

MAY 2026

Welcome to Djeran | The cooler weather begins

THIS MONTH...

A message from our
Shire President
and CEO

Connecting to
Country

Community Grants



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



Contact us:

-  28 Yougenup Road
-  gnpshire@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au
-  08 9827 1007
-  www.gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message



Hello everyone,

It's been a busy and productive few weeks across the Shire, and I'd like to share some of what your council has been up to.

On 15 April, council conducted a comprehensive bus tour of Shire assets, with a particular focus on our roads and waste facilities. The information gathered will help inform council and staff as we work through the 2026/27 budget. This is always a particularly rigorous time for council and executive staff — we meet weekly and work hard to deliver a tight, professional budget that maximises returns for our ratepayers while making sound financial decisions for the future of the Shire.

We were very grateful to DFES for the workshop they presented on earthquake preparedness. It gave us valuable insight into the current tracking of earthquakes within our Shire and the practical steps we can take to make sure our community is prepared.

On 24 April, the CEO and I attended the WALGA Zone meeting hosted by Broomehill-Tambellup. We were pleased to be joined by the incoming WALGA President and the WALGA CEO, alongside Peter Rundle MLA. They each provided updates on what they have been working on, and we were able to share what's happening here in our own region.

I'd also like to take a moment to acknowledge the wonderful ANZAC Day services held across our three towns — Gnowangerup, Borden and Ongerup. We are very fortunate to have a service in each town within the Shire of Gnowangerup, and on behalf of the Shire I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the preparation and delivery of these services. They are a meaningful and important part of our community calendar, and the care taken to honour the day in each town does not go unnoticed.

This week, the Deputy Shire President, the CEO and I attended our Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils meeting in Nyabing. This is a smaller group of shires who work collaboratively on shared projects, and it's always a valuable gathering. At this meeting we farewelled the Shire of Plantagenet from our ROC, and we wish them every success going forward.

In celebration of Volunteer Week, the CRC is hosting a volunteer appreciation event on 15 May. I'd warmly encourage all of our valued volunteers from across the Shire to attend. The Shire relies heavily on volunteers — we simply couldn't thrive without them — and I welcome any opportunity to celebrate the enormous contribution they make.

Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message



It's also been wonderful to see so many community members enjoying the winter sports season. Time spent up at the Gnowangerup Sporting Complex has been just fabulous, and I feel so grateful for the facilities we have in our Shire. I've also been fortunate enough to attend both the Borden and Ongerup golf open days, and it's terrific to see these clubs thriving as the season gets underway. Hopefully with more rain on the way and things greening up, the courses will improve significantly.

I also attended the HARVEST Housing Initiative presentation at the CRC this week. It was inspiring to see the innovative housing designs being explored for future housing projects within the Shire. Congratulations to Cassandra Beck for her work in this space — we look forward to hearing how things progress.

Finally, thank you to everyone for your continued engagement. Please remember that your elected members are here anytime you'd like to reach out, so please keep those lines of communication open. We love hearing from you.

Cr Kate O'Keeffe JP
President
Retires October 2027
crkokeeffe@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

Cr Rebecca O'Meehan
Deputy President
Retires October 2029
crromeehan@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

Cr Mick Creagh
Retires October 2027
crmcreagh@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

Cr Rebecca Kiddle
Retires October 2029
crrkiddle@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

Cr Peter Callaghan
Retires October 2029
crpcallaghan@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

Cr Robbie Minter OAM
Retires October 2027
crrminter@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au

Cr Joanne Hemley
Retires October 2029
crrhemley@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au



From the CEO's desk



April included a proper “recharge the batteries” break for me (and yes—my inbox tried its best to come along for the ride). A big thank you to our Deputy CEO for stepping in and keeping everything moving smoothly while I was away. I've come back to a busy office, a few new to-do lists and plenty of good news stories from across the Shire—which is exactly how you want to return from leave.

Budget season is well and truly upon us. Planning for the 2026/27 budget is progressing, with the draft scheduled to go to Council for adoption at the 17 June meeting. Our aim is a practical budget that delivers on the Council Plan 2025–2035—while staying mindful that many households and local businesses are feeling cost pressures. In short: we'll keep focusing on the essentials, prioritise what matters most and be upfront about what we can (and can't) do this year.

On 15 April we held our annual Councillor budget bus tour. Councillors visited a mix of current and proposed projects that may shape the 2026/27 budget, including Virginia Estate, our waste facilities, the airport, current and planned road works (including roads used by school buses) and sporting complexes. Thank you to the Executive Manager Infrastructure and Assets for coordinating the tour and to the Yongergnow Centre for keeping everyone well fueled (Council decisions are always better after a good cup of tea.)

Our annual statutory audit is undertaken by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). The interim audit starts in early June and will focus on making sure we've addressed items raised last year—particularly around reconciliations, policies and procedures, planning, and record keeping. It will also cover the usual “big ticket” areas like revenue and expenses, assets and liabilities, disclosures, and key estimates and judgments.

While an audit can sound a bit dry, it's an important check that public funds are being managed responsibly and that our reporting is accurate. The OAG is aiming to complete the audit by early December. Between now and then, our team will be working steadily behind the scenes to provide information promptly and keep improvements on track—so we can keep delivering services with confidence.

Planning for Wild Gravel 2026 is already rolling along nicely. Last year we welcomed more than 600 participants and early interest suggests 2026 could be even bigger—so we're getting in early to make sure the event is safe, welcoming and a great showcase of our region.

This year we're adding new courses, plus an “Untamed” option for those who like their adventures with a little extra grit. The project team also spent time learning more about the cultural significance of the Stirling Range, I'd like to sincerely thank Robbie Minter and Peter Twigg for generously sharing cultural links and stories of the region. It's a valuable reminder that great events aren't just about the route—they're about respect, connection and community. More details will be shared as planning progresses, so keep an eye out (and start “training” now by taking the long way to the shops).

Wild Gravel team connecting to Country

The Wild Gravel team recently had the privilege of taking part in a cultural journey on Goreng Country, guided by local Noongar Robbie Minter from Yaakiny Services and current Councillor at the Shire of Gnowangerup. It was an opportunity to step away from the day-to-day and spend time listening, learning, and building a deeper understanding of the place that brings the Wild Gravel event to life each year.

Seven team members set out on Wednesday morning, heading towards the Blue Hills — the name Noongar people use for the Stirling Range. The group travelled to Moingup Springs, a place of quiet significance, where Robbie encouraged everyone to slow down, wander, and take in the surroundings. The focus was simple but powerful: to connect to Country. Whether someone has been here five minutes or five years, that connection matters and it belongs to everyone.

Time was spent sitting together for a yarn, sharing stories and perspectives. Robbie spoke about the Blue Hills and the deep spiritual connection Noongar people have with the landscape. These stories offered insight into the cultural meaning of the area, grounding the team in a perspective that goes far beyond what can be seen on the surface.

The conversation also turned to the future. There was a genuine and open discussion about opportunities to work together, recognising the importance of collaboration, respect, and shared understanding in shaping events like Wild Gravel.

On the way back, the group visited Pech's farm, where an incredible collection of artefacts provided another layer of connection to the region's history. We learnt about the Twisted Tree — a well-known local landmark with its own important place in Gnowangerup's story. Next time you see Robbie or someone on the Wild Gravel team, ask us about it!

Experiences like this are a reminder that there is always more to learn, and that the stories held within this landscape are rich, valuable, and worth hearing firsthand. Anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of Country and culture is encouraged to connect with Robbie Minter through Yaakiny Services, who now offers cultural experiences for the wider community.

We would like to thank Robbie and Peter Twigg from Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation for their time, and look forward to the journey ahead of us working together.





Wild Gravel team with Robbie Minter pictured left. Peter Twigg - Gnowangerup Aboriginal Services, Rory Murray - Shire of Gnowangerup, David Nicholson-Shire of Gnowangerup, Robbie Minter- Yaakiny Services, Stuart Drummond - Shire of Gnowangerup, Neah Stewart - Shire of Gnowangerup, Penny Wells - Shire of Gnowangerup.

**Saturday 24
October 2026**

WILD GRAVEL



ON WHEELS

10KM | 30KM
65KM | 100KM
150KM



UNTAMED NEW IN 2026

RUN 23KM
RIDE 95KM



ON FOOT

5KM | 10KM
21KM | 42KM



ULTRA NEW IN 2026

422km
Starts Fri 23

Finalist announcement for Local Government's Place Innovation Award

The Shire of Gnowangerup has been recognised as a finalist in the 2026 Minister's Local Government Place Innovation Awards, highlighting a strong, collaborative approach to shaping the future of the community.

The shortlisted application, Partnering Together: The Stirling Range Cultural and Tourism Precinct, showcases the joint efforts of the Shire, GNP360 and the wider community to develop a shared vision for enhancing key local assets. The project focuses on improving facilities across Gnowangerup, including the recreation precinct and broader town centre spaces, with a view to strengthening both community use and visitor appeal.

This recognition reflects the value of local partnerships and the commitment to creating places that are functional, welcoming and future-focused. The awards attracted a record number of submissions this year, with finalists selected for demonstrating best practice in place innovation across Western Australia.

Winners will be announced on Friday, 8 May at the Town Team Movement's Festival of Doing, where representatives will be in attendance.

While another nomination, The Ongerup Do-Over, was not selected as a finalist, it remains an important initiative contributing to the region's ongoing development, particularly in the lead-up to the Bloom Festival.

The Shire looks forward to sharing further updates following the awards announcement.



Community Grants Will Open in July with Clearer Pathways for Local Projects

At the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 22 April, Council adopted a new Community Assistance Grants Policy, making it easier for local groups to plan, apply for, and deliver projects that benefit the community.

The updated policy introduces two funding streams designed to support a range of initiatives. Stream 1 offers grants of up to \$5,000 for smaller projects, while Stream 2 provides between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for larger ideas. Both streams will open annually from 1 July through to 31 May, or until available funds are fully allocated.

The application process has been designed to be straightforward and timely. Stream 1 applications will be assessed as they are received, with decisions typically provided within four weeks. Stream 2 applications will also be reviewed as they come in, with recommendations presented to Council for a final decision at the next available meeting.

To ensure funding delivers real value, applications will need to clearly demonstrate how projects align with the Community Plan and the positive outcomes they will bring. For projects with a longer-term focus, there is also an option for tapered funding to help build sustainability over time.

Support is available to help groups put forward strong applications. The Shire will offer workshops and one-on-one assistance with officers, helping applicants refine their ideas before submitting.

For larger funding requests above \$10,000, organisations can still seek support through the Shire's annual budget process.

Adding a fresh and engaging element, an annual "Shark Tank" style event will also be introduced, giving community groups the opportunity to pitch their ideas for grants of up to \$1,000. Workshops will be held in the lead-up to help participants build confidence and sharpen their presentations.

Successful applicants will work with the Shire to agree on funding terms and reporting requirements, ensuring transparency and strong outcomes for the community.

This new approach provides a clear, supportive pathway for local organisations to bring their ideas to life and continue building a vibrant and connected community.

Stay. Grow. Thrive.





Road Works

Public Notice -Borden Bremer Bay Road Shoulder widening and sealing upgrade works

As part of the 2025/26 Annual Works Program and delivering safer roads, please note that from 10th May 2026 for estimated duration of 5 weeks, Fulton Hogan will be carrying out works for the upgrade of Borden-Bremer Bay Road. The works involve, widening the shoulders and resealing the section of road.

To ensure safety during this period:

- Advanced warning signage,
- 40-60km/h speed restriction with traffic light control for shuttle flow or temporary holds on traffic.
- Lane closure for shuttle flow, with lane down to 3.2m during works.
- worksite delineation,
- verge works,
- pilot vehicle (follow me)
- mobile site for sweeping.

Delays will be kept to a minimum during works where possible.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as these improvements are made.

Apologies for any inconvenience caused, and as always, please drive safely!

For any queries in regards to the traffic management, contact Fulton Hogan – Project Manager Emile Botes 0408 705 980

Style and logo

You may have noticed the new logo starting to appear out on the roads. This marks the beginning of the rollout of the Shire's updated branding.

There are a few variations of the logo. This is intentional, as no single version suits every application. Each has been designed to work clearly and consistently across different uses, from signage and vehicles through to documents and digital platforms.



Earthquake Session

The Shire of Gnowangerup recently hosted a community information session in partnership with DFES to provide residents with a better understanding of earthquakes and what they mean for our local area. The session covered recent earthquake activity around Gnowangerup, what to expect moving forward, and practical steps the community can take to stay safe before, during and after an earthquake. Residents are encouraged to review the information provided and take simple steps to be prepared.

The full presentation can be found on the Shire website under latest news.



Photos: West Australian Newspapers Limited (left), Johnson & White 1968 (right)

DFES Community Earthquake Preparedness Guide

<https://publications.dfes.wa.gov.au/publications/dfes-earthquake-guide>

Before and after Earthquake fact sheet

<https://publications.dfes.wa.gov.au/publications/before-and-after-an-earthquake-fact-sheet>

What to do during an earthquake fact sheet

<https://publications.dfes.wa.gov.au/publications/what-to-do-in-an-earthquake-fact-sheet>

Earthquakes@GA

<https://earthquakes.ga.gov.au/>

Geoscience Australia - Earthquake Hazard

<https://www.community-safety.ga.gov.au/hazards/earthquake>

The Great ShakeOut – International Earthquake Exercise. Practice earthquake safety now, and participate on 16 October.

<https://www.shakeout.org/>



KidSport program boosts swimming participation and community wellbeing in Gnowangerup

The Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport's KidSport program continues to make a meaningful difference in regional communities, including right here in Gnowangerup.

This season, the program has supported families with concession cards to access free entry to the Gnowangerup pool, resulting in an additional 680 attendances.

Beyond increased participation, the impact of this initiative reaches much further. KidSport is designed to reduce financial barriers so more children can take part in sport and recreation activities. In doing so, it helps to build water safety awareness, swimming confidence, and lifelong skills that are critical in a country where access to pools, rivers, and the ocean is part of everyday life.

Regular exposure to aquatic environments supports safer swimming behaviours, while also encouraging physical activity, social connection, and improved mental health and wellbeing. Programs like this are especially important in regional areas, where opportunities for structured sport and recreation can be limited by distance and cost.

The success of this season reflects the value of partnerships between government programs, local facilities, and community services working together to ensure children and families have equitable access to healthy, active experiences.

The Gnowangerup pool continues to play an important role as a safe, welcoming space for the community to learn, play, and stay active.



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WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Proudly supported by the WA Government

The Early Years Expo

Supporting families from bump to preschool

CONNECT. LEARN. EXPLORE. TOGETHER

A relaxed free-flowing day for families to explore support services, wellbeing and early childhood development.

Come when you can, stay as long as you like



Browse

STALLS ALL DAY

Discover local services, supports & products



Listen

INSPIRING SPEAKERS

Topics for every stage of family life



Kids

ACTIVITIES ALL DAY

Play zone, reading corner, face painting



Relax

TAKE YOUR TIME

Morning tea & lunch included

Program Highlights



- 9.00am Official Opening & Morning Tea
- 9.30am Jamie the Clown Special
- 10.00am Early Childhood Development & Support
Sally Ford & Amanda Baxter (Uplyft)
- 10.30am Jamie the Clown Special
- 11.00am Supporting Your Child's Development
Kim McLean & Jolene Olde (Uplyft)
- 11.30am Jamie the Clown Special
- 12.00pm Parent Wellbeing
Amanda Baxter & Dee Mantach (Uplyft)
- 12.30pm Lunch & Door Prize Draw
- 1.00pm Jamie the Clown Special

**FREE
EVENT**



MONDAY
11 MAY 2026



9AM - 2PM



**GNOWANGERUP
SPORTING
COMPLEX**



**COME & GO
AS YOU PLEASE**



**SOMETHING FOR
EVERYONE**



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Everything you need in one place for busy mums & families

SUPPORT • CONNECTION • INFORMATION • A MOMENT TO BREATHE

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Scan for more info



Mental Health in Rural WA

There is no doubt that farming throws in its fair share of uncertainties and unpredictability's. It can be confronting and overwhelming to even think about reaching out and asking for help let alone trying to figure out the logistics and timing of how you can get to appointments.

Rural Aid can provide free counselling to farmers, farming families, farm workers and their families as well as those involved in the sheep industry for example shearers, truckies, stockies, livestock supply stores and their families. Our counselling service is not asset or income tested, and the number of sessions is not limited

- ✓ We offer farmgate, VC or telehealth appointments
- ✓ We are there to advocate for our rural communities and to be a face at local events: Sundowners, field days, farm sales, bbq's etc.
- ✓ We can deliver workshops, talks, presentations on any topics to do with mental health and wellbeing.
- ✓ We can help with fodder and domestic water where needed and offer some financial assistance to disaster effected farming families
- ✓ We also deliver our Mustering Growth program to schools which helps them with resilience and emotional awareness.

All our services are completely free.

If you or anyone you know may need a safe and confidential space to talk then please reach out. Details below.





Rural Aid

Rural Aid is here for farmers

Rural Aid supports farmers, families, and rural communities to prepare for and recover from tough times, including droughts, floods & other disasters.

By registering with Rural Aid, you'll have access to:

- Practical assistance – hay, domestic water, water tanks, and financial support
- Mental health and wellbeing support – through our local counsellor, now based in your region
- Faster help when you need it most – by registering ahead of time
- A stronger collective voice – helping Rural Aid advocate for greater support for your community

Having a counsellor on the ground means there's now someone local to talk to, someone who understands your region and is here to help you and your family through life's challenges.

Connect today...

Rural Aid is here for you,
your family & your community

Louise O'Neill
0475 558 706

**One conversation with the right person,
at the right time, can change everything.**

Monday to Friday | 9am-4pm*
mhwb@ruralaid.org.au
ruralaid.org.au/mhwb



Protect regional WA from the polyphagous shot-hole borer

Polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB) is present in the Perth metropolitan area.

Help stop the spread:

- ✓ Check restrictions before moving wood, plant material or live plants from the Perth metropolitan area.
- ✓ Buy firewood where you burn it – PSHB can't move far on its own but can be transported long distances in infested wood.
- ✓ Do not burn wood with signs of borer damage – PSHB disperse when infested wood is burnt, increasing the risk of further spread.
- ✓ Check your plants for signs of PSHB infestation.
- ✓ Report suspect borer activity via the MyPestGuide® Reporter app.



dpir.wa.gov.au/PSHB

A Heartfelt Thank You from Karl & Edith

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who contributed to making this year's ANZAC Service and Breakfast such a successful event. Your support, time, and generosity truly brought the community together in remembrance and respect.

Firstly, a big thank you to those who helped bring the service to life:
Councillor Peter Callaghan, and Police Officer Christiaan, for the raising of the flag.
Kevin, for delivering the Ode.

Thanks to Tara, Joni, Darren Lemin and his staff for setting up and dismantling the town hall for the service.

Thanks to the Shire of Gnowangerup for allowing us to use the Town Hall.

To those who kept the breakfast running smoothly:
Darren Robinson and Paul, for manning the barbecue
Tara, Karl and Donna, for looking after the toast and more
Barbara, for the Anzac biscuits.

We are also incredibly grateful for the kind donations that helped make the morning possible:

The Shire of Gnowangerup, Stacey Russell, Janine Thornton and Tara McDonald

If anyone is interested in contributing ideas or helping out with next year's service, your involvement would be warmly welcomed and appreciated.

Once again, thank you all so much.

Karl & Edith

