

# COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday 17 December 2025  
6:00 PM

Senior Citizens Centre, Kerang

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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**

## **4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

That the minutes of the Council Meetings held on 19 November 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

**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 17 November 2025 to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025.

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### 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 - 1 December 2025 [6.1.1 - 2 pages]

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## RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



<b>Type of Meeting</b>	<b>Councillor Briefing Session</b>
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2025
<b>Time:</b>	8.30 am – 5.30 pm
<b>Location:</b>	Council Chambers, Kerang
<b>In Attendance: (Councillors)</b>	Cr Garner Smith, Mayor Cr Ross Stanton, Deputy Mayor Cr Daniel Bolitho ( <i>only from 10.45 am to 11.30 am</i> ) Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Lisa Farrant Cr Keith Link Cr Pat Quinn
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cr Daniel Bolitho, Paul Fernee
<b>In Attendance: (Officers)</b>	Geoff Rollinson, Wade Williams, Jodie Basile, Phil Higgins, Fiona Gorman, Stevie Pearce, Leigh Hollingworth, Jasmine Saparamadu, Scott Wishart, Scott Bourne
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Sarah Hobgen, Vic Grid Engagement Officer Sarah Kruger, Vic Grid Kristie Cooper-Harvey, Vic Grid Adele McCarthy, Vic Grid Geoff Caine, Vic Grid Amy Pepper, Vic Grid Marg Sangalli, RMCG Nathan Heicrich, Coliban Water Project Manager
<b>Matters Discussed:</b>	Councillor Only Session Building, Planning and Local Laws Quarterly Update 2026 Citizenship Ceremonies Dates for 2026 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting – November Community Asset Committee Draft Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy G12-2025 – DRFA Flood Betterment Works G02-2025 Gannawarra Central Landfill Cell 3 Capping Koondrook Local Development Strategy (LDS) Presentation on VICGrid Transmission Plan Update Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030 Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2030 Council Policy No. 068 Dogs and Cars – Designated Areas Council Policy No 065 – Tree Policy Council Asset Sale or Disposal Rating and Revenue Options Presentation on Cohuna Water Reclamation Project Budget 2026/2027 Parameters Recreation Reserve Support Training Councillor Induction Training

	Strategic Planning Work Plan Program Waste Services Update Operational Update – Disposal of Timber Waste at Transfer Stations Northwestern Victoria Energy & Mining Impact Readiness Strategy Draft Workforce 2026-2030 10 Year CAPEX Projects Report Future Listing Report Councillors/CEO/Directors Discussion CEO & Councillors Discussion	
<b>Conflict of Interest Disclosures</b>		
<b>Matter No.</b>	<b>Councillor/Officer making disclosure</b>	<b>The CEO left the meeting for the discussion</b>
Item 2.6 – G02-2025	Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer	Geoff left at 2.46 pm and returned at 2.58 pm
<b>Completed By:</b>	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer	
		



## 7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

### 7.1 2026 CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY DATES

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

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. **Adopt the following dates, times and location for the 2026 Citizenship Ceremonies:**
  - **Monday 26 January 2026 at 9.00 am at Atkinson Park, Kerang**
  - **Monday 20 April 2026 at 6.00 pm at the Glasshouse, Kerang**
  - **Monday 27 July 2026 at 6.00 pm at the Glasshouse, Kerang**
  - **Monday 19 October 2026 at 6.00 pm at the Glasshouse, Kerang.**
2. **Provide notification of the 2026 Citizenship Ceremony dates to;**
  - **the Australian Electoral Commission**
  - **the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**
  - **the Federal Member for Mallee**
  - **a Member of the Federal Senate of a different political party**
  - **a Local State or Territory MP**
  - **a Local Government Representative**

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's endorsement of proposed Citizenship Ceremony dates for the 2026 calendar year. Setting ceremony dates in advance enables compliance with the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code, supports timely coordination with the Department of Home Affairs, and ensures adequate planning for venues, staffing and community participation. Early adoption of a ceremony schedule also improves the experience for conferees by providing certainty and reducing waiting times.

The recommended dates align with national requirements, consider peak periods for conferrals, and accommodate Council's operational capacity. Approval of the proposed schedule will allow officers to finalise arrangements, notify stakeholders, and deliver meaningful, well-organised ceremonies throughout 2026.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's formal adoption of the 2026 Citizenship Ceremony schedule to support internal planning and resource allocation. Endorsing the dates provides clarity for staff coordination, allows for early engagement with stakeholders, and ensures ceremonies are integrated effectively within Council's broader community and event programs.

#### DISCUSSION

Citizenship ceremonies fulfil legal requirements prescribed by the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* and the Australian Citizenship Regulations 2007 and are the final step in the citizenship process.

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They are conducted by a Presiding Officer, usually the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or Chief Executive Officer, under the authority of the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.

Each year, Council is required to set a schedule of ceremony dates and provide this schedule to the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible, usually three to six months in advance.

Where possible, Parliamentary Sitting dates are avoided to allow for elected representatives from all three tiers of government to attend throughout the year.

According to the Citizenship Code, ceremony organisers must invite all elected officials of the locality, at all levels of government, including:

- Local Federal MP and a Senator (of a different political party)
- Local State or Territory MP
- A Local Government Representative

The Department of Home Affairs recommends that Council hold ceremonies regularly throughout the year and conduct at least one ceremony on or within 3 days either side of Australia Day (26 January), aligning with Commonwealth guidelines.

Council currently conducts 4 Citizenship Ceremonies annually, welcoming an estimated 20 new citizens each year. To ensure consistency and allow adequate scheduling, a proposed timetable is in the officer's recommendation.

#### **RELEVANT LAW**

- Australian Citizenship Act 2007
- Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code

#### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Nearing the conclusion of each calendar year, Council receives a formal request from the Department of Home Affairs to confirm the proposed dates for Citizenship Ceremonies for the upcoming year.

The Citizenship Ceremony dates have been selected based on:

- historical attendee numbers and processing volumes
- alignment with Department of Home Affairs notification patterns
- venue and staffing availability
- avoidance of major Council or community events

Historically, this report has been provided to the Council for consideration and adoption at the November Meeting of Council. However, due to the Parliamentary Sitting dates being released later this year, this report will go to the December Council meeting for approval. This report went to Council for adoption of 2025 dates on 27 November 2024.

#### **OPTIONS**

Citizenship ceremonies are public ceremonial occasions that provide an important opportunity to formally welcome new citizens as full members of the Australian community and are formal occasions conducted with dignity, respect, and due ceremony. Conducting four ceremonies will ensure that the Council provides this opportunity for its community throughout the year.

- **Adopt the recommended 2026 dates** (*Recommended*)  
Provides certainty for planning and ensures compliance with the expected standard frequency of ceremonies.
- **Modify the proposed dates**  
Council may adjust individual dates based on operational or strategic preferences.
- **Decline to adopt dates at this time**  
Not recommended as it may delay planning and communication with stakeholders.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Adopting the 2026 Citizenship Ceremony dates provides an opportunity to plan events efficiently and incorporate sustainable practices, such as using digital communications, minimising disposable materials, and optimising venue and transport arrangements. This supports the Council's broader sustainability objectives and promotes environmentally responsible event management.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No formal consultation is required; however, public notice will be given of the schedule once adopted.

Internal Consultation has occurred with the Executive team and Councillors.

### **INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Adopting the 2026 Citizenship Ceremony dates allows Council to streamline planning, incorporate digital tools for administration and participant communication, and apply feedback from previous events to improve inclusivity, accessibility, and ceremony delivery. This proactive approach supports ongoing improvements in efficiency, community engagement, and service quality.

### **COLLABORATION**

Citizenship Ceremonies involve close collaboration between the Department of Home Affairs, elected representatives, internal Council departments, Traditional Owner groups, community organisations, emergency services, and local venue/technical providers. This multi-agency and community partnership ensures ceremonies are compliant, culturally respectful, safe, and meaningful for new citizens.

### **FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Ceremonies are delivered within existing operational budgets.

Projected 2026 costs include staffing, catering, citizenship packs including a small gift to welcome our new citizen to Gannawarra Shire, and equipment setup. Any variations are expected to remain within approved allocations.

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

- **National Level:** The *Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code* and the *Australian Citizenship Act / Regulations* are the primary legal and policy frameworks.

- **State / Regional Level:** While there's no universal "state citizenship ceremony plan," local government associations and multicultural policies can influence how Councils implement the ceremonies.
- **Local Government Role:** Councils host ceremonies on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs, but also shape how they run them (date, format, cultural protocols) within the bounds of national policy.

### **COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

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

Nil

## 7.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING - NOVEMBER

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

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

- 1. Receive and note the summary of the discussions of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 12 November 2025;**
- 2. Receive and note the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report;**
- 3. Receive and note the Audit and Risk Committee Evaluation; and**
- 4. Maintain the current Audit and Risk Committee structure of three independent members and two Councillors**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) met on 12 November 2025. The agenda included reports related to financial, governance, compliance, and risk management matters.

This report provides a summary of the meeting discussions and outcomes which includes the tabling of the Biannual Report in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and a review of the ARC Charter which incorporates consideration of the number of external representatives on the ARC.

The ARC has recommended that Council increase the number of external members from three to four. The recommendation is to maintain the existing structure of three independent members.

#### **PURPOSE**

This report outlines the actions of the ARC to meet its responsibilities to ensure compliance with Council policies, monitor financial performance, monitor risk and fraud control, and overview the audit functions.

This report complies with Section 54 (4) of the *Local Government Act 2020* to review the ARC's performance against the Charter. This includes reporting on audit and risk issues as required by Section 54 (5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Meeting Summary**

The details of the 12 November 2025 ARC Meeting are summarised below:

#### Apologies

Cr Garner Smith – Councillor Representative  
Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer

#### Member attendees:

Frank Crawley – Independent Member - Chair  
Jarrah O'Shea – Independent Member  
Cr Ross Stanton – Councillor Representative  
Noting that Laura Conti has resigned from the ARC.

In attendance:

Brad Ead – Internal Audit Provider - AFS &amp; Associates

Wade Williams – Acting Chief Executive Officer

Phil Higgins – Acting Director Corporate Services

Deanne Caserta – Manager Financial Services

Melissa Mathers – Manager People and Culture

Dylan Taylor – Governance Officer

The following agenda items were considered by the ARC at the meeting:

	<b>Report</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
5.1	Quarterly Budget Report - Quarter Ending 30 September 2025	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the report outlining the 2025/2026 Quarterly Budget Report as of 30 September 2025.
5.2	Draft 2025 – 2035 Asset Management Plan and Sub- Plans Report	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the Asset Management Plan and Sub Plans report
5.3	CEO Credit Card Expenditure and Work Related Reimbursements	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the CEO Credit Card Expenditure and Work Related Reimbursements report for the period 1 July – 30 September 2025.
5.4	Councillor Expenditure and Allowance Report	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the Councillor Expenditure and Allowance Report for the period 1 July – 30 September 2025.
5.5	Policy No. 046 - Corporate Credit Cards (Employee Policy)	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee endorse Policy No. 046 – Corporate Purchase Cards.
5.6	Risk Management Report	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the update of the risk management project and reconsider

		the Risk Management Framework at the February 2026 meeting following a further review of the risk consequence thresholds.
5.7	OH&S and WorkCover Update	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the Occupational Health and Safety and WorkCover update for Q1 – July 2025 to September 2025 as presented in the report.
5.8	Verbal Fraud and Corruption Report Presented by the Chief Executive Officer	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the verbal fraud and corruption report presented by the Chief Executive Officer
5.9	Internal Audit Program Status Update	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the Internal Audit Program Status Update as attached to this report.
5.10	Internal Audit Program - Human Resources Risk Management Audit Final Report	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee: 1.Acknowledge receipt of the Internal Auditor's report Human Resources Risk Management Audit dated October 2025. 2.Acknowledge the presentation by Brad Ead of AFS & Associates outlining the management responses and key findings of the report
5.11	Meeting Held with Internal Auditors Without Officers Present	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee confirms the occurrence of the meeting held with internal auditors without officers present.
5.12	Outstanding Audit Actions Update	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee receives and notes the management comments on the outstanding internal audit actions as detailed in this report.
5.13	VAGO Report - Financial Management of Local Councils	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That Audit and Risk Committee receive and note this report.
5.14	Recent Reports and Publications - Local Government	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton

		That the Audit and Risk Committee receive and note the Local Government reports and publications of interest report as attached and presented by AFS.
5.15	Minutes of Previous Meeting	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee: 1. Adopts the Minutes of the meeting held 10 September 2025, and 2. Notes that a summary of the meeting was presented to the 17 September 2025 Council meeting .
5.16	Audit and Risk Committee Evaluation	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee complete the Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Survey and endorse its presentation to Council.
5.17	Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee: 1. Endorses the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report: 1 April 2025– 30 September 2025; and 2. Provides a copy of the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report: 1 April 2025– 30 September 2025 to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.
5.18	Internal Control Environment Plan	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee endorse the Internal Control Environment Plan
5.19	Audit and Risk Committee Charter Review	Moved: Cr Jarrah O'Shea Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton That the Audit and Risk Committee Charter be reviewed, and amended to incorporate four independent members in the structure.
6.1	Annual Work Plan	Moved: Cr Ross Stanton Seconded: Cr Jarrah O'Shea That the Audit and Risk Committee adopt the Annual Work Plan.

### **Biannual Report**

The Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report for the 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025 timeframe is attached to the report.

The Biannual Report summaries the committee membership, remuneration, meetings and attendance, committee governance, an assessment against the Committee Charter, the audit program and focus areas for the upcoming reporting period.

The Biannual Report is a requirement of the ARC Charter and *Local Government Act 2020*.

Section 6.2 Charter states:

*The Committee Chairperson will prepare a report to Council through the Chief Executive Officer on the Committee's activities twice per annum. One of these reports will be prepared after the meeting at which the annual financial report and the annual performance statement have been considered and recommended to Council for adoption, such report indicating how the Committee has discharged its responsibilities as set out in this Charter for the previous year.*

Under Section 54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

*An Audit and Risk Committee must—*

- a. prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations; and*
- b. provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.*

Also attached is the self assessment score undertaken by the ARC members, with a collated average score summarised in the attachment. The scoring is based out of a score up to 5.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

Section 53 and 54 *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

The last biannual review was considered by Council on 21 May 2025.

## **OPTIONS**

With the resignation of one of the external members, the ARC Charter was reviewed at this meeting. The options open to Council with the ARC Charter review are to:

- Maintain the existing structure of three independent members and two councillors;
- Alter the existing structure to four independent members and two councillors; and
- Some other structure as determined by Council that conforms with the legislation.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The *Local Government Act 2020* gives the ARC a broad focus and a strong emphasis in financial and performance reporting, internal control environment (ICE), risk management, fraud prevention, internal audit, external audit, and compliance management risks.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The independent members on the ARC ensure that there is involvement by key community members.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The self-assessment survey conducted by the ARC involves reviewing current practices to analyse whether there is a better way of doing things, which reflects a continuous improvement approach.

**COLLABORATION**

Reports from various agencies were included in the agenda.

The ARC independent membership of neighbouring councils reveals the following: Loddon 4, Buloke 3, Swan Hill 3 and Campaspe 3.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The current membership allowance for ARC members is \$2,000 per annum plus travel costs. The current operating budget in 2025/2026 caters for three independent members. Any increase in membership would be over the current budget.

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

The review of reports from agencies like VAGO allows the ARC to consider various state wide plans, policies and best practice guidelines.

**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. Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report 1 July-30 September 2025 [7.2.1 - 10 pages]
2. Council Audit Risk Committee Charter 2025 November [7.2.2 - 6 pages]
3. ARC Self Assessment Survey Results 2025 [7.2.3 - 1 page]

# **GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE BIANNUAL REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2025**

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## 1 PURPOSE

The Audit and Risk Committee has been established in accordance with Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). The committee provides support to Council in discharging its oversight responsibilities related to:

- financial and performance reporting
- risk management
- fraud prevention systems and control
- maintenance of a sound internal control environment
- assurance activities including internal and external audit and
- Council's performance with regard to compliance with its policies and legislative and regulatory requirements.

It acts in this capacity by monitoring, reviewing, endorsing and advising on the above matters as set out in the Committee's Charter.

Clause 9 Charter states:

### REPORTING TO COUNCIL

A summary of each ARC meeting will be reported at the next meeting of the Council. A biannual audit and risk report including the activities of the Committee and its findings and recommendations, will be tabled at the next meeting of Council in accordance with section 54(5) of the Act.

This requirement is in addition to the legislative requirement under Section 54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which states:

*An Audit and Risk Committee must—*

- a) prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations; and*
- b) provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.*

## 2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This report does not impact the operational budget.

## 3 RISK ANALYSIS

Through the Council, the Audit and Risk Committee has oversight responsibilities in relation to risk management.

## 4 SCOPE

This report encompasses the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee for the 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025 period. There were two meetings held during the period on 7 May 2025 and 10 September 2025.

## 5 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee consists of five members appointed by Council, three of whom are independent members.

The Committee membership for this reporting period included independent members Frank Crawley (Chair), Laura Conti and Jarrah O'Shea. With Laura Conti resigning on 3 October 2025.

Council appointed representatives were Cr Garner Smith and Cr Ross Stanton.

## 6 REMUNERATION

Remuneration is reviewed annually. The current remuneration for independent Committee Members as adopted by Council at the 17 April 2024 meeting:

- Remuneration payable to Independent Committee Members of the Audit and Risk Committee of \$500 per meeting, and \$650 per meeting for the Chairperson.
- Reimbursement of travel expenses for the independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee, paid in line with existing Council policy.

## 7 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings are scheduled quarterly as the first Tuesday in February, May, August, and November, with the allowance for special meetings or circulating resolutions where required.

### 7.1 Committee meeting attendance

The following outlines the Committee Members' attendances for meetings in the reporting period:

Name	May 2025 Meeting	September 2025 Meeting	Total	Percentage of Attendance
Frank Crawley	✓	✓	2	100%
Laura Conti	✓		1	50%
Jarrah O'Shea	✓	✓	2	100%
Cr Garner Smith		✓	1	50%
Cr Ross Stanton	✓	✓	2	100%

In addition to Committee Members, attendance includes the following officers:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director Corporate Services
- Governance Officer
- Manager Financial Officer

Additional relevant officers are invited to meetings to discuss their items and any internal audit reports related to their work.

## 8 COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

### 8.1 Committee Charter

The Committee Charter is a requirement under the Local Government Act and outlines the responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee. The charter is supported by an annual work plan that ensures all responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee are addressed

The Committee underwent a comprehensive review and was endorsed by the Audit and Risk Charter at the 9 May 2024 meeting and was then adopted by Council at the 17 July 2024 Council Meeting.

### 8.2 Annual Work plan

The most recent review of the Annual Work Plan was aligned with the financial year. The Annual Work plan is being considered at the November 2025 meeting.

## 9 ASSESSMENT AGAINST COMMITTEE CHARTER

In accordance with the Committee's Charter, the Committee is responsible for:

- Financial and performance reporting
- Internal Control Environment
- Risk Management
- Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls
- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- Compliance Management.

Each of the key responsibilities has been assessed against agenda items and action during the reporting period, with comments provided.

### 9.1 Financial and Performance Reporting

Details	Status
At least annually review significant accounting and external reporting issues, including complex or unusual transactions, transactions and balances in areas where judgement is required, changes to accounting policies, recent accounting, professional and regulatory pronouncements and legislative changes, and understand their effect on the annual financial report and the audit thereof	<b>Complete:</b> This report was addressed at the 7 May 2025 meeting.
At least annually review changes to the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework and understand the impact of those changes on Council's performance indicators;	<b>Monitored:</b> No major changes in the reporting period.
Review the annual financial report and annual performance statement and consider whether they are complete, consistent with information known to Committee members, reflect appropriate accounting treatments and adequately disclose Council's financial performance and position;	<b>Complete:</b> Reports were presented at the 10 September 2025 meeting.
Review with management and the external auditors the results of the audit, including any difficulties encountered by the auditors and how they were resolved;	<b>Complete:</b> This report was included in the 10 September 2025.

Details	Status
Recommend the adoption of the annual financial report and annual performance statement to Council; and	<b>Complete:</b> This report was included in the 10 September 2025.
Review the appropriateness of the format and content of periodic management financial reports and performance statements to Council as required.	<b>Complete:</b> Reports were presented at the 7 May and 10 September 2025 Meetings.
In accordance with section 40(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 (Reimbursement of expenses of Councillors and members of a delegated committee) Council must provide details of all reimbursements under this section to the Audit and Risk Committee.	<b>Complete:</b> Reports presented at the 7 May and 10 September 2025 meetings.

## 9.2 Internal Control Environment

Details	Status
Review the adequacy and effectiveness of key policies, systems and controls for providing a sound internal control environment. This should be done on a rotational basis over a three to four year period;	<b>Complete:</b> Various policies and other strategic documents relevant to the ARC have been presented.
Determine whether systems and controls are reviewed regularly and updated where required;	<b>Complete:</b> The ICE is reviewed through internal audit reviews and provided to the ARC meetings.
Monitor significant changes to systems and controls to assess whether those changes significantly impact Council's risk profile;	<b>Upcoming:</b> Underway with a report included in November 2025 agenda.
Ensure that a program is in place to test compliance with systems and controls;	<b>Upcoming:</b> The ICE program is being presented to the November 2025 meeting.
Assess whether the control environment is consistent with Council's Governing Principles.	<b>Complete:</b> The Governing principles are addressed with each Council report.

## 9.3 Risk Management

Details	Status
Review annually the effectiveness of Council's risk management framework;	<b>Upcoming:</b> Underway with a report included in November 2025 agenda.
Review Council's risk appetite statement and the degree of alignment with Council's risk profile;	<b>Upcoming:</b> Underway with a report included in November 2025 agenda.
Review Council's risk profile and the changes occurring in the profile from meeting to meeting;	<b>Upcoming:</b> Underway with a report included in November 2025 agenda.
Review Council's treatment plans for significant risks, including the timeliness of mitigating actions and progress against those plans;	<b>Incomplete:</b> No report presented in the reporting period.

Details	Status
Review the insurance program annually prior to renewal;and	<b>Incomplete:</b> No report presented in the reporting period.
Review the approach to business continuity planning arrangements, including whether business continuity and disaster recovery plans have been regularly updated and tested.	<b>Upcoming:</b> Due in 2027 under the proposed ICE.

#### 9.4 Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls

Details	Status
Review Council's Fraud Prevention policies and controls, including the Fraud and Corruption Control Plan and fraud awareness program at least every two years;	<b>Upcoming:</b> This report is next due in2026.
Receive a verbal report from management about actual or suspected instances of fraud or corruption including analysis of the underlying control failures and action taken to address each event; and	<b>Complete:</b> Reports were presented at the 7 May and 10 September 2025 meetings.
Review reports by management about the actions taken by Council to report such matters to the appropriate integrity bodies.	<b>Complete:</b> This forms part of the above mentioned report.

#### 9.5 Internal Audit

Details	Status
Review the Internal Audit Charter regularly to determine that it provides an appropriate functional and organisational framework to enable Council's internal audit function to operate effectively and without limitations;	<b>Upcoming:</b> Report included in November 2025 meeting.
Review and approve the three year strategic internal audit plan, the annual internal audit plan and any significant changes to them;	<b>Complete:</b> Currently implementing the approved three year Strategic Internal Audit Plan.
Review progress on delivery of annual internal audit plan;	<b>Upcoming:</b> Report included in November 2025 meeting.
Review and approve proposed scopes for each review in the annual internal audit plan;	<b>Complete:</b> Two scopes approved in May 2025 and one in September 2025.
Review reports on internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those reviews;	<b>Complete:</b> Report considered at September 2025meeting.
Meet with the leader of the internal audit function at least annually in the absence of management;	<b>Upcoming:</b> Report included in November 2025 meeting.
Monitor action by management on internal audit findings and recommendations;	<b>Complete:</b> Reports were presented at the 7 May and 10 September 2025 meetings.
Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function and ensure that it has appropriate authority within Council and has no unjustified limitations on its work;	<b>Complete:</b> Consider with this review.

Ensure that the Committee is aware of and appropriately represented with regard to any proposed changes to the appointment of the internal audit service provider, including being appropriately briefed on the need for any proposed change;	<b>Not applicable.</b> Tender process completed for appointment of Internal Auditor for three year term.
Recommend to Council, if necessary, the termination of the internal audit contractor.	<b>Not applicable.</b> Tender process completed for appointment of Internal Auditor for three year term.

## 9.6 External Audit

Details	Status
Annually review and approve the external audit scope and plan proposed by the external auditor;	<b>Complete:</b> This report was presented at 5 February 2025 meeting.
Discuss with the external auditor any audit issues encountered in the normal course of audit work, including any restriction on scope of work or access to information;	<b>Complete:</b> A report was included in the 10 September 2025 agenda.
Ensure that significant findings and recommendations made by the external auditor, and management's responses to them, are appropriate and are acted upon in a timely manner;	<b>Complete:</b> A report was included in the 10 September 2025 agenda.
Review the effectiveness of the external audit function and ensure that the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) is aware of the Committee's views;	<b>Upcoming:</b> This is an item for consideration by the ARC.
Consider the findings and recommendations of any relevant performance audits undertaken by VAGO and monitor Council's responses to them; and	<b>Complete:</b> VAGO and Commission Inquiry report recommendations have been reviewed at both the May and September 2025 meetings.
Meet with the external auditor at least annually in the absence of management.	<b>Complete:</b> Meeting occurred 10 September 2025.

## 9.7 Compliance Management

Details	Status
Review the systems and processes implemented by Council for monitoring compliance with relevant legislation and regulations and the results of management's follow up of any instances of non-compliance;	<b>Incomplete:</b> No report presented in the reporting period.
Review the processes for communicating Council's Employee Code of Conduct to employees and contractors and for monitoring compliance with the Code;	<b>Complete:</b> A report was presented to the ARC at the 5 February 2025 meeting.
Obtain briefings on any significant compliance matters	<b>Complete:</b> This is a standing agenda item..
Receive reports from management on the findings of any examinations by regulatory or integrity agencies (whether related to investigations at Council or other agencies), such as the Ombudsman, IBAC, Victoria Government Inspectorate, etc. and monitor Council's responses.	<b>Complete:</b> Standing agenda item.
Review reports on key policies	<b>Complete:</b> Reports are presented as per the ICE plan. Extra policy reviews considered as they occur.

## 10 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAM

### 10.1 Reports provided to the Committee

The three year Strategic Internal Audit Plan report was adopted at the 10 December 2024 Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

The 2024/25 program is complete and the 2025/26 program is well underway. The forward three year plan is being considered at the November 2025 meeting.

### 10.2 Open Actions List

The outstanding audit items are regularly reviewed and discussed with relevant officers to ensure actions towards their completion are progressing.

In September 2025, the ARC received a report on outstanding audit recommendations and endorsed for all items bar one to be removed. For the November meeting a revised outstanding list has been developed including external and internal audit actions.

At the conclusion of the biannual reporting period there were 17 open audit actions.

## **11 FOCUS FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD**

### **11.1 Risk framework**

The development of the Risk Framework and review of the risk policy is underway. Once this is complete it will allow a review of the software needed to host the risk modules, with the decision made to move away from RelianSys.

### **11.2 Service Reviews**

A Service Review framework is under development. The project has most of the framework established and the services and sub services have been identified. Data around the services and sub services is being collated. From there a program for the review of Services will commence.

### **11.3 Digital Transformation Strategy**

The Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) is developed and phase 1 of implementing the strategy has commenced. Horizon 1 is about “Build and Uplift Core Capacity” (2025 – 2027).

The DTS is based on key pillars which are:- Digital Infrastructure & Cloud Modernisation; Systems Integration & Automation; Customer & Community Experience; Governance, Security & IT Engagement; and Workplace Productivity & Collaboration.

### **11.4 Implementation of new software modules**

This includes the abovementioned risk module. Also being implemented is the human resource software (Pulse) for areas such as onboarding and performance reviews. A new software module is being implemented for Council agendas (DocAssembler). The software for asset management under a joint arrangement with three councils is also imminent.

# AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER

## 1. PURPOSE

The Gannawarra Shire Council (GSC) has established an Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) pursuant to Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) to support Council in discharging its oversight responsibilities related to financial and performance reporting, risk management, fraud prevention systems and control, maintenance of a sound internal control environment, assurance activities including internal and external audit and Council's performance with regard to compliance with its policies and legislative and regulatory requirements. It acts in this capacity by monitoring, reviewing, endorsing and advising on the above matters as set out in this Charter. This Charter has been developed in accordance with Section 54 of the Act.

The appointment of independent members to the Committee as outlined in this Charter enables the Committee to provide advice to Council on matters related to its responsibilities based on broader skills and experience than might otherwise be the case and in so doing bring additional benefits to Council.

The Committee has no executive authority and no delegated financial responsibilities and is therefore independent of management.

## 2. AUTHORITY

The Committee is directly responsible to Council for discharging its responsibilities as set out in this Charter. The Committee has no delegated authority from Council unless specifically provided by Council from time to time and any such authority shall be temporary and may only relate to specific matters as directed by Council.

The Committee has the authority to:

- Endorse key documents and reports that must be approved by Council, including annual financial reports, annual performance statements, new or revised policies and other documents that assist in maintaining a strong internal control environment;
- Review and endorse internal and external audit plans that must be approved by Council;
- Provide advice and make recommendations to Council on matters within its areas of responsibility;
- Retain counsel of relevant independent experts where it considers that is necessary in order to execute its responsibilities, subject to prior agreement with the Chief Executive Officer;
- Seek any relevant information it requires from Council (who is expected to co-operate with the Committee's requests) and external parties;
- Meet with internal and external auditors and other parties as required to discharge its responsibilities.

The Committee will, through the Chief Executive Officer, have access to appropriate management support to enable it to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP AND TENURE

The Committee will consist of five members appointed by Council, three of whom must be independent members. Council employees cannot be members of the Committee. Details of membership and tenure are set out below:

#### Independent Members

- 3.1 Independent members will generally be appointed for three year terms. This may vary for the initial term of independent members to stagger the retirement time of independent members;
- 3.2 Independent members may be reappointed for two additional three-year terms subject to satisfactory performance, that is, a maximum of nine consecutive years;
- 3.3 Independent members must collectively have expertise in financial management and reporting and risk management and also experience in public sector management;
- 3.4 Independent members' terms of appointment will be set so that as far as possible only one member retires at a time in order to minimise the loss of knowledge of Council's business that may occur on change of membership;
- 3.5 Remuneration will be paid to independent members as approved by Council from time to time, subject to their attendance at Committee meetings;
- 3.6 Independent members may be removed from the Committee if they fail to attend two meetings without an apology in a financial year.

#### Councillor Members

- 3.7 Councillor members will be appointed to the Committee by Council annually;
- 3.8 Should an appointed Councillor member not be able to attend a Committee meeting, Council may appoint an alternate member to act in such circumstances, either on a meeting by meeting basis or for the entire year;

#### Chairperson

- 3.9 The Chairperson of the Committee must be an independent member;
- 3.10 The Committee will appoint the Chairperson of the Committee;
- 3.11 If the Chairperson is unable to attend a meeting, the members in attendance at the meeting will appoint a Chairperson for that meeting from among the attending independent members;

#### Quorum for Meetings

- 3.12 A quorum shall comprise a majority of three (3) members of the Committee, one (1) of which must be an independent representative and one (1) of which must be a Councillor.

### 4. MEETINGS

The Committee will meet at least four times a year, with authority to convene additional meetings as circumstances require.

- 4.1 A schedule of meetings will be developed annually and agreed to by members;
- 4.2 It is preferred all Committee members attend each meeting in person, although in certain circumstances members can attend through electronic means by negotiation with the Chairperson;
- 4.3 The Committee may invite members of Council's executive leadership and management teams, the internal and external auditors and other personnel as appropriate to attend meetings. The Chief Executive Officer and the Director Corporate Services will attend all meetings, except for confidential matters;

- 4.4 Committee members and the internal and external auditors may request the Chairperson to convene additional meetings if they feel that is justified, to address unexpected matters that may have arisen;
- 4.5 Meeting agendas and appropriate briefing materials will be provided to members at least one week prior to each meeting;
- 4.6 Minutes will be prepared for all meetings.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee has the following responsibilities:

### Financial and Performance Reporting

- 5.1 At least annually review significant accounting and external reporting issues, including complex or unusual transactions, transactions and balances in areas where judgement is required, changes to accounting policies, recent accounting, professional and regulatory pronouncements and legislative changes, and understand their effect on the annual financial report and the audit thereof;
- 5.2 At least annually review changes to the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework and understand the impact of those changes on Council's performance indicators;
- 5.3 Review the annual financial report and annual performance statement and consider whether they are complete, consistent with information known to Committee members, reflect appropriate accounting treatments and adequately disclose Council's financial performance and position;
- 5.4 Review with management and the external auditors the results of the audit, including any difficulties encountered by the auditors and how they were resolved;
- 5.5 Recommend the adoption of the annual financial report and annual performance statement to Council; and
- 5.6 Review the appropriateness of the format and content of periodic management financial reports and performance statements to Council as required.

### Internal Control Environment

- 5.7 Review the adequacy and effectiveness of key policies, systems and controls for providing a sound internal control environment. This should be done on a rotational basis over a four year period;
- 5.8 Determine whether systems and controls are reviewed regularly and updated where required;
- 5.9 Monitor significant changes to systems and controls to assess whether those changes significantly impact Council's risk profile;
- 5.10 Ensure that a programme is in place to test compliance with systems and controls; and
- 5.11 Assess whether the control environment is consistent with Council's Governance Principles.

### Risk Management

- 5.12 Review annually the effectiveness of Council's risk management framework;
- 5.13 Review Council's risk appetite and the degree of alignment with Council's risk profile;
- 5.14 Review annually Council's risk profile and the changes occurring in the profile;
- 5.15 Review Council's treatment plans for significant risks, including the timeliness of mitigating actions and progress against those plans;
- 5.16 Review the insurance programme annually; and
- 5.17 Review the approach to business continuity planning arrangements, including whether business continuity and disaster recovery plans have been regularly updated and tested.

### Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls

- 5.18 Review Council's fraud prevention policies and controls, including the Fraud Control Plan and fraud awareness programmes at least every four years;
- 5.19 Receive reports from management about actual or suspected instances of fraud or corruption including analysis of the underlying control failures and action taken to address each event; and
- 5.20 Review reports by management about the actions taken by Council to report such matters to the appropriate integrity bodies.

### Internal Audit

- 5.21 Review the Internal Audit Charter regularly to determine that it provides an appropriate functional and organisational framework to enable Council's internal audit function to operate effectively and without limitations;
- 5.22 Review the three year strategic internal audit plan, the annual internal audit plan and any significant changes to them;
- 5.23 Review progress on delivery of annual internal audit plan;
- 5.24 Review proposed scopes for each review in the annual internal audit plan;
- 5.25 Review reports on internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those reviews;
- 5.26 If necessary, meet with the internal auditor at least annually in the absence of management;
- 5.27 Monitor action by management on agreed internal audit findings and **timely implementations of** recommendations;
- 5.28 Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function and ensure that it has appropriate authority within Council and has no unjustified limitations on its work;
- 5.29 Ensure that the Committee is aware of, and appropriately represented with regard to any proposed changes to the appointment of the internal audit service provider, including being appropriately briefed on the need for any proposed change; and
- 5.30 Recommend to Council, if necessary, the termination of the internal audit contractor.

### External Audit

- 5.31 Annually review the external audit scope and plan proposed by the external auditor;
- 5.32 Discuss with the external auditor any audit issues encountered in the normal course of audit work, including any restriction on scope of work or access to information;
- 5.33 Ensure that significant findings and recommendations made by the external auditor, and management's responses to them, are appropriate and are acted upon in a timely manner;
- 5.34 Review the effectiveness of the external audit function and ensure that the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) is aware of the Committee's views;
- 5.35 Consider the findings and recommendations of any relevant performance audits undertaken by VAGO and monitor Council's responses to them; and
- 5.36 If necessary, meet with the external auditor at least annually in the absence of management.

### Compliance Management

- 5.37 Review the systems and processes implemented by Council for monitoring compliance with relevant legislation and regulations and the results of management's follow up of any instances of non-compliance;
- 5.38 Review the processes for communicating Council's Employee Code of Conduct to employees and contractors and for monitoring compliance with the Code;
- 5.39 Obtain briefings on any significant compliance matters; and

- 5.40 Receive reports from management on the findings of any examinations by regulatory or integrity agencies (whether related to investigations at Council or other agencies), such as the Ombudsman, IBAC, Victoria Local Government Inspectorate, etc. and monitor Council's responses.

## 6. REPORTING TO COUNCIL

- 6.1 Minutes of Committee meetings will be provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Committee Chairperson following each Committee meeting;
- 6.2 The Committee Chairperson will prepare a report to Council through the Chief Executive Officer on the Committee's activities twice per annum. One of these reports will be prepared after the meeting at which the annual financial report and the annual performance statement have been considered and recommended to Council for adoption, such report indicating how the Committee has discharged its responsibilities as set out in this Charter for the previous year.

## 7. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The Committee shall undertake a process to evaluate its performance annually and report the outcomes of the evaluation process to Council through the Chief Executive Officer, including recommendations for any opportunities for improvement. The evaluation will include feedback from both Committee members and senior officers who have regular interactions with the Committee.

## 8. COMMITTEE MEMBER REGULATORY OBLIGATIONS

Committee members are expected to be aware of their obligations under Section 53 of the Act. These obligations relate to misuse of position as a member of the Committee (Section 123), confidential information (Section 125) and conflict of interest (Sections 126 to 131). Details about these obligations are included in Appendix A to this Charter.

## 9. REVIEW OF CHARTER

The Committee shall review and assess the adequacy of the Charter annually or earlier if necessary and submit requests to Council through the Chief Executive Officer for revisions and improvements for approval.

### Altus ECM Folder: 3.000562

	ARC	Council
Originally adopted	04/08/2020	19/08/2020
Reviewed	29/09/2020	21/10/2020
Reviewed	23/03/2021	21/04/2021
Reviewed	09/11/2021	15/12/2021
Reviewed	08/11/2022	21/12/2022

## Appendix A

### Committee Member Regulatory Obligations

#### Guidance to Members

LGA Section	LGA Requirement
<b>Misuse of Position</b>	
123(1)	A Committee member must not intentionally misuse their position to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person; or</li> <li>b) Cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to the Council or another person.</li> </ul>
123(3)	Circumstances involving misuse of a position by a member of the Committee include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Making improper use of information acquired as a result of being a member of the Committee; or</li> <li>b) Disclosing information that is confidential information; or</li> <li>c) Directing or improperly influencing, or seeking to direct or improperly influence, a member of Council staff; or</li> <li>d) Exercising or performing, or purporting to exercise or perform, a power, duty or function that the person is not authorised to exercise or perform; or</li> <li>e) Using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised; or</li> <li>f) Participating in a decision on a matter in which the member has a conflict of interest.</li> </ul>
<b>Confidential Information</b>	
125	A member of the Committee must not intentionally or recklessly disclose information that the member knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information. There are some exemptions to this requirement, the key one being that if the information disclosed by the member has been determined by Council to be publicly available.
<b>Conflicts of Interest</b>	
126	A member of the Committee has a conflict of interest if the member has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A general conflict of interest as described in Section 127; or</li> <li>b) A material conflict of interest as described in Section 128.</li> </ul>
127	A member of the Committee has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the members private interests could result in that member acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty as a member of the Committee.
128	A member of the Committee has a material conflict of interest in a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.
<b>Please Note</b>	
<p><i>The above guidance is not verbatim from the Act and does not include all details as explained in Part 6, Division 1 of the Act. For a full understanding of the requirements of the Act in relation to the matters summarised above, members are expected to make themselves fully aware of the requirements of the Act.</i></p>	

### Audit and Risk Committee - Self Assessment Survey 2025

	<b>Audit Committee Charter</b>	<b>Skills and Experience</b>	<b>Understanding the Business</b>	<b>Meeting Admin and Conduct</b>	<b>Communications with Council</b>	<b>Management Commitment and Support</b>	<b>Internal Audit</b>	<b>External Audit</b>	
Response 1	4.5	4	4.5	3.5	4	3.5	4	4	
Response 2	5	5	5	4		5	5	5	
Response 3	5	4	4.5	4	3	4	4.5	5	
Response 4	4.5	3	5	4.5	5	5	5	5	
Response 5	5	4.5	5	5	5	5	4.5	4.5	
Response 6	5	5	4.5	4.5	4	4.5	4.5	4.5	
	29	25.5	28.5	25.5	21	27	27.5	28	
<b>Average Scores:</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	

### 7.3 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.**

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#### 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

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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 ensembles 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 a number of 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 within 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 focussed on ensuring that the Leitchville Pool Committee are 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 date. The committee plan to open on the weekend commencing 22 November 2025.

*Performance:*

The Committee has operated within 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*

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**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council received a report on the activities of the Community Asset Committees on 19 February 2025.

**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 [7.3.1 - 2 pages]
2. QCP AGM MINUTES 2025 [7.3.2 - 6 pages]

<b>Date: 14 October 2025</b>		<b>Time: 6.00pm</b>		<b>Location: Senior Citizens Centre, Kerang</b>	
<b>Chairperson:</b>		Dylan / Mel		Minutes: Dylan	
<b>Invitees:</b>		Keith Link, Melissa Mathers, Dylan Taylor			
		<b>Murrabit Hall</b> – Neil Hopkins, Jeanette Coulter <b>Myall Hall</b> – Graham Cockroft, Gary Napier <b>Dingwall Hall</b> – Alan Bott, Brian Fletcher		<b>Koroop Hall</b> – Stuart Richardson, Alan Pryor <b>Lake Charm Hall</b> – Clarie Gillen, Carol Caldwell <b>Gannawarra Hall</b> – Linda Spence Stanton, Jenny Spence	
<b>Meeting Objective:</b>		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	<b>Apologies*</b>		All	Keith Link, Neil Hopkins, Graeme Cockroft, Gary Napier, Brian Fletcher, Stuart Richardson, Claire Gillen, Linda Spence Stanton, Jenny Spence.	
2	<b>Minutes from previous Meeting*</b>	Confirmation of Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 3 February 2025.	All	Confirmed.	
3	<b>Review of Actions*</b>		All	Most actions have been completed. Katrina from Council to update Grant Opportunities email list, to include all Hall members.	
4	<b>Grant Opportunities*</b>		All		
5	<b>Asset Committee Operational Review</b>	<b>Sub-Delegation to Committee</b> 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	<b>General Business*</b>		All	Koroop Hall given details of a funding opportunity by Lake Charm Hall to potentially buy new chairs.	
7	<b>Preferred day / time for next meeting*</b>		All	7pm, unknown date as yet. Will occur sometime after the November Council Meeting.	
<b>Rules for our Meeting:</b>					
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:**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Action Due Date</b>	<b>Completed</b>
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

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## 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).

| FINANCIAL YEAR | INCOME    | EXPENDITURE | PROFIT/(LOSS) | CAPEX     |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|-----------|
| 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               |
| <br>                     |                       |                            |                           |
| <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.

## **7.4 G12-2025 DRFA FLOOD BETTERMENT WORKS**

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

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council is awaiting the final tender submissions. These will be presented prior to the Council Meeting in an updated report.**

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### **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 project is funded under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and will deliver targeted improvements to reduce future flood risk and improve community safety. [Details of the preferred contractor, contract value, and key project milestones to be inserted following tender evaluation.]

### **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 ensure that recovery works not only repair but also strengthen infrastructure against future flood events.

### **DISCUSSION**

The DRFA Flood Betterment Works have been developed in response to vulnerabilities identified during recent flood events across the Gannawarra region.

The Betterment Fund, as part of the DRFA, provides an opportunity to go beyond simple restoration by funding enhancements that will improve the performance and durability of Council assets in the face of future disasters.

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.

A public tender process has been initiated, and submissions will be evaluated based on contractor experience, methodology, value for money, and sustainability outcomes. The works will be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the DRFA and Council's procurement policy, ensuring compliance and value for the community.

[Insert summary of tender submissions, evaluation process, and rationale for preferred contractor once available.]

### **RELEVANT LAW**

<enter text here>

---

1. <enter text here>

### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

<enter text here>

### **OPTIONS**

1. Award the contract to the preferred contractor for the lump sum amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (excluding GST), not subject to rise and fall.
2. Consider alternative tenderers, noting potential risks to project delivery, compliance, or value for money.  
[Update with actual tender outcomes and recommendations.]

### **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**

<enter text here>

**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**

Nil

**7.5 G02-2025 GANNAWARRA CENTRAL LANDFILL – CELL 3 CAPPING**

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council award contract G02-2025 for Gannawarra Central Landfill – Cell 3 capping to Ward Bros Earthmoving (Aust) Pty Ltd for the lump sum amount of \$481,001.45 excluding GST, not subject to rise and fall.**

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This project — the capping of Cell 3 at the Gannawarra Central Landfill — will ensure compliance with the Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic) for site rehabilitation.

Council officers advertised a public tender, and have completed an evaluation of the submissions, and recommend the appointment of Ward Bros Earthmoving (Aust) Pty Ltd as the successful tenderer for the capping of Cell 3 – at the Gannawarra Central Landfill.

**PURPOSE**

To seek Council approval to award contract G02-2025 Gannawarra Central Landfill – Cell 3 Capping to Ward Bros Earthmoving (Aust) Pty Ltd as the preferred tenderer to, ensuring the works proceed with an experienced contractor capable of delivering high quality outcomes in line with Council's objectives and budget.

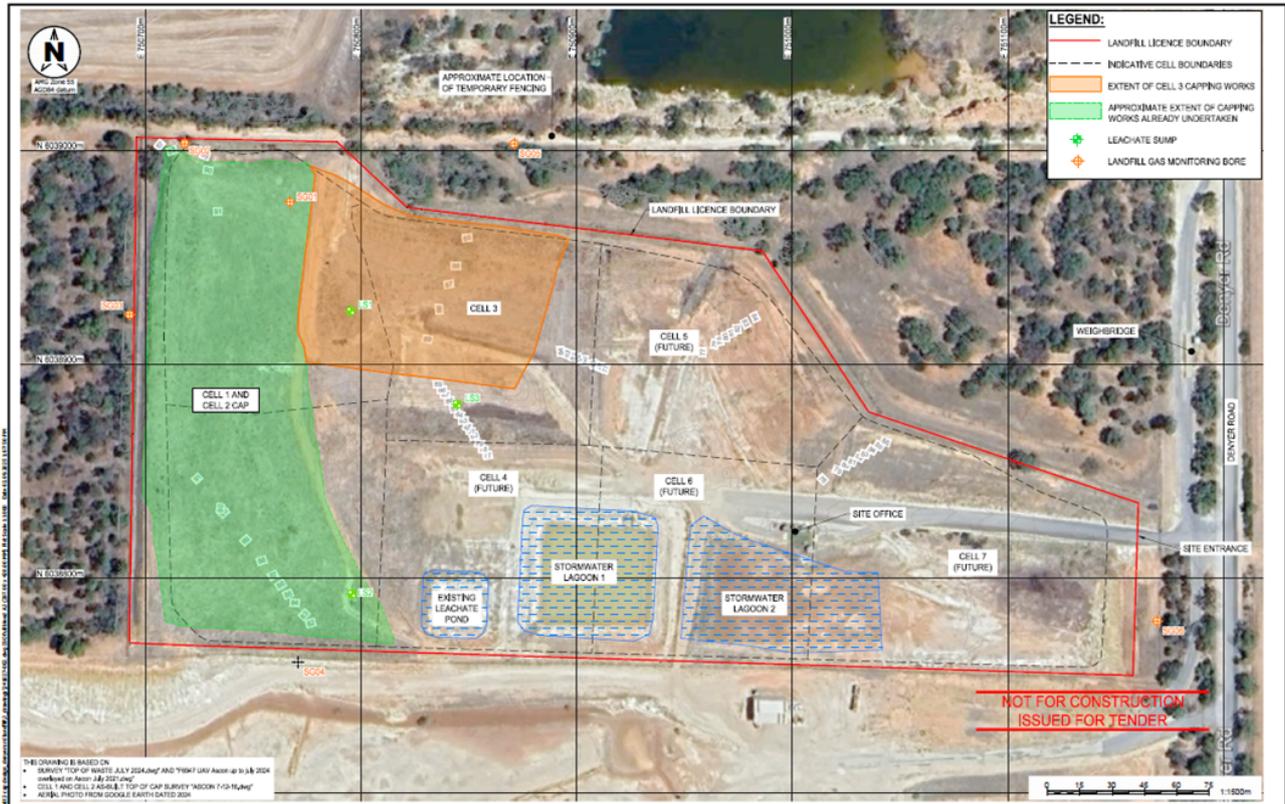
**DISCUSSION**

Council recognises that the rehabilitation of Cell 3 at the Gannawarra Central Landfill (Figure 1) is a mandatory requirement under the *Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic)*. Accordingly, the capping works were prepared for tender, with the plans developed in accordance with the *Best Practice Environmental Management – Siting, design, operation and rehabilitation of landfills* which are published by the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) and seek to minimise risks to the environment.

The capping works will include placement of compacted capping layers and topsoil, installation of a passive gas collection system, stormwater management drains, and vegetation of the final surface. These measures will support site stability and assist in meeting rehabilitation objectives.

Tenders for the project were advertised on Council's eProcure portal and closed on 08/10/2025. A total of seven submissions were received and evaluated, with the preferred contractor identified based on experience, capability, value for money, and sustainable outcomes. The preferred contractor understands the statutory obligation for this rehabilitation and is well-equipped to deliver the works in accordance with environmental and operational requirements.

Figure 1: Cell 3 Capping – Gannawarra Central Landfill site conditions and extent of work area



Post tender closing, Council officers evaluated the proposals, using the criteria displayed in Table 1, which included reviewing the submitted prices.

Table 1: Tender Evaluation Criteria

| Evaluation Criteria                                                          | Weighting | Sub Weighting | Sub Criteria                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demonstrated skills, experience & capacity to undertake the prescribed works | 45%       | 10%           | Experience of contractor & any sub-contractors                                     |
|                                                                              |           | 15%           | Project specific experience                                                        |
|                                                                              |           | 10%           | Resources                                                                          |
|                                                                              |           | 10%           | Methodology                                                                        |
| Delivery timeline                                                            | 25%       | 25%           | Ability to coordinate works with Principal, GITA and EPA Auditor. Delivery history |
| Contractor’s fees for the works                                              | 20%       | 20%           | 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                       |

Tendered prices range from \$351,781.42 to \$962,251.45 ex GST as shown in Table 2. The preferred tenderer, based on the evaluation criteria and the evaluation panel scoring is Tenderer 7.

*Table 2: Tendered Prices*

| Tenderers                            | Tender Price (excluding GST) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tenderer 1                           | <b>\$462,527.30</b>          |
| Tenderer 2                           | <b>\$351,781.42</b>          |
| Tenderer 3                           | <b>\$578,005.00</b>          |
| Tenderer 4                           | <b>\$449,743.54</b>          |
| Tenderer 5                           | <b>\$412,579.00</b>          |
| Tenderer 6                           | <b>\$962,251.45</b>          |
| Ward Bros Earthmoving (Aust) Pty Ltd | <b>\$481,001.45</b>          |

The cheapest tenderer, Tenderer 2, did not include all elements specified in the tender, and the evaluation panel considered their submission risky, as significant variations would likely be required to deliver the full scope.

The preferred tenderer, Ward Brothers, is within budget and meets all evaluation criteria. The panel is satisfied with their experience, capacity, ability to complete works on time, minimal risk, and local benefits, and therefore recommends them as the preferred contractor.

#### **RELEVANT LAW**

The *Environment Protection Act 2017* (Vic) requires landfill operators—Council in this case—to take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or minimise risks associated with landfill operations.

#### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Not applicable

#### **OPTIONS**

1. Award the contract to Ward Bros Earthmoving (Aust) Pty Ltd for the lump sum amount \$481,001.45 excluding GST, not subject to rise and fall.
2. Award the contract to a cheaper tenderer and accept the risk of variations to meet the specification.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

As part of its operating license obligations, Council is responsible for the capping of landfill cells at the Gannawarra Central Landfill to reduce environmental impacts and contain deposited waste within the cell. The works for Cell 3 are necessary to ensure long-term compliance with environmental regulations and to maintain the integrity of the site.

A native vegetation plan will be developed and implemented, as advised by the project designers, auditors and the EPA, to help stabilise the capped surface and minimise erosion. These measures will ensure the landfill continues to operate within its licence conditions while minimising operational costs.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Vegetation and soil dispersion aspects from previous Cell 1 and 2 capping works have been considered, with lessons learnt applied to improve stability and reduce erosion, as reflected in the current Cell 3 capping design. A native vegetation plan will also be implemented, which will be developed as advised by an EPA appointed environmental auditor to further stabilise the site.

**COLLABORATION**

Not applicable.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

This project is budgeted for in Council's Capital Works budget.

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

Not applicable.

**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.
3. Advance local sustainability and waste initiatives.

**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. G02-2025 Scoring Template [7.5.1 - 2 pages]

Gannawarra Shire Council

Contract name: Cell 3 Capping  
Contract number: G02-2025

| Criteria                                                                       | Weighting | Sub-criteria                                                                       | Sub Weighting | Tenderer 1 |                | Tenderer 2 |                | Tenderer 3 |                | Tenderer 4 |                | Tenderer 5 |                | Tenderer 6 |                | Ward/ROS |                |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------|----------------|-------|
|                                                                                |           |                                                                                    |               | Score      | Weighted Score | Score    | Weighted Score | Score |
| 1 Demonstrated skills, experience & capacity to undertake the prescribed works | 45%       | Experience of contractor & any sub-contractors                                     | 10%           | 6.60       | 0.66           | 7.30       | 0.73           | 7.40       | 0.74           | 6.50       | 0.65           | 6.90       | 0.69           | 8.40       | 0.84           | 7.70     | 0.77           |       |
|                                                                                |           |                                                                                    | 10%           | 5.30       | 0.53           | 5.50       | 0.55           | 5.10       | 0.51           | 6.10       | 0.61           | 7.30       | 1.10           | 9.10       | 1.37           | 6.10     | 0.85           |       |
|                                                                                |           |                                                                                    | 10%           | 7.30       | 0.73           | 6.80       | 0.68           | 7.30       | 0.73           | 6.30       | 0.63           | 6.10       | 0.61           | 8.50       | 0.85           | 7.10     | 0.71           |       |
|                                                                                |           |                                                                                    | 10%           | 6.60       | 0.66           | 5.80       | 0.58           | 8.30       | 0.83           | 6.90       | 0.69           | 4.90       | 0.49           | 8.50       | 0.85           | 7.50     | 0.75           |       |
| 2 Delivery timeline                                                            | 25%       | Ability to coordinate works with Principal, GITA and EPA Auditor. Delivery history | 25%           | 6.30       | 1.58           | 5.60       | 1.40           | 7.40       | 1.85           | 5.90       | 1.48           | 5.10       | 1.28           | 8.10       | 2.03           | 5.80     | 1.45           |       |
|                                                                                |           |                                                                                    | 20%           | 5.60       | 1.00           | 7.39       | 1.48           | 2.59       | 0.50           | 5.28       | 1.06           | 6.08       | 1.22           | 5.80       | 1.16           | 4.60     | 0.92           |       |
| 3 Contractor's fees for the works                                              | 20%       | Comparison based on formula                                                        | 5%            | 5.30       | 0.27           | 5.09       | 0.25           | 6.80       | 0.34           | 8.00       | 0.40           | 6.30       | 0.32           | 6.30       | 0.32           | 6.30     | 0.32           |       |
|                                                                                |           |                                                                                    | 5%            | 3.00       | 0.15           | 2.50       | 0.13           | 5.80       | 0.29           | 2.30       | 0.12           | 2.30       | 0.12           | 4.00       | 0.20           | 4.80     | 0.24           |       |
| 4 Local Benefit & Environmental Sustainability                                 | 10%       | Benefits to local employment and economy                                           |               |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |          |                |       |
|                                                                                |           |                                                                                    | 5%            |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |          |                |       |
| E.g. use of sustainable materials, emission minimisation etc                   |           |                                                                                    |               |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |            |                |          |                |       |
| <b>TOTAL WEIGHTEDSCORE:</b>                                                    |           |                                                                                    |               |            | <b>5.84</b>    |            | <b>6.07</b>    |            | <b>6.05</b>    |            | <b>5.93</b>    |            | <b>5.81</b>    |            | <b>5.28</b>    |          | <b>6.10</b>    |       |

| Criteria                                                                     | Weight | Sub-criteria                                                                       | Weight | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Demonstrated skills, experience & capacity to undertake the prescribed works | 45%    | Experience of contractor & any sub-contractors                                     | 10%    | Team has 9 years' civil construction experience; supplier trading 4 years. Broad client base including Tier 1 contractors and councils. Good mix of earthmoving/civil experience. No subcontractors, full in-house capability. Experience relevant and scaled for landfill capping.                                                                                                                                                                | Mainly water projects. Good mix of general earthmoving and civil experience; company trading since 2017 (full-time operations since 2020); experience in local water projects and earthworks; liner contractor experienced with geosynthetics; no landfill or Level 1 evidence.              | Good mix of general earthmoving and civil experience; established 2013, worked for Tier 1 contractors. Level 1 experience. VIC/Roads prequalification. Projects verifiable; experience with councils and broad client base.                                                                                                                                   | Focused on water infrastructure; Sub-contractor 1 has general earthmoving experience. Established 2024; some landfill experience noted for one director. Projects verifiable; experience with councils and broad client base; reasonable civil earthworks experience, including personnel and subcontractors.                                                      | Established 1986; extensive earthmoving experience. DTP prequalified. Projects in area completed, staff experienced. Only subcontractor is an aggregate supplier. Limited information beyond mention of landfill works.                                                                                                                                                         | Extensive earthmoving experience. Good mix of general and large-scale earthmoving; established 1978. Projects verifiable, experience with councils. Business stable, and subcontractors highly experienced.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Extensive general earthmoving experience. Good mix of general and large-scale earthmoving; established 1978. Projects verifiable, experience with councils. Business stable, and subcontractors highly experienced.                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                              |        |                                                                                    | 15%    | No direct landfill capping experience noted for the company or individuals, but has completed similar works (e.g., dam clay liner, compaction) relevant to the project scope.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Lacking direct landfill capping experience; focus on water engineering. Some projects completed with similar scope, including landfills and wastewater storage structures. Sub-contractor experienced in landfill clay liners.                                                               | Limited landfill experience; no direct landfill capping or low-permeability earthworks experience noted.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Leachate dam, Paths. No other landfill or capping experience listed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Completed capping of Cells 1 & 2 at GSC. Works at SH and Ultima landfills. Experience with similar projects, but limited information provided.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 7 examples of landfill projects including cells and 1 cap.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Experience mainly in water infrastructure and bulk earthworks. Leachate pond at Patho (2025) completed with Veolia. Other works similar in scope, but no direct landfill or capping experience.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                              |        |                                                                                    | 10%    | Good mixed fleet and experienced staff; relatively small team. Capacity is high with no projects listed in for the year. Resources include 36t excavator, D6t dozer, watercarts, 2-40t Mixies, rollers, 15t excavator, full-time supervisor, GPS plant, and in-house survey equipment. Proposed team suitably qualified and resources identified to complete the works. Limited contingency if breakdown occurs. Works insurance not yet in place. | Grader rather than dozer to spread subsoil. Good mixed fleet and experienced staff; relatively small team. Resources identified and subcontractors arranged as needed. Large base of plant. Works insurance assumed by GSC. Current commitments noted; capability statement not fully clear. | Good mixed fleet and experienced staff; relatively small team. Current works insurance in place. Key plant listed and resources (including subcontractors) appear capable; capacity to deliver project demonstrated.                                                                                                                                          | No works insurance noted; no accredited OHS or environmental system. All work subcontracted; PMs only, limited staff. Tradequalified. Sub-contractor 1 provides earthmoving resources. Capacity to deliver stated; no full list of machinery provided.                                                                                                             | Relevant plant. Brief submission. No works insurance yet. Own plant and equipment; 40 employees; subcontractors and staff appear experienced. Current plant commitments until Feb 2026; can meet May 2025 deadline. No full list of earthworks machinery provided.                                                                                                              | 75 staff, in-house fleet with GPS-controlled plant. Resources and subcontractors appear experienced; key equipment considered.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Works insurance upon award. Long established company with adequate in-house resources and plant. Subcontractors and staff appear experienced; capacity to deliver stated. No detailed site establishment or full machinery list provided.                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                              |        |                                                                                    | 10%    | Clear and concise submission with methodology covering placing clay liner twice, hydroseeding, and fortnightly maintenance. Proposed timelines may be tight, and some areas lack detail (no allowance for fit to cap base height, subsoil not mentioned, little contingency in program). Overall, addresses required works and delivery appears on time, though not comprehensively.                                                               | No allowance for locating existing gas pipes. Grader for subsoil, laser bucket/small loader for topsoil, and drought-tolerant grasses. Follows technical specs but omits VEMP and plant species approval. Good delivery timings.                                                             | Good detail provided. Created own hold points; possible NSW project carry over. Noted working with GITA. Very detailed and comprehensive methodology; good understanding of scope. Satisfies criteria with no major weaknesses. GITA listed as subcontractor, but role in scope unclear. Proposed hold points don't align with QAP                            | Hydroseed native species mix suited to Gannawarra Shire. Temp irrigation if needed. Detailed methodology provided; overall timeframes realistic, though individual construction stages may be underestimated. Covers clay liner, topsoil, cartage, hydroseeding with native species, and temporary irrigation. Follows technical specifications; delivery on time. | Basic methodology provided; maintenance planned weekly in summer, bi-weekly in winter. Addresses required works but not comprehensively. VEMP and plant species approval not addressed. Delivery expected on time; brief overview covers construction process.                                                                                                                  | Realistic timelines; excellent understanding of scope. Comprehensive methodology covering clay layer, strip drains, and maintenance (monthly for 52 weeks). Project completion 18 May 2026. GITA listed as subcontractor, but role in governance unclear. Lay strip drain design alignment following construction of clay layer to avoid crushing.                                                                                                                                               | Detailed methodology demonstrates good understanding. VEMP mentioned late. Short timelines. Construction traffic planned to avoid gas collection system. Comprehensive methodology; all cap design aspects addressed.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Delivery timeline                                                            | 25%    | Ability to coordinate works with Principal, GITA and EPA Auditor. Delivery history | 25%    | Unrealistic timelines. Experience with GITA, EPA auditor not mentioned. Timeline may be optimistic; no contingency. Communication plan detailed; delivery history not provided.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Standdown >1hr incurs additional costs. Assumes hold points won't disrupt works; hourly standdown variations. Strong delivery history, stakeholder coordination included. Timeline tight. GITA/EPA auditor collaboration not specifically mentioned.                                         | Noted contingency built into schedule and weather management plan. Demonstrates coordination and quality with history, stakeholder coordination and quality with process. Detailed schedule and risk management provided, including GITA & EPA auditor coordination. Timeline with contingencies and weather management noted. Delivery history not provided. | Acknowledges delays due to hold points; GITA and EPA auditor not referenced. Weekly reporting and GSP framework detailed; earthworks start Jan, completion 2 Mar 26. No delivery history provided; coordination assumed from past experience.                                                                                                                      | No mention of hold points/liaison with GITA. WUC means works commence 16 Feb Completion 26 March. Not much contingency within schedule. Mentions GISC signing off on ITP; no reference to GITA or EPA auditor. Some experience with GITA/EPA assumed, but no delivery history provided. Schedule basic, works planned Feb-Mar 2026; pricing assumes GSC engagement of EPA/GITA. | Later project completion with realistic timelines. Some previous projects not completed on time. Commence 8 Dec; Completion 18 May; 18 days for clay liner. Excellent understanding; early engagement and proactive communication. Demonstrates stakeholder coordination with GITA/EPA, verified NATA accredited testing. 52-week vegetation maintenance planned. Delivery history mixed; challenges noted. Realistic timeline with detailed Gantt, risk management, and customer service plans. | Understands Level 1 supervision; short construction timelines. Gantt chart provided; delivery history not confirmed. Generic customer service and risk management statements; GITA and EPA auditor communication not mentioned.                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                              |        |                                                                                    | 20%    | Auto Calculation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Provisional items not included in pricing. Vegetation management omitted.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Auto Calculation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Auto Calculation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Auto Calculation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Auto Calculation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Local Benefit & Environmental Sustainability                                 | 10%    | Benefits to local employment and economy                                           | 5%     | Torquay/Woodend office Moama depot Accommodation and supplies locally Not local but provides LAFH benefits; project team staying locally; prioritises local sourcing for materials, fuel, and services.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Sub-contractor 1, Cohuna - 5% Sub-contractor 2, Bendigo - 5% Sub-contractor 3, Cohuna - 5% Local benefits not clearly explained; some subcontractors within shire. Company based in Echuca; prior work in GSC; director lives in Kerang.                                                     | Sub-contractor 1, Echuca - 2% Sub-contractor 2, Swan Hill - 2% Sub-contractor 3, Cohuna - 2% Depot based in Cohuna; subcontractors and staff local. Active sources materials and services locally, supporting economic growth and delivering regional benefits.                                                                                               | Sub-contractor 1, Kerang 65% Sub-contractor 2, Bendigo - 2% Sub-contractor 3, Cohuna - 2% Uses Sub-contractor 1 for onsite works; social procurement not addressed in policy. Provides strong local benefits. Director active in local community (Kerang).                                                                                                         | Sub-contractor 1, Cohuna - 5% Swan Hill based; local subcontractors within the shire. Likely to stay locally and use local services. Aggregate sourced from Cohuna.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Sub-contractor 1, Echuca - 1.3% Sub-contractor 2, Kyabram - 2.4% Echuca based; strong local benefits. Sources labour, plant operators, materials, fuel, and services locally. 100% local staff in Northern Victoria/Southern NSW. Supports Local Jobs First and social procurement objectives.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Based in Rochester. Local staff. Sub-contractor 1, Bendigo - 3% Sub-contractor 2, Bendigo - 1% Strong local benefits; employs in Campaspe/Rochester. Employs local staff, sources quarry materials from Lake Riggs, and uses local services. Prioritises local procurement.                                                                                                           |
|                                                                              |        |                                                                                    | 5%     | Environmental policy in place (ISO 14001); GPS-controlled plant noted; limited demonstration of environmental sustainability beyond policy; brief EMP submission mentioned.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Environmental policy in place (ISO 14001); EMP briefly noted; drought-tolerant grasses included; limited demonstration of broader environmental sustainability; not specified in response schedules.                                                                                         | Environmental policy in place; GPS-controlled plant and soil stability hydroseeding noted. Some sustainability aspects identified, with detailed management responses including objectives, key actions, and verification/control.                                                                                                                            | Native grasses. Environmental policy in place; no environmental sustainability measures demonstrated. Section 5.2 lacks environmental management objectives and measures; not specified in response schedules.                                                                                                                                                     | No mention of VEMP. Environmental policy in place; no environmental sustainability demonstrated. EMS roles and responsibilities noted, but Section 5.2 not completed; not specified in response schedules.                                                                                                                                                                      | Maintenance period includes one scheduled visit per month over 52 weeks. Good environmental policy in place. Environmental sustainability in place. Environmental policy in place; GPS-controlled plant noted. Section 5.2 provides EMS overview (erosion, dust, surface water, waste, fuel/chemicals, noise, rehabilitation). Limited broader environmental sustainability demonstrated; not specified in response schedules.                                                                   | Good enviro management measures and objectives. Environmental sustainability in place, emphasizing impact reduction and long-term sustainability. Section 5.2 outlines objectives and measures overview (erosion, dust, surface water, waste, fuel/chemicals, noise, rehabilitation). Limited broader environmental sustainability demonstrated; not specified in response schedules. |

**Gannawarra Shire Council**

**Contract name:** Cell 3 Capping

**Contract number:** G02-2025

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| <i>Based on "Lump Sum" only</i>          | Tenderer 1       | Tenderer 2       | Tenderer 3       | Tenderer 4       | Tenderer 5       | Tenderer 6       | WardBros         |
|------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Tender price:                            | <b>462527.30</b> | <b>351781.42</b> | <b>578005.00</b> | <b>449743.54</b> | <b>412579.00</b> | <b>962251.45</b> | <b>481001.45</b> |
| Median Price                             | 462527.30        | 462527.30        | 462527.30        | 462527.30        | 462527.30        | 462527.30        | 462527.30        |
| ( Median Price -Tender Price )           | 0.00             | 110745.88        | -115477.70       | 12783.76         | 49948.30         | -499724.15       | -18474.15        |
| 10 x (Median \$ -Tender \$ ) / Median \$ | 0.00             | 2.39             | -2.50            | 0.28             | 1.08             | -10.80           | -0.40            |
| <b>Financial Criteria Score:</b>         | <b>5.00</b>      | <b>7.39</b>      | <b>2.50</b>      | <b>5.28</b>      | <b>6.08</b>      | <b>-5.80</b>     | <b>4.60</b>      |

## 7.6 KOONDROOK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (LDS) ADOPTION

**Author:** Scott Wishart, Manager Economic Development  
**Authoriser:** Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer)

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

1. Endorse and adopt the Koondrook & District Local Development Strategy (LDS) as presented.
  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 submit an application for \$250,000 for the Forest Activation Strategy through Stream 2 (competitive funding) of the Community Development Fund.
  5. Confirm Council's role as Lead Agency for the planning, coordination and delivery of LDS implementation projects in accordance with the Agreement between Council and the Koondrook Local Development Strategy Steering Committee.
- 

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

The highest priority action is the Koondrook Structure Plan, supported by \$500,000 identified through Stream 1 of the Community Development Fund. Council is now required to submit a formal application for this funding. An additional \$750,000 is available through competitive funding rounds for projects in agribusiness development, cross-border service planning and forest activation, which may be pursued once Council endorses the Strategy.

Funding must be directed towards innovation opportunities identified through the Local Development Strategy and refined by the Innovation Working Groups.

Council will lead responsibility for project management, procurement, and funding coordination. Endorsing the LDS in December 2025 will allow officers to progress funding submissions due in January 2026 and begin coordinated implementation of the priority projects.

### PURPOSE

To seek Council endorsement and adoption of the Koondrook & District Local Development Strategy (LDS), and to authorise officers to progress associated funding applications and implementation actions.

---

**DISCUSSION**

The Koondrook LDS provides a community-led framework for future development, supported by detailed research across four strategic pillars:

1. Enhanced Liveability and Township Improvements
2. Agribusiness: Diverse, Innovative and Resilient
3. Tourism Development
4. Enabling Infrastructure and Services

The Strategy was developed in collaboration with DEECA and the Koondrook LDS Steering Committee and reflects input from pop-up sessions, drop-in sessions, online surveys and two Innovation Working Groups (Agribusiness and Tourism).

**Priority Projects and Funding**

The LDS identifies the Koondrook Structure Plan as the primary foundational project required to guide land use, infrastructure, drainage, township character and economic facilitation. DEECA has confirmed the availability of \$500,000, subject to Council adopting the Strategy and submitting a formal application.

Further initiatives totalling up to \$750,000—including the Gunbower Forest Activation Strategy, agribusiness development initiatives and cross-border service provision studies—can be applied for once the Strategy is endorsed.

**RELEVANT LAW**

Local Government Act 2020

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Victorian Forestry Transition Program Guidelines (DEECA)

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Appointment of consultants for LDS development (2024).

Previous reporting to Council on the Victorian Forestry Transition Program.

**OPTIONS**

- Option 1 – Adopt the Koondrook LDS
- Option 2 – Do not adopt the Koondrook LDS. However, by choosing to not adopt the strategy, Council will be unable to meet the deadline for the expression of interest for funding the strategy recommendations.

**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.

### **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 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.

### **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 v 1.0 [7.6.1 - 29 pages]
2. Agreement between Koondrook Local Development Strategy Steering Committee and Gannawarra Shire Council [7.6.2 - 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.

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.

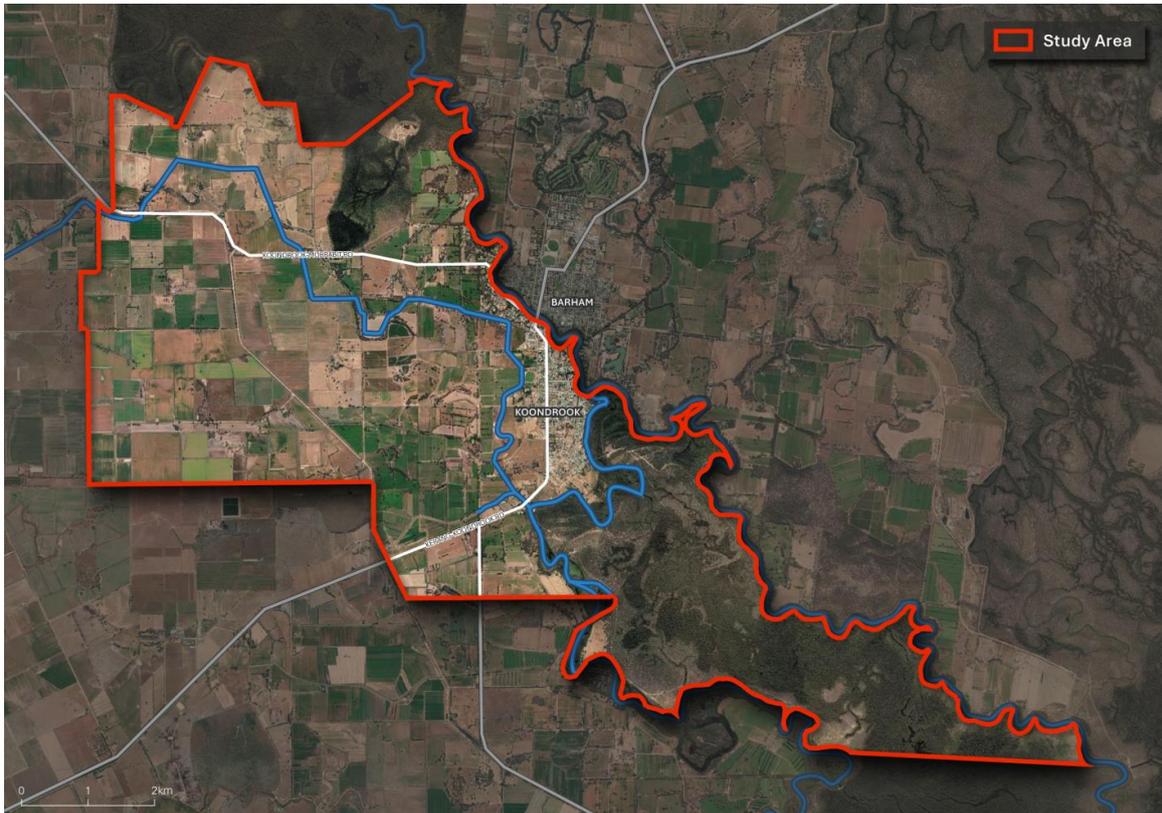
## Purpose of the Strategy

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**

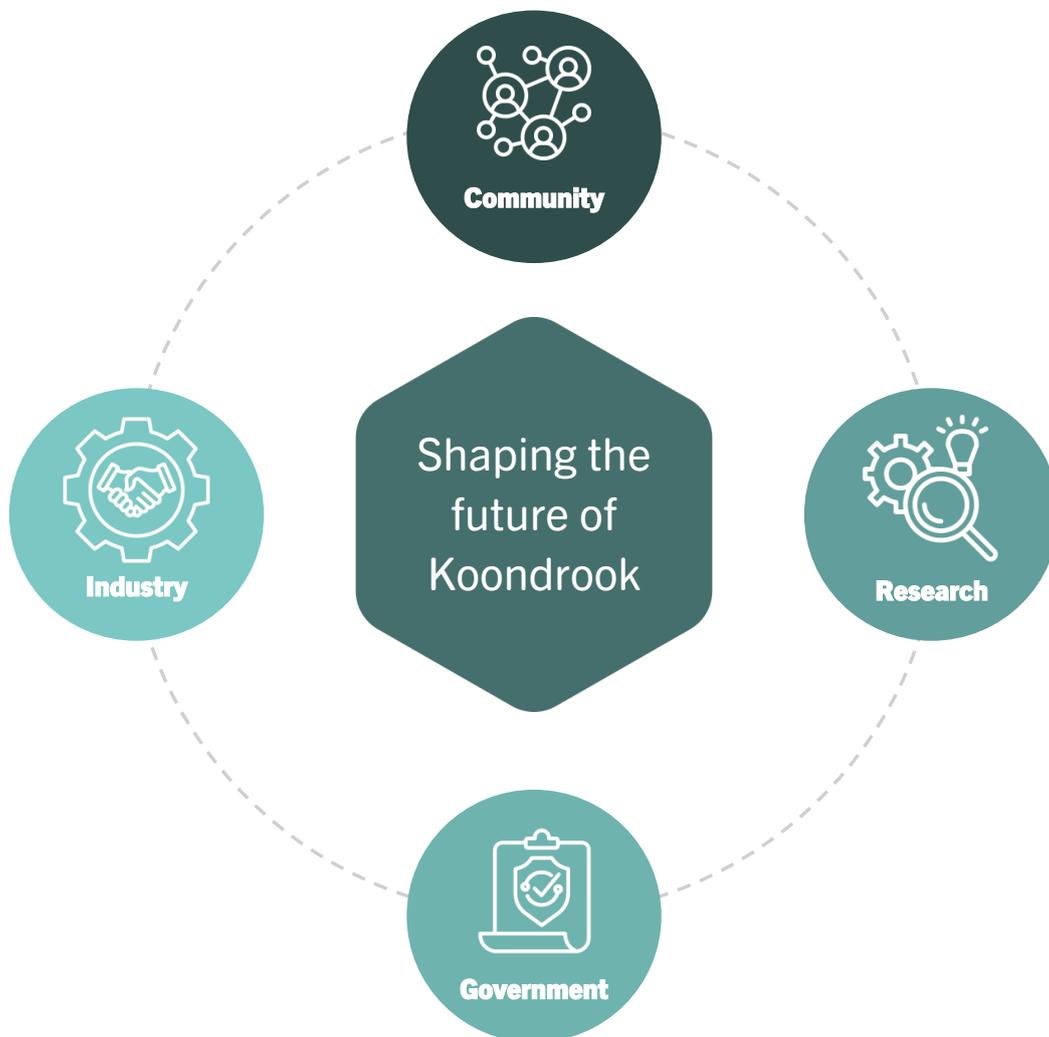
The Koondrook and District study area for the LDS includes the urban area of Koondrook and surrounding rural areas along the Murray River and Gunbower Forest.

## 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.

### 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.

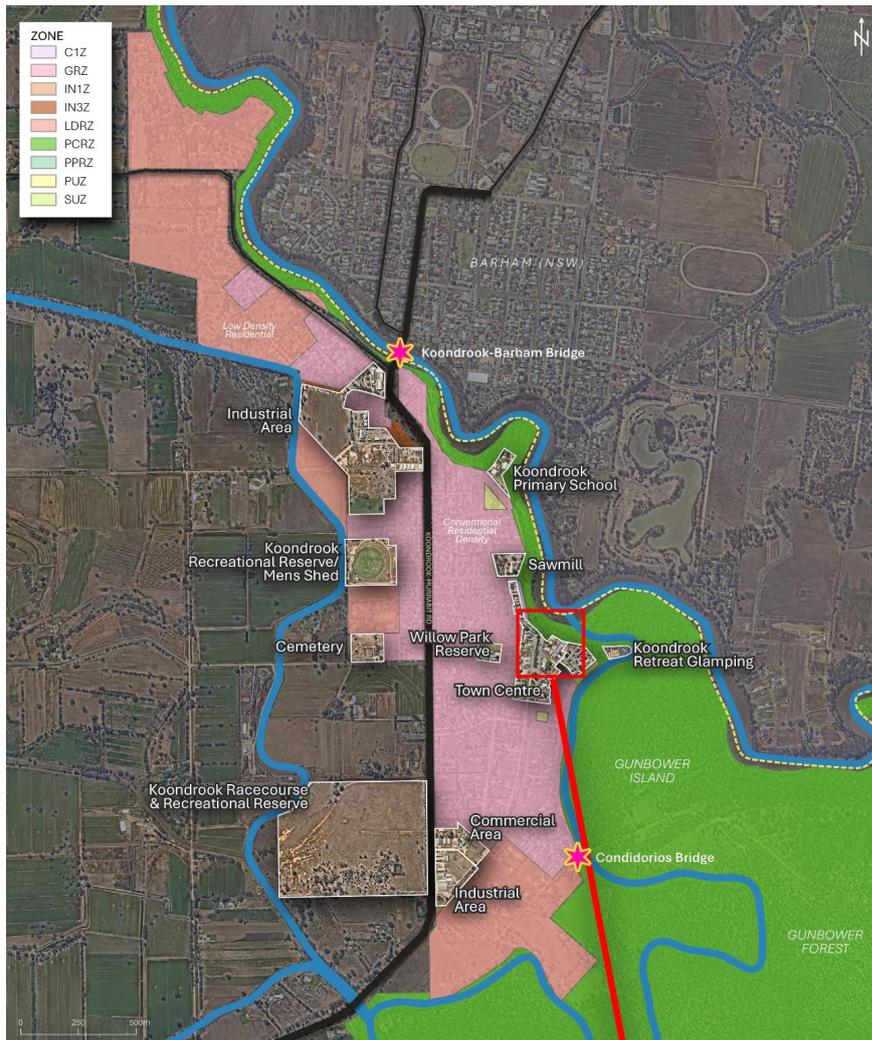
Gunbower Island is a popular destination for locals and visitors who undertake nature based and adventure activities such as bushwalking, camping, fishing, hunting, bird watching, canoeing and kayaking.

### 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.

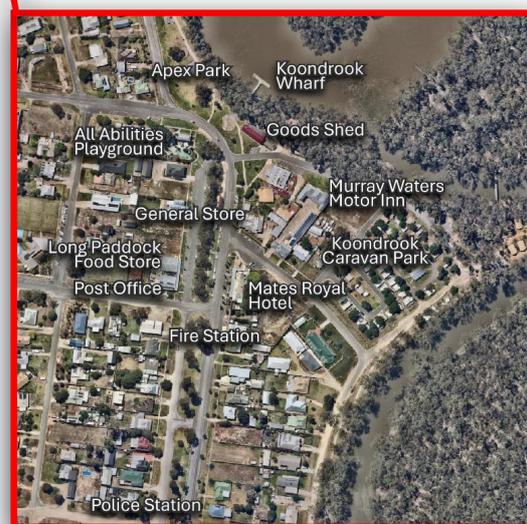


Figure 3. Key Assets and Areas in Koondrook 



Gunbower Forest



Koondrook Wharf



Gunbower Island



Condidorios Bridge



Gunbower Creek



Goods Shed



Apex Park



Murray River



Swimming Pool, Willow Park Reserve



Recreation Reserve



Mens Shed



All Abilities Play Space

## 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.

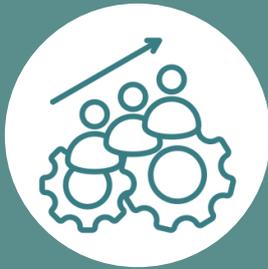




Original photo by Urban Enterprise, modified using Sora by OpenAI.

# KOONDROOK GOODS SHED

CIRCA 1888



## 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 drought tolerant grass to enhance livestock resilience.
- Potential for a cross-border food producers' group for 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.

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## 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.

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

## 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"> <li>• Delivering sealed roads;</li> <li>• Adequate drainage infrastructure;</li> <li>• Active transport access and connections (e.g. pedestrians, cycling);</li> <li>• Residential and industrial land supply availability;</li> <li>• Community and recreation infrastructure and services;</li> <li>• Streetscape amenity and beautification; and</li> <li>• Family friendly activities and experiences.</li> </ul> | Short term  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>• Local residents and businesses</li> </ul> |
| 2   | Support the delivery of the Koondrook Levee Bank.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Short term  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul>                                           |
| 3   | Investigate the feasibility of establishing a contemporary, multi-purpose community hub.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Medium term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                               |
| 4   | Support community groups and volunteers who are critical to community development, social cohesion and civic pride.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Ongoing     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul>                                           |

\* 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"> <li>The optimal location and site, including land capability, ownership and developability;</li> <li>Land requirements and optimal lot sizes;</li> <li>Trunk infrastructure requirements (e.g. drainage, water sewer); and</li> <li>Servicing requirements.</li> </ul> | Medium to long term* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> <li>DEECA</li> </ul>                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers</li> </ul> |
| 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"> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul>                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers</li> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>        |
| 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"> <li>Identify and promote strengths and advantages of the region that relate to agribusiness;</li> <li>Identify and promote value-adding opportunities; and</li> <li>Identify and promote intensive and alternative farming opportunities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                    | Short term           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers</li> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul> |
| 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"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEECA</li> </ul>                                                                                |
| 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"> <li>Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers</li> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                                             |

\*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"> <li>• A wetlands walk and viewing platform;</li> <li>• Passive and active recreation experiences (e.g. bushwalking, bird watching, sightseeing, nature-based immersion);</li> <li>• Interpretive and wayfinding signage; and</li> <li>• Koondrook to Cohuna trail ride.</li> </ul> | Medium term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEECA</li> <li>• Parks Victoria</li> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul>                  |
| 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"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul>                  |
| 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"> <li>• Recreational boating;</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Paddling (kayak, canoe, stand up paddle);</li> <li>• Legalised hunting;</li> <li>• Commercial boat tours / river cruises; and</li> <li>• Enabling infrastructure (mooring, boat launch, pontoons, signage).</li> </ul>                                                              | Medium term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEECA</li> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul> |
| 13  | <p>Support the delivery of the Murray River Adventure Trail (MRAT). Promote the Barham to Barmah stage of MRAT once complete and operational.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Ongoing     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> <li>• Murray River Shire Council</li> </ul>                       |

## 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"> <li>• A Riverfront Holiday/Tourist Park;</li> <li>• Experiential accommodation (e.g. farm stays); and</li> <li>• Contemporary boutique short stay accommodation.</li> </ul> | Ongoing    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul>                                                                                |
| 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"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul>                                                                                |
| 16  | <p>Advocate for a suitable commercial hospitality/function operator to activate the Koondrook Goods Shed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                | Ongoing    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> <li>• Goods Shed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul>                                     |
| 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"> <li>• Arbuthnot Sawmill</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul>                                            |
| 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"> <li>• Barapa Barapa</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gannawarra Shire Council</li> <li>• Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>• Murray Regional Tourism</li> </ul> |

\*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"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul>                                                                        |
| 20  | Advocate for new retail and hospitality business and services to establish in Koondrook's town centre.                                                                                                 | Ongoing   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> </ul>                                                                        |
| 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"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> <li>Murray River Shire Council</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victorian State Government</li> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>Cross-border Commissioner</li> </ul> |
| 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"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>Victorian State Government</li> <li>Cross-border Commissioner</li> </ul> |
| 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"> <li>Cross Border Commissioner</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gannawarra Shire Council</li> <li>Koondrook Development Committee</li> <li>Murray River Shire Council</li> </ul>  |



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## **AGREEMENT BETWEEN KOONDROOK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY STEERING COMMITTEE AND GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL**

This Agreement is made on this Twenty Fourth day of November, 2025.

### **PARTIES:**

1. **Koondrook Local Development Strategy Steering Committee** ("the Steering Committee")
2. **Gannawarra Shire Council** ("the Council")

### **PURPOSE:**

This Agreement sets forth the terms under which the Gannawarra Shire Council will act as the Lead Agency for the planning, coordination, and delivery of the following strategic projects:

- Koondrook Structure Plan
- Gunbower Island Forest Activation Strategy
- Koondrook Agricultural Development Project
- Cross Border Service Provision and Attraction Study

### **TERMS OF AGREEMENT:**

#### **1. Lead Agency Role**

The Council agrees to serve as the Lead Agency for the above-listed projects, assuming responsibility for overall project management, stakeholder engagement, funding coordination, and reporting.

#### **2. Engagement of External Organisations**

- The Council will engage qualified external organisations, consultants, or contractors to undertake the implementation of each project.
- Selection of external organisations will follow appropriate procurement processes and align with Council policies and relevant legislation.
- The Council will oversee and manage the performance of these organisations to ensure project objectives are met.

#### **3. Steering Committee Role**

- The Steering Committee will provide strategic oversight, community representation, and advisory support.

- The Committee will be consulted during key phases of project development, including scoping, procurement, and review of deliverables.
- 4. Governance and Collaboration**
  - A joint working group shall be established to monitor project progress, comprising representatives from both parties.
  - Regular meetings shall be held at intervals agreed upon by both parties.
  - Decisions shall be made collaboratively, with the Council responsible for implementation and contractual management.

**5. Funding and Resources**

- The Council will seek and manage funding from DEECA through the Community Development Fund as part of the Victorian Forestry Transition Program.
- The Steering Committee will assist in advocating for project support.

**6. Reporting and Accountability**

- The Council shall provide quarterly progress reports to the Steering Committee, including updates on external engagements.
- A final report shall be submitted upon completion of each project, including evaluation of outcomes and contractor performance.

**7. Duration**

This Agreement shall remain in effect until the completion of all listed projects unless terminated earlier by mutual consent.

**8. Dispute Resolution**

Any disputes arising under this Agreement shall be resolved through good faith negotiations between the parties.

**9. Amendments**

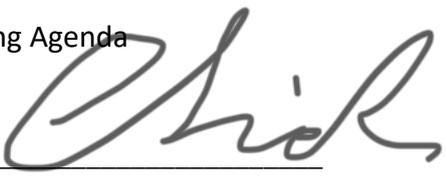
This Agreement may be amended only in writing and with the consent of both parties.

**SIGNATURES:**

Signed for and on behalf of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy Steering Committee:

Name: Thomas Chick

Position: Chairman

Signature: 

Date: 17 Nov 2025

Signed for and on behalf of the Gannawarra Shire Council:

Name: Geoff Rollinson

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Signature: 

Date: 24 November 2025

## 7.7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026-2030

**Author:** Scott Bourne, Communications Coordinator  
**Authoriser:** Paul Fernee (Director Community Wellbeing)

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030*.

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* outlines the Council's commitment to provide the community with genuine opportunities to contribute and inform strategies, projects, services, and decisions that affect them.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to adopt the *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030*, which Council sought community feedback regarding between 16 October 2025 and 13 November 2025.

### DISCUSSION

The *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* builds on work undertaken in the Council's *Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025*. Adopted in September 2020, this strategy aimed to deliver timely, effective, and transparent communication, aligning with the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum, to ensure community input was gathered and used to make informed local government decisions.

With the current strategy nearing the end of its lifespan, Council officers reviewed this document using feedback received via the 2025 Community Satisfaction and *How Can Council Work with You?* surveys to develop a version of the strategy that will guide Council's community engagement practices for the next five years.

The strategy features 27 actions that align with the IAP2 Spectrum that will better inform decisions in the planning of services, setting budgets, identifying and planning projects, and developing policies and strategies.

Council sought community feedback regarding the draft version of the document between 16 October 2025 and 13 November 2025, with one response received.

### RELEVANT LAW

The *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* is aligned with Policy No. 143 – Community Engagement, which ensures Council adheres to section 55 of the Local Government Act 2020.

### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

In October 2025, Council endorsed for the development of the draft *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* to proceed to the community engagement stage, with feedback for a period of 28 days commencing on 16 October 2025.

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In August 2025, the Council adopted Policy No. 143 – *Community Engagement*, which guides the delivery of community engagement processes across the organisation to better inform decisions in the planning of services, setting of budgets, identifying and planning projects, and developing policies and strategies.

In September 2020, the Council adopted the *Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025*, which addressed new community engagement requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## OPTIONS

Council may wish to adopt the recommendation, adjust, or decide not to endorse the documents at this time

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council promoted how residents could provide feedback regarding the draft version of the *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* in the following ways:

- Distribution of a media release on 17 October 2025.
- Publishing of posts on Facebook and LinkedIn on 17 November 2025.
- Reference in the ACE Radio Mayoral interviews conducted on 16 October 2025, 30 October 2025 and 13 November 2025.
- Reference in the 4 November 2025 edition of *Gannawarra News*.

Council received one response during the community engagement period that focused on the following matters:

| Suggestions                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Engage with people who take the time to make detailed submissions to draft plans.                                                                                                                                     | This is incorporated into Action 1.1 - Uphold standards set out in the Customer Charter and Action 4.1 - Acknowledge that Council has listened to feedback received during the community engagement process, and highlight how this feedback is used.          |
| 2. Use reference committees including community people or groups to oversee council projects up to the end of revised design. This may help to improve outcomes of projects for the community, something that is needed. | This is incorporated into Action 4.4 - Continue to evolve Council's engagement capacity, incorporating Have Your Say online platforms and other initiatives, to assist with in-depth community consultation around key community projects or service planning. |
| 3. Action 5.2 should include community organisations such as Landcare, sporting groups and churches                                                                                                                      | Action 5.2 has been changed, with the wording "Progress Association and Community Development Committees" altered to "community organisations".                                                                                                                |
| 4. Include a new Action 5.6 - Establish community reference committees to oversee the design, review and construction of projects such as CBD redevelopments.                                                            | This is incorporated into Action 4.4 - Continue to evolve Council's engagement capacity, incorporating Have Your Say online platforms and other initiatives, to assist with in-depth                                                                           |

|                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                     | community consultation around key community projects or service planning.                                                         |
| 5. Include a new Action 5.7 - Council will pay due attention to its Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy and Cool it strategy when designing projects. | As part of its normal business operations. Council considers all relevant policies when designing projects or providing services. |

## INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* recommends improvements to the way Council engages with stakeholders. These include:

- Enabling Council's publications, such as *Gannawarra News* and *Gannawarra Connect*, to be sent digitally to stakeholders who would like to receive these publications via this format.
- Continued promotion of Council's services, news, events and engagement opportunities via its various social media accounts and platforms.
- Developing and implementing an annual community pop-up session calendar, with engagement opportunities scheduled for all communities.
- Continued use of online surveys and feedback forms for all engagement opportunities.

## COLLABORATION

Actions from the Strategy will be delivered in collaboration across the organisation.

## FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* does highlight a need for some expenditure over the life of the document, although this would be incorporated in Council's annual budgeting process, with no significant expenditure recommended.

## REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

*Local Government Act 2020*

## COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

4. Provide ongoing support for libraries, children's services, community-led initiatives and transport connections within and beyond our shire.

## 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. Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030 [**7.7.1** - 19 pages]

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2026 - 2030



# Contents

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Gannawarra Shire Council engages with the community daily in many ways, making clear and effective communication essential.**

**Engaging openly with residents, decision-makers, partners, and staff about Council's vision, plans, and processes helps build a strong, informed, transparent, and inclusive Gannawarra community.**



Council's role is to represent and serve its community. This can only be achieved through effective communication and engagement, and by actively listening and responding to the needs and feedback of our community and other stakeholders.

Effective engagement enables Council to gather meaningful insights from the community and use this input to inform future decisions. It also ensures residents are involved in shaping Council's direction, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for projects and services.

Council's *Community Engagement Strategy 2026–2030* aims to deliver timely, targeted, transparent and inclusive communication and engagement. It ensures the community not only has access to relevant information, but also opportunities to contribute to decision-making. This will be achieved through alignment with the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum, as applied to Local Government under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The strategy sets clear, achievable goals to strengthen engagement across all Council stakeholders—including the local community, Councillors and staff—while building on existing efforts to support a small rural Council.

Importantly, the strategy promotes a whole-of-Council approach to engagement, ensuring consistent messaging and frameworks to guide decisions, while exploring opportunities to increase community participation.

This document also supports Council in sharing its story with the community, celebrating achievements and building local pride.

## PURPOSE

**Council’s *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* outlines Council’s commitment to provide our Gannawarra community with genuine opportunities to contribute to and inform strategies, projects, services and decisions that affect them.**

The strategy guides the delivery of community engagement processes across the organisation to better inform decisions in the planning of services, setting budgets, identifying and planning projects and developing policies and strategies.

Council acknowledges that engagement should be a planned process that aims to work with our community and stakeholders to shape decisions and actions in the delivery of Council’s services.

This strategy has been developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and community consultation, ensuring Council’s engagement with the community is committed to these principles, being transparent and deliberative.

### International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum



#### INFORM

We will inform and engage by maintaining an honest dialogue with our community.



#### CONSULT

We commit to sharing information about Council’s projects and services with our community, giving them a reasonable opportunity to express their views, and taking those views into account in decision making.



#### INVOLVE

We will work with our community to ensure they are included in the process of Council decision making that affects their community.



#### COLLABORATE

We will ensure the community are enabled to participate in the decisions that affect them.



#### EMPOWER

We will build understanding of Council’s goals and priorities and work to empower our community to achieve community-led initiatives.

## BACKGROUND

Gannawarra Shire Council aims to communicate and engage with stakeholders to improve our service delivery, to build community capacity and ensure our community feels connected and involved in the Gannawarra’s future.

We will strive to be transparent in our actions and to fulfil our responsibilities to our community and partners.

Council’s *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030* is supported by the following plans, strategies and policies:



|                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>2025-2029 Council Plan and Community Vision</b></p> | <p>The <i>Gannawarra Shire 2025-2029 Council Plan</i> outlines what Council plans to achieve and how it will deliver on these plans. Developed alongside the <i>Gannawarra Shire 2025-2029 Council Plan</i>, the <i>Gannawarra Community Vision 2040</i> outlines the Gannawarra's strengths, challenges, and the community’s top 10 priorities for the next 15 years.</p> |
| <p><b>Community Engagement Policy</b></p>                 | <p>Council’s Community Engagement Policy guides the delivery of community engagement processes across the organisation to better inform decisions in the planning of services, setting of budgets, identifying and planning projects and developing policies and strategies.</p>                                                                                           |
| <p><b>Public Transparency Policy</b></p>                  | <p>Council’s Public Transparency Policy promotes the need for clarity in Council’s decision making process, and ensuring information is easily accessible and disseminated in a timely manner.</p>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>Media Policy</b></p>                                | <p>Council’s Media Policy ensures that communication between Council, its stakeholders and the media is managed properly. This includes providing accurate, timely and consistent information</p>                                                                                                                                                                          |

## REFERENCES

There are several references that have been considered as a part of the development of this strategy. These include:

- *Local Government Act 2020*: Section 56 of the *Local Government Act 2020* outlines the principles councils must undertake when engaging with the community. These include:
  - Enabling participants access to objective, relevant and timely information.
  - Ensuring all who are affected by the matter are represented.
  - Ensuring all participants can access reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement.
  - Ensuring participants are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council's decision making process.
  - sought

Council is also required under this legislation to have a Community Engagement Policy which outlines the principles of engagement for the organisation.

- The Victorian Auditor General's report "Public Participation and Community Engagement: Local Government Sector" (May 2017) utilised the IAP2 spectrum to analyse community engagement at a number of Councils in Victoria. The report found that many Councils have strong community engagement frameworks or plans, but these should be aligned with best practice and provide practical guidance to staff on the implementation. Additionally, a more robust evaluation of engagement measures would establish opportunities to improve the practices moving forward.



## COUNCIL'S DEFINITION OF ENGAGEMENT

**Engagement is the processes by which Council provides deliberate opportunities for the community to participate in and influence Council decision making.**

**Effective community engagement results from a strong partnership between Council and the community, in shaping the future together.**

## WHO IS THIS STRATEGY FOR?

Council’s key stakeholders can be broadly categorised into the following groups:

### COMMUNITY

**Council is elected by, and is responsible to, its community.**

**This group includes:**

- Residents
- Community groups
- Service users
- Businesses
- Tourists and visitors

### INFLUENCERS

**Responsible for influencing the ability for Council to gain funding and benefit from policy decisions.**

**This group includes:**

- State and Federal Government representatives
- Media
- Local business and community leaders
- Leadership organisations, such as Council cluster or regional tourism groups
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Focus groups

### PARTNERS

**Our partners ensure Council is able to offer its range of services to the community.**

**This group includes:**

- Organisations and businesses which partner with Council to deliver services
- State and Federal Government agencies
- Other local councils
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Local and regional health services

### ORGANISATION

**Responsible for the day-to-day operation of Council and the ability for Council to serve its community.**

**This group includes:**

- Councillors
- Council staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors



## HOW DOES COUNCIL COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE?

**Council engages the community through both traditional and digital media, following a planned and purposeful approach.**

**Council maintains open, respectful relationships with community groups, organisations, local media and politicians.**

Existing communication and engagement methods, excluding phone calls, emails, meetings and face-to-face communication that occurs daily, consist of the following:

### TRADITIONAL MEDIA

- **Media releases:** Information regarding Council services, projects, policies, strategies and views on local issues are regularly distributed to media outlets (print, radio and television), local community newsletter publishers and others.
- **Gannawarra Connect:** Produced every three months and distributed to all properties in the municipality, this printed newsletter provides updates regarding Council services and projects.
- **Gannawarra News:** Published fortnightly in the *Gannawarra Times* and *Koondrook-Barham Bridge* newspapers, this half-page advertisement features a Mayor's Message, job vacancies, Council meetings and immunisation sessions dates, engagement opportunities and other Council-related messages. This advertisement is also sent digitally to local community development committees and progress associations.
- **ACE Radio (3SH/MIXX FM):** Council enters an annual agreement with the two local commercial AM and FM radio stations to promote Council services and events. This contract also includes a fortnightly interview with the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer regarding Council-related matters.
- **Gannawarra Update:** Published fortnightly, this internal newsletter promotes Council-related news and updates to Councillors and staff.
- **Advertisements, including public notices:** Advertisements regarding Council services and projects, as well as public notices as required by legislation, are published in local newspapers.
- **Posters, brochures and flyers:** Council regularly produces promotional material for events and services, tourist information and advocacy efforts.
- **Noticeboards:** Posters, service information and tourism messaging are displayed on various noticeboards located throughout the municipality.



## DIGITAL MEDIA

- **Website:** Information regarding Council's services and projects is updated regularly. The website also features digital versions of Council's media releases, *Gannawarra Connect* and *Gannawarra News*.
- **Facebook:** Council manages six Facebook pages – Gannawarra Shire Council, Gannawarra Library Service, Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre, Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre, Creative Gannawarra and Gannawarra Healthy Lifestyles, Healthy Communities. These pages are updated regularly to promote events, projects and services.
- **LinkedIn:** Council's LinkedIn profile regularly features information regarding Council-related projects and services.
- **Instagram:** Council's tourism Instagram page, *thegannawarra* promotes tourism attractions and events occurring within the municipality.
- **Intranet:** Council manages Councillor-related and staff-related SharePoint pages, which communicate updates to these groups of people.

## ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Partnership meetings:** Councillors and staff regularly participate in partnerships meetings to advocate for the community's needs. These groups include the Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM), Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils, Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) and emergency management forums.
- **Face-to-face engagement:** Councillors and staff regularly meet with residents and community groups regarding various Council services and projects.
- **Community development committees and progress associations:** Councillors and staff regularly attend community development committee and progress association meetings to provide Council-related information and to collect feedback from members of these groups.
- **Kerang Elders and Emerging Leaders Group:** Councillors and staff work with the Kerang Elders and Emerging Leaders Group to foster stronger relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.



## WHAT OUR RESIDENTS HAVE TOLD US ABOUT ENGAGING WITH COUNCIL

Council regularly pursues opportunities for stakeholders to outline how they currently engage with Council and how Council can improve this relationship.

As part of the development of this strategy, Council used feedback provided via two engagement opportunities:

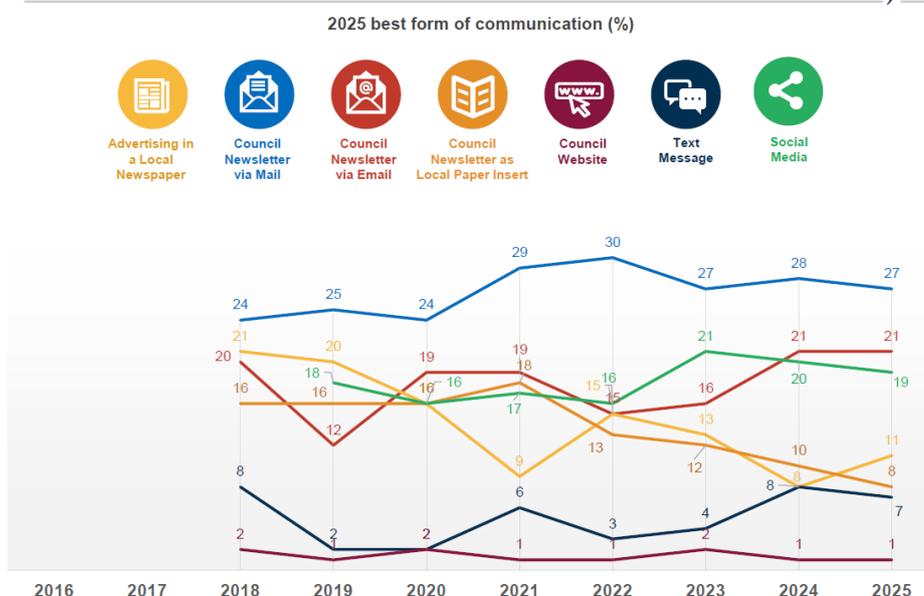
### COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

Conducted annually, this Local Government Victoria-organised survey involves the interviewing of 400 residents aged 18 years and older about a range of Council-related matters. Surveys conducted since 2018 have included questions relating to how residents prefer to receive information from Council.

The 2025 edition of this survey, conducted during three interview periods that occurred between August 2024 and March 2025, found that:

- More than one-quarter of residents interviewed identified a newsletter sent by mail as their preferred form of communication from Council regarding news, information and upcoming events.
- Residents aged under 50 years of age continue to prefer to receive information from Council via social media.
- Residents aged 50 years or older prefer to receive information from Council via a newsletter sent via mail, followed by a newsletter sent via email.

### Best form of communication



ABOVE: 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey – Gannawarra Shire Council results, page 37

### HOW CAN COUNCIL WORK WITH YOU? SURVEY

Conducted during May and June 2025 as part of efforts to review Council's *Community Engagement* policy, the *How Can Council Work With You?* enabled residents to identify how they currently engage with Council and how they would like Council to engage with them in the future. A version of the survey that focused on how community groups engage with Council was also available for completion during this period

These surveys revealed:

- Residents primarily receive information via *Gannawarra Connect*, Council's website and media releases promoted via Council's Facebook page.
- X (Twitter) is no longer seen as a viable social media communications tool, with Facebook the preferred social media account option for residents.
- The top five preferences to receive information from Council is media releases via Council's website, information on Council's website, media releases promoted via Facebook, *Gannawarra Connect* and media releases published in local newspapers and community newsletters.
- Residents prefer to receive information about changes to Council's services, meeting outcomes and capital works updates.
- A strong preference for in-person engagement opportunities for residents and community groups to collaborate with and influence Council's decision making process. The highest responses were for Councillors/Council staff to attend community events and host pop-up sessions. There was also a high preference for people to collaborate via online or hard copy surveys.



## OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

Through feedback, and anecdotally, Council utilises many of its communications and engagement options effectively.

This strategy aims to build on the success of Council's *Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025* to increase Council's ability to communicate and engage with a wider variety of residents and stakeholders to ensure all residents can provide input to Council and/or participate in the decision making process.



The 2025 Community Satisfaction and *How Can Council Work With You?* surveys revealed:

- Residents want Council to push relevant information to them, rather than proactively seeking it out.
- There is a growing desire for residents to receive information about Council via a newsletter sent by email.
- The desire for receiving information via advertising and/or newsletters in local publications is reducing.
- There is a strong preference for in-person engagement opportunities.
- There is a high preference for residents to collaborate with Council via online or hard copy surveys.

Key items identified as part of this strategy's Action Plan that address these items include:

- Enabling for Council publications, such as *Gannawarra News* and *Gannawarra Connect* to be sent digitally to stakeholders who would like to receive this publication via this format.
- The continued promotion of Council's services, news, events and engagement opportunities via its various social media accounts and platforms
- Developing and implementing an annual community pop-up session calendar, with engagement opportunities scheduled for all communities.
- Continued use of online surveys and feedback forms for all engagement opportunities.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS





## INFORM

We will inform and engage by maintaining an honest dialogue with our community.

| ACTION                                                                                                                                     | TIMEFRAME | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | RESPONSIBILITY                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.1 Uphold standards set out in the Customer Charter                                                                                       | Ongoing   | Community members are responded to promptly and thoroughly                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Customer Service Team<br>Relevant directors and managers<br>All staff |
| 1.2 Promote Council news and events using targeted forms of media                                                                          | Ongoing   | Publish media releases that are targeted, relevant and educate the community<br><br>Publish <i>Gannawarra Connect</i> digitally and by hard copy<br><br>Publish <i>Gannawarra News</i> digitally and in local newspapers<br><br>Utilise local radio for the promotion of events and services<br><br>Publish <i>Gannawarra Update</i> for Councillors and staff | Communications Coordinator                                            |
| 1.3 Continue daily engagement on social media                                                                                              | Ongoing   | Continued promotion of Council’s services, news, events and engagement opportunities via its various accounts and platforms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Communications Coordinator<br>Relevant department staff               |
| 1.4 Build capacity to incorporate video into the promotion of Council’s projects, events and services                                      | June 2028 | Staff to undertake training to produce videos to promote Council’s projects, events and services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Communications Coordinator<br>Relevant department staff               |
| 1.5 Promote services provided on Council’s website                                                                                         | Ongoing   | Regularly promote elements of Council’s website, advising the community of this resource                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Communications Coordinator                                            |
| 1.6 Continue to innovate Council’s Annual Report to ensure it celebrates Council’s achievements and adheres to best practice               | Ongoing   | Annual Report is clear, understandable and accessible to most readers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Communications Coordinator                                            |
| 1.7 Develop new branding/style guidelines for the organisation to ensure all Council communications are presented clearly and consistently | June 2027 | Review and update branding/style guidelines                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Communications Coordinator                                            |



## CONSULT

**We commit to sharing information about Council’s projects and services with our community, giving them a reasonable opportunity to express their views, and taking those views into account in decision making.**

| ACTION                                                                                                                                            | TIMEFRAME     | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                    | RESPONSIBILITY                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2.1</b> Continue to undertake regular consultation with the community regarding major projects and the development of key Council documents    | Ongoing       | Engagement opportunities occur as required, with adequate notice provided to the community                                                                                 | Executive Leadership Team<br>Relevant directors and managers                                                            |
| <b>2.2</b> Continued engagement by broader Council staff through email, phone conversations and attendance at community meetings                  | Ongoing       | Councillors and staff engage with community through email, phone conversations and attendance at community meetings                                                        | Mayor, CEO and Councillors<br>Executive Leadership Team<br>Relevant directors and managers<br>Community Engagement Team |
| <b>2.3</b> Incorporate gender friendly options for community engagement opportunities                                                             | June 2026     | Host in-person community engagement opportunities at family-friendly times and locations                                                                                   | Executive Leadership Team<br>Relevant directors and managers<br>Community Engagement Team                               |
| <b>2.4</b> Investigate the development of a community feedback process for all Council departments                                                | June 2028     | After-hours engagement opportunities occur at well-lit, accessible venues<br>Implementation of community feedback process across all departments involving frontline staff | Relevant directors and managers                                                                                         |
| <b>2.5</b> Implement an annual community drop-in program, enabling stakeholders to meet Councillor and staff at locations across the municipality | February 2026 | Community drop-in sessions held annually across the municipality                                                                                                           | Mayor, CEO and Councillors<br>Executive Leadership Team                                                                 |
| <b>2.6</b> Develop case studies for projects and events that celebrate successes and highlight opportunities for improvements                     | Ongoing       | Case studies celebrating the completion of projects and hosting of events developed and promoted                                                                           | Relevant departments                                                                                                    |



## INVOLVE

We will work with our community to ensure they are included in the process of Council decision making that affects their community.

| ACTION                                                                                                                                              | TIMEFRAME     | MEASURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | RESPONSIBILITY                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3.1 Investigate ways to incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into sections of Council’s website to provide more interactive engagement</b>   | December 2028 | Implementation of AI tools on website                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ICT Team<br>Communications Coordinator                  |
| <b>3.2 Continue to use online and hard copy versions of surveys and feedback forms so Council can collect useful information on specific issues</b> | Ongoing       | Implementation of online and hard copy surveys and feedback forms for community engagement opportunities across the organisation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Community Engagement Team                               |
| <b>3.3 Explore innovative ways to record or livestream Council events</b>                                                                           | Ongoing       | Successful recording or livestreaming of Council events, including meetings, project openings, funding announcements and awards ceremonies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Communications Coordinator                              |
| <b>3.4 Ensure all communication methods and materials are accessible for residents of all abilities</b>                                             | Ongoing       | Continue Council’s subscription to ReadSpeaker, which converts online content to audio<br><br>Ensure staff who engage with stakeholders are trained in accessible language and accessibility aides<br><br>Council’s communications are written in easy to understand language and can be converted to meet the needs of people with vision impairment or limited English proficiency | Communications Coordinator<br>Community Engagement Team |



## COLLABORATE

We will ensure the community are enabled to participate in the decisions that affect them.

| ACTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | TIMEFRAME | MEASURE                                                                                                                        | RESPONSIBILITY                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4.1</b> Acknowledge that Council has listened to feedback received during the community engagement process, and highlight how this feedback is used                                                                            | Ongoing   | Incorporate a “You Said, We Did” report into the community engagement process, which is available to view on Council’s website | Communications Coordinator                                          |
| <b>4.2</b> Work with communities to implement community plans that guide Council decision making for each area                                                                                                                    | Ongoing   | Implement key actions listed in community plans developed by each community                                                    | Community Engagement Team                                           |
| <b>4.3</b> Councillors and appropriate staff to regularly attend Progress Association and Community Development Committee meetings to provide information regarding Council initiatives and receive feedback                      | Ongoing   | Regular attendance at Progress Association and Community Development Committee meetings                                        | Mayor and Councillors<br>Executive Leadership Team                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |           | Updates regarding Council initiatives to be provided to Council representatives attending these meetings                       | Communications Coordinator                                          |
| <b>4.4</b> Continue to evolve Council’s engagement capacity, incorporating Have Your Say online platforms and other initiatives, to assist with in-depth community consultation around key community projects or service planning | Ongoing   | Increase in number of residents engaging with key community project or service planning process compared to 2020-2025          | Communications Coordinator<br>Community Engagement Team<br>ICT Team |
| <b>4.5</b> Explore the use of Council geographic information system (GIS) mapping to enable community-led planning of future projects                                                                                             | June 2027 | Utilise GIS mapping in future engagement plans for key projects                                                                | Manager Council Assets<br>Communications Coordinator<br>ICT Team    |



## EMPOWER

We will build understanding of Council’s goals and priorities and work to empower our community to achieve community-led initiatives.

|     | <b>ACTION</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>TIMEFRAME</b> | <b>MEASURE</b>                                                                                                   | <b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>                                                                  |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.1 | Develop and implement a Community Engagement Framework and Toolkit for Council-led community engagement opportunities                          | December 2028    | Framework and toolkit developed, and staff trained to use these resources                                        | Community Engagement Team                                                              |
| 5.2 | Continue to effectively support and upskill community organisations, fostering greater capacity for Council-supported and community-led events | Ongoing          | Training opportunities identified and implemented across the community                                           | Community Engagement Team                                                              |
| 5.3 | Regularly provide media training for Councillors and staff who regularly engage with the media                                                 | Ongoing          | Media training sessions held with local and State industry leaders every two years                               | Communications Coordinator<br>People and Culture Team<br>Governance Team<br>CEO Office |
| 5.4 | Facilitate partnerships with local health services and community agencies to implement local priorities                                        | Ongoing          | Regular Council representation at Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM) gatherings                              | Community Engagement Team                                                              |
| 5.5 | Continue to advocate to State and Federal politicians and departments regarding local issues and strategic project priorities                  | Ongoing          | Regular communication and meetings with relevant politicians/departmental representatives regarding local issues | Mayor, CEO and Councillors<br>Executive Leadership Team                                |



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## 7.8 DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2029

**Author:** Mark Birrer, Community Amenity Team Leader  
**Authoriser:** Fiona Gormann (Manager Planning and Regulatory Services), Wade Williams (Director Infrastructure & Development)

### RECOMMENDATION

#### That Council

1. **Adopt the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029**
  2. **Authorises the submission of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 to the Department of Agriculture Victoria, as required under Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.**
  3. **Notes that annual evaluation of the Plan will be included in Council's Annual Report.**
- 

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires Council to prepare and adopt a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAM Plan) every four years. The 2026-2029 Plan builds on the outcomes of the 2022-2025 Plan, incorporates feedback from community consultation, and has been benchmarked against plans from Casey, Bass Coast, and Swan Hill councils.

Key improvements in the new Plan include:

- Establishing a training register for Authorised Officers.
- Expanding community education programs (schools, signage, social media).
- Strengthening registration and identification strategies, including incentives.
- Enhancing compliance programs for nuisance animals and illegal breeders.
- Developing an improved annual evaluation.

### PURPOSE

To present the revised Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 to Council, and that Council adopts the DAM Plan and authorises it to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture Victoria.

### DISCUSSION

Council's previous DAM Plan (2022–2025) was adopted in October 2022. Annual reviews highlighted improvements in complaint handling, training, and registration, but also identified gaps in rehoming, education, and proactive compliance.

The revised DAM Plan 2026–2029 was developed by Local Laws staff, drawing on:

- The review of the DAM Plan 2022–2025
  - Consultation with veterinary clinics
  - Benchmarking against Bass Coast, Casey, and Swan Hill councils, which demonstrated stronger education campaigns, community partnerships, and structured annual evaluations.
  - Updated registration numbers (dogs and cats).
  - Complaint statistics and trends.
  - Pound/rehoming statistics.
-

- Training participation rates.
- Feedback from community consultation considered and incorporated if required.

**RELEVANT LAW**

**Domestic Animals Act 1994, Section 68A** – requires Councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years, submit it to the State Government, and report annually on implementation.

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Adoption of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022–2025 (October 2022).

**OPTIONS**

- Council can choose to adopt the Domestic Animals Management Plan 2026-2029 and authorise for it to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture Victoria.
- Council can choose not to adopt the Domestic Animals Management Plan 2026-2029 and authorise for it to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture Victoria.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The DAM Plan supports animal welfare, minimises risks to biodiversity (particularly wildlife impacts from cats and dogs), and ensures sustainable management of domestic animals across the Shire.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community consultation on the revised DAM Plan 2026 - 2029 occurred in October 2025 via Have Your Say, drop-in sessions, social media, and local newspapers.

Council received three submissions. All submissions have been considered and as the result of the submissions received no changes are required to the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029.

| Submission Number and Township | Submission Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Consideration of Submissions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Submission 1 - Quambatook      | <p>“I would like to know how many cats and dogs are permitted on a residential property?”</p> <p>“My neighbour has 3x cats and 3x dogs plus sometimes puppies.”</p> <p>“Cats are not secured at night and kill native birds.”</p> <p>“I have complained a few times and yet no formal</p> | <p>Submitter 1 was contacted by Council and requests pertaining to cats and dogs were answered with information available in Gannawarra Shire Council Community Amenity Local Law 2023. Council does not have a policy that requires cats to be secured at night. All requests for service lodged with Council through customer service on synergy are documented and will be responded to. Submitter 1</p> |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | complaint has been documented.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | confirmed that they had not lodged formal requests before.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Submission 2 - Cohuna | <p>“We frequently come across dogs being walked off leash.”</p> <p>“We daily observe fresh dog poo on walking tracks.”</p> <p>“We occasionally come across dogs at large.”</p> <p>“It would be more then 4 years since we have observed a Gannawarra Ranger in Cohuna.”</p> <p>“We walk our dog on a lead twice a day and always have bags to pick up poo.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Submitter 2 was contacted by Council via email to confirm receipt of submission. They were thanked for taking the time to make the submission and informed that the information provided will be considered for the DAM Plan 2026-2029. There information will also be used for daily operational tasks and static patrols. (Of current relevance is 068 Dogs and Cats Designated Areas Policy.)</p> |
| Submission 3 - Kerang | <p>“It is good that council now conducts euthanasia on all feral cats.”</p> <p>“Domestic cats also cause a high level of killing of native birds and animals.”</p> <p>“We frequently have the domestic cats of neighbours in our garden day and night. They kill native birds in our garden.”</p> <p>“We have asked our neighbours to contain their cats but they dismiss our concerns.”</p> <p>“Night curfews are not enough.”</p> <p>“Council should require all residents to contain their cats inside at all times. This measure has been adopted by many councils in Australia.”</p> <p>“Council should also automatically euthanise all domestic cats that are found outside.”</p> | <p>Submitter 3 was contacted by email to confirm receipt of submission. They were thanked for taking the time to make the submission and informed that the information provided will be considered for the DAM Plan 2026-2029. In considering the submission no written changes are required to the drafted version of the DAM Plan.</p>                                                                |

## INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The revised DAM Plan 2026 -2029 will:

- Streamline animal registration, tracking, and compliance reporting, improving efficiency and accuracy.

- Introduce innovative community engagement programs to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce nuisance complaints.
- Regularly review and update policies, procedures, and training for staff based on data analysis, community feedback, and emerging best practices in animal management.

### **COLLABORATION**

The DAM Plan was prepared with input from:

- Local veterinary clinics.
- Animal welfare organisations.
- Benchmarking against neighbouring councils.
- Community consultation.

### **FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Implementation will be funded through the Local Laws operational budget. External grant opportunities (e.g., cat desexing programs) will be explored to reduce costs.

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

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Domestic Animal Regulations 2015*
- *Alignment with Animal Welfare Victoria strategies*

### **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.

- Gannawarra Council Plan 2026 - 2029
- Community Amenity – Local Laws 2023

### **TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

The draft DAM Plan 2026 – 2029, before a decision by Council to adopt the plan, was publicly advertised and community feedback has been considered. Adoption ensures compliance with State Government transparency requirements.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. DAM Plan 2026-2029 Final [7.8.1 - 30 pages]

# DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

2026-2029



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029  
Plan No. 2026.01



## Amendment Details

| Plan no. | Page | Description | Date       | Amendment details                                  |
|----------|------|-------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 2026.01  | ALL  | Adoption    | 17/12/2025 | Domestic Animal Management Plan Adopted by Council |
|          |      |             |            |                                                    |
|          |      |             |            |                                                    |

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Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029  
Plan No. 2026.01



## 1 Introduction and context

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act)* requires Council to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAM Plan) every four years.

The DAM Plan must set out a method for evaluating whether the animal management services provided by Council are adequate to give effect to requirements of the Act and the *Domestic Animal Regulations 2015*.

The DAM Plan must also outline programs for the training of authorised officers along with programs, services and strategies to:

- ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
- minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
- address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
- require the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
- provide for the review of orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district to assist in determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are required; and
- provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district as required; and
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Council is required to review and where appropriate amend the DAM Plan and publish an evaluation of the implementation of the DAM Plan in Council's Annual Report.

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029  
 Plan No. 2026.01



1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The DAM Plan was developed by Gannawarra Shire Council’s Local Laws staff with information from the annual reviews of the 2022-2025 DAM Plan and observations of trends in complaints to Council and incidents involving domestic animals in the Gannawarra Shire. Local vet clinics were also consulted regarding issues that they believe are important to residents and animal owners. Through this review the Local Laws team have set realistic objectives which have measurable goals.

The DAM Plan was available for public consultation after the draft was approved at the Council meeting in October 2025. This consultation involved face to face meetings, newspaper content and social media posts.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFILE OF COUNCIL

Gannawarra Shire is a three-hour drive from Melbourne and has an area of 3,736 square kilometers, bordered by the Murray River to the north. Gannawarra is a diverse agricultural region within the Loddon Murray Region of northern Victoria and strategically located along the Murray River between Echuca and Swan Hill. It includes the main service centers of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook along with the villages of Murrabit, Quambatook, Lalbert, Macorna, Lake Charm, Leitchville and Mystic Park. Gannawarra Shire’s population is approximately 10,700, including around 5,300 households with a median household income of \$1,071 per week. (Aust. bureau of statistics 2021 census)



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029  
Plan No. 2026.01



1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

| Program/Service                                        | Service Level                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Identification and registration - dogs                 | 1971.25 dogs registered (average over past 4 years)                                                                                                                    |
| Identification and registration - cats                 | 310.8 cats registered (average over past 4 years)                                                                                                                      |
| Identification and registration - door-knock campaigns | Property inspection of outstanding animal registration renewals was conducted in 2025 to update data and achieve compliance.                                           |
| Domestic animal complaints                             | General non urgent complaints within 5 days<br>Urgent issues within 2 days                                                                                             |
| Dangerous Dogs complaints                              | Response time - within 24 hours                                                                                                                                        |
| Routine street patrols                                 | Proactive, static patrols as time permits. Visual presence to deter breaches.                                                                                          |
| Pound                                                  | Operating 7 days per week.<br>Not open to public. No adoptions.                                                                                                        |
| Microchipping and/or desexing programs                 | As funding becomes available.<br>Border Veterinarian Clinic facilitate microchipping of impounded animals if required before release to enable legislative compliance. |
| School information sessions                            | As requested                                                                                                                                                           |
| After hours emergency service                          | After hours phone in operation 24/7 for emergencies.<br>Authorised officers are called out when required.                                                              |

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1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

The domestic animal statistics and charts summarised below are shown in the relevant section of the DAM Plan.

| Content and data                               | Section and title                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Registered dogs / cats                         | Section 5<br>Registration and identification               |
| Declared dogs                                  | Section 8<br>Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs |
| Registered domestic animal businesses          | Section 9<br>Domestic Animal Businesses                    |
| Animals seized or surrendered                  | Section 4<br>Overpopulation and high euthanasia            |
| Cats and dogs reclaimed, rehomed or euthanised | Section 4<br>Overpopulation and high euthanasia            |
| Complaints relating to cats and dogs           | Section 6<br>Nuisance animals                              |

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## 2 Training of Authorised Officers

This section outlines current qualifications and future training programs for authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district. *Compliant with Section 68A(2)(b) of the Act.*

### 2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Gannawarra Shire Council currently employs the following animal management staff:

| Current staff                   |         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Officer                         | EFT     | Position                                                    | Training and qualifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Officer 1                       | 1 EFT   | Community Amenity Team Leader.<br>(Authorised Officer)      | Cert IV Local Government Regulatory Services LGA40504<br>Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-escalation<br>Risk Assessment Fundamentals<br>First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation<br>Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention<br>Firearm Safety Training, Humanely Destroy Animals AHCPMG304<br>Traffic Control |
| Commenced in position July 2025 |         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Officer 2                       | 1 EFT   | Local Laws Officer / Ranger<br>(Authorised Officer)         | Cert IV Local Government Regulatory Services LGA40504<br>Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-escalation<br>Risk Assessment Fundamentals<br>First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation<br>Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention<br>Firearm Safety Training, Humanely Destroy Animals AHCPMG304<br>Traffic Control |
| Commenced in position July 2025 |         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Officer 3                       | 0.4 EFT | Local Laws Support Officer / Ranger<br>(Authorised Officer) | Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-escalation<br>Risk Assessment Fundamentals<br>First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation<br>Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention<br>Firearm Safety Training, Humanely Destroy Animals AHCPMG304<br>Traffic Control                                                          |
| Commenced in position July 2025 |         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Admin Support                   | 0.4 EFT | Customer Services Officers                                  | All CS Staff: SynergySoft training LLCR, animals CS Supervisor & 2IC:<br>How to issue permits, Monitoring of Permits, Create Requisitions / PO EPM<br>CS Supervisor:<br>Animal Renewal Process Training SynergySoft<br>Infringements SynergySoft                                                                                           |
| Commenced in position in 2024   |         |                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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## 2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Authorised Officers are required to be suitably qualified with a sound understanding and knowledge of a range of legislation including the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. Apart from being able to administer and enforce the legislation, officers need to be able to communicate with all members of the community, defuse difficult situations and safely handle animals.

| Authorised Officer Training                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Planned (2026-2029)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cert IV Local Government Regulatory Services LGA40504 or Equivalent                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 12 months                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Online Induction Compliance Training<br><i>Occupational Health &amp; Safety</i><br><i>Information Privacy</i><br><i>Fraud and Corruption</i><br><i>Workplace Bullying and Harassment</i><br><i>Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities &amp; Child Safe Standards</i> | For any new Officers<br>Comprehensive induction within their first week. Other required modules within their first three months.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 6 months                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Victorian Firearms Training and Licensing Category A & B are required for all Authorised Officers to be delegated as "Municipal Employees"                                                                                                                                           | Any new Local Law Authorised Officers to have successfully obtained Category A & B Firearm License prior to commencement with Council.<br>External training Humanely Destroy Animals to be complete within their first 12 months<br>(Noting that a firearm licence is not mandatory for a support officer, but is an advantage) |
| Traffic control - animals on roads                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 12 months                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-Escalation                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 12 months)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Industry Training - prosecutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Optional / senior staff training                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | As scheduled by Council's HR department                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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2.3 OUR PLAN

Local Laws Officers are to receive relevant training to ensure tasks are performed in a safe and effective manner and within relevant legislation.

| <b>Objective 2.1</b> New and Relief Local Laws Officers to receive induction training     |                                                                     |                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                           | <b>When</b>                                                         | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                              |
| New and Relief Local Laws Officers undertake Councils induction programs for new staff    | Upon commencement                                                   | Employee completes standard inductions                                         |
| Staff to undertake and complete role specific induction programs for Local Laws Officers. | During their first 2weeks of employment, then their annual reviews. | Inductions completed and records stored in Personnel fileswith Human Resources |

| <b>Objective 2.2</b> Ensure animal management officers have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                         | <b>When</b>                                                      | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                                |
| Identify minimum required skills for Local Laws Officers                                                                                                | Prior to commencement of new staff, then annually to meet needs. | All role specific deficiencies and requirements are identified                                                                                                   |
| Source specific training to increase Local Laws Officers skill levels                                                                                   | As required                                                      | At least 80 per cent of Local Laws Officers complete one accredited or targeted training program within 12 months, with training recorded in the staff register. |
| Officers to complete all required relevant training, including upskilling.                                                                              | As required                                                      | Copy of completion certificates for training kept on file with HR                                                                                                |

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| <b>Objective 2.3</b> Adopt a formal training register for local laws staff including staff with administration responsibilities |                  |                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>When</b>      | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                             |
| Develop and implement a centralised training register template                                                                  | By November 2027 | Confirm the register is operational by ensuring 100 per cent of existing staff training records are entered and accessible within 3 months of adoption.       |
| Assign responsibility for maintaining and updating the register                                                                 | By November 2027 | Conduct a quarterly check to verify that all new training undertaken by staff has been recorded in the register within 2 weeks of completion.                 |
| Integrate the register into staff development and compliance processes                                                          | By November 2027 | At year-end, report on training completion rates for mandatory courses, aiming for at least 90 per cent staff compliance as demonstrated by the register data |

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### 3 Responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(i) of the Act.*

#### 3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Local Laws Officers frequently provide one-on-one education and information to ensure that domestic animal owners are aware of their legislative requirements and subsequent repercussions should they or their animals commit any offences.

For domestic animal owners who do not comply with the requirements of the Act, Local Laws Officers may issue a verbal and/or written warning followed by Notices to Comply and Infringements. Council may then escalate to prosecution should the animal owner continue to breach conditions of the Act.

#### 3.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

##### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

###### Clause 21 - Keeping Animals

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property

###### Clause 22 – Animal Accommodation

Local Law requiring Private Land to provide accommodation for animals which is appropriate

###### Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing

Local Law requiring Private Land to be fenced in a way that will prevent animals from straying or escaping

###### Clause 24 - Animal Excrement

Local Law requiring dog or cat owners to carry a Litter Device and remove and dispose of any excrement deposited by dogs or cats in public places

###### Clause 25 - Animal and Bird Noise

Local Law regarding prevention of any Animal or Large and/or Noisy Birds on the Private Land from sounding noise at unreasonable times

##### Council Policy No. 068 / Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas

Policy to:

- prohibit dogs from certain areas;
- prohibit cats from certain areas; and
- permit dogs in certain areas, but only on a leash.

#### 3.3 OUR PLAN

| Objective 3.1                                                                                                                          | Promote 'Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife' messaging among residents |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Activity                                                                                                                               | When                                                        | Evaluation          |
| In partnership with the Gannawarra Library, establish/display information regarding the Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife program in the Library | 2026                                                        | Program Established |

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|                                                                                                                  |                                    |                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social media promotion via link on Council website to <a href="http://www.safecat.org.au">www.safecat.org.au</a> | Current                            | Reduction in number of cats impounded overall with focus on numbers in the month following the targeted Facebook posts |
| Publish a Facebook post and information on the Gannawarra News page                                              | November, February, May and August |                                                                                                                        |

|                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                     |                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 3.2</b>                                                                                                                                    | Education campaign on the importance of registering and microchipping dogs and cats |                                                                      |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                         | <b>When</b>                                                                         | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                    |
| Publish a Facebook post and information in Gannawarra News page                                                                                         | In March, June, September and December                                              | Map trends on registered dogs and cats from data in Synergy database |
| Distribute a GSC brochure on the requirement to keep contact details up to date with the microchip registry to animal owners with registration renewal. | Current                                                                             | Map trends of microchipping in animals impounded by Council          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 3.3</b>                                                                                                                                                            | A structured community education strategy (schools, social media, signage, community events) |                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>When</b>                                                                                  | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                            |
| Develop a tailored education plan with key messages and delivery methods for different audiences (schools, online platforms, and local events).                                 | By June 2026                                                                                 | Strategy documents endorsed internally within 3 months, with at least 4 education streams (e.g., schools, social media, signage, events) clearly identified. |
| Roll out targeted campaigns across chosen channels (e.g., school presentations once per term, monthly social media posts, seasonal signage)                                     | By December 2026 and ongoing                                                                 | Track activity delivery by maintaining a schedule showing at least 80 per cent of planned campaigns completed within the year.                               |
| Collect and review community feedback from each education initiative (e.g., short surveys at school visits, event feedback forms, or monitoring comments/likes on social media) | By January 2028 and ongoing annually                                                         | Compile feedback reports after each initiative, with at least 70 per cent of activities showing positive responses or engagement trends.                     |

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## 4 Overpopulation and high euthanasia

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats as applicable.

### 4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council endeavours to reunite lost pets prior to impoundment.

Current registration and up to date contact details on the pet's microchip records are vital for this to be truly successful. Far too many owners of lost microchipped animals cannot be contacted due to phone numbers being disconnected, not up to date or the microchip remaining under the breeder's or last owner's name.

All domestic animals are impounded and advertised on Council's website and Facebook page for fourteen days. Animals that are claimed by owners are required to be registered and microchipped before they can be released from the pound. After 14 days, any unclaimed animals that are suitable to be rehomed are transferred to a rehoming organisation via a section 84Y agreement. Rehoming organisations sterilize and microchip all animals before adoption. All rehoming organisations are located outside of the Gannawarra Local Government.

Stray and feral cats continue to be an issue in the municipality. Issues experienced range from uncontrolled breeding to attacks on domestic cats and ongoing wildlife predation. Council provides residents with access to cat trap hire to facilitate the removal of feral, nuisance, unwanted and unowned cats. This process is strictly controlled by Council, with trapped cats removed only by Local Laws Officers.

It is important that community members are educated and take responsibility for their cats by registering, microchipping, de-sexing and securely confining them to their property. Council continues its public awareness and education campaigns to try and rectify many of these issues.

#### Our current data

| Dogs & Cats Impounded & Euthanised                       | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Dogs impounded<br>*Does not include surrendered          | 39*  | 50*  | 76*  | 51*  |
| Surrendered                                              | 28   | 13   | 39   | 42   |
| Dogs Euthanised                                          | 1    | 0    | 6    | 4    |
| Domestic Cats Impounded<br>*Does not include surrendered | 43*  | 74*  | 63*  | 87*  |
| Surrendered                                              | 132  | 50   | 60   | 64   |
| Domestic Cats Euthanised                                 | 2    | 5    | 10   | 7    |
| <b>Wild-cats trapped &amp; Euthanised</b>                |      |      |      |      |
| Wild-cats trapped                                        | 96   | 79   | 99   | 71   |
| Wild-cats Euthanised                                     | 96   | 79   | 99   | 71   |

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#### 4.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

##### **Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals**

###### **Clause 21 - Keeping Animals**

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property.

###### **Clause 22 – Animal Accommodation**

Local Law requires owners of Private Land to provide appropriate accommodation for animals.

###### **Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing**

Local Law requiring Private Land to be fenced in a way that will prevent animals from straying or escaping.

Under the *Act*, a reduced registration fee is applicable to sterilized dogs and cats.

###### **Our current education/promotion activities**

- Provide education on responsible pet ownership and on confinement of cats
- Promote microchip identification and de-sexing of animals

###### **Our current compliance activities**

- Operation of a domestic animal pound for impounded animals
- Advice to the public regarding animals that are currently residing in the Council Pound on the Council website and Facebook page
- Council trapping program for wild cats
- Rehousing of suitable animals under a Section 84Y agreement
- Investigate reports of unregistered animals and breeders

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4.3 OUR PLAN

To increase levels of responsible pet ownership of cats, reduce unwanted and uncontrolled breeding in domestic animals and retain low euthanasia rates for impounded animals.

| <b>Objective 4.1</b> Provide education on responsible pet ownership and on confinement of cats |                                                                  |                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                | <b>When</b>                                                      | <b>Evaluation</b>                                       |
| Owners of trapped cats to be made aware of responsibilities of cat ownership                   | Ongoing                                                          | Reduction of reoccurring offences of impounding of cats |
| Media releases - newspaper, Facebook<br><br>Website links to AWV information                   | Ongoing, but focus during times of increased cat breeding cycles | Information placed onto website                         |

| <b>Objective 4.2</b> To educate community regarding wild cat population / reduce wild cat population |             |                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                      | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                                           |
| Investigate (and instigate if viable) Council Order to confine cats                                  | July 2025   | Council order in place                                      |
| Investigate (and instigate if viable) cat de-sexing program                                          | Ongoing     | Council monitor and apply for suitable grants as available. |

| <b>Objective 4.3</b> To continue Section 84Y agreement/s with approved animal rescue organisation/s |             |                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                     | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                       |
| Maintain current Section 84Y agreements                                                             | Ongoing     | Agreements renewed at least every four years                            |
| Investigate and instigate additional Section 84Y agreements                                         | As required | Suitable agreements implemented as required for breed specific animals. |

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## 5 Registration and identification

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(v) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act*

### 5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

| Animal registration             | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of registered dogs          | 2158 | 1758 | 1751 | 1880 |
| No. of registered cats          | 426  | 330  | 331  | 346  |
| No. of registered declared dogs | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0    |

| Infringements issued                        | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Failure to register dog or cat              | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Failure to renew registration of dog or cat | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

#### Fee Structure 2025/26

Full fee Unsterilised dog or cat \$154.65

Full fee Dangerous Menacing Dog \$154.65

#### Council's Registration Concessions.

Reduced fee – Sterilised \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Aged dog or cat (over 10 years) \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Applicable organisation \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Working dog \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Eligible pensioner \$27.65

### 5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

##### Clause 21 – Keeping Animals

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property

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**Procedures**

| <b>Animal registration timeline</b> |                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-Mar                               | approximate date renewals for animal registration will be posted to animal owners                                                                   |
| 1-Mar                               | information on local radio regarding animal registration renewals due on 10 April                                                                   |
| 1-Apr                               | information in Gannawarra News page of the Gannawarra Times regarding animal registration renewals due on 10 April                                  |
| 10-Apr                              | Renewals for animal registration due                                                                                                                |
| 18-Apr                              | Reminder letters to be generated outstanding registrations                                                                                          |
| 1-June                              | Property inspections conducted to confirm animals located at outstanding registrations                                                              |
| 15-June                             | Data updated. Notice to Comply (NTC) issued to register outstanding animal registration renewals.                                                   |
| July                                | Infringements to be generated for 'Not renewing registration' under <i>Domestic Animals Act 81/1994</i> S.10(2) – 2747, failure to comply with NTC. |

**Our current education/promotion activities**

- Education of pet owners to continually check and update contact details at microchip registries
- Provision of Council animal registration application and link to online registration form to owner by vet clinic when an animal is microchipped
- Education and information provided to animal owners on an ad hoc basis

**Our current compliance activities**

- Registration and identification for domestic animals (dogs and cats)
- Registration renewal notices sent in March with follow up reminder notices sent during April
- Follow up with animal owners who fail to renew registration of their domestic animals
- Follow up on registration of animals adopted from Rehousing Organisations or purchased from domestic animal breeding businesses
- Follow up and correct all information in Council’s animal registration register
- Registration and identification of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
- Mandatory registration and microchipping of animals prior to release from pound
- Permanent identification number registration tags
- Investigation and compliance service

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### 5.3 OUR PLAN

To increase the number of registered dogs and cats in the Municipality by three to five per cent.

| <b>Objective 5.1</b> Increase in the number of animal registrations each year                      |                                                                               |                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                    | <b>When</b>                                                                   | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                   |
| Targeted inspections of both urban and rural areas                                                 | Periodically<br>During property attendance relating to animal investigations. | Data analysed to show total number of animals identified as registered/unregistered and compliance after follow up. |
| Return to home incentives for registered and microchipped pets found wandering for the first time. | Ongoing                                                                       | To be assessed from impound numbers / repeat offenders.                                                             |

| <b>Objective 5.2</b> Education regarding awareness of requirement for Council registration |                            |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                            | <b>When</b>                | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                  |
| Media releases - newspaper<br>Facebook                                                     | Quarterly                  | Record number of media releases<br>Record number of Facebook posts |
| Issue legislative correspondence promoting compliance before issuing Infringements.        | Permanent ongoing practice | Observe registration numbers and reduction in wandering animals.   |

| <b>Objective 5.3</b> Improve incentives, proactive campaigns, digital renewal tools.                                                                                 |             |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                      | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                                        |
| Introduce incentive programs for timely pet registration and renewal (e.g., discounted early-bird renewals, prize draws, or small rewards).                          | March 2026  | Compare renewal timing year-on-year and achieve at least a 10 per cent increase in registrations completed before the due date.                                          |
| Run targeted proactive campaigns (e.g., social media reminders, mail-outs, community pop-up stalls) focusing on the benefits of pet registration and identification. | ongoing     | Track campaign reach and participation, aiming for engagement with at least 50 per cent of registered pet owners through one or more campaign channels within 12 months. |
| Implement or enhance digital renewal tools (e.g., online payment portal, SMS/email reminders, mobile-friendly renewal forms).                                        | ongoing     | Monitor uptake of digital services, with at least 30 per cent of renewals completed online within the first 12 months of rollout.                                        |

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## 6 Nuisance Animals

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

### 6.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The most common complaints received by Council's Local Laws Department relate to roaming and/or stray dogs and cats, with noise a significant second.

| Nuisance categories (complaints)                | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Dog at large                                    | 61   | 112  | 160  | 91   |
| Cat at large<br>(cats impounded plus wild cats) | 139  | 153  | 162  | 158  |
| Animal noise/nuisance (dogs & cats)             | 64   | 66   | 111  | 68   |
| Dog excrement                                   | 2    | 0    | 4    | 0    |

#### Our current education/promotion activities

- Use of Council's website to educate pet owners
- Education and information services provided as requested.
- Education and information provided to increase community awareness of Council's on-leash policy
- Media and promotion regarding responsible pet ownership

#### Our current compliance activities

Current programs in place to minimise the incidence of nuisance animals include:

- Routine vehicle patrols across the municipality on a daily basis
- Operation of a domestic animal pound for impounded animals (capacity of eight dogs / twelve cats)
- Community education regarding responsible pet ownership
- Provision of cat cages for trapping nuisance cats (currently 16 traps are owned by Council)
- Council trapping program for wild and nuisance.
- Barking dog noise log record sheets provided to complainants
- Respond to all nuisance complaints and follow up on compliance within 48 hours

#### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

##### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

**Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing** requiring private land to be fenced in a way to prevent animals from straying or escaping.

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## 6.2 OUR PLAN

| <b>Objective 6.1</b> Reduce the number of cats at large                                                    |              |                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                            | <b>When</b>  | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                  |
| Provision of cat traps to residents as required                                                            | Ongoing      | Data from cat trap use collected in Shelter Manager program. Data to inform where community education programs are to be targeted. |
| Access grants to allow Council to provide financial assistance to residents for de-sexing of dogs and cats | As available | Successful grant application                                                                                                       |

| <b>Objective 6.2</b> Educate community regarding wildcat population / reduce wildcat population                                                                                                                                  |             |                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                    |
| Link on Council website to AWV information regarding wildcats / feral cats                                                                                                                                                       | Current     | Information available on website                                                                     |
| Media releases on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cat traps availability</li> <li>• Rules for cat trap use</li> <li>• Legislation that regulates cats at large</li> <li>• Unowned cats</li> </ul> | Quarterly   | Quantity and details of media releases are available from Council's Communications and Media Officer |

| <b>Objective 6.3</b> Increase community awareness and understanding regarding on-leash and restricted areas for domestic animals. |              |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>When</b>  | <b>Evaluation</b>                         |
| Media awareness                                                                                                                   | Twice yearly | Observed reduction in offences            |
| Information listing off leash areas                                                                                               | Current      | Council website updated to show locations |

| <b>Objective 6.4</b> To reduce domestic animal excrement in public places and educate animal owners of the requirement to carry a litter device |             |                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                 | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                               |
| One on one education                                                                                                                            | Ongoing     | Reduction in excrement complaints               |
| Receptacles installed for excrement litter bags located throughout LGA                                                                          | Current     | Ongoing installation as identified by incidents |

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| <b>Objective 6.5 More systematic nuisance reduction measures (barking education packs, cat containment enforcement).</b>                                                        |             |                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                  |
| Develop and distribute nuisance education materials (e.g., barking dog education packs, cat containment brochures) to pet owners at registration and in response to complaints. | ongoing     | Track distribution numbers, aiming for at least 80 per cent of complainants or new pet registrations to receive an education pack within 12 months |
| Host community information sessions or online campaigns on responsible pet ownership (with a focus on nuisance behaviours such as barking and roaming).                         | June 2026   | Achieve attendance or online engagement of at least 100 community members across sessions or campaigns within the first year.                      |



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## 7 Dog attacks

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(iii) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act.*

### 7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

| Reported attacks                         | 2021      | 2022      | 2023      | 2024      |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| No. of reported dog on animal attacks    | 8         | 11        | 11        | 13        |
| No. of reported dog on people attacks    | 6         | 3         | 2         | 5         |
| No. of reported dog on livestock attacks | 4         | 2         | 12        | 7         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>18</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>25</b> | <b>25</b> |

| Infringements issued                    | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2045 |
|-----------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Non-serious injury caused by dog attack | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

The confinement of dogs to the owner's property is a priority because wandering dogs increase risk to other pets, humans, livestock and consumes considerable time and resources of Local Laws officers.

Often when a dog attack is reported, officers find that it is a recurrence of an offence that was unreported. Had initial attacks been reported, subsequent attacks may have been averted.

Education is required to encourage community members to report dogs at large, dogs rushing and dog attacks of all types (minor or serious).

### 7.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

##### Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing

Local Law requiring Private Land to be fenced in a way that will prevent animals from straying or escaping

##### Council Policy No. 068 / Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas

It is Policy to:

- prohibit dogs from certain areas;
- prohibit cats from certain areas; and
- permit dogs in certain areas, but only on a leash.

#### Our current education/promotion activities

- Provision of education and information to community about responsible pet ownership
- Encourage dog de-sexing to assist in reducing the incidence of wandering animals

#### Our current compliance activities

Current programs in place to minimise the incidence of dog attacks include:

- Respond to notification of dog attack in progress immediately
- Investigate all reported attacks and complete relative enforcement as per the Act.

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7.3 OUR PLAN

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 7.1</b>                                            | Awareness campaign for both property/stock owner and animal owner re: potential destruction of dog found in paddock with stock |                                                                                         |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                 | <b>When</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                       |
| Media release (newspaper, Facebook and website)                 | February and August (ongoing)                                                                                                  | Record of the number of media releases.                                                 |
| <b>Objective 7.2</b>                                            | Education regarding responsible pet ownership with focus on dogs at large                                                      |                                                                                         |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                 | <b>When</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                       |
| Media releases                                                  | ongoing                                                                                                                        | Record the number of media releases. Information to be placed onto the Council website. |
| Educate owners of liabilities from dogs wandering.              | ongoing                                                                                                                        | Record the number of media releases. Information to be placed onto the Council website. |
| <b>Objective 7.3</b>                                            | Community awareness for reporting dog attacks                                                                                  |                                                                                         |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                 | <b>When</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                       |
| Public awareness to inform owners of process to report attacks. | Ongoing                                                                                                                        | Increased information and reports received by Council.                                  |



## 8 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(vii) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act.*

### 8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

| Declared and Restricted Dogs   | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of declared dangerous dogs | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0    |
| No. of declared menacing dogs  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| No. of restricted breed dogs   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

| Animal registration             | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of registered dogs          | 2158 | 1758 | 1751 | 1880 |
| No. of registered declared dogs | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0    |

### 8.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are controlled by the Act.

#### Our current education/promotion activities

- Education and information services provided, as resources and opportunity allow

#### Our current compliance activities

- Registration and identification of declared dangerous dogs, declared menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs, including renewal.
- Ensure compliance with the requirements for keeping dangerous dogs.
- Investigation and compliance
- All declared dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs are to be listed on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR).

### 8.3 OUR PLAN

To minimise the risks of dog attack to the community from declared and restricted breed dogs and to ensure that those dogs that are declared dangerous, menacing and those of restricted breed are kept in accordance with the legislation.

| Objective 8.1                                                                                                                               | Increase Officer awareness of the location of declared dangerous, declared menacing dogs or restricted breed dogs to improve safety when attending premises |                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activity                                                                                                                                    | When                                                                                                                                                        | Evaluation                                                                                                                   |
| All locations where declared dangerous, declared menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept, will be identified on Council's mapping system | Ongoing.<br>Council's Data Analyst to update mapping system as required                                                                                     | Council's mapping system identifies properties where declared dangerous, declared menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                |                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 8.2</b> Ensure that declared dangerous dogs, declared menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs kept in Gannawarra Shire are kept in compliance with the Act and relevant Regulations |                                                |                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>When</b>                                    | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                               |
| Regular inspections of properties where declared dangerous, declared menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept.                                                                                 | Quarterly in February, April, July and October | Inspections entered to SSCR as a task and copy of inspection report saved as an attachment to this SSCR record. |

|                                                                                                                                                      |                        |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 8.3</b> Annual audits and owner education program                                                                                       |                        |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                      | <b>When</b>            | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                                   |
| Conduct annual property audits of declared dog owners, combined with tailored education sessions on safety, containment, and legal responsibilities. | June 2026 and annually | Complete 100 per cent of required annual audits and achieve at least 80 per cent attendance or acknowledgement of the education program by owners within 12 months. |

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## 9 Domestic Animal Businesses

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation. *Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(ii) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act*

### 9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

Types of Domestic Animal Business (DAB) include a Council pound, a dog and/or cat breeding business, a dog training establishment, a pet shop, an animal shelter, an establishment boarding dogs or cats or an establishment that is rearing dogs or cats.

Other than the Council Pound, Council currently has no registered DABs.

### 9.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

##### Clause 21 - Keeping Animals

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property

#### Our current education/promotion activities

- Supply and distribution of information related to DABs and the relevant codes of practice

#### Our current compliance activities

Council's programs/activities working with domestic animal breeding businesses include:

- Annual registration and renewal of Councils DAB permits
- Conduct regular audits of the Council pound facility to ensure compliance with regulations

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OUR PLAN

To work in partnership with DABs to meet the requirements under the Act and approved Codes of Practice.

| <b>Objective 9.1</b> Identify unregistered DABs in the Gannawarra Shire |             |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                         | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                             |
| Follow up on registration of possible DABs identified                   | Ongoing     | Identified DABs to be registered with Council |

| <b>Objective 9.2</b> Ensure registered DABs are compliant with legislation                                                                                                    |             |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                               | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
| Planning information to be provided to all applicants or interested parties to ensure that compliance with the Act and relevant codes are met when DABs are being established | As required | Quantity of Planning permits issued for Keeping of animals<br><br>Annual permit renewals are sent to existing DABs in March each year for the issue of permits by 10 April. |

| <b>Objective 9.3</b> Stronger compliance program against illegal breeders                                                                                             |             |                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                                                                                       | <b>When</b> | <b>Evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                         |
| Undertake targeted investigations and inspections of suspected illegal breeding operations, supported by community reporting channels and cross-agency collaboration. | As required | Record and report on enforcement actions, with at least one confirmed illegal operation investigated and compliance outcomes documented within 12 months. |

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## 10 Other matters

This section provides for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.  
*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(e) of the Act.*

### 10.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Relevant programs, strategies and services implemented or proposed by Council have been already detailed in previous sections of this Plan.

### 10.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Current policies and procedures

**Council's Policy No. 068 Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas** is an Order made under Section 26 of the Act. It requires dogs to be under effective control by means of a leash in a reserve or public place except where it is a Designated Area or a Prohibited Area. The Schedule to the Order lists the reserves and public places that are Designated or Prohibited Areas. The Policy is due for review in 2026.

#### Current compliance activities

An infringement for Dog/Cat Found in Prohibited Public Place can be issued for offences under section 26(1) of the Act relating to Council's Policy No. 068 Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas.

Offences under the Council Local Laws can result in the following infringements:

- Keeping Animals contrary to Local Law
- Keeping Animals without required accommodation
- Failure to provide adequate fencing
- Animal excrement remaining on Council land
- Failure to carry a suitable animal litter device

### 10.3 OUR PLAN

|                                                                                      |                                                                                      |                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 10.1</b>                                                                | Information regarding emergency planning for domestic animals available to residents |                                                  |
| <b>Activity</b>                                                                      | <b>When</b>                                                                          | <b>Evaluation</b>                                |
| Council website to contain information about emergency planning for domestic animals | By December 2026                                                                     | Website updated to contain relevant information. |

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## 11 Annual review of Plan and annual reporting

This section provides for the annual review of the Plan and annual reporting to provide assurance that the targets in the DAMP are being met.

*Compliant with Section 68A (3)(a)(b)(c) of the Act*

### 68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

(3) Every Council must—

- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan
- (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan
- (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

As required by DJPR, this DAM Plan will be reviewed annually and submitted to Council with any necessary amendments made. The amended version will then be forwarded to the Secretary of the DJPR as required under legislation.

A review of performance under the DAM Plan is required to be included in Council’s Annual Report.

Measurements should relate to activities and evaluations in this Plan and should include educational programs, increased registration of domestic animals, reduction of animals at large, decreased numbers of dog attacks and increases in compliance and levels of community satisfaction as a measure of success.

It should be noted that if performance under the DAM Plan is not satisfactory, further revision of the Action Plan and its methods may be required and should be recommended.

| Objective 11.1 Annual Evaluation of the DAM Plan                                                                                              |                          |                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activity                                                                                                                                      | When                     | Evaluation                                                                                                                    |
| Collect and analyse data from key animal management activities (registrations, nuisance complaints, compliance actions, community education). | June 2026                | Complete and present an annual performance report to Council by 30 June each year, covering all key metrics.                  |
| Undertake stakeholder and community consultation (e.g., surveys, focus groups, feedback from vets, shelters, animal businesses).              | August 2026 and annually | Achieve responses from at least 30 stakeholders/community members annually, with results summarised in the evaluation report. |

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## 7.9 COUNCIL POLICY NO. 068 - DOGS AND CATS - DESIGNATED AREAS

**Author:** Mark Birrer, Community Amenity Team Leader  
**Authoriser:** Fiona Gormann (Manager Planning and Regulatory Services), Wade Williams (Director Infrastructure & Development)

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council adopt the revised Policy No. 068 – Dogs and Cats - Designated Areas.**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council officers have undertaken a review of Policy No. 068 Dogs and Cats – Designated Areas. This review has resulted in amendments to enhance transparency, compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, and alignment with Council's *Community Amenity Local Laws 2023*.

This report seeks the Council's endorsement of the revised policy.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and concise guidance for the management, exercise and control of cats and dogs in designated areas throughout the municipality. The policy aims to encourage responsible animal ownership while maintaining public safety.

### DISCUSSION

Dogs and Cats in Designated Areas policy is designed to balance the needs of responsible animal owners to safely exercise their cats and dogs in public places in a way that reduces impact on residents, animals, environment and complies with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and the *Gannawarra Shire Council Community Amenity Local Laws 2023*.

### RELEVANT LAW

This policy operates within the framework of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Vic) and Council's *Community Amenity Local Laws 2023*, which regulates the public locations dogs and cats are prohibited, permitted and the specific control conditions that apply.

### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Previous review and adoption of Policy No. 068 on 18 August 2021.

### OPTIONS

Council may choose to revoke the policy and allow dogs and cats in areas only in accordance with conditions stipulated in the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* or endorse the revised policy that promotes responsible animal ownership in designated areas under various control conditions.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

A defined policy approach promotes shared access to public places, encourages responsible animal ownership while maintaining public safety and minimising risk to biodiversity. (native wildlife impacts from cats and dogs)

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The policy encourages innovation by supporting designated areas throughout the municipality to facilitate the exercising of cats and dogs as driven by community needs. The policy aims to encourage responsible animal ownership while maintaining public safety.

**COLLABORATION**

Development of the policy involved consultation across Council departments including Operational Services and Local Laws to ensure a coordinated and practical implementation.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Implementation is managed through existing operational budget to facilitate the installation of new usage signage and dog bag dispenser.

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

Not applicable.

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

- Community Amenity Local Laws 2023

**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. Council Policy No. 068 - Dogs and Cats - Designated Areas [7.9.1 - 2 pages]



# Dogs and Cats – Designated Areas

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 068

This Policy is made in accordance with Section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

### 1. POLICY

That Council prohibit dogs from the following areas:

- Municipal Swimming pools and surrounds
- School grounds throughout the municipality

That Council prohibit cats from the following areas:

- Atkinson Park, Kerang
- Municipal Swimming pools and surrounds
- Town & Back Swamp, Kerang
- School grounds throughout the municipality

That Council permit dogs in the following areas, but only on a leash:

- All recreation grounds within the municipality whilst a sporting fixture is taking place
- Garden Park, Cohuna
- Parks and playgrounds where children's play equipment has been installed
- Apex Park, Cohuna
- Roads as defined under Section 3(2)(a) of the *Road Safety Act 1986*
- Atkinson Park, Kerang
- Gorton Point, Kangaroo Lake
- Gilrule Park, Cohuna
- Cohuna Ski Run, Island Road, Cohuna
- Murrabit Market, Murrabit

That dogs be permitted in other public places and in recreation grounds whilst a sporting fixture is not taking place, but dogs in such locations may be off leash but must be under 'effective voice control'.

That 'other public places' means any park, garden, reserve, or other place of public recreation controlled by Council, but not areas where dogs have been prohibited or where dogs must be on a leash.

That 'effective voice control' is where the dog responds to the controlling person's command by the second call. This also means that the dog does not rush, threaten or attack any person or animal and that the handler must remain close enough to see the dog at all times and if required promptly place it on a leash.

## 2. 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*.

## 3. 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.

Altus Folder – 3.000518  
Originally adopted: 12/03/1996  
Last Reviewed: 17/12/2025  
Next Review: 2029

**7.10 COUNCIL POLICY NO. 065 - TREES**

**Author:** Craig Maffescioni, Manager Operational Services  
**Authoriser:** Wade Williams (Director Infrastructure & Development)

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council adopt Policy No. 065 – Trees.**

---

**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 review of Policy 065 – Trees.

**PURPOSE**

This report addresses the review of Council Policy 065 – Trees, for the consideration of Council. The policy has been revised to streamline content and clarify objectives, as well as to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and which is reflective of current obligations.

**DISCUSSION**

Council officers conduct regular reviews of policies to ensure they comply with current legislation and reflect best practices. While policies may be reviewed as needed, most are required to be reassessed within 12 months or two years following a General Election. Once reviewed, policies are either presented to Council for endorsement or recommended for repeal if deemed unnecessary. These policies serve as important guidance for Council, staff, and the community, helping inform decisions and operations.

All endorsed policies are made publicly available on the Council’s website.

Council Policy No. 065 – Trees has been revised to a minimalistic format, focusing on legislative compliance and strategic alignment with the Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2025–2029.

The revised policy:

- Affirms Council’s commitment to protecting and preserving trees.
- Provides clear guidance on tree selection, planting, and establishment
- Aligns and streamlines key objectives, including tree risk assessment, inspections, removal, and street tree pruning.

This revision ensures the policy remains relevant, actionable, and compliant, while reducing complexity and improving clarity for Council and the community.

**RELEVANT LAW**

Not applicable

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Previous review and adoption of Policy No. 068 on 20 April 2022.

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**OPTIONS**

Council may wish to approve the recommended policy, provide alternative adjustments or decide not to make any adjustments to the policy at this time. Alternatively, Council may decide to repeal the policy.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Council is committed to adopting innovative practices and continuously improving tree management strategies to enhance urban canopy health, sustainability, and community benefits

**COLLABORATION**

Development of the policy involved consultation across Council departments including the Planning department and Local Laws to ensure a coordinated and practical implementation.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Not applicable

**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. Policy 065 Trees [7.10.1 - 3 pages]
2. 065 Tree Management Guidelines [7.10.2 - 3 pages]

# TREES

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 065

### 1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines Gannawarra Shire Council's commitment to the effective management of trees located on Council-owned or managed land. It encompasses tree selection, planting, protection, maintenance, risk assessment, removal, and community consultation, ensuring a sustainable and safe urban forest for current and future generations.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies exclusively to trees situated on land owned or managed by Gannawarra Shire Council.

### 3. POLICY

Gannawarra Shire Council will demonstrate its commitment to efficient and effective management of its tree population by:

- providing adequate resources to support the preservation of tree health, aesthetic appearance and amenity value;
- providing adequate resources, including professional independent advice when deemed necessary, to mitigate risk potential and maintain and enhance the tree population for future generations;
- replacing and replenishing trees with pre-determined species suitable for the site, environment, performance and compatibility with other plantings, taking reference from the 'Cool It' program.
- Investigating all tree management options, including consultation with the Planning Department to determine if a planning permit is required under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme, prior to the removal of a tree;
- consulting with the community on major tree projects; and
- maintaining accurate and current records on the management of Council's tree population.

This policy should be read in conjunction with 065 – Tree Management Guidelines.

### 4. 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*.

### 5. 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.

Altus Folder – 3.000518  
Originally adopted: 1995  
Last Reviewed: 17/12/2025  
Next Review: 2029



# Tree Management Guidelines

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with Gannawarra Shire Council Policy No. 065 - Trees.

## 1. SCOPE

These guidelines apply only to trees located on Council owned or managed land.

## 2. GUIDELINES

### Community Consultation

Council will provide information regarding major tree projects to affected residents, interest groups and the local community.

Community consultation regarding tree matters will include information on the process to appeal a decision of Council to remove or retain a tree, or other tree management decisions on major tree projects.

### Tree Protection

- Trees will be protected from development, construction, and other activities that may negatively impact their health.
- Tree protection barriers will be used during works that pose a risk to tree health.
- Council will enforce protection measures and seek compensation for damage caused by third parties.

### Tree Selection & Planting

- Trees will be selected based on site suitability, climate considerations, and species characteristics.
- Resident requests for street tree planting will be evaluated.
- Major tree planting projects will involve community consultation.

### Tree Establishment

- Mulch will be used to support the establishment of newly planted trees.
- A regular watering program will operate, as required between October and March on newly planted trees.
- Residents will be encouraged to assist with the watering of nature strip trees.

Tree inspections will be undertaken as required utilising good judgement based on sound arboriculture experience and a range or combination of tree assessment methods in consultation with Manager Operational Services. Additional professional independent advice may also be required.

- The risk associated with trees is a combination of the condition of the tree and the use in the vicinity of the tree.
- Trees have an inherent risk which must be managed effectively.
- Risk assessment/potential should be the overriding factor in determining priority for works and allocating resources.
- Tree risk assessment methods generally consider tree failure, risk-target value, probability of failure and impact potential.
- Details of inspections and any subsequent assessments are to be documented in Council's Records and Asset Management System.

### Tree Inspections

Council conducts annual inspections on trees in high risk areas. High risk areas are generally those in parks and reserves where equipment has been installed by Council and the public is encouraged to gather, these locations are listed below. Other locations will be inspected as determined.

- Cohuna Apex Park
- Cohuna Caravan Park
- Cohuna Garden Park
- Cohuna Kings Park
- Cohuna Pre-school
- Cohuna Recreation Reserve (selected areas)
- Cohuna RV Camping area (selected areas)
- Cohuna Swimming Pool
- Cohuna Young Park
- Kerang Atkinson Park
- Kerang Children's Centre
- Kerang Egg Park
- Kerang Lyaall Avenue Park
- Kerang McCann Crescent Park
- Kerang Swimming Pool
- Kerang Victoria Street Square
- Koondrook Apex Park
- Koondrook Caravan Park
- Koondrook Nature Based Tourism Hub
- Koondrook Wharf
- Lalbert Park
- Leitchville Lions Park
- Leitchville Pool
- Leitchville Pre-school
- Leitchville RV Camping Area
- Murrabit Market (selected areas)
- Murrabit Playground
- Quambatook Guthrie Street Playground
- Quambatook Caravan Park

**Tree Removal**

- Tree removal may be required to ensure public health and safety, protect infrastructure, facilitate approved development and infrastructure improvements, maintain a healthy urban forest or for ecological restoration.
- Nuisance trees which drop debris such as berries, seed pods etc. is not sufficient justification to remove a healthy tree however an assessment will be conducted to determine the potential risk to the community which may result in tree removal.
- Perceived danger that a tree may fall in a storm is not sufficient justification to remove a healthy tree.
- Council's Director Infrastructure and Development will authorise the removal of a street tree.

Council staff will:

- Investigate all tree management options, including consultation with the Planning Department to determine if planning permit is required under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme, prior to the removal of a tree.
  - Actively investigate the removal of poor performing trees in order that the municipality's landscapes are reinvigorated and maintained with regard to safety and amenity.
  - Consult and inform the community about all major projects involving tree removal.
- Pursue unauthorised tree removal and investigate enforcement action under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme.

**Street Tree Pruning**

- Street tree pruning will only be undertaken by authorised personnel using techniques to maintain the health of trees.
- Street tree pruning will be undertaken as required to meet statutory requirements for power line clearances.
- Under-pruning of street trees may be undertaken to maintain clearance of roadways, footpaths and signage.

### 3. FURTHER INFORMATION

Any enquiries in relation to this document should be directed to the Director Infrastructure and Development on (03) 5450 9333.

**8 URGENT BUSINESS**

Nil

**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

**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                      |

Councillors participated in the following activities throughout November 2025:

| <b>Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer</b>                                                                                             |                                                      |                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Geoff Rollinson was on Annual Leave from 5 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> November. Wade Williams was the Acting CEO during this period. | 3 November 2025                                      | November Council Briefing Session                           |
|                                                                                                                                             | 6 November 2025                                      | Murray River Group of Councils CEO Meeting online           |
|                                                                                                                                             | 10 November 2025                                     | Executive Leadership Team meeting                           |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | Kerang Neighbourhood House Veterans Photo Display           |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | Road Focus Group Meeting                                    |
|                                                                                                                                             | 11 November 2025                                     | Remembrance Day Service in Cohuna                           |
|                                                                                                                                             | 12 November 2025                                     | Audit and Risk Committee meeting in Kerang                  |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | VHM Project Update Meeting                                  |
|                                                                                                                                             | 13 November 2025                                     | RV Local Government Forum online                            |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | CWA Meeting in Kerang                                       |
|                                                                                                                                             | 17 November 2025                                     | Joint Coliban Water and GSC Executive Meeting online        |
|                                                                                                                                             | 18 November 2025                                     | Loddon Mallee Drought Co-ordination Meeting online          |
|                                                                                                                                             | 19 November 2025                                     | Executive Leadership Team meeting                           |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | Management Team Meeting                                     |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | Council's Glass Advocacy Meeting online                     |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | Mayoral Election and November Council Meeting in Kerang     |
|                                                                                                                                             | 20 November 2025                                     | Moyne Shire Energy Projects Tour in Port Fairy              |
|                                                                                                                                             | 25 November 2025                                     | Meeting with European Energy                                |
|                                                                                                                                             | 26 November 2025                                     | Walk Against Family Violence                                |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | Executive Leadership Team meeting                           |
| 27 November 2025                                                                                                                            | CVGA Regional Climate Leaders AGM                    |                                                             |
| 28 November 2025                                                                                                                            | Coliban Water Meeting online                         |                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                             | RCV State Election Platform                          |                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                             | Loddon Murray Community Leadership Launch in Bendigo |                                                             |
| <b>Cr Garner Smith, Mayor</b>                                                                                                               |                                                      |                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                             | 3 November 2025                                      | November Council Briefing Session                           |
|                                                                                                                                             | 10 November 2025                                     | Salute their Service Book Launch – Guest Speaker            |
|                                                                                                                                             | 11 November 2025                                     | Remembrance Day Service in Cohuna as Guest Speaker          |
|                                                                                                                                             |                                                      | National Roads and Transport Congress and Dinner in Bendigo |
|                                                                                                                                             | 12 November 2025                                     | National Roads and Transport Congress in Bendigo            |
|                                                                                                                                             | 13 November 2025                                     | 3SH/MixxFM Interview                                        |

|                                       |                  |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                       | 19 November 2025 | Mayoral Election                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                       | 19 November 2025 | November Council Meeting in Kerang                                                                                                                                       |
|                                       | 25 November 2025 | Meeting with European Energy                                                                                                                                             |
|                                       | 27 November 2025 | 3SH/MixxFM Interview                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                       | 28 November 2025 | VLGA Mayoral Leadership Program                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Cr Ross Stanton – Deputy Mayor</b> |                  |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                       | 3 November 2025  | November Council Briefing Session                                                                                                                                        |
|                                       | 11 November 2025 | Kerang Neighbourhood House Veterans Photo Display<br>Remembrance Day Service in Cohuna                                                                                   |
|                                       | 19 November 2025 | Mayoral Election and November Council Meeting in Kerang                                                                                                                  |
|                                       | 24 November 2025 | Webinar for Councils on the ESC's role in the Fair Go Rates System<br>Murrabit Advancement Association Meeting                                                           |
|                                       | 26 November 2025 | Walk Against Family Violence                                                                                                                                             |
|                                       | 27 November 2025 | CVGA Regional Climate Leaders AGM in Bendigo                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Cr Daniel Bolitho</b>              |                  |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                       | 3 November 2025  | November Council Briefing Session                                                                                                                                        |
|                                       | 6 November 2025  | Federation University Research Presentation – Impacts of Renewable Energy, Transmission Infrastructure and Mining Developments on Farmers in the Wimmera Southern Mallee |
|                                       | 11 November 2025 | Kerang Neighbourhood House Veterans Photo Display                                                                                                                        |
|                                       | 13 November 2025 | Dingwall CWA Meeting in Kerang                                                                                                                                           |
|                                       | 19 November 2025 | Mayoral Election and November Council Meeting in Kerang                                                                                                                  |
|                                       | 26 November 2025 | Walk Against Family Violence in Kerang                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Cr Lisa Farrant</b>                |                  |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                       | 3 November 2025  | November Council Briefing Session                                                                                                                                        |
|                                       | 23 November 2025 | Gateway Visitor Centre Open Day in Cohuna                                                                                                                                |

|                              |                  |                                                         |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|                              | 19 November 2025 | Mayoral Election and November Council Meeting in Kerang |
| <b>Cr Charlie Gillingham</b> |                  |                                                         |
|                              | 3 November 2025  | November Council Briefing Session                       |
|                              | 19 November 2025 | Mayoral Election and November Council Meeting in Kerang |
| <b>Cr Keith Link</b>         |                  |                                                         |
|                              | 3 November 2025  | November Council Briefing Session                       |
| <b>Cr Pat Quinn</b>          |                  |                                                         |
|                              | 3 November 2025  | November Council Briefing Session                       |
|                              | 10 November 2025 | Road Focus Group Meeting                                |
|                              | 11 November 2025 | National Roads and Transport Congress in Bendigo        |
|                              | 19 November 2025 | Mayoral Election and November Council Meeting in Kerang |

## 12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

### RECOMMENDATION

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

#### **12.1 2026 GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL CITIZEN AND YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

This report is confidential as specified under Section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act*, which states:

*The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee Meeting may be closed to the public are listed in section Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act and are as follows:-*

*(f) personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;*