



Daniel Roberts and his kids have already collected 36 toys to donate to those doing it tough. Picture: Tracy Roberts

Focus on roads

GANNAWARRA Shire Council's Roads Focus Group continues to advocate for residents regarding improvements to the maintenance of roads across the municipality.

Council chief executive officer Geoff Rollinson said the group was made up of residents, Councillors and Gannawarra Shire Council staff, and met every two to three months to receive updates on Council's roads management program and discuss other key issues.

"Our Roads Focus Group plays an important role in ensuring our residents' concerns about local roads are heard and enacted upon," Mr Rollinson said.

"Group members have varying degrees of expertise when it comes to using our roads, which is valuable when it comes to understanding the concerns of motorists using our roads."

The group's recent meeting provided attendees with an update on Council's road improvement and maintenance programs and included discussion on future road investment opportunities.

The group also reviewed the results of Council's 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey, which enabled residents to identify which local roads needed improvement.

As part of this process, all Victorian Department of Transport-managed roads in the municipality, including the area's two highways and eight arterial roads, were highlighted as being of concern to residents.

Various Council-managed roads that needed attention were also identified during the survey.

These ranged from various roads within Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook, various local roads and roads that connect local highways to districts.

"Council will use the information provided via the Community Satisfaction Survey to support our advocacy efforts for improved maintenance of our highways and arterial roads, which are managed by the State Government," Mr Rollinson said.

"Council thanks our Roads Focus Group members for their commitment and passion regarding road management within the municipality."

World Cup toy drive

Louis Harrison

AS many eager fans gear up to watch the men's Soccer World Cup, the Kerang soccer club is taking their support one step further with a toy drive to support the community.

Daniel Roberts from the Kerang soccer club has organised the toy drive which will see the club donate a brand new toy to the Kerang Neighbourhood House for every goal that is scored throughout the elimination rounds of the tournament.

Mr Roberts said a lot of people locally are struggling at the moment and the club was looking for a way to give back.

"When you look at the news these days, it's

one of two things; it's either the Soccer World Cup being mentioned, or it's just the cost of living," he said.

"We've always been very mindful that a lot of people are doing it tough locally."

The toys will be distributed to local families in need at the discretion of the Kerang Neighbourhood House.

"The people who work there on a regular basis and volunteer on a regular basis will know particular families, in particular kids, who are in need, so it'll be up to them whether they want to, nominate families and give the toys to those families," Mr Roberts said.

While soccer isn't as goal-heavy as other

sports like AFL, Mr Roberts said the club has already donated more than 40 toys to match the goals scored as of the end of Round 32.

"We're currently up to, as we speak, I think about 42 goals scored, so we've got that number of toys to take," he said.

Mr Roberts said the club hopes that other businesses or members of the community will see what they're doing to inspire them to give back similarly.

"The reason we decided to reach out is that if our story inspires even one local business owner - or someone with a bit of spare cash who connects with what we're doing - it might motivate them to get involved and make a difference too," he said.

SPONSORED CONTENT

More Australians are choosing life beyond the big cities

Australians are moving to regional communities in record numbers, with new data showing the shift away from capital cities continues to gather pace.

The latest Regional Movers Index found the number of people moving from capital cities to regional Australia reached its highest level since the index began. In the March 2026 quarter, people moving to the regions outnumbered those heading back to the cities by almost 30 per cent.

Regional Australia Institute chief executive Liz Ritchie said the result reflected the growing appeal of regional living.

"This is the highest level of capital to regional movement the RMI has ever recorded," she said. "Australians are continuing to choose regional life in greater numbers, even as economic conditions shift."

While Sydney and Melbourne continue to account for most people leaving capital cities, the trend is becoming more widespread, with increasing numbers of movers also coming from Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

The Sunshine Coast remained the most popular destination for city movers, while Greater Geelong, Fraser Coast, Moorabool and Lake Macquarie were also among the leading destinations.

The data also shows growth is spreading beyond established regional hotspots.

Toowoomba recorded the strongest year-on-year increase in people moving from capital cities of any local government area in Australia. Other locations attracting growing numbers of residents included Broome, Townsville and the Mid-Coast region of New South Wales.

Ritchie said the data helps identify emerging growth areas and gives communities an opportunity to plan for future housing, infrastructure and services.

For regional businesses, population growth can create new opportunities as communities expand and local economies grow.

Read the full story at CommBank Newsroom.

