

DECEMBER 2025

Welcome to **Birak** representing the 'first summer,' characterized by heat, fire, and the preparation of the land for new growth.

THIS MONTH...

A message from our
Shire President
and CEO

Fields & Fortunes
Save the Date

Holiday Season
Opening Hours



Full issue can be found on our website www.gnowangerup.wa.gov.au
Council > News and Information > [Gnowangerup Shire Newsletter](#)



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Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message



Welcome to the December edition of our community newsletter.

As I reflect on the year that has been 2025, I feel an enormous sense of pride, not only in our Shire, but in the remarkable community members who bring it to life. We have achieved so much together and demonstrated a level of connectedness and strength that truly defines who we are.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our CEO and all Shire staff for their tireless work throughout the year. Despite facing a range of physical and staffing challenges, they have remained committed and focused on achieving our shared goals. I would also like to acknowledge my fellow councillors for their dedication and service to our community.

As we move into the new year, I want to remind everyone that we have a vacant council position which will go to election in March. If you have ever considered contributing to your community in this way, please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm more than happy to discuss the role and all that it encompasses, serving on Council is a meaningful and exciting way to represent our Shire.

Yesterday, our LEMC Committee met to discuss matters relating to incident response, community safety, and wellbeing. A key message shared by our local Police Sergeant was clear: everyone using our roads needs to slow down. Whether you are driving a car, ute, holiday vehicle or harvest machinery, please take extra care—safety is paramount, particularly at this time of year.

I would also like to offer my heartfelt condolences to the Ravensthorpe Council and broader community on the tragic loss of their community member, friend and Deputy Shire President, Mark Mudie. Our sincere thoughts are with all who are grieving. With fire events prominent in many people's minds at this time of year, tragedies close to home can be deeply affecting. Please reach out for support if you need it.

A couple of weeks ago, Gnowangerup experienced a housefire, and the community response was extraordinary. Those first on the scene acted with courage and efficiency, working incredibly hard—and with impressive strategy—to save neighboring homes. Their coordinated, skillful and highly effective response prevented what could have been a far more devastating outcome. On behalf of everyone on the town side of Gnowangerup, I thank them all. We are incredibly fortunate to have such committed, capable and dedicated brigade members serving our community. Our DFES representatives have also asked me to remind everyone arriving at the scene of a fire event to prioritise their own safety first.

Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message

Our SES team also has reason to celebrate. In addition to securing a grant for new training equipment, two of their cadets have been nominated for state awards. Of the 25 SES cadets across Western Australia, five are from the Shire of Gnowangerup—an exceptional achievement and a testament to the commitment and skill of our SES leaders and trainers. Congratulations to all involved.

Our Christmas Lights Competition is now underway, with categories for Residential, Business and Farm properties. I hope many of you are busy stringing lights and creating festive displays—I look forward to seeing your photos and celebrating the creativity that makes this time of year so magical.

I'm also pleased to confirm the reopening of the Ongerup Tip four days a week—Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 7am to 5pm. This is positive news for the wider Ongerup community. It does, however, serve as an important reminder for all residents across the Shire to use our waste facilities responsibly. We are one of the few local governments operating three separate waste sites, and the long-term sustainability of this model is constantly under review. Waste management is a challenging issue for council and we rely heavily on responsible usage of the three facilities by our community. Therefore your cooperation and care when disposing of waste make a significant difference.

Council does not meet in January, but we will be holding a Strategic Planning Day later in the month. If you have suggestions, ideas, or feedback, please reach out to any of your elected members or send us an email so your thoughts can be considered.

As we enter the festive season, I want to wish everyone a safe and bountiful harvest, a joyful holiday period, and precious time spent with family and friends. To shire staff I hope you enjoy your break, and use the time to rest and reflect on the great work you have done this year. I look forward to celebrating with all staff and fellow council members on the 19th.

Merry Christmas to all, and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

As always, your elected members are here to listen if you have any concerns.

Warmest regards,
Kate O'Keeffe
Shire President
Shire of Gnowangerup



Mount Toolbrunup Bookends

Update from the Chief Executive Officer - David Nicholson



The November council meeting included appointment of independent members to the Shire's Audit and Risk Improvement Committee (ARIC). Appointment of independent members is a significant initiative and a reflection of council's commitment to good corporate governance. While having independent members will be a requirement under the State Government's industry reform agenda, declaration of effective date is still some time away, so we are well ahead of requirements.

The Shire's ARIC independent members will be Renata Paliskis as Presiding Member, and Emily Onn as Deputy Presiding Member. Both Renata and Emily have significant audit, risk and governance experience with Renata holding similar roles for many years with other organisations, and Emily holding corporate roles and being legally qualified.

On Monday 17 November I attended a meeting in Perth with the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) as part of a Medical Alliance we've involved in. The Alliance comprises six Great Southern / Mid-west local governments who all have a similar issue – we all financially support our local GP.

For us, ratepayers contribute approximately \$350k pa to have a local GP, and it is our view (as is the Alliance's) that this cost should be borne by the State / Federal Government. This issue is heightened when you consider our local hospital's only doctor is the doctor the Shire pays for!

In addition, not only do our ratepayers have to pay for their doctor through their rates, but they also must pay when they see the doctor, and we all pay Medicare levy to support the medical system. In other words, our ratepayers pay three times to have a doctor. Just think about the stink this was cause if this was the case in a capital City.

Clearly there is an inequity in this model and we've been advocating for this to be fixed for a couple of years – hence the trip the President and I did in June to Canberra, and the meeting with WACHS in Perth. We still have a long way to go, but it's not an issue we're not about to drop.

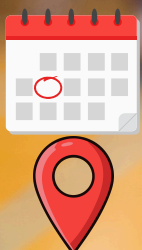
Projects that the Shire is involved in with Voluntary Region of Councils (VROC) are making traction. These include the Great Southern (GSDC) Housing Strategy, Water for the Future Project, and Regional Infrastructure Audit. These are all big-picture strategic projects that will provide long-term benefit but will take several years before the community sees results.

Over the past few weeks, the Shire's management team have been sitting through presentations from ReadyTech, a software provider who specialise in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software systems. ReadyTech supports the Shire's existing ERP (Synergy) but have advised the industry that from 2030 they will commence the process of no longer supporting this platform.

In its place they have developed a new system but moving from the old to the new will not be a simple exercise. This of course assumes we will be staying with ReadyTech which is an unknown until we go through the procurement process. While 2030 is still a few years away, as the ERP is critical to the Shire's ability to operate planning must start well in advance.

On Monday 2 February 2026 the Shire is holding its annual electors meeting. This is being held in the Gnowangerup Town Hall, commencing at midday. An agenda will be released in the new year.

Annual Electors Meeting



Monday 2 February
Gnowangerup Town Hall

Wild Gravel 2026

The Shire of Gnowangerup is pleased to share that Wild Gravel 2026 will be held on Saturday, 24 October 2026.

Selecting the right date each year takes a fair bit of balancing. We work through weather patterns, the winter sport season, major regional events, community commitments, and the national cycling calendar. After considering everything from local finals to long weekends, agricultural demands, music festivals, and even UCI World Championship scheduling, 24 October emerged as the most workable and community-friendly option.

It gives us good weather, aligns well with both AusCycling and WestCycle, avoids most major clashes, and supports strong participation from our local community.

We're looking forward to building on the success of 2025 and delivering another brilliant event for riders, runners, volunteers, and supporters.

More details will follow soon, but for now, please save the date — and thank you for your ongoing support of Wild Gravel.



KOI KYEUNU-RUFF
STIRLING RANGE NATIONAL PARK, WA
24 OCTOBER 2026



Shire of
GNOWANGERUP

BORDEN • GNOWANGERUP • ONGERUP

Heart of the Stirlings

RIDE
RUN
WALK





Shire of

GNOWANGERUP

BORDEN ♦ GNOWANGERUP ♦ ONGERUP

Heart of the Stirlings

DECEMBER/JANUARY OPENING HOURS

The Shire administration office and
depot will be closed from

**Wednesday 24 December 12pm
and will re open**

Monday 5 January 2026 9am

For full opening/closing hours see the Shire website



Wishing everyone a safe and
happy holidays



Have you got your entry in the Christmas Lights Competition yet!!??





Fields & Fortunes
Regional Business Forum

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Thursday 19 February 2026

Gnowangerup Sporting Complex

Smart Business, Strong Communities





All Wild Gravel photos and video is now available to view and download from the Shire website.

<https://www.gnowangerup.wa.gov.au/media-libraries/>



Western Power prepared for summer season

Extreme heat and severe weather are not confined to the summer months and so while summer is just around the corner, we've been working year-round to ensure the network is prepared for the impact these conditions can have on electricity supply.

Every year Western Power undertakes a \$1 billion comprehensive package of maintenance programs and bushfire mitigation works to prepare the network for extreme weather events.

Prolonged high temperatures, summer storms and bushfires can have a significant impact on the network, which is why we do everything we can to prepare, delivering key upgrades and mitigation works which increase the resilience of our network.

These works include comprehensive maintenance of poles and wires, as well as bushfire mitigation programs such as network inspections and timely condition remediation, adjustments to switching patterns to manage demand, and vegetation management near power lines.

Reliability continues to be a key focus for our business, especially considering the complex and increasing challenges of climate change impacts and extreme weather events.

"Demand on our network during summer is continually increasing – over the last two summers we've experienced the top 10 highest demand days in the history of the network," Western Power Executive Manager Asset Management Gair Landsborough said.

"While 100 per cent reliability can never be guaranteed, we do everything we can to maintain reliability of 99.92% even with the increasing demand.

"We know outages over summer can be inconvenient and uncomfortable, and our targeted year-round works programs are aimed at minimising the chance of outages occurring. We work to ensure we have additional resources where required and mobile specialist staff along with emergency response generators where possible.

We're constantly enhancing our capacity to respond to emergency events, adopting a cloud-based emergency management solution, bringing us in line with DFES and WA Police, increasing our inter-agency cooperation with organisations like the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, and working closely with the Bureau of Meteorology to obtain detailed weather briefings to prepare for unique extreme weather conditions that impact our network.

"To address impacts of extreme weather events, we've increased our emphasis on disaster preparedness, customer communications and network maintenance, innovation and investment, including integrating new technologies to improve network reliability and resilience, and on-going bushfire management," Mr Landsborough said.



"This includes targeted investment in programs such as undergrounding of the overhead network and proactive asset inspections and network enhancement."

End

About Western Power:

Western Power is a Western Australian State Government owned corporation responsible for building, maintaining and operating an electricity network which connects our 2.3 million customers to traditional and renewable energy sources, delivering a critical service to the community.

We're at the forefront of the energy industry in leveraging new technologies, including integrating microgrid and battery storage solutions. We're planning the grid of the future that's leading the way to a cleaner, brighter and more resilient energy supply for the next generation.

To find out more visit the Western Power website at www.westernpower.com.au

Western Power Media: media@westernpower.com.au or 1300 139 240 (24 hours)





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Never bin your batteries

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toss them**

in general waste or
recycling bins



**Tape
them**

using clear
sticky tape



Take them

to your nearest
B-cycle accredited
Drop off point

