

# COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 17 December 2025  
6:00 pm

Senior Citizens Centre, Kerang

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**MINUTES OF GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE, KERANG  
ON WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2025 AT 6:00 PM**

**PRESENT:**

- Cr Garner Smith (Mayor)**
- Cr Ross Stanton (Deputy Mayor)**
- Cr Charlie Gillingham**
- Cr Lisa Farrant**
- Cr Keith Link**
- Cr Pat Quinn**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Chief Executive Officer**
- Manager People and Culture**
- Governance Officer**

**GALLERY:** Nil

**MEDIA:** Nil

CONFIRMED

## 1 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

The Acknowledgment of Country video was played.

## 2 OPENING DECLARATION

Cr Link read the Opening Declaration.

## 3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Apology received from Cr Daniel Bolitho.

## 4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Keith Link

That the minutes of the Council Meetings held on 19 November 2025 be confirmed.

**CARRIED**

## 5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson declared a General Conflict of Interest in Item 7.4 - G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works and Item 7.5 - G02-2025 Gannawarra Central Landfill - Cell 3 Capping.

## 6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

### 6.1 RECORD OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFING – 17 NOVEMBER 2025 TO 2 DECEMBER 2025

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

### RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham

Seconded: Cr Lisa Farrant

That Council note the Records of Councillor Briefings from 17 November 2025 to 2 December 2025.

**CARRIED**

## 7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

### 7.1 2026 CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY DATES

#### 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.

#### RESOLUTION

**Moved:** Cr Charlie Gillingham

**Seconded:** Cr Pat Quinn

**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

**CARRIED**

## 7.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING - NOVEMBER

### 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.

### 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

### MOTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Lisa Farrant

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. Increase the current Audit and Risk Committee structure to four independent members and two councillors.
5. Update the ARC Charter to reflect the change in independent members and bring to the 2026 February Council Meeting for endorsement.

CARRIED

### 7.3 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEE

#### 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.

#### RECOMMENDATION

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

#### PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Cr Keith Link

That Council handle the three Community Asset Committees individually.

LOST

#### PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That Council lay Item 7.3 - Community Asset Committee on the table until the next Council Meeting in February 2026.

CARRIED

Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson left the Meeting at 6:17pm.

### 7.4 G12-2025 DRFA FLOOD BETTERMENT WORKS

#### 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.

#### RECOMMENDATION

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

**PROCEDURAL MOTION****Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham****That Council lay Item 7.4 - G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works on the table until the next Council Meeting in February 2026.****CARRIED****7.5 G02-2025 GANNAWARRA CENTRAL LANDFILL – CELL 3 CAPPING****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.

**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.

**PROCEDURAL MOTION****Moved: Cr Keith Link****That Council lay Item 7.4 - G02-2025 Gannawarra Central Landfill - Cell 3 Capping on the table until the next Council Meeting in February 2026.****CARRIED ON THE CASTING VOTE OF THE MAYOR****PROCEDURAL MOTION****Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham****That Council to adjourn the Meeting.****CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 6:21pm.

Meeting resumed at 6:34pm.

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**Moved:** Cr Ross Stanton

**That Council rescind the Procedural Motion to lay Item 7.4. - G02-2025 Gannawarra Central Landfill - Cell 3 Capping on the table until the next Council Meeting in February 2026.**

**CARRIED**

**RESOLUTION**

**Moved:** Cr Ross Stanton

**Seconded:** Cr Charlie Gillingham

**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.**

**CARRIED**

Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson returned to the Meeting at 7:39pm.

**7.6 KOONDROOK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (LDS) ADOPTION****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.

**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.

## **MOTION**

**Moved:** Cr Lisa Farrant

**Seconded:** Cr Keith Link

**That Council:**

1. **Confirm Council's role as Lead Agency for the planning, coordination and delivery of LDS implementation projects in accordance with the Agreement between Council and the Koondrook Local Development Strategy Steering Committee.**
2. **Authorise officers to lodge the required funding application for the \$500,000 Koondrook Structure Plan through Stream 2 of the Community Development Fund (DEECA).**
3. **Authorise officers to prepare and submit applications for the \$500,000 for the Agricultural Development project and Cross-border service assessment through Stream 1 of the Community Development Fund.**
4. **Authorise officers to prepare and submit an application for \$250,000 for the Forest Activation Strategy through Stream 2 (competitive funding) of the Community Development Fund.**
5. **Request a report to be presented at the February Meeting containing:**
  1. **The total estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy**
  2. **Council's role, as documented or directed by DEECA, in the development of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy**
  3. **Estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Structural plan**
  4. **Once the structural plan funding is received, how much funding still available from the Forestry Transition Program**
  5. **The process and conditions by which the funding is applied**
  6. **A list of the councils eligible to apply for that funding**

**AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION****Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham****Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton****That Council:**

1. Endorse and adopt the Koondrook & District Local Development Strategy (LDS) as presented.
1. 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.
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. Request a report to be presented at the February Meeting containing:
  1. The total estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
  2. Council's role, as documented or directed by DEECA, in the development of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
  3. Estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Structural plan
  4. Once the structural plan funding is received, how much funding still available from the Forestry Transition Program
  5. The process and conditions by which the funding is applied
  6. A list of the councils eligible to apply for that funding

LOST

**RESOLUTION****Moved:** Cr Lisa Farrant**Seconded:** Cr Keith Link**That Council:**

1. Confirm Council's role as Lead Agency for the planning, coordination and delivery of LDS implementation projects in accordance with the Agreement between Council and the Koondrook Local Development Strategy Steering Committee.
2. Authorise officers to lodge the required funding application for the \$500,000 Koondrook Structure Plan through Stream 2 of the Community Development Fund (DEECA).
3. Authorise officers to prepare and submit applications for the \$500,000 for the Agricultural Development project and Cross-border service assessment through Stream 1 of the Community Development Fund.
4. Authorise officers to prepare and submit an application for \$250,000 for the Forest Activation Strategy through Stream 2 (competitive funding) of the Community Development Fund.
5. Request a report to be presented at the February Meeting containing:
  1. The total estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
  2. Council's role, as documented or directed by DEECA, in the development of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
  3. Estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Structural plan
  4. Once the structural plan funding is received, how much funding still available from the Forestry Transition Program
  5. The process and conditions by which the funding is applied
  6. A list of the councils eligible to apply for that funding

**CARRIED****7.7 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.

**RESOLUTION****Moved:** Cr Ross Stanton**Seconded:** Cr Charlie Gillingham**That Council adopt the *Community Engagement Strategy 2026-2030*.****CARRIED**

## 7.8 DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2029

### 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.

### 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.

### MOTION

Moved: Cr Keith Link

Seconded:

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.**
4. **Council require all cats to be inside or contained between sun down and sun up.**
5. **Council either automatically euthanise all cats that are found and/or trapped between sun down and sun up or pay a \$200 fine per occurrence to retrieve said cat.**

**MOTION LAPSED FOR WANT OF A SECONDER**

**RESOLUTION****Moved:** Cr Pat Quinn**Seconded:** Cr Lisa Farrant**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.**

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

**RESOLUTION****Moved:** Cr Charlie Gillingham**Seconded:** Cr Ross Stanton**That Council adopt the revised Policy No. 068 – Dogs and Cats - Designated Areas.****CARRIED****7.10 COUNCIL 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.

**RESOLUTION****Moved:** Cr Pat Quinn**Seconded:** Cr Lisa Farrant**That Council adopt Policy No. 065 – Trees.****CARRIED**

## 8 URGENT BUSINESS

### PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Cr Keith Link

That Council admit Urgent Business into the Agenda as distributed.

CARRIED

Mayor Garner Smith declared he would seek to vacate the Chair for the Urgent Business and remainder of the Meeting.

### PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

That Council to adjourn the Meeting.

CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

Meeting resumed at 7:24pm.

### PROCEDURAL MOTION

Moved: Cr Lisa Farrant

That Cr Ross Stanton assume the role as acting Chair for the remainder of the Meeting.

CARRIED

Mayor Garner Smith vacated the Chair at 7:25pm.

Cr Ross Stanton assumed the role as acting Chair at 7:25pm.

**RESOLUTION****Moved: Cr Garner Smith****Seconded: Cr Lisa Farrant****That Council**

- 1. Oppose compulsory access to, and compulsory acquisition of, private land in relation to VNI West.**
- 2. Write to the Minister responsible to request an urgent meeting to discuss:**
  - 1. Council's opposition outlined in point 1.**
  - 2. Consultation with landholders.**
  - 3. Compensation to impacted residents; and**
  - 4. Benefits to Gannawarra Shire community, and the opportunity for the Gannawarra Shire to benefit from VNI West.**
- 3. Write to Councils impacted by VNI West to advise them of our position.**

**CARRIED**

Mayor Garner Smith left the Meeting at 7:31pm.

## 9 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

## 10 QUESTION TIME

Nil

## 11 DELEGATES REPORTS

### 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.

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

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 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

## 12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

### RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham

Seconded: Cr Pat Quinn

That Council considers the Confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Sections 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;*

CARRIED

The Meeting closed to the public at 7:48pm.

The Minutes of this Meeting were confirmed at the Meeting of the Gannawarra Shire Council held on 18 February 2026.

Mayor Garner Smith

CHAIR