

JULY 2026

Welcome to Makuru | The coldest and wettest time of year

THIS MONTH...

A message from our
Shire President
and CEO

National Impact
Forum

Wild Gravel Merch



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



What a busy month it's been for the Shire of Gnowangerup.

Councillors and staff have worked tirelessly over the past month to finalise the 2026/2027 Annual Budget and have put together a document that reflects our community's needs while remaining financially responsible. As such, our decision to increase rates by CPI plus 2% wasn't made lightly. With prudent financial management in mind this decision will allow our Shire to maintain current service levels while building much-needed reserves and continuing priority work on waste management and roads.

We continue to advocate strongly at a regional level on the defunding of DFES equipment and volunteer support. This is a particularly poignant issue for our Shire following last year's December fire, and the status of the Borden fire truck remains front of mind. It's vital the state government prioritises rural firefighters and their equipment, and we look forward to seeing meaningful improvement in this space before summer arrives.

As I write this, our CEO is in Canberra representing the National Rural Health Alliance, encouraging local governments from around the country to join the Alliance and continue the push for state and federal support for councils who've been drawn into funding GP services for their communities. You may have read that a couple of local governments in WA have either opted not to get involved in this space, or have stepped away from it, leaving Kalbarri and Boyup Brook without a GP service. The Alliance recognises the significant cost burden funding GP services places on local government and will keep working to recoup funding from the federal government and secure housing assistance from the state.

It's exciting to see entries open for this year's Wild Gravel event. The signage and posters around the Shire look fantastic and should go a long way toward attracting visitors. I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to get involved - whether as a volunteer on the day, a volunteer in the lead-up, a participant, a host, wearing the merch or simply by encouraging family and friends to come down and take part. Every bit of involvement helps make this event a success, and there are some great new additions to the event lineup and after-event celebrations this year - I can't wait.

In the lead up to Wild Gravel the Borden community will host 'Community Gravel' on Thursday 8 October. This will provide another opportunity for Shire residents to become actively involved in Wild Gravel so stay tuned for further details of what is planned. It could be the perfect way to tweak your training schedule prior to the main event and encourage more locals to challenge themselves and register for Wild Gravel!

Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message



On the development front, it's been encouraging to see land come onto the market in Gnowangerup. The Shire continues to seek out and prioritise opportunities for housing and industrial land development across all three towns and we're working with the state government on a couple of exciting projects in this space. Council continues to nurture and encourage our many community partnerships and looks forward to the possibilities this collegiate approach will bring to our Shire into the future.

Board representatives from both the Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre, based in Ongerup and North Stirling Pallinup Natural Resource group, based in Borden presented to Council last month to outline their strategic objectives and the many ways their projects positively impact our Shire. Yongergnow celebrates 20 years since its opening this year and the centre continues to provide incredible tourism and conservation opportunities. The Shire's Community Development team will continue working with the board to promote and capitalise on opportunities moving forward.

And while we are still awaiting the outcome of a significant grant application, submitted in conjunction with GNP360 for the Gnowangerup Tourism and Heritage Precinct (encompassing the recreation precinct), we have high hopes for this project and its potential impact on the Gnowangerup townsite and continue to work together towards this outcome.

As always, I encourage you to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns - community engagement is critical to local government, and all community members are welcome to contact your elected members at any time. You're also warmly invited to join us at our Ordinary Council Meetings, held on the fourth Wednesday of every month starting at 3:30pm. All Council meetings are advertised on the Shire website.

2026 Council Meeting Dates

Wednesday 22
July

Wednesday 28
October

Wednesday 26
August

Wednesday 25
November

Wednesday 23
September

Wednesday 16
December

Upcoming Events



13-Jul-2026
Monday Night Sports
Gnowangerup Sporting Complex



22-Jul-2026
Ordinary Council Meeting 22 July 2025
The Ordinary Council Meeting 22 July 2025 will be held on Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at 3:30 PM.



26-Aug-2026
Ordinary Council Meeting 26 August 2026
The Ordinary Council Meeting 26 August 2026 will be held on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 3:30 PM.

[View all Events](#)

From the CEO's desk



While the Labour Day long weekend brought some welcome downtime, it also brought wild weather across parts of our Shire. Fortunately, many households escaped with little more than leaf litter and a few fallen branches, though some areas experienced more significant impacts. I would like to sincerely thank our depot team, particularly those who worked through the break to clear fallen trees, assist Main Roads, and keep local roads safe.

It has also been a busy period for our organisation. We recently welcomed Michael Sweeney as our new grader operator and Ayrene Bautista as Senior Executive Assistant and Governance Officer. Recruitment continues across several important roles, and we look forward to introducing more new team members soon. At the same time, we are farewelling valued staff, including Michele Illy, Anita Finn and Fiona Butler, who have each made outstanding contributions to the Shire and our community.

Council has adopted the 2026/27 budget earlier than in recent years, which puts us in a strong position to plan ahead and secure contractors for key works. The budget includes significant investment in roads, housing, equipment and infrastructure, while also setting aside funds for future community needs.

We also continue to advocate strongly for fairer health funding. Rural communities should not be expected to carry costs that metropolitan communities would not accept. Recent discussions in Perth and Canberra are helping raise the profile of this important issue and we will keep pushing for better support for local GP services.

Pictured right Shire Presidents and CEOs from Gnowangerup, Lake Grace, Jerramungup, Ravensthorpe and Narembene.



There is plenty to be excited about across the Shire. Planning for Wild Gravel 2026 is well underway, with new signage installed and registrations already building. The event continues to showcase our region, our volunteers and our community spirit. Our youth activities programme is also going from strength to strength, with strong participation and plenty of positive energy.

We are also exploring opportunities to restore degraded wetlands in partnership with local landowners, GAC and other stakeholders. These projects have the potential to improve habitat, water quality and the long-term health of our environment.

How would you like to receive your monthly Shire newsletter?



- ☒ Delivered to my PO Box
- ☒ Online on the Shire website
- ☒ Pick up from Shire office/CRC
- ☒ On social media

The Shire newsletter is published on the first Thursday of every month and is packed with updates on local events, road works, projects, Council decisions, community opportunities and more. It's one of the best ways to stay informed about what's happening across the Shire. The challenge is making sure it reaches everyone. Rather than printing hundreds of copies that may go unread, the Shire would like to know how you would prefer to receive your newsletter.



Printed copy – Call the Shire office and register to have a copy placed in your PO Box each month.



Email notification – Register your email address and receive a reminder when the latest newsletter is available online.



Online – Read it anytime on the Shire website under Council > News & Information, or use the quick link on the homepage.

**Have
your
say**

However you choose to receive it, the important thing is that you stay connected with what's happening in your community.

To register for a printed copy or email notification, contact the Shire office on (08) 9827 1007.

Roads with Rick – Infrastructure and Assets

Rural Roads and Safety – Building a Stronger Network for the Future

Around the townsites you may have noticed it a little easier to park with existing carpark bays, remarked and the three disable bays upgraded in Gnowangerup at key parking locations. You would have seen that the shire has recently adopted a new logo and this is progressively being rolled out on street names signs as they are progressively being replaced with better reflective and easy to read signs.

“Safe roads are not just about maintenance—they are about planning, investment and working together as a community.”



2026/27 Annual Roads Program Adopted

The 2026/27 roads program is only one part of a broader strategy to improve road safety, road condition and long-term asset sustainability across the Shire.

Council adopted the 2026/27 Annual Roads Program on 17 June 2026, with significant investment planned across both sealed and gravel roads. The program includes reconstruction works on sections of Tieline Road and Ongerup–Pingrup Road, together with gravel resheeting projects on Corackerup Road, Magitup Road, Willemenup Road, Jackitup West Road and Jackitup North Road. These projects will improve road condition, enhance safety and extend the life of the network.

Strategic Planning Underway

These works form part of a broader strategic approach currently underway to strengthen the Shire's long-term infrastructure planning. Over the next few months, a number of important initiatives will be completed, including a Strategic Gravel Resource Plan, a comprehensive road condition audit, updated 10-Year Road Asset Renewal Plans, and new Asset Management Plans covering roads, drainage and pathways. The Shire is also reviewing and updating its Road Hierarchy and Road Strategy Plans to ensure future investment is prioritised where it delivers the greatest benefit to the community.

Roads with Rick – Infrastructure and Assets

“The 2026/27 roads program is only one part of a broader strategy to improve road safety, road condition and long-term asset sustainability across the Shire.”

Funding the Future

Securing external funding remains a key priority. While Council continues to invest heavily in local roads, grant funding plays an important role in bringing forward improvements and reducing the burden on ratepayers. The Shire is actively seeking grant opportunities to support both infrastructure delivery and strategic planning initiatives. We currently have a federal grant submission that if successful will have a transformative positive effect on Corackerup Road. This would be a \$940,000 project to upgrade this important rural route by targeting long-standing pavement condition and winter flooding issues. A funding decision is expected within the next couple of months.

Keeping Our Rural Roads Safe

Rural roads are the lifeblood of our community, connecting residents, farms, businesses and visitors across the Shire. Weather, heavy vehicle movements, agricultural traffic and varying road conditions present ongoing challenges. Driving to conditions remains one of the most important ways motorists can improve safety, particularly during winter rainfall and summer dust conditions.

How You Can Help us Help You..

Drive to conditions, slow down around road crews and worksites, and report hazards or storm damage promptly. Together, responsible driving, sound planning and continued investment will help deliver a safer and more resilient road network.



Building Stronger Communities Through Connection

The Shire of Gnowangerup was represented at the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation's National Community Impact Forum in Mildura, with Communications and Events Coordinator Penny Wells and Wild Gravel Project Manager Rory Murray selected as two of five Network Weavers representing the Great Southern region of Western Australia.

The three-day forum brought together the first five Network Weavers from each of the 12 Community Impact regions across Australia. Representing the Great Southern (pictured below) were Sarah Louise Collins (Torbay) Bec Stephens (Albany), Rory Murray (Perth), Penny Wells (GNP), Cassie Beeck (GNP) and supported by regional facilitator Briony Arnold. The Wheatbelt was the only other Western Australian region represented, with the remaining participants travelling from across eastern Australia.

The forum focused on developing practical leadership skills to help communities tackle complex challenges and build long-term resilience. Sessions explored systems leadership, human-centred design, facilitation, stakeholder engagement, critical thinking and strengthening community networks. One of the most valuable aspects of the program was learning alongside people from local government, community development, agriculture, tourism and not-for-profit organisations from across the country. Rather than providing ready-made solutions, the forum encouraged participants to better understand the underlying causes of community challenges, ask stronger questions and create the conditions for communities to develop their own solutions.

A standout session explored human-centred design and opened with a quote from Albert Einstein: "If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about the solution."

This approach reinforced the importance of investing time in understanding community needs before designing projects or programs.



A key outcome for the Great Southern delegation was beginning work as a regional team. The five Network Weavers mapped existing relationships and identified opportunities to strengthen connections across the region, laying the foundations for a future Great Southern Regional Impact Forum that will bring together around 25 community leaders over the coming year.

The experience has provided several practical ideas that will be applied in future community projects within the Shire, including using human-centred design to strengthen community engagement, placing greater emphasis on facilitation rather than consultation alone, building stronger partnerships between community groups, businesses and agencies, using storytelling to foster trust and connection, and applying systems thinking to create projects that build lasting community capacity rather than one-off outcomes.

The forum reinforced that strong, connected communities are built through collaboration, shared leadership and genuine relationships. These learnings will help strengthen future projects and continue building resilient communities across the Shire.



Pictured above 60 participants from across the regions and the facilitators and mentors running the National Impact Forum.

Implementation of the BCA 2025 in Western Australia

Western Australia (WA) adopted the Building Code of Australia 2025 (BCA 2025), being Volumes One and Two of the National Construction Code, on 1 May 2026. From this date, BCA 2025 became the Building Code in effect in WA.

Building permit applications

Most building permit applications in WA have the choice of applying:

- the Building Code in effect, or
- the Building Code that was in effect 12 months before the time the application is made.

Having the choice means that:

- BCA 2025 can be applied from 1 May 2026 but only becomes mandatory for most building permit applications from 1 May 2027.
- BCA 2022 with Amendments 1 and 2 (BCA 2022) can be applied until 30 April 2027.

BCA 2025 WA variations and additions

For BCA 2025, there are new and deleted WA variations and additions:

New to BCA 2025

- A WA addition addressing the fire separation of roofed outdoor areas, explained further in Industry Bulletin 174
- WA additions and variations relating to private swimming pools, explained further in Industry Bulletin 175

Deleted from BCA 2025

- The WA variations for wind regions B and D have been removed, as the changes previously introduced by these variations are now incorporated into the main body of BCA 2025.

Note: The WA variations for wind regions B and D continue to apply when using BCA 2022.

All other WA variations and additions from the previous edition of the BCA are retained.

Building Amendment Regulations (No.2) 2026

The Building Regulations 2012 were recently amended by the Building Amendment Regulations (No.2) 2026 — see Industry Bulletin 176. These amendments modify the application of BCA 2025 by making voluntary the:

- Bushfire construction requirements for primary schools, secondary schools and early childhood centres – voluntary until 30 April 2028.
- Livable housing provisions.
- Separate heating and cooling load limits (HCLL) that would otherwise apply when using the energy rating compliance pathway for energy efficiency. HCLL are also voluntary when applying the BCA 2019 Amendment 1 for an existing building in accordance with Part H6 of BCA 2025.

Community Grants OPEN

Community Assistance Grants are now open. The program offers two funding streams, with grants of up to \$5,000 available through Stream 1 and grants between \$5,000 and \$10,000 available through Stream 2.

Applications are assessed as they are received, and support is available through workshops and one-on-one assistance to help groups develop strong applications.

A new "Shark Tank" style event will also be introduced later this year, giving community groups the chance to pitch ideas for grants of up to \$1,000.

Community organisations with ideas that will benefit the district are encouraged to apply. For more information or to access the application forms, visit the Shire website or contact the Shire office.

COMMUNITY

Assistance Grants

SUPPORTING LOCAL INITIATIVES, STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY



SMALL GRANTS

Up to **\$5,000**



COMMUNITY GRANTS

\$5,000 - \$10,000

WILD GRAVEL NEWS



New 2026 Wild Gravel Merch Has Arrived!

The 2026 Wild Gravel merchandise has landed in Gnowangerup!

The latest range includes hoodies, half-zip jumpers, T-shirts and hats, now available to purchase from the Shire Administration Office, 28 Yougenup Road, Gnowangerup.

Wild Gravel is a Shire of Gnowangerup initiative, proudly planned and delivered by Shire staff each October. More than just a cycling and running event, Wild Gravel is designed to encourage people to be active, increase participation in local events and sport, build community capacity, and attract visitors to the region, delivering benefits for local businesses and the wider community.

Community support plays a huge role in the event's success. Purchasing and wearing Wild Gravel merchandise is a simple way to show your support, help build the event's profile, and contribute to its long-term success.

Whether you're a past participant, volunteer, sponsor, supporter or planning to take part for the first time this year, grab your Wild Gravel gear and wear it with pride.
So head into the Shire office to day to grab yours!

WILD GRAVEL APPAREL COLLECTION 2026

earn the view

ORDER AT WILDGRAVEL.COM.AU

Local pick up available at Gnowangerup Shire Office Monday - Friday
9am - 4:30pm or
Collection available at registration points day before or day of the event



WILD GRAVEL CAPS 30

Details

Embroidered front
Embroidered back

Colour

Chocolate Brown

Size

One size fits most
Adjustable velcro back



T-SHIRTS 40

Unisex Staple T-Shirt

Details
Screenprint Front
No print on back

Colour

Black

Size

XS | S | M | L | XL \ up to 5XL



Womens Basic T-Shirt

Details
Embroidered Front
Screenprint Back

Colour

Bone

Size

XS | S | M | L | XL \ up to 2XL



HOODIES 90

Womens Relaxed Faded Hood

Embroidered front
Screen Printed back

Colour

Faded Grey
Faded Bone

Size

XS | S | M | L | XL | XXL



Unisex Stencil Hood

Embroidered front
Screen Printed back

Colour

Black

Size

XS | S | M | L | XL \ up to 5XL



HALF ZIP JUMPERS 85

Womens Relaxed Faded Half Zip

Details
Embroidered front
Screen Print back

Colour

Faded Grey

Size

XS | S | M | L | XL \ up to 2XL



Mens Relaxed Faded Half Zip

Details
Embroidered front
Screen Print back

Colour

Faded Grey

Size

XS | S | M | L | XL \ up to 3XL



CYCLING JERSEYS 120

Mens and Womens Jerseys by Society

Limited Edition
Custom Wild Gravel Design

Pre orders welcome



society

SIZE GUIDE

We recommend selecting your usual size but bear in mind that our garments are "race cut" meaning that they are designed to fit snugly.

WOMENS	XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL
WOMENS	80-84	84-88	88-92	92-96	96-100	104-108	112-116
MENS	88-92	92-96	96-100	100-104	104-108	108-112	112-116

MENS JERSEYS, HALF ZIP JUMPERS, VESTS & RIB SHORTS

WOMENS	XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL
WOMENS	78-82	82-86	86-90	90-94	94-98	102-106	110-114
MENS	102-106	106-110	110-114	114-118	118-122	122-126	130-134

MENS JERSEYS & RIB SHORTS



FOR DETAILED SIZE GUIDES
AND GARMENT INFORMATION

Visit the as colour website
Scan the QR code or follow the
link below

ascolour.com.au



Quality
garments

Custom
designs

Built for
adventure

A photograph showing a fire burning on a bed. A white electric blanket is pulled back, revealing a heater underneath. Bright orange and yellow flames are rising from the heater. A digital clock is visible on the right side of the bed.

HOME HEATING IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF HOUSE FIRES

Stay warm safely this winter:

- ✓ Make sure everything is at least a metre from the heater.
- ✓ Never leave children unsupervised near heaters.
- ✓ Only use heaters that meet approved Australian standards.
- ✓ Never leave heaters unattended or on overnight.
- ✓ Check your heaters once a year. Worn out electrical cords or plugs should be replaced immediately.
- ✓ Always plug heaters directly into permanent power points and never overload power points and power boards.
- ✓ Turn off electric blankets before going to bed.

For more information visit dfes.wa.gov.au



ARE YOU COOKING WITH FIRE?

**Unattended cooking is a
major cause of home fires**

- ✓ When cooking, never leave food unattended on a stove.
- ✓ Never hang items such as tea towels near stoves or on cooking appliances.
- ✓ Turn off cooking appliances after use.
- ✓ Clean and maintain cooking appliances, exhaust fans and rangehood filters.

For more information visit dfes.wa.gov.au

SOUTHERN AGCARE

Across 40,000 Square Kilometres, Southern Agcare Offers a Lifeline

How Southern Agcare Supports Rural Mental Health

For more than three decades, Southern Agcare has quietly become a lifeline across the southern reaches of Western Australia—offering something both simple and profound: someone to talk to.

In a region spanning over 40,500 square kilometres and covering 15 shires—from Newdegate to Denmark—this community-owned service delivers free, confidential counselling to rural people, by rural people. It's a model built on trust, local understanding, and the belief that no one should have to face hardship alone.

A Service Built by Community, for Community

Southern Agcare is not a distant organisation operating from afar. It is owned and governed by the community through a voluntary management committee, and its team of psychologists, social workers and counsellors are deeply embedded in the regions they serve.

Their approach is deliberately different.

Rather than imposing a “one size fits all” model, Southern Agcare prides itself on flexibility—meeting people where they are, both physically and emotionally. Their counsellors travel extensively, offering mobile support that reaches even the most isolated individuals and families.

At its core, the service exists to provide “hope, healing and recovery”—not just for individuals, but for entire communities.

The Reality of Rural Mental Health

Life in rural Australia carries unique pressures: geographic isolation, financial uncertainty, climate challenges, and limited access to services. These factors can take a heavy toll.

The statistics are sobering. Across Australia, nine people die by suicide every day—seven of them men. In the Wheatbelt and Great Southern regions alone, 72 lives were lost to suicide between 2019 and 2023.

Young people in regional WA are particularly vulnerable. Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death for Australians aged 15–24, and at least 40 young West Australians lost their lives to suicide in 2024 alone. In both the Great Southern and Wheatbelt, youth suicide rates remain significantly higher than state averages.



SOUTHERN AGCARE

But behind every statistic is a story—and Southern Agcare sees those stories every day.

Each year, the organisation supports around 400 clients. Their needs are complex and often overlapping. In the past year alone:

- 42% of clients experienced depression, anxiety, or stress
- 22% were affected by domestic violence
- 21% faced family separation.
- 20% struggled with alcohol or other drug use
- 18% were impacted by sexual assault
- 13% were dealing with grief and loss

Issues such as eviction stress, childhood and intergenerational trauma, and strained parent-adolescent relationships are also increasingly common.

These are not isolated problems—they ripple through families, workplaces, and entire communities.

A Different Kind of Support

What sets Southern Agcare apart is not just what they do, but how they do it.

Their counsellors offer a non-judgemental space—one where people can speak openly without fear of criticism or stigma. In communities where “toughing it out” is often the norm, this kind of support can be transformative. Clients are not treated as cases, but as people. The service takes a holistic approach, focusing on mind, body and spirit, and works collaboratively with other agencies to ensure seamless care.

Just as importantly, Southern Agcare listens.

Through genuine community consultation, the organisation continually adapts its services to meet evolving needs—whether that means one-on-one counselling, group programs, or educational initiatives that build resilience and emotional wellbeing.

Doing More with Less

Despite its wide reach and growing demand, Southern Agcare operates with limited resources.

Core funding allows for approximately 45 hours of service per week—equating to just three hours per shire once travel time is considered. To expand and sustain its work, the organisation relies heavily on grants and community donations.

It is a constant balancing act: meeting urgent needs today while striving to build a stronger, more sustainable future.

Why Mental Health Matters to Everyone

A common misconception is that mental health only matters when something goes wrong. It underpins every aspect of our lives.

Good mental health helps people cope with stress, build relationships, think clearly, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. It is closely linked to physical health and plays a critical role in overall wellbeing.

As Southern Agcare’s work shows, mental health is not a niche issue—it is a community issue.

And in rural areas, where support can be harder to access, services like this are not just valuable—they are essential.

SOUTHERN AGCARE

Looking Ahead

Southern Agcare's vision is clear: resilient, healthy and sustainable rural communities across southern Western Australia.

To achieve this, the organisation is focused on:

- Continuing to support individuals and families in crisis
- Listening closely to community needs
- Expanding education and outreach programs
- Raising awareness and reducing stigma
- Securing long-term funding to ensure sustainability

But they cannot do it alone.



A Collective Responsibility

The strength of Southern Agcare lies in the community it serves—and the community that supports it.

Every conversation, every outreach visit, every moment of care is made possible through collective effort. Donations, partnerships and advocacy all play a role in ensuring that help remains available to those who need it most.

Because in the end, mental health is not just an individual journey—it is something we build, protect and nurture together.

And in the vast landscapes of rural Western Australia, that support can make all the difference.

Southern Agcare's work is made possible through community support, partnerships and donations.

If you would like to access support, make a referral, or contribute to helping rural communities thrive, contact:



Phone: 0898271552



admin@southernagcare.org.au



www.southernagcare.org.au



Talk to a registered
nurse **for free anytime,
anywhere in Australia.**

Call 1800 633 422

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