

Date: 2 September 2026	Embargo: None
Pages: 2	Publication: All local media

Gawler's 150-year-old Time Capsule Comes Home

Historic McKinlay Memorial Time Capsule opened and conserved, with its contents now on display at the Gawler Civic Centre

More than 150 years after it was sealed beneath the McKinlay Monument, a historic Gawler time capsule has returned home, revealing a remarkable collection of documents and objects preserved by the community of 1874.

The McKinlay Memorial Time Capsule was uncovered during conservation works to the monument in December 2025. The lead capsule was carefully transported to Artlab Australia, where specialist conservators opened it and began the delicate process of conserving its contents.

Among the items preserved inside are historical newspapers, journals and documents relating to the committee responsible for erecting the monument, as well as a picture of explorer John McKinlay.

The materials provide a rare glimpse into Gawler life in 1874 and the community's efforts to commemorate the life and achievements of John McKinlay, who died in Gawler in 1882.

Following their conservation, the historic items have now returned to Gawler and are being displayed in the café area of the Gawler Civic Centre, giving the community an opportunity to see the contents of the time capsule for themselves.

Town of Gawler **Mayor Nathan Shanks** said the return of the capsule marked a special moment for the community.

Quote attributable to Mayor Nathan Shanks:

“There’s something pretty special about opening a piece of Gawler’s history that somebody deliberately put away more than 150 years ago for a future generation to find,” **Mayor Shanks** said.

“They couldn’t have known what Gawler would look like today, but they clearly thought these items were worth preserving”.

“It has certainly got us thinking about whether we should create a time capsule of our own – something that tells future generations a little about Gawler in 2026.”

Town of Gawler **CEO Chris Cowley** said the discovery offered a tangible connection to Gawler’s past.

Quote attributable to CEO Chris Cowley:

“The time capsule gives us a direct link to the people and community of Gawler in 1874,” **Mr Cowley said.**

“The care taken to conserve these materials means they can now be preserved for future generations while also being shared with the community today.”

The capsule was discovered by stone masons undertaking works to address salt damage at the base of the McKinlay Monument on 15 December 2025.

Its lead construction required specialist handling, with Artlab conservators carefully opening the capsule and undertaking conservation treatment to stabilise the contents.

The Town of Gawler thanks Artlab Australia and conservators Jo Dawe, Principal Objects Conservator; Robin Tait, Senior Books Conservator; and Sophie Parker, Senior Conservator Objects and Textiles, for their specialist care of the collection.

The conserved items will form part of the Gawler Heritage Collection.

Connect with Gawler:

Facebook: facebook.com/townofgawler

Instagram: [@townofgawler](https://www.instagram.com/townofgawler)

You Tube: youtube.com/townofgawler

ENDS

The media may make contact with CEO, Chris Cowley on 0458 340 412