



ganbina

Partner Update

Welcoming Echuca into the Ganbina Family

Ganbina is excited to officially welcome the children, young people and families of Echuca into the Ganbina community through the opening of our new Echuca site.

For almost 30 years, we have worked alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to support success through education, training, employment and leadership pathways. The establishment of the Echuca office represents an additional chapter in extending this support to more children, young people and communities.

Our approach in Echuca begins early. Through partnerships with Echuca East Primary, Echuca Primary and Echuca Twin Rivers Primary schools, our team will work with children in Grades 3 to 6 to build confidence, strengthen school engagement, develop aspirations and create strong pathways into secondary education and beyond. This early intervention approach is a key element of our Jobs4U2 program.

Official Opening of the Echuca Site

In July, we officially opened our Echuca office with a traditional Smoking Ceremony attended by community leaders, Elders, partners and Ganbina staff. The ceremony marked an important milestone in Ganbina's commitment to supporting children and young people across the region.

Speaking at the opening, Chief Executive Officer Anthony Cavanagh described the new office as:

“

More than a new location. It is a place of connection, opportunity and belonging... a place where children and families will be welcomed, supported and encouraged to pursue their aspirations, and where partnerships can grow, ideas can flourish, and strong futures can be built together.

”

The new Echuca site will deliver Ganbina's proven Jobs4U2 model, supporting young people aged 5 to 25 through education, training, employment, and life-skills development. Jobs4U2 achieves strong outcomes, with 86% of graduates attaining a secondary school qualification and more than 80% of participants successfully completing their education, employment, or training activities each year, demonstrating the effectiveness of the model being introduced to Echuca.



Building a Strong Local Team

A critical part of establishing the Echuca office has been recruiting local community leaders who bring deep knowledge, trusted relationships and a strong commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.



Paulleen Markwort
Executive General Manager

Paulleen Markwort Executive General Manager

Paulleen has extensive experience in strategy, policy development, organisational leadership, and community sector engagement. A Murri woman with ties to the Gulf of Carpentaria and Wiradjuri heritage, Paulleen will oversee the entire operations, providing strategic direction, governance, and operational leadership. She is committed to building strong partnerships, fostering sustainable growth, and ensuring Ganbina delivers meaningful outcomes for communities across the region.



Tracy Hardie
General Manager Operations
Shepparton and Echuca

Tracy Hardie, General Manager Operations Shepparton and Echuca

Tracy is a Gunaikurnai woman and accomplished leader with extensive experience in community development, workforce engagement, and regional operations. Tracy will manage the day-to-day operations of Partner Up in Echuca, leading local engagement, partnerships, and service delivery. Her strong community connections and commitment to creating opportunities will help ensure Partner Up achieves positive and lasting outcomes for the Echuca community.



Keith Hearn
Appointed Site Coordinator

Keith Hearn Appointed Site Coordinator

Ganbina is delighted to welcome Keith Hearn as Site Coordinator for Echuca. Keith is a Yorta Yorta man who has dedicated more than 35 years to supporting and strengthening community through leadership, health, education, employment and program development. His extensive experience and deep community connections will play an important role in ensuring the successful delivery of Ganbina programs in Echuca.



Nerrissa Leitch
Senior Education Program
Project Officer

Nerrissa Leitch Joins as Senior Education Program Project Officer

We are also pleased to welcome Nerrissa Leitch, a Yorta Yorta and Gunaikurnai young woman, as Senior Education Program Project Officer. Before joining Ganbina, Nerrissa worked in education and as a Better Futures Community Connector, supporting young people to stay engaged, build confidence and work towards their goals. Her passion for community, education and supporting young people makes her a valuable addition to the Echuca team.



Together, the team brings a wealth of local knowledge, cultural leadership and professional experience that will ensure Ganbina's work in Echuca is community-led, culturally strong and focused on positive outcomes for children and young people.

Looking Ahead

Registrations for the Echuca program opened on 13 July, with early data indicating strong community interest and promising uptake of the education program. Since launch, the team has been actively engaging with schools, community partners, and local networks to build awareness and strengthen referral pathways across three school communities. As participation grows our team looks forward to working alongside families, Elders, educators, and employers to create opportunities that support children and young people to thrive in education, employment, and life. Together, we are laying the foundations for stronger futures across the region.



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