NOVEMBER 2026

Welcome to Kambarang | The season of birth

THIS MONTH...

A message from our Shire President and CEO

Wild Gravel

Weir Park Stage 1 Completion



The 5km start at Wild Gravel 2026

Full issue can be found on our website **www.gnowangerup.wa.gov.au**
Council > News and Information > Gnowangerup Shire Newsletter

Shire of GNOWANGERUP
BORDEN • GNOWANGERUP • ONGERUP
Heart of the Stirlings

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Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message



As the dust settles on what has been an extraordinary month for the Shire of Gnowangerup, I'd like to pause and thank every volunteer who works so tirelessly across our Shire.

From the hugely successful Borden Backtracks on 8 October to the Wild Gravel event on 24 October; from the Yongergnow and NSPNR teams, who held their AGMs and celebrated a year of achievement, to GNP360, whose AGM and progress reports showcased the remarkable work they continue to do, our volunteers are the heart of this community. Without them, so much of what we accomplish simply would not happen. On behalf of the Shire, we recognise you, we thank you, and we celebrate you.

The inaugural Borden Backtracks was a wonderful day, despite some challenging weather. Congratulations to the organisers and to everyone who took part. It was tremendous to see participants of all ages, and I sincerely hope this becomes a fixture on our annual calendar.

Wild Gravel also faced difficult weather this year, so well done to everyone who took part and everyone who helped on the day. Around 600 registrations is an outstanding achievement, and I hope each of them encourages a friend to join them in 2027. Congratulations to all our winners, though in my view everyone who lined up at the start line is a winner. It is always tricky to single out individuals at events like this, as so many people are involved, including many of our Shire staff. I would, however, like to once again thank our Community Development team, not only for the work they do all year to bring Wild Gravel to our Shire, but for the enormous effort they put in during the weeks leading up to the event. To Stuart, Rory, Neah, and Penny, thank you all. You are truly an incredible asset to our Shire.









Pictured above left to right Shire President Kate O'Keeffe with Adrian Hardy, Minang Dancers, Local legends Mandy Hanna, Anne Hinkley and Terri Herbert all in the new 11km trail run, Shire of Gnowangerup Project Support Officer for Wild Gravel, Neah Stewart and Shire of Gnowangerup CEO, David Nicholson and three generations of the Bungey family all participating.

Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message

Congratulations also to Mt Trio Bushcamp & Caravan Park on another fantastic Country Music Muster last weekend. With James Blundell among the headline performers, it was a weekend to remember, even if the weather once again reminded us all how small we are in the scheme of things. It is wonderful to see events like this bringing visitors to our Shire and the wider region, and the Shire of Gnowangerup was proud to be a financial sponsor.

Council has been busy working on a number of projects. It is terrific to see movement on housing in our Shire, with some exciting proposals now before Council. Council is also developing a tree policy to identify trees of significance throughout the Shire. Once identified, these trees can be protected from future development and formally recorded, so that future generations understand their importance.

For those who don't follow our Council meeting minutes, you may not know that two local businesses recently took advantage of a Shire policy that supports new business initiatives through rate subsidies. Council is always excited to back new ventures in our Shire. If you are thinking about starting a business, I encourage you to contact our Community and Economic Development Manager to find out how this policy could help you.

Many of you have now started harvest, and I wish you all the very best. I hope your yields are rich and rewarding, especially after such a challenging year with so little rain.

With that in mind, the Shire is working to establish a Water Shortage Working Committee to develop strategies for managing water shortages, not only this summer but in the years ahead. Fire mitigation will also be a top priority this season. Please make sure you are aware of the restricted burning periods and follow them strictly.

Thank you all for everything you do to make our Shire such a special place to live.

Kate O'Keeffe









Mt Trio Bush Camp and Caravan Park Afgri Country Music Muster a resounding success! The artists loved it, the campers loved it and we loved it. James and Blair Blundell, and Paul Costa starred but our WA artists shone. Over 750 people experienced an amazing weekend of music, story telling, camping and relaxing with old friends as well as making new friends. Many thanks to the Shire of Gnowangerup for their continued support of this regional event highlighting our region. ~ Margot Byrnes, Mt Trio Bushcamp and Caravan Park.

From the CEO's desk



Wild Gravel 2026: a memorable community occasion

Rain, hail, bitter cold and gale-force winds could not dampen the spirit of Wild Gravel 2026 held on Saturday 24 October. Participants embraced the challenge, while spectators and support crews helped create an atmosphere to remember. With 600 registrations, Wild Gravel provided an opportunity to showcase our landscape, welcome visitors and support the local economy. Months of preparation brought the occasion together, with contributions from volunteers, partners and the wider community. Stuart, Penny, Neah and Rory from the Shire's Community Development team played a pivotal part to the success of the event. Promotion at the World Gravel Championships earlier in the month in Nannup also helped introduce our Shire to a wider cycling audience.

Borden Backtracks 2026 gets the community moving

The first Borden Backtracks provided a lively lead-in to Wild Gravel, bringing together well over 100 participants and a similar number of spectators and supporters. A 25 km ride, 10 km run and 5 km run/walk offered opportunities for different ages and abilities to join in. With event posters on display in Moir Street and with neat and tidy verges, Borden was ready to welcome everyone. Congratulations to the Borden community for organising this event. Together, Borden Backtracks and Wild Gravel highlight the community spirit that makes our Shire a great place to live and visit.













Pictured above at Borden Backtracks top left the fabulous organising committee, local 5km legend Bernie Bungey, the start line up, local Mum Neah Stewart and son Louis, local kids all ready to head out on the bike ride and the rego desk team with Chris from Cyclesense.

From the CEO's desk

From the Council chamber

Council's latest meeting considered 14 reports, including two Local Laws, the Economic Development Plan 2026–2036 and a proposal to reduce the Yougenup Road speed limit to 40 km/h. Briefings and workshops have also covered Public Health Planning, gravel supply, disability access and inclusion, and the draft Annual Report.Council meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of the month, and the public are welcome to attend.

Safety and fire-season readiness

Preparing for the fire season remains a priority. The Bush Fire Advisory Committee discussed training and qualification requirements, while volunteer firefighters have been undertaking further training with the Shire's Community and Emergency Services Manager (Phill Gunn). A big thank you to all the Shire's volunteer firefighters and let's hope the fire season ends up being a non-event.

Townsite improvements

Stage one of Ongerup's Weir Park refresh is complete following consultation with residents and particularly the local children. Penny Wells coordinated community input and Matt Bowen managing project delivery. In Borden, recent works have included repairs to Moir Street's tourist parking area and garden maintenance around the public toilets.

Better systems behind the scenes

Following three months of trials, the Shire's new payroll software went live on 22 October. This software enables staff to enter timesheets, update personal details and access previous payslips, while supporting more accurate, efficient and auditable payroll processing. The Shire's Deputy CEO (Tom Gorman) led the project, with Ciara Wise putting the system through its paces as part of testing.



Pictured: Weir Park, located in the Ongerup townsite, has recently received upgrades, including a new reticulation system, fresh lawn, garden beds and landscaping. These improvements have created a fresh, inviting space for the community to enjoy, just in time for summer picnics.







Roads with Rick – Infrastructure and Assets



Looking After Our Rural Roads

Throughout October our crews continued grading, gravel patching and maintenance works across many roads within the Shire, including Maileeup Road, Jamvale Road, Holden Road, Haxby Road, Magitup Road, Highdenup Road, Tin Hut Road, Woodlands Road, Gleeson Road, Day Road, Mungerup Road South, Cowcher Road, North Stirlings Road and Tieline Road. These works help maintain safe and reliable access for residents, farmers, visitors and freight operators.

Our maintenance teams will continue prioritising key harvest routes where possible, however road conditions can change quickly during this period. We encourage road users to report hazards such as severe corrugations, potholes, fallen trees, damaged signs or other safety concerns to the Shire as soon as practicable.

Harvest Safety on Our Roads

Harvest is now underway across the Shire, bringing increased grain haulage, farm machinery movements and heavy vehicle traffic to our rural road network. Combined with a drier-than-average winter and spring, road users can expect more dust, loose gravel and reduced visibility on many local roads. Shire crews have continued maintenance grading and gravel patching on key routes throughout October to support harvest activities and maintain safe access across the district.

Dust is one of the biggest hazards during harvest. Visibility can disappear quickly behind trucks, machinery and passing vehicles, making it difficult to see oncoming traffic, road crews or vehicles entering the roadway. Drivers are reminded to slow down, switch on headlights in dusty conditions, increase following distances and always drive to the conditions.



Roads with Rick – Infrastructure and Assets

A Reminder for Heavy Vehicle Operators

Many Shire roads form part of the Main Roads WA Restricted Access Vehicle (RAV) Network, with most local routes generally operating as Network 7 roads. Truck operators are reminded that access is subject to route approvals, permit conditions and any specific restrictions that apply to individual roads.

Across the region, several neighbouring local governments have introduced operating conditions for heavy vehicles that reduce allowable speeds by up to 30 km/h below the posted speed limit, or impose maximum limits of 60 km/h on selected gravel roads. While these restrictions currently do not apply on roads within the Shire of Gnowangerup, they highlight the importance of checking route conditions and driving to the prevailing road conditions.

"No delivery schedule, harvest load or timetable is worth risking the safety of a child travelling to or from school."

School Bus Routes Need Extra Care

Particular care is required on school bus routes. During the school term, buses may stop unexpectedly on narrow gravel roads to collect or drop off students. Heavy dust generated by trucks and agricultural vehicles can completely obscure a stationary bus, waiting passengers or approaching traffic.

Bus drivers often have limited visibility when pulling back onto the roadway, and children can be difficult to see in dusty conditions. Truck drivers are urged to significantly reduce speed when approaching a school bus, school bus stopping point or known bus route. If visibility is reduced by dust, slow down immediately and be prepared to stop



Sharing the Road Safely

Harvest is one of the most important times of the year for our community. A little patience and a little less speed can make a big difference. Most importantly, let us make sure everyone gets home safely at the end of each day.

Remember, every vehicle on our roads is carrying someone's family member. Slow down, share the road, look out for one another, and help make this harvest season a safe one for everyone.

- Drive to the conditions
- Slow down in dust and on loose gravel
- Be patient around agricultural machinery
- Follow all roadwork and traffic management directions
- Give shire road crews plenty of space and slow down
- Take extra care near school bus routes and stopping points and slow down

Wild Gravel 2026 – The Dust Has Settled

Well, that's Wild Gravel done for another year! After months of planning, countless emails, spreadsheets, meetings, phone calls and a whole lot of gear being transported into the Stirling Range, Wild Gravel 2026 came together on Saturday 24 October, with around 600 registrations across our cycling, running and walking events.

And what a day it was!

One of our favourite statistics from this year is that the humble 5 km Walk/Run was our most popular event, with more than 160 people registered. So many of those were locals, and for the Community Development Team, that's a huge win. Wild Gravel isn't just about the serious cyclists and endurance athletes. It's about getting people out, moving their bodies, having a go and enjoying a great day in their own backyard.

At the other end of the scale, we had 20 brave souls take on the 420 km Ultra. These riders departed Mt Trio Bush Camp and Caravan Park on Friday afternoon, either at 1 pm or 5 pm, and headed off through Ongerup, Gnowangerup, Katanning and Mt Barker before making their way back through the Stirling Range.

After riding through a freezing night and clocking up more than 350 km, they arrived at what was arguably the toughest part of the course. A few had some rather sarcastic words of thanks for Race Director Rory Murray, who had apparently saved the best until last! But they pushed through and arrived back to a warm welcome in Event Village. What an achievement.

A Little Bit of Untamed Magic

Our new Untamed Trail Runs were another highlight. Earlier in the planning, Laurie from SES took Penny out to inspect the 21 km loop through the Stirling Range. The scenery was so spectacular that the decision was made to add an 11km out-and-back course, simply so more people could experience it.

And judging by the interest and feedback, that was a good call! A big thank you to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for supporting access to these incredible trails.







Wild Gravel 2026 – Connection

The People Who Make It Happen





More than 100 volunteers put their hands up this year. Some were out at pit stops, some were driving around the course, others were marshalling, handing out medals, setting up, helping at the start and finish lines or packing everything away at the end.

And to those loyal volunteers who were still there when everyone else had gone home, helping load the last bits of gear and bring everything back to town – you know who you are, and you are absolute legends.

Our local SES and St John Ambulance crews were once again fantastic, and a special mention goes to Albany Veterans Assist, who sent a whole crew to marshal the Kendenup end of the course. Their support made a real difference.

Culture, Connection and a Very Memorable Performance

Early in the planning, the team met with local Noongar Robbie Miniter and Peter Twigg for a conversation about connection to Country in the Stirling Range. It was one of those meetings that really shaped what the team wanted Wild Gravel to become.

Working alongside the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) has been a highlight. The team generously supported planning, logistics, volunteering and Event Village displays, including the involvement of the Ngowanjerindj Rangers.

Local Noongar Robbie Miniter welcomed us in the morning, spreading smoke to create a shared safe passage for our visitors and locals coming together for this event. You can see Robbie down at the start line carrying the smoke from one side to the other.

GAC also connected the organisers with the Kalyagul Cultural Group, who delivered an incredible performance on the day. And then the heavens opened!

Rather than stopping, the dancers continued their performance in the pouring rain while everyone watched on. It was a pretty special moment, and one that will stay with the team for a long time.
There's a real desire to grow this cultural connection in 2027, and the team is looking forward to continuing those conversations.








Wild Gravel 2026 – The Afgri Event Village

The Food, the Coffee and Everything in Between

Afgri Event Village was a big part of the day again this year, and despite the weather throwing a few challenges at everyone, the vendors did a fantastic job.

Nick from Shaka's Dumplings has left quite a few people dreaming about their next dumpling fix. Thankfully, being based in Albany means another serve isn't too far away!

Bec and the team from Smoove Açai returned for their second year, keeping the coffees flowing and serving up delicious food, while Bluff Knoll Café provided some great grab-and-go options.

The team also loved having local businesses, community groups and service providers on display, along with pop-up shops and the recovery zone supported by Auspan.

Dartfish's enormous screen was a brilliant addition, bringing live footage from the course back to Event Village. It meant spectators could actually see what was happening out there rather than just waiting for someone to appear over the finish line.

And after a long day on the gravel, Dune Brewery, Sheppard's Hut Wines and Woodlands Distillery were certainly welcome sights for many!

A big thank you also goes to Nutrien for the stage truck and to Zach for helping transport a mountain of equipment to and from Event Village.











Wild Gravel 2026 – What's Next?

So, How Did It Go?

The feedback is rolling in, and so far Wild Gravel 2026 has an average overall rating of 4.6 out of 5. The team is pretty happy with that!

There are also some really useful suggestions coming through. More signage around Event Village and start lines? Fair call. It all made perfect sense in the organisers' heads, but clearly a few things could have been communicated better! Drinking water more readily available at the finish line? Absolutely something to improve.

There's also been feedback about giving the cultural elements of the event an even greater presence, which is something the team would love to build on.

As for grading every gravel road the day before the event or turning every out-and-back course into a loop, there are a few practical limitations. But that doesn't mean the team isn't always looking for better options.

Keep the feedback coming. It genuinely helps shape the next event.

And Just Like That, It's Time to Plan 2027!

The gear has barely been unpacked and the team has already met to discuss next year's date.

It's not as simple as picking a Saturday! There are other gravel events, community commitments, volunteer availability and plenty of other things to consider. Feedback from this year's event is also part of the discussion. The date announcement isn't far away, so keep an eye out and get ready to put Wild Gravel 2027 in your diary.

To everyone who participated, volunteered, sponsored, supplied, supported, cheered, handed out medals, cooked, poured coffees, marshalled a course or helped pack away the last gazebo – thank you.

Wild Gravel is becoming something pretty special, and it's because so many people are willing to get involved.

See you in 2027!









Wild Gravel 2026 – Sponsors and Partners

Wild Gravel 2026 was supported by the WA Government through Tourism WA, Royalties for Regions and WA Events funding, with additional funding from the Great Southern Development Commission, Southern Ports Community Investment Program and CSBP Community Grants. The event was proudly supported by headline sponsor AFGRI Equipment, major sponsor Roast & Brew Café and a valued network of sponsors and community partners.

Thank You!

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Stay, Grow, Thrive – Economic Development Plan 2026–2036

The Shire of Gnowangerup has developed a new Economic Development Plan 2026–2036, setting out a vision for the future of Borden, Gnowangerup and Ongerup. The Plan looks at what makes the Shire a great place to live, work and do business, while identifying opportunities for growth over the next ten years. It focuses on practical priorities including housing, attracting and retaining workers, supporting local businesses, strengthening agriculture, growing tourism and encouraging new investment.

So, what does this mean for everyday residents? A strong local economy helps keep our towns thriving. It means more opportunities for local jobs, businesses that can grow, families choosing to stay or move here, and the services and facilities that make our communities great places to live. The Plan gives the Shire a clear direction to work towards, helping guide future projects, attract funding and build partnerships to turn opportunities into reality. Residents are encouraged to take a look and see what is planned for the future of their community.

Read the full Economic Development Plan on the Shire's website at www.gnowangerup.wa.gov.au under Council → Public Documents → Integrated Plans.



Gnowangerup Shire Monthly Newsletter

How Do You Prefer to Receive Your Shire News?

The Shire's monthly newsletter is released in the first week of each month, featuring updates from the CEO and Shire President, current works, community projects, events and important information for residents.

The newsletter is available on the Shire website, through social media or as a printed copy from the Administration Office.

Would you prefer a printed copy delivered to your PO Box each month?
This edition has been delivered to all PO Boxes across the Shire. However, to reduce printing and distribution costs, future editions will only be delivered to residents who request a copy.

To join the monthly PO Box distribution list, simply contact the Shire on 08 9827 1007 or email gnpshire@gnowangerup.wa.gov.au.
The Shire wants to make sure everyone can stay informed in the way that suits them best!

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DANDJOO

EST 2025 CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE

SAVE THE DATE

Dandjoo Day 2027 will be held on Wednesday 24 March

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

We will be awarding the following annual awards:

- Community Citizen of the Year
- Community Group or Event of the Year
- Senior Citizen of the Year (65 and older)
- Young Citizen of the Year (25 and Younger)



Have you seen our Tagalog translated edition of the Shire newsletter?

Our Filipino community is an important part of life across Borden, Ongerup and Gnowangerup. Filipino residents work on our farms, in our businesses and in essential services, and they contribute to local sport, schools, churches and community groups. It is important they have the same access to Shire services.

The Filipino edition can be found in the news section on the Shire website.

Maraming salamat po!

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A message from our Community Emergency Services Manager

Bushfire season is here, and now is the time to prepare your property and protect our community. Residents are encouraged to reduce fire hazards by slashing long grass, clearing leaves and flammable material from around buildings, maintaining firebreaks, and ensuring driveways and access tracks are free from obstructions.

Rural residents should take extra precautions by ensuring stock and machinery fire plans are in place, water supplies and firefighting equipment are accessible and serviceable, and access routes can accommodate emergency vehicles if required.

Taking simple steps now can significantly reduce the risk of fire spreading and help keep firefighters, neighbours and families safe.

Please review your bushfire survival plan, stay informed of weather conditions and fire warnings by downloading the Emergency WA app, and report any fire incidents to 000.

By working together, we can make the Shire of Gnowangerup a safer and more resilient community this bushfire season.



FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS 2026-2027

Chief Fire Control Officer:	WAYNE PECH	0428 428 124
Deputy Chief Fire Control Officer 1:	RICK CARPENTER	0428 544 970
Deputy Chief Fire Control Officer 2:	CHRIS STONE	0427 281 018
Fire Weather Officer:	WILLIAM DILLON	0400 644 130
Communications Officer:	PAUL RICHARDSON	0447 279 232
Base Operator:	CHRIS STONE	0427 281 018



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CEO Community Outreach

Every Thursday, Shire of Gnowangerup Chief Executive Officer, David Nicholson is out in the community, taking the time to listen to residents and answer questions.

If you're wondering about the rates increase, have questions about a Council decision, want to better understand what's happening around the Shire, or have an idea you would like to share, this is your opportunity to have a conversation.

Feedback isn't just about raising concerns. If there's something the Shire is doing well, or something you'd like to see more of, David would love to hear that too.

The best decisions come from understanding the community's experiences, priorities and ideas. So if there's something on your mind, stop by and have a chat.



Borden | First Thursday of the month
NSPNR 19 Moir St, Borden

Ongerup | Second and Third Thursday
Yongergnow Centre Jaekel St, Ongerup

Gnowangerup | Fourth Thursday of the month
CRC Yougenup Rd, Gnowangerup

10am
Thursdays

Borden | Gnowangerup | Ongerup

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION

Three competition categories:
Business | Farm Gate | Residential

Prizes in each category:
1st Prize: $250 local business voucher
2nd Prize: $150 local business voucher
3rd Prize: $100 local business voucher

Entries close: Monday 7 December 2026
Winners announced: Saturday 12 December 2026 at the Christmas Markets.

Landfill Sorting Tips

Before visiting your local landfill or refuse site, please take a few minutes to sort your load into separate groups and dispose in correct location as signposted:

✅ General Household Waste
- Everyday household rubbish
- Non-recyclable materials accepted by the landfill

✅ Scrap Metal
- Steel, fencing wire (remove any timber posts first), farm machinery parts and other metal items
- Empty IBC chemical shuttles should be returned to the supplier but the metal frames only can be placed in the scrap metal area only.

✅ Green Waste
- Tree prunings, leaves, grass clippings and garden material
- Keep free from plastics and other contaminants

✅ Building Rubble
- Bricks, concrete, pavers and similar inert materials
- Place only in designated rubble areas.

❌ Do Not Bring
- Tyres
- Asbestos
- Chemicals
- Fuels and oils
- Paints (empty tins are ok)
- Hazardous materials
- Gas bottles that have not been degassed and made safe

These materials are not accepted at Shire refuse sites and require specialist disposal arrangements.

As harvest activities commence in the coming weeks, the Shire encourages everyone to remain vigilant when disposing of waste, particularly materials that may pose a fire risk. Taking a few extra minutes to sort loads before arriving at the landfill helps reduce fire hazards, improves recycling outcomes and keeps disposal costs down for the whole community.

Thank you to everyone who continues to do the right thing. By working together and using our waste facilities responsibly, we can build a cleaner, safer and more sustainable Shire for future generations.

For more information on our waste facilities please visit the Shire website.