

May | 2025

Welcome to Djeran - Cooler weather begins.

**A message from our
Shire President and
CEO**

**Colin Ottoway sets
Fastest Known Time on
Gravel Trails**

Youth Week - wrap up

**End of season pool
closure**

this month...



Full issue can be found on our website www.gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

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SHIRE OF GNOWANGERUP
BORDEN GNOWANGERUP ONGERUP



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Shire President – Kate O’Keeffe Monthly Message



Last month, we held a series of successful community consultation sessions. I’d like to sincerely thank everyone who attended and provided their thoughts and feedback. For those who couldn’t make it in person, thank you for taking the time to complete the community survey. Your input is invaluable. The results from these sessions will be presented to Council later this month and then shared with the wider community. Community input is essential in helping us shape a meaningful and effective long-term community plan.

I would also like to recognise the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) for their outstanding response to the recent fire at the Gnowangerup IGA. Our dedicated volunteers acted swiftly and effectively to assist on the day of the fire, and the committee has continued their support by working closely with the IGA owners to restore essential services to the community. A heartfelt thank you to every individual and organisation who contributed during this time—your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of our incredible volunteers who spent much of their Easter break in the Stirling Ranges, responding to a range of rescue and recovery situations. We are so fortunate to have such dedicated SES and St John Ambulance volunteers who selflessly donate their time and skills—not only for the benefit of our own community but often in support of visitors to our region as well. Their commitment and professionalism are deeply appreciated.

On 9 May, Councillors O’Meehan, Kiddle, Miniter and I had the honour of attending WALGA’s Reconciliation event. This was a powerful learning experience and an important step forward as we continue to work on our Reconciliation Action Plan.

The following week, all councillors took part in our annual tour of the Shire, visiting key assets and roads that need attention. This important initiative supports our long-term financial planning and helps guide future decision-making.

In the lead-up to the recent election, I had the opportunity to engage with many candidates and discuss key issues that remain a priority for the Shire of Gnowangerup. These include housing, access to medical services, tourism development, and the ongoing challenge of cost and responsibility shifting onto local governments by both state and federal authorities.

As many of you know, our Shire has joined an alliance with other local governments to advocate for fairer funding and support—particularly regarding the provision of GP services in rural communities. In June, I will travel to Canberra alongside our CEO, the Shire President, and the CEO of the Shire of Lake Grace to meet with politicians and key organisations. This is a vital investment by our alliance, and we are hopeful for a positive outcome. We will keep you informed as developments unfold.

Looking ahead, I encourage you to mark your calendars for some fantastic upcoming events. The 2025 Wild Gravel Cycle and Run Event is already generating excitement and will take place on 11 October. This event heavily relies on our incredible volunteers—if you’re interested in helping out, please contact the Shire. We are hoping to more than double the number of participants this year - so dust off your gravel bikes and find your joggers!!!

The Mount TRio Caravan Park will once again host its much-loved Country Music Event, and I’m very much looking forward to attending. Events like these not only celebrate our local talent and community spirit, but also bring valuable tourism and promotional opportunities to our region. Last year they had some 550 guests, most of whom stayed at the park!

Shire President – Kate O’Keeffe Monthly Message cont.



Recently, I had the privilege of paddling for a group of swimmers at the Lake Argyle Swim. These swimmers have trained diligently at our community pool throughout summer, taking advantage of the early morning swim sessions. I’d like to thank Andre and Tara for their commitment and for maintaining such an excellent facility. We are truly fortunate to have it.

Finally, let’s hope for some much-needed rainfall to sustain our crops and replenish our dams. I ask everyone to use water from community dams responsibly. We are currently developing clear signage to outline usage guidelines and ensure long-term water security for all.

As always, please don’t hesitate to reach out to your elected members with any concerns, questions or feedback. We are here to listen and work with you to continue building a strong, vibrant Shire.

Warm regards,
Kate O’Keeffe



Update from the Chief Executive Officer – David Nicholson



Works and Infrastructure update

Rebuilding the Works crew continues in earnest. In April we refilled the Executive Manager Infrastructure and Assets position and appointed a Gardener / Maintenance Officer for Ongerup / Borden. This month we've been interviewing for the Works Coordinator, and Technical Officer positions. We've had some great applicants and will be making appointments soon.

Frustratingly though our resheeting, and reconstruction and widening of Kwobrup Road work, has been delayed. While we've issued contracts the ongoing shortage of workers in the industry will result in delayed start, putting these projects at risk of encountering adverse weather. We're working through options at the moment.

We've also issued a contract to repair and replace large sections of the footpath in Yougenup Road, Gnowangerup. Again, we've encountered shortage of tradespeople resulting in a cost higher than originally anticipated.

The capital works programme for 2025/26 is currently being developed. In April Councillors did a quick bus tour of the Shire's roads and inspected some dams and other assets. This was a valuable exercise and allowed Councillors to not just see the issues firsthand, but to discuss these with the executive team at the same time.

Council is focusing more effort on maintaining the Shire's portfolio of assets to a higher standard and preserving heritage for future generations. For example, over the past 12 months the Gnowangerup Town Hall ceiling has been removed to reinstate the original design. Upgrade of the toilets is now being considered.

Similar ideas are now also being discussed for the Ongerup Town Hall.

The 2025/26 budget will also include significant maintenance work and upgrades for some of the Shire's houses.

Quinn Street Housing project

At the April Workshop Councillors were provided with an update on the Quinn Street housing project. This is a Shire initiative to help address the housing shortage in our Shire. The concept is to build up to 12 dwellings in Quinn Street Gnowangerup to meet accommodation needs for teachers, nurses and Shire staff.

This is a large project in terms of cost and scale, ranging from \$5.6m for six dwellings, to \$12.7m for 12 dwellings. The project is still in the concept stage with the next step being development of a business case.

Council elections

This October, the biennial council elections will take place. As part of the State Government's local government reform, the number of Councillors representing our Shire will also be reduced from eight to seven.

Over the coming months you'll hear more about the elections including important information if you're considering standing for Council yourself. Serving as a Councillor is a vital role in shaping the future of our community. Councillors help set strategic direction and priorities based upon the Strategic Community Plan.

While community priorities are currently being updated following recent consultation, you can view our current priorities and progress by visiting [corporate-business-plan-april-2025](#).

Youth Week Roller Disco Brings the Fun to Gnowangerup

The Shire of Gnowangerup's Youth Week celebration rolled into town in glowing style with a high-energy Roller Disco held at the Gnowangerup Sporting Complex – and what a night it was!

Organised by the Shire's Community Development team, the event brought local families together for a fantastic evening of food, fun and skating. A very special thank you goes to Donna, who did the heavy lifting in bringing the event to life – your hard work behind the scenes truly paid off. Thanks also to Penny who was on hand during the evening to lend her support, and to Megan for generously volunteering her time in the kitchen – we couldn't have done it without you!

The disco kicked off with a free community meal, with 60 hot dinners served between 5pm and 6pm. From there, the lights dimmed, the music pumped, and the skates rolled out. With only 50 skates available, children waited patiently for their turn on the floor – and by the end of the night, even the most cautious beginners were confidently zooming around with big smiles.

The crowd – including children and parents – peaked at around 70 to 80 attendees, creating a brilliant atmosphere. A big hit on the night was the glow sticks provided by the Shire, adding that extra sparkle to the skating fun.

The roller disco wrapped up by 8pm, leaving behind some very happy kids and a few tired grown-ups! Thank you to everyone that attended. Your support is what keeps events like this happening in our town.



Gnowangerup Community Pool End of 2024/25 Season

We closed out the 2024/25 pool season on Sunday, 6 April, with a relaxed community event. After a few days of rain, the weather cleared just in time, and we welcomed a warm 28°C day when gates opened at 12pm.

The barbecue was fired up, and the smell of sausages drew in the crowd. Thank you to Donna, Penny, and Chiara for keeping everything running smoothly on the grill.

Walter and Wendy arrived at 1.15pm to say hello and present prizes for our colouring competition, which received around 40 entries from children in Borden, Gnowangerup and Ongerup. Thank you to local schools for helping us promote the competition.

Colouring Competition Winners

Kindy & Pre-School

- 1st – Amaya Noakes
- 2nd – River Thomas

Year 3 to Year 5

- 1st – Lucy Lance
- 2nd – Emma Dickson

Pre-Primary to Year 2

- 1st – Claire Lance
- 2nd – Fraiser Tiller

Year 6 to Year 10

- 1st – Sakura Hawser
- 2nd – William Lance



Due to the heat, Walter and Wendy departed shortly after the presentations. Thank you to Lomas and Ashley for donning the costumes and helping make it special for the kids.

The afternoon included a few small activities in and out of the pool. We served 150 sausage sizzles, over 100 juice boxes, and plenty of water to keep everyone cool.

A total of 117 community members attended the end of season pool party. It was a great way to wrap up the season.



9525
Total number
of pool
entrants for
the season

66
Daily average
of pool
entrants

222
Most
entrants in
one ordinary
day (6th Jan)

1916
Swimming
lessons

79
Days above
30 degrees



Announcing the Wild Gravel Trail: A New Adventure for Gravel Riders

The Shire of Gnowangerup is excited to announce the launch of the Wild Gravel Trail, a new opportunity for gravel riding enthusiasts to explore the stunning landscapes of the region in their own time, and at their own pace.

The Wild Gravel Trail offers participants a chance to experience the beauty and challenge of long distance, multi-day gravel riding through a 440km loop that is over 90% gravel. The trail begins in Gnowangerup and takes riders through Ongerup, past Bluff Knoll, along Stirling Range Drive, south to Mount Barker, and then on northward via Kendenup, Cranbrook, Tambellup, Broomehill and Katanning, before returning to Gnowangerup.

The Wild Gravel Trail is inspired by Wild Gravel, a mass participation gravel cycling and running event held in the Stirling Ranges. Established in 2024, the event was a resounding success and will be returning for its second edition on October 11, 2025. The new trail allows riders to enjoy the area year-round, providing a unique and adventurous experience for all levels of cyclists.

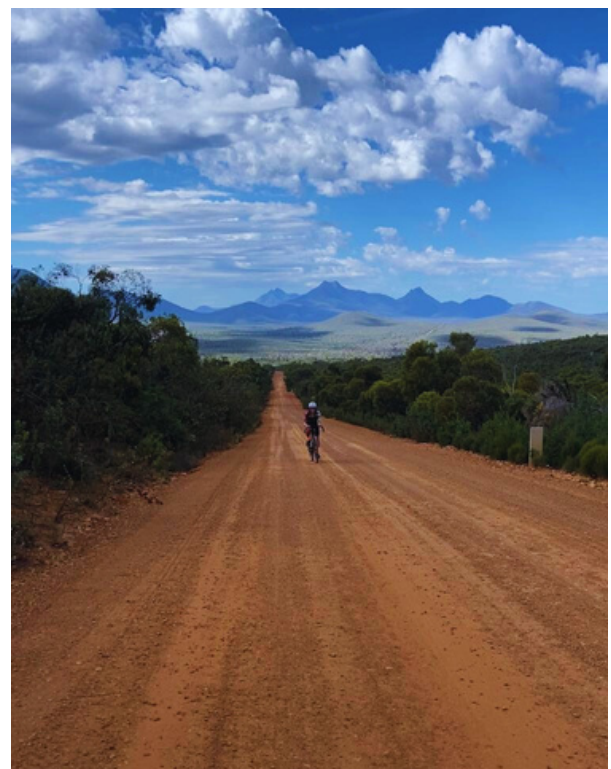
To celebrate the launch of the Wild Gravel Trail, renowned ultra cyclist, and 2022 winner of the Indian Pacific Wheel Race, Colin Ottaway, completed a Fastest Known Time (FKT) record on the trail, on April 22 of 17 hrs 54 mins. This exciting event drew attention from the cycling community and beyond.

For more details of the trail including maps, visit <https://wildgravel.com.au/wildgraveltrail>

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The ultimate outdoor adventure

KOI KYEUNU-RUFF STIRLING RANGE NATIONAL PARK, WA



GRAVEL RUN

5|12|21|42

RIDE

12|30|60|100|150

RUN+RIDE

5+12|12+30|21+60

WALK

5|12



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Incorporating the Inaugural Wild Gravel **Marathon**