

# SEPTEMBER 2025

**Welcome to Djilba** The first spring. The second rains. Season of conception.

## THIS MONTH...

A message from our  
Shire President  
and CEO

Projects update

Wild Gravel Entry  
Competitions



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



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## Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message



It is hard to believe we are already moving into September – this year is absolutely flying by! Council has been very busy over the past four weeks, and we are pleased to confirm that the budget has now been adopted. This means we can move forward with a number of important projects that will benefit our community.

Rates notices have now been posted out, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Shire office. As a small local government, rates and grants are our only sources of income, and rising costs across the sector meant we had to make the difficult decision to increase rates this year. The two-year rates freeze during COVID disrupted our long-term financial planning, and we have been working hard to recover. The positive news is that this proactive step now puts the Shire back on a solid financial footing, and for the first time in two to three years we are in a position to contribute to our reserve programs again.

We are particularly excited to be working alongside GNP 360 on their proposed Community Hub project and look forward to sharing more details once grant applications have been submitted and assessed. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank GNP 360, the Boarding Group, and the OCD for the incredible work they do for their communities. We are incredibly fortunate to have such proactive and invested organisations driving positive outcomes across our Shire.

In August, I had the privilege of speaking to the secondary students at Gnowangerup District High School about local government and many of the projects currently before Council. The students asked some very insightful questions, and I thoroughly enjoyed my time with them. Hopefully, we will see some of these bright young minds in the Council Chambers in years to come.

The past few weeks have also seen our National Rural Health Alliance gain momentum, following a productive meeting in Perth with Minister Reece Whitby. We presented the Minister with several suggestions on how the State Government could better support local governments with the financial burden of maintaining GP services in our Shires. Minister Whitby engaged with our proposals, and the discussion was both constructive and worthwhile.



*Shire President Kate O'Keeffe, Hon. Reece Whitby and Shire of Lake Grace President Len Armstrong.*

## Shire President - Kate O'Keeffe Monthly Message

September is always an interesting month for local government as we enter caretaker mode with the election period underway. Both Deputy President Rebecca O'Meehan and I will be away for three weeks in September, and as a result, the September Council Meeting has been rescheduled to Tuesday, 30 September. Councillor Peter Callaghan will chair the Council Workshop on 10 September, while Councillors Callaghan, Kiddle, and Miniter will also represent the Shire of Gnowangerup at WALGA Week later in the month.

Our Zone also met recently, and I look forward to updating the community on discussions and outcomes in the coming weeks. It is always a positive meeting when our WALGA Zone representatives come together and share issues, challenges, and reports from our individual local governments. There are many commonalities across our Shires, and these meetings give us the opportunity to work together to improve outcomes for our residents.

Congratulations to the Borden Pavilion Committee on their successful Celebration of Small Halls event last week. By all accounts, it was a wonderful community catch-up and the entertainment was top-notch. September also marks the start of the Blooms Festival in Ongerup on Saturday, 27 September. Please mark the date in your calendars and join the Ongerup community for lunch as part of this great regional celebration.

I trust everyone's training for the Gravel Cycle and Run event is going well. Saturday, 11 October promises to be an incredible day, with the warm-up event on Friday, 10 October also shaping up to be a lot of fun. If you haven't yet nominated, please do so. And if you feel your skills are better suited to volunteering, we would love your support — please reach out to the Community Development Team, as there are still a number of positions to be filled.

As always, I encourage all community members to reach out to their elected member if they have any questions or concerns. Even though I am on leave during September, I will remain contactable by email. Finally, congratulations to all nominees for the upcoming local government election – thank you for putting your hand up to serve your community.

Council has spent a great deal of time over the past couple of years researching and preparing for potential renewable energy projects. The proposed wind farm for our Shire is something we have considered at length, taking care to learn as much as possible by working with both the industry, governments, community (through consultation) and prospective developers. We are exploring the idea of holding a community event later in the year where everyone can come together to share views and discuss any future proposals—details will be provided in due course.

In the meantime, community members are warmly encouraged to raise any comments, concerns, or suggestions either during Public Question Time at an Ordinary Council Meeting, or by arranging a time to meet directly with the CEO or myself. Council is mindful of the impact that any developments will have on our Shire, both now and in the future, and will continue to ensure that careful planning and consideration is undertaken in conjunction with state and federal governments.



*Shire President Kate O'Keeffe with Neil Fong at a recent CEDA event.*



## Update from the Chief Executive Officer - David Nicholson



In recent years the State government has made it known through their words and actions that they expect Local Governments to be more effective, efficient and professional.

The State Government provides oversight to the industry via the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety, and is currently undertaking industry reform.

This has included the introduction of stronger penalties for breaches and non-compliance, improving industry effectiveness through consistency and simplicity, greater transparency and accountability, requirements for stronger governance and community engagement, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and improved financial management and reporting.

The Department's approach to regulation revolves around fostering best practice within the industry, monitoring industry performance, and ensuring compliance.

The Department notes that when appropriately resourced and with the right capabilities, local governments can create and make real change for the communities they serve, which in part is driven by rising community expectations.

When the Shire undertook community consultation in preparing its Council Plan for 2025-2035, the strong theme that emerged was the community wants Council to do more.

For the Shire of Gnowangerup this has resulted in the need to increase internal expertise and in some cases increase staff complement. Indeed, this potential outcome has been highlighted by the Department in their paper titled Local Government Regulatory Approach where they state the new local government operating environment will require local governments to have the right capabilities and resources, and a well-resourced workforce.

As CEO of the Shire I take compliance and serving the community very seriously. Having the right people in the right jobs, and simply enough people is critical to this end goal.

But I also recognise there are opportunities to reduce costs by sharing resources with near-neighbour local governments. To this end the Shire is part of the Great Southern Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC). VROC's purpose is to Collaborate to Create Value, which means working on similar challenges and projects together to share costs and improve outcomes.

VROC is currently working on a joint submission to obtain grant funds to build houses for key workers, address water shortages, and reduce carbon emissions.



## Update from the Executive Manager Infrastructure and Assets

### Why Are Gravel Roads Closed When It Rains?

Occasionally residents receive SMS messages or Public notices on shire website and socials in regards to complete and partial road closures due to the heavy rain. Different areas of the shire received different amounts of rain at different times which, is why some areas were closed and others opened. We make the decisions based on weather advice and observations, road inspections by shire staff and reports from landowners. The aim is to minimise damage to the gravel road network and to minimise disruption to the traveling public. Large trucks cause the most damage which is why they are banned first which, reduces the risk of hazards for other users including school buses.

The shire has over 800kms of gravel roads, the surfaces vary from good depths of gravel to sections that are formed and are sandy or have a lot of clay content that makes them good when dry but slippery when wet. We currently gravel re-sheet about 25km per year and are looking at ways to increase the length of re-sheets.

The Local Government Act 1995 provides the authorisation for the shire to temporarily close roads within its jurisdiction and there can be penalties if road users knowingly flout directions.

Some of the key reasons for closure:

- **Safety First:** Wet gravel surfaces can become slippery and deformed, increasing the risk of accidents and vehicle damage.
- **Preventing Road Damage:** Rain softens the road base, and vehicle traffic (particularly trucks) can cause deep ruts, potholes, and erosion. Temporarily closing roads during these adverse conditions helps avoid costly repairs and prolongs their usability.
- **Efficient Maintenance:** Keeping vehicles off wet roads allows maintenance crews to restore surfaces more effectively once conditions dry out and improve.

The key messages are, 'Do the right thing and follow shire issued instructions' and to always 'Drive to conditions' particularly knowing that wet gravel roads become slippery and deformed.

Be aware, Be Safe....



# Projects Update



## **Park Road Pedestrian Bridge - Asset Replacement**

Local contractor engaged and is constructing bridge frame to span over the water way. Bridge footings and site heritage approval to with installation expected to be completed after winter.



## **Ongerup Hall Park Drinking Fountain installation Asset Replacement**

Funded by Watercorp to replace the drinking fountain that was closed due to water quality issues, we are working towards re-opening prior to the Bloom festival event.



## **Gnowangerup Aerodrome Manual and Certification**

CASA has advised the shire that our Aerodrome manual will be re-approved to allow the Aerodrome to be certified.



## **Waterpipe Connection**

Aerodrome storage dam will be connected to the 90mm main pipe that feeds the Sport Complex Dam to improve the efficiency of water transfer and reduce water loss.



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Transport  
and Major Infrastructure



**FREE ENTRY**

# GNOWANGERUP COMMUNITY GRAVEL



SCAN HERE

# 2025



**FRI, 10 OCTOBER | 2PM - ONWARDS  
IN THE GNOWANGERUP SHIRE CARPARK**

 **RIDE WITH OUR WILD GRAVEL  
AMBASSADORS**

 **TIMED GRAVEL RUN  
5KM OR 10KM**

 **GRAVEL RIDING WORKSHOP**

 **JUNIOR BIKE COURSE &  
GUIDED RIDE**

 **HEAPS OF PRIZES UP FOR  
GRABS**

 **BIKE CHECK & REPAIR**

 **FOOD VENDORS & MORE**

 **MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT**

**2PM | KIDS ACTIVITIES**

**3PM | AMBASSADOR RIDE**

**3:30PM | 5KM RUN**

**4PM | 10KM RUN**

**5PM | NIGHT CONTINUES**



# We ♥ WA Bike Month

[wabikemonth.com.au](http://wabikemonth.com.au)





WIN A WEEKEND  
AWAY IN  
BREMER BAY



REGISTER FOR WILD GRAVEL  
BEFORE SEPT 14 TO GO IN THE  
DRAW FOR 2 NIGHTS IN AN AIRBNB  
GENEROUSLY DONATED BY A  
LOCAL SPONSOR

T&C's apply see website for full details  
<https://www.gnowangerup.wa.gov.au/terms-and-conditions-for-wild-gravel-trade-promotion-lottery-wa.aspx>

REGISTER TO WIN

ULTIMATE SAFETY BUNDLE



FLY 12 SPORT WITH SILICONE CASE | FLY 6 WITH  
SILICONE CASE AND LENS PROTECTORS | DUO  
MOUNT | MICROPHONE FILTERS | SADDLE RAIL MOUNT

**CYCLIQ**

T&C's apply see website for full details

REGISTER AT  
WILDGRAVEL.COM.AU



WALK/RUN 5 | WALK/RUN 12 |  
RUN 21 | RUN 42 | RIDE 12 | RIDE  
30 | RIDE 60 | RIDE 100 | RIDE 150



DUST OFF YOUR COWBOY  
HATS AND HITCH UP YOUR  
TRAILERS FOR THE ...



# 2025 AFGRI MOUNTAIN COUNTRY MUSIC MUSTER

MT TRIO BUSH CAMP & CARAVAN PARK - STIRLING RANGE WA  
30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER – 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2025

FEATURING



**JUSTIN STANDLEY**

Multi-award-winning Australian  
country singer-songwriter, and  
Golden Guitar finalist.



**AMBER JOY POULTON**

Award-winning Australian  
country music singer-  
songwriter.



**CONNIE KIS ANDERSEN**

One of the finest, most dedicated  
and professional artists to hail  
from Perth.

ALONG WITH: KATHY CARVER, MOIRA SCOTT, ROGUE PONY, COYOTE LOCO, CAMPFIRE COUNTRY, DAVE KENT, WAYNE PRIDE

## ENJOY A FANTASTIC WEEKEND :

Outdoor Movie Night, Country Music, Market Stalls, Wine  
Tasting, Food Vans, and Poets Corner.

**BOOK NOW :** [mttriomusicmuster.com.au](http://mttriomusicmuster.com.au)



WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA



AUSPAN



## TICKETS :

Book your tickets online. All tickets  
include 3 nights camping on an  
unpowered camp  
site at Mt Trio Bush  
Camp & Caravan  
Park.





# VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Join a local Alcohol & Other Drug **Prevention** Committee and help create safer & healthier communities across the Great Southern

- ✓ Flexible ✓ Fun ✓ Training and support provided
- ✓ Plan and action events, and other activities to educate and raise awareness



**CONTACT US TODAY!**



<https://holyoake.org.au>



0422 294 909



albanyaodpreventioncommittee@gmail.com