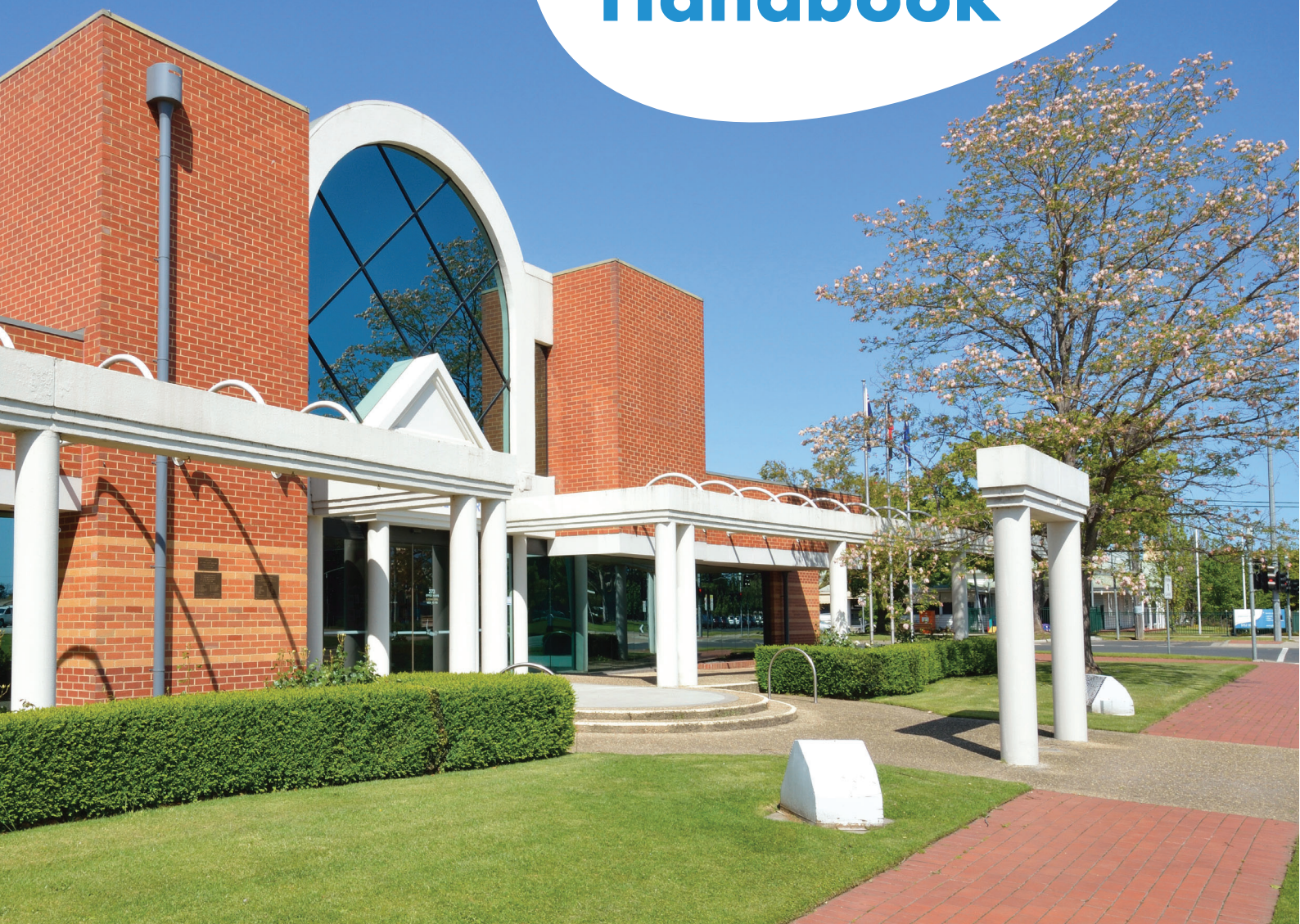




2024 Election Candidate Handbook



Councillors set East Gippsland's strategic direction, establish and guide policies, set service delivery standards, and monitor performance. They represent the entire community and advocate on a wide range of issues.

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A young Aboriginal dance troupe performed at the opening of Inspire East Gippsland Tourism Summit and Eco Tourism Certification event, held at Metung, in May 2023.

Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of this land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with country. The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years.

Council value their living culture and practices and their right to self-determination. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders, past, present, and future.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Councillor at East Gippsland Shire Council. This handbook has been created to provide an overview of the responsibilities of local government, the role of Councillors and our guiding principles and legislation.

Being a Councillor provides an exciting challenge and an opportunity to represent your community and play a vital role in shaping the East Gippsland Shire Council.

If you are looking for an opportunity to contribute to the future direction and development of your community, you should consider standing for Council.



PART 1

Council Insight

We manage more than \$1.2 billion in property and infrastructure on behalf of the community. These assets directly support key services we deliver to the community.

East Gippsland - who we are

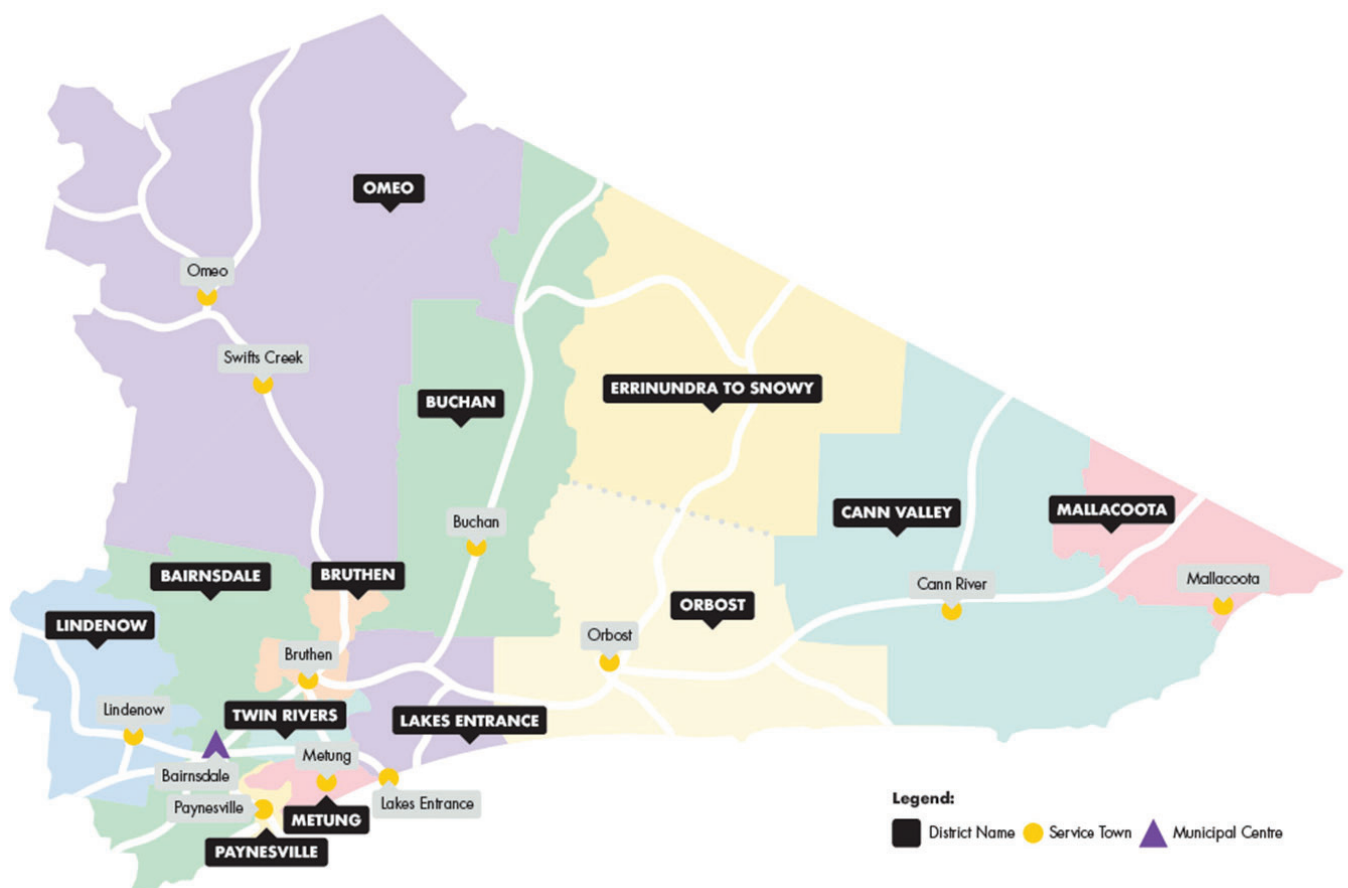
East Gippsland is a large and vibrant region in a beautiful natural setting, home to proud and involved communities that embrace and encourage self-reliance, responsibility, and new ideas. The past 30 years have seen East Gippsland evolve from its rural origins to a flourishing economic and tourism region drawing more than one million visitors each year.

The region has kept its identity and sense of place as it has grown. The shire stretches from west of Bairnsdale to the New South Wales border, covering more than 21,000 square kilometres or 10 per cent of the state.

East Gippsland's unique qualities are both its strength and challenges. The region is distinguished by its natural setting, with its southern edge defined by the Gippsland Lakes and rugged coastline and the rising backdrop of the High Country. Historical rural landscapes and natural bushland areas surround its communities.

As East Gippsland has matured as a region, its communities have also developed and diversified. East Gippsland has an abundance of local producers. With its fertile soils, good rainfall and temperate climate, East Gippsland is a food bowl for Australia, producing fresh fruit and vegetables all year round.

Place based planning and working with our local communities is a key to Council's focus, with the shire reflected as 13 separate places (which includes Errinundra to Snowy as a sub-district of Orbost) – with many localities within each place.



East Gippsland - at a glance

48,887 people



Female:
50.8%



Male:
49.2%



Born in Australia:
79.6%



Square kilometres:
20,931



Persons per square km:
2.34



- Couples with children: 19.1%
- Couples without children: 32.5%
- One parent household: 8.8%
- People living alone: 29%
- Private dwellings: 26,081

Employment



19,914
Total jobs



4,771
Businesses

49%
Worked full-time

38.4%
Worked part-time

4.4%
Unemployed

8.2%
Other -
employed, away
from work

Industries – Registered Business by industry (top four)



- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing – 23.6%
- Construction – 18.8%
- Rental, hiring and Real Estate Services – 9.1%
- Accommodation and Food Services – 6.7%

* Sourced from 2022-23 Annual Report.

Community

48,887
population

57,799
population forecast by
2040

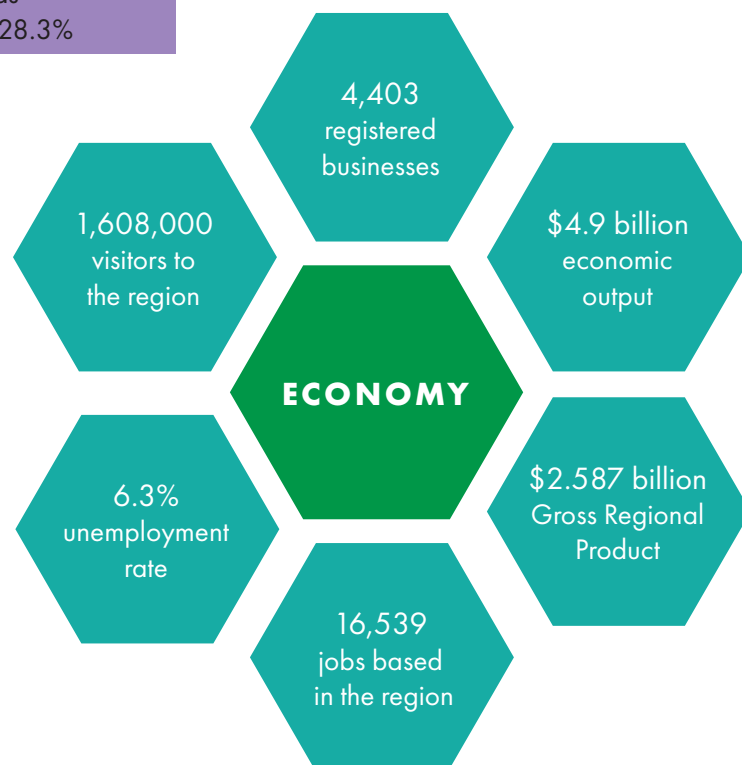
36.5%
of population over 60
years old - Victoria is 21%

2.9%
of population is Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander -
Victoria is 0.8%

10.8%
of population is born
overseas -
Victoria is 28.3%

Age Group	Population
0 - 17 years old	8,616
18 - 34 years old	6,459
35 - 59 years old	13,500
60 + years old	16,450

Major Towns by Population	
Bairnsdale	17,468
Lakes Entrance	8,534
Paynesville	6,387
Orbost	3,939



* Sourced from 2022-23 Annual Report.

Our community, our vision

In 2040 our people, place, environment, and economy will be connected, in balance and resilient. Our unique and diverse communities will be accessible, inclusive, well connected and safe. We will value and care for each other and our natural environment. Our economy will support existing and emerging industries by being agile, innovative, and sustainable.

Our Community Vision 2040 expresses the aspirations, values, and priorities of the East Gippsland community, and will help shape what we want achieved in our community by 2040.

No one area of Council, community, agency, or other levels of government can help to achieve the Community Vision alone. It extends beyond Council's jurisdiction, and provides a platform for collaboration with community, municipal and regional partnerships, and advocacy. It is, in part, an expression of how Council will work with the community to apply and direct resources under its control towards achieving our desired future. As our community evolves, the Community Vision will be reviewed and updated to reflect community aspirations, to ensure it maintains relevance.

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Community Vision guides Council's work through the development and implementation of the Council Plan and other strategic plans.

East Gippsland Shire Council creates conditions for our communities to thrive. We provide leadership, governance, services, and infrastructure to meet the needs and aspirations of communities across our shire.

We are striving to improve our waste facilities and services to maximise the recovery of waste before it enters landfill.



Our values

Everything we do is guided by our values, which translate to the delivery of quality services and programs, a better everyday customer experience, and thriving communities.



Our strategic objectives

- An inclusive and caring community that respects and celebrates diversity.
- Planning and infrastructure that enriches the environment, lifestyle, and character of our communities.
- A natural environment that is managed and enhanced.
- A thriving and diverse economy that attracts investment and generates inclusive local employment.
- A transparent organisation that listens and delivers effective, engaging and responsive services.

Our services

FAST FACTS

Aerodromes

- Managed three aerodromes, Bairnsdale, Mallacoota and Orbost

Animal management

- 125 animals rehomed
- 132 animals reclaimed

Aquatic and recreation centres

- 1,158 Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre active memberships, 612 Lakes Entrance Aquadome active memberships
- 451,300 visits to all aquatic facilities during the year (BARC, Aquadome, Bairnsdale Outdoor Pool and Orbost Outdoor Pool)

Arts and culture

- 17,615 people attended shows and activities at the Forge Theatre and Arts Hub
- 137 performances of 73 shows presented at the Forge Theatre and Arts Hub
- *Major Live Music Project*
 - Employed 101 local musicians
 - Events held at 13 local businesses/venues
 - 896 people in attendance
 - Across six different towns
- Six Arts and Culture grants programs events took place, attracting 2,898 participants
- Six Arts and Heritage projects were completed, attracting 644 participants

Asset management

- Council maintains
 - 3,033km of roads
 - 191 timber and concrete bridges
 - 41 public jetties, 19 fishing platforms and 31 boat ramps

Boat ramps and marinas

- Three commercial marinas – Metung (145 berths – including 24 dry berths) and Chinaman's Creek (69 berths) in Metung and Slip Bight (220 berths) in Paynesville

Caravan parks and campgrounds

- 12,090 bookings at Mallacoota Foreshore Holiday Park
- 2,055 bookings at Eagle Point Caravan Park
- 2,178 bookings at Omeo Holiday Park

Civic events

- Five Citizenship Ceremonies
- Three Volunteer Recognition Events

Customer service

- 44,128 phone calls received
- Average call wait time was 41 seconds
- 74.91% of calls were answered within 45 seconds
- 948 calls were received after hours
- 121,666 customers attended service centres during the year (excluding the Bairnsdale Library)
- Collectively, service centres and mobile centres were open 249 hours per week

Disaster recovery and preparedness

- Supported 10 Community Recovery Committees

Environmental and public health

- 498 food premises inspections carried out
- Greenhouse gas emissions from energy use reduced by 42% from 2021-22. We emitted 3,808 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in 2021-22, which reduced to 2,206 tonnes in 2022-23

Events

- 346 events held
- Five events in the region during off peak periods

*Fast facts sourced from 2022-23 Annual Report.

Libraries

- 184,814 library visits
- 3,319 visits to the mobile library services
- 965 library programs
- 12,021 people attended library programs
- 45,664 hours of WiFi used
- 7,397 hours of library bookable devices
- 77,819 library items were available for loan. 70,564 physical items and 7,255 digital items
- Over 237,000 library loans were taken

Livestock exchange

- 47,779 cattle and 21,393 sheep processed

Media and communications

- Council's Facebook page has 9,006 followers
- Council's website had 364,208 visits
- There were 546 media releases/newsletter articles distributed during the year
- Environment Connect – Distributed quarterly to over 400 subscribers, which over 660 people opened

Playgrounds and parks

- Over 40 playgrounds were mulched with an estimated 450m³ of mulch spread

Planning and building approvals

- 547 planning permits were issued, representing \$117 million estimated cost of works for all permits granted combined.
- The average cost of works per permit was \$213,000
- Over 130 new dwellings and over 350 new lots were permitted (including revisions to permits)

Roads, bridges and footpaths

- 300 lineal metres of footpaths were replaced
- 1,310km of gravel roads graded at an overall cost of \$1.7 million
- Roadside rubbish removed from 320 locations at an overall cost of \$130,700

Streetlights

- Saved over 310,000 kWh (or 27% reduction) of energy use by upgrading our streetlights to LED globes

Tourism

- \$596 million of domestic tourism expenditure in the region for the year ending March 2023

Trees and vegetation

- 8,618.25km of slashing

Waste and recycling services

- Glass collection services now available at eight waste transfer stations
- 21,901 kerbside garbage bins
- 21,681 kerbside recycling bins
- 1,279,576 kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts

Electronic vehicle chargers

- 613 unique charges
- 15,333 kWh used
- 4,889 tonnes of CO₂ saved
- The EV chargers were used by cars registered to 206 different postcodes from all over Australia

FAST FACTS

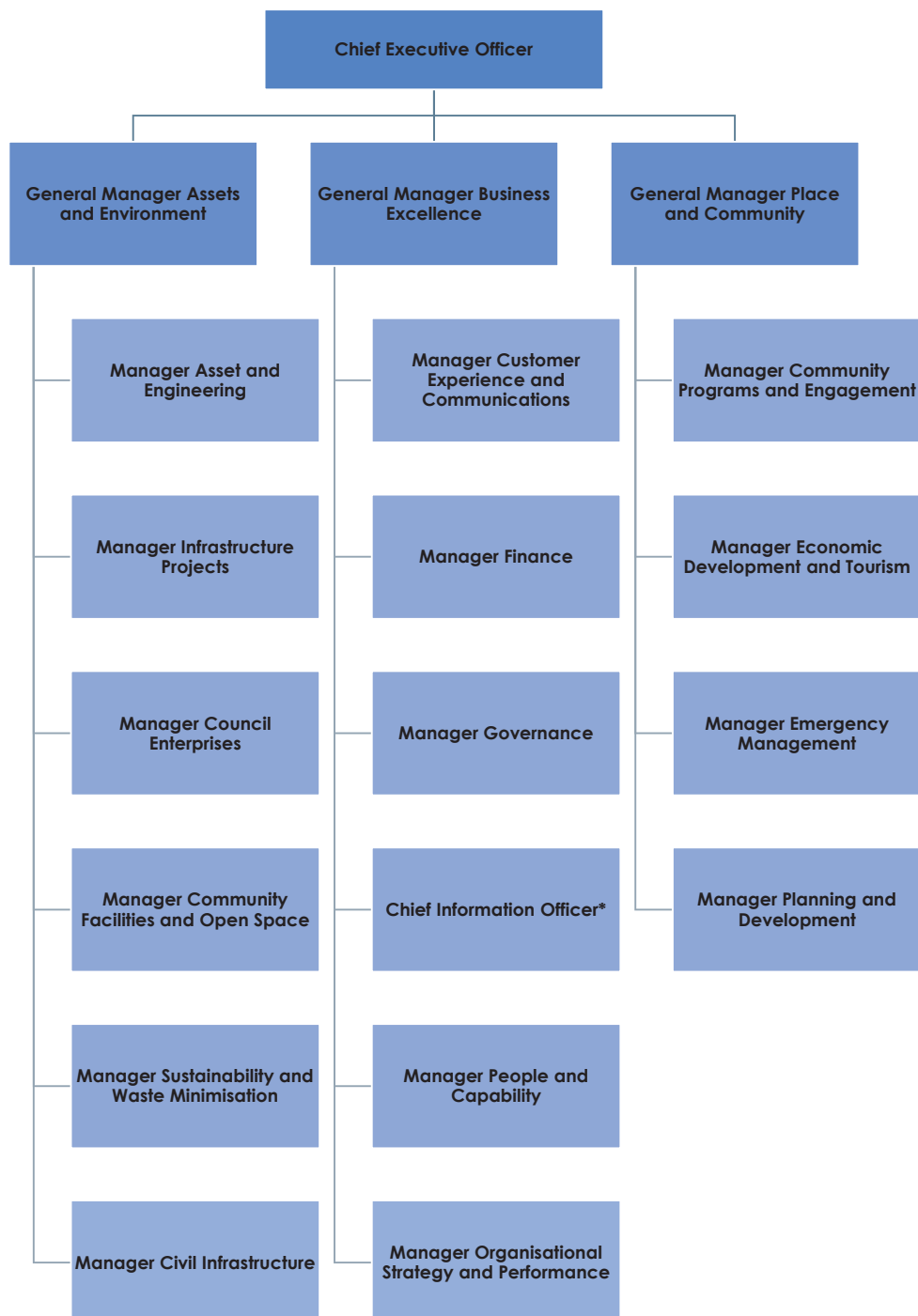
**Fast facts sourced from 2022-23 Annual Report.*

Our Council

Council's Chief Executive Officer, Fiona Weigall leads the Executive Leadership Team which oversees three directorates responsible for the delivery and quality of the many programs, services and activities Council provides.

The Executive Leadership Team includes:

- Chief Executive Officer
- General Manager Assets and Environment
- General Manager Business Excellence
- General Manager Place and Community



*Wellington Shire Council shared service resource

Council structure

Place and Community

The Place and Community directorate is responsible for community development, urban planning, and place management. This directorate ensures that Council services align with community needs and aspirations through strategic planning, policy development, and program implementation.

Key responsibilities include:

- aged services
- bushfire recovery activities
- community planning and development
- economic development and tourism
- emergency management
- family and children's services
- strategic and statutory planning

Business units that make up our Place and Community directorate are:

- Community Programs and Engagement
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Emergency Management
- Planning and Development

Major upgrades at Bullock Island, Lakes Entrance, allow visitors to better enjoy this stunning location close to the famous entrance to Bass Strait.





We maintain over 350 hectares (about 175 Melbourne Cricket Grounds) of open space, this includes the maintenance and ongoing improvement of sporting facilities, gardens, recreational grounds, parks and natural bushlands to create active and passive environments for enjoyment of residents and visitors. Pictured is the Triangle Park Playground in Marlo.

Assets and Environment

The Assets and Environment directorate manages and maintains the Council's physical assets and natural environment. This includes overseeing infrastructure projects, implementing sustainability and environmental protection policies, managing public works and services, and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Key responsibilities include:

- asset management
- capital works program
- commercial business operations
- fleet and plant management
- Forge Theatre
- parks and reserves
- playgrounds and public toilets
- recreation facilities
- roads, bridges, and drainage
- signs, footpaths, and street sweeping
- tree management
- waste and environmental management

Business units within the Assets and Environment directorate are:

- Assets and Engineering
- Civil Infrastructure
- Community Facilities and Open Space
- Council Enterprises
- Infrastructure Projects
- Sustainability and Waste Minimisation

Business Excellence

The Business Excellence directorate is responsible for driving organisational efficiency, effectiveness, and continuous improvement. This directorate focuses on enhancing business processes, implementing best practices, and promoting a culture of excellence within Council.

Key responsibilities include:

- communications
- corporate planning
- cost management of Councillors
- customer service
- financial management
- governance administration
- human resources
- information services
- libraries
- procurement
- property services
- rate collection
- regulatory services
- risk management
- valuations

Business units within the Business Excellence directorate are:

- Customer Experience and Communications
- Finance
- Governance
- Information Services
- Organisational Strategy and Performance
- People and Capability

We provide library services from Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Mallacoota, Omeo, Orbost, Paynesville and two mobile vehicles offering books, online resources, free computer and WiFi access, and programs like Storytime (pictured below).



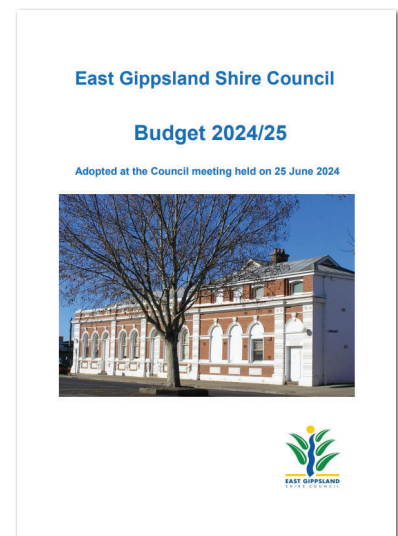
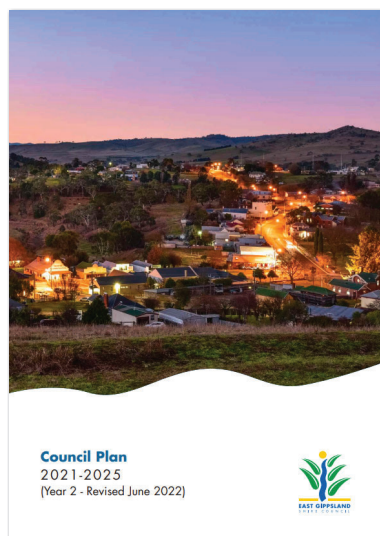
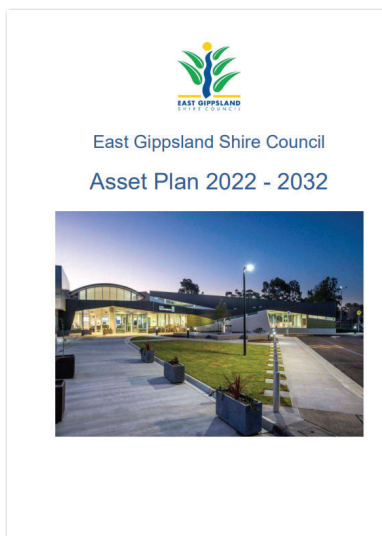
Key documents and recommended reading

Visit eastgippsland.vic.gov.au to access the below documents:



Annual Report
Asset Management Plan
Community Engagement Policy
Community Plans
Community Vision 2040
Council Budget, inc. Financial Plans
Council Plan

Development Plan Policy
Economic Development Strategy
Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-32
Governance Rules
Municipal Emergency Management Plan
Well Placed for Wellbeing 2021-25



Planning and Development

Although we don't have a specific Council guide on planning, the links below provide an insight into how the planning system operates under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and Councillors' responsibilities.

Using Victoria's Planning
System Guide
planning.vic.gov.au



Municipal Association of
Victoria Land Use Planning
Guide



Advocacy priorities

Council's Advocacy Strategy provides a prioritised set of initiatives to focus our efforts on delivering the community's priorities. Advocacy and partnership priorities are based on the adopted decisions of Council. These decisions include the strategic objectives in the 2021-25 Council Plan, Annual Budget, other strategic documents and partnerships, and items identified and resolved at Council meetings.

Seven of these priorities are critical' and are outlined below.

1. Asset management
2. Climate change mitigation and adaptation
3. Digital connectivity
4. Housing availability for workers
5. National Disaster Recovery Funding reform
6. Native timber industry transition
7. State-wide flood mapping integration

Our Advocacy Strategy

eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/council/advocacy



Our advocacy priorities align with the Council Plan themes

OUR COMMUNITIES



OUR PLACE



OUR ENVIRONMENT



OUR ECONOMY



OUR COUNCIL



PART 2

Local Government Fundamentals



We host a range of events, including civic receptions, community celebrations, official openings and launches. The Mayor presides over citizenship ceremonies.

Role of local government

All Councils consist of elected members (democratically elected Councillors) and the administration (Council employees). East Gippsland Shire Council is made up of nine Councillors, representing the entire community.

Understanding the governance principles and key legislation is critical in making responsible decisions and meeting the statutory requirements of a Council.

The *Local Government Act 2020* is a primary legislative document and contains key information for elected Councillors.

The community votes in Councillors. Councillors represent the community's needs and participate in decision making.

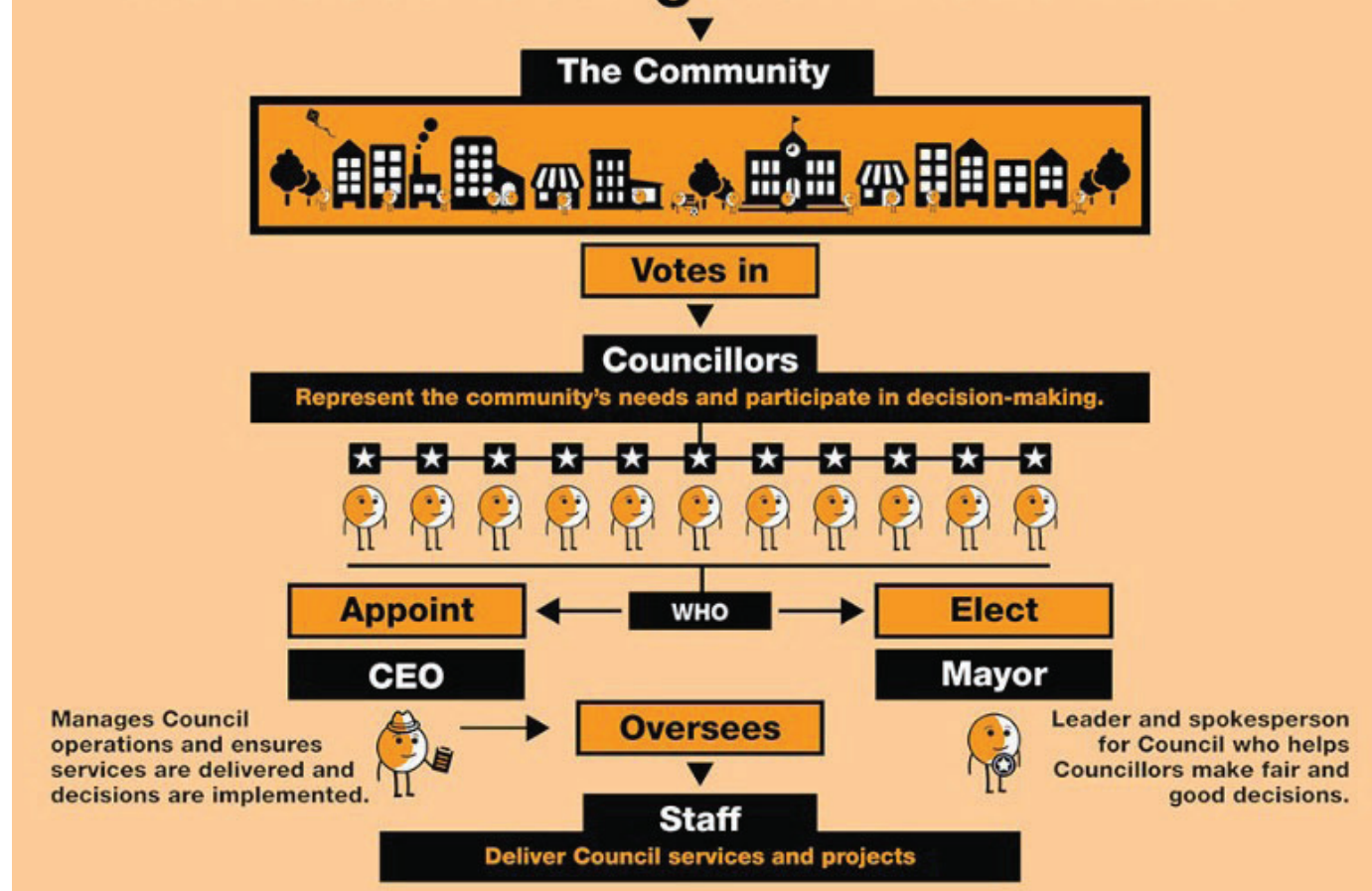
The Councillors appoint a CEO who manages Council operations and ensures services are delivered and decisions are implemented, and oversees the staff who deliver Council services and projects.

The Councillors also elect a Mayor who is the leader and spokesperson for Council, and helps the Councillors make fair and good decisions.

For more information visit: viccouncils.asn.au



How does local government work?



*We thank the City of Greater Dandenong for permission to use this graphic explaining the role of local government.



We own and manage two recreation centres and two outdoor swimming pools, offering a range of recreational activities, fitness and wellbeing opportunities, including learn to swim programs.

Role of Council

Section 8 of the *Local Government Act 2020* describes the role of a Council is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community.

1. A Council provides good governance if—
 - a. *it performs its role in accordance with section 9;*
 - b. *the Councillors of the Council perform their roles in accordance with section 28.*
2. In performing its role, a Council may—
 - a. *perform any duties or functions or exercise any powers conferred on a Council by or under this Act or any other Act; and*
 - b. *perform any other functions that the Council determines are necessary to enable the Council to perform its role*
3. If it is necessary to do so for the purpose of performing its role, a Council may perform a function outside its municipal district.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, the Council must take into account the following supporting principles.

- a) *community engagement principles;*
- b) *public transparency principles;*
- c) *strategic planning principles;*
- d) *financial management principles; and*
- e) *service performance principles.*

The *Local Government Act* states that the municipal community includes:

- a) *People who live in the municipal district of the Council;*
- b) *People and bodies who are ratepayers of the Council;*
- c) *Traditional owners of land in the municipal district of the Council; and*
- d) *People and bodies who conduct activities in the municipal district of the Council.*

Role of a Councillor

Section 28 of the *Local Government Act 2020* defines the role of a Councillor as:

1. *to participate in the decision making of the Council; and*
2. *to represent the interests of the municipal community in that decision making; and*
3. *to contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents of the Council, including the Council Plan.*

Councillors are the voices of their community. They help ensure the community's values and needs are met through strategic planning, funding priorities and advocacy to state and federal governments.

The work of Local Government is varied, but almost all areas of our day-to-day life are impacted by Council decisions or services.

If you are passionate about the region and seeing it be the best it can be, now and in the future, you may like to think about becoming a Councillor.

You will need to understand what is important to the community and balance the community's vision with available funds and Council's obligations under law.

Councillors are required to undertake a number of key responsibilities.

Performing the role of a Councillor

1. Consideration of diversity of interests of municipal community
2. Supporting role of Council
3. Acknowledging and supporting role of Mayor
4. Acting lawfully and in accordance with oath or affirmation of office
5. Acting in accordance with standards of conduct
6. Complying with Council's procedures for good governance

Attendance at meetings

1. Councillor briefings (weekly)
2. Council meetings (approximately every 3 weeks)
3. Committee meetings (varies)

Disclosures

1. Election Campaign Donation Returns
2. Personal Interests Returns
3. Conflicts of Interest

Role of the Mayor

Council historically elects the Mayor and Deputy Mayor each October/November for a one-year term.

Section 18 of the *Local Government Act 2020* defines the role of a Mayor as:

1. *chair Council meetings; and*
2. *be the principal spokesperson for the Council; and*
3. *lead engagement with the municipal community on the development of the Council Plan; and*
4. *report to the municipal community, at least once each year, on the implementation of the Council Plan; and*
5. *promote behaviour among Councillors that meets the standards of conduct set out in the Councillor Code of Conduct; and*
6. *assist Councillors to understand their role; and*
7. *take a leadership role in ensuring the regular review of the performance of the Chief Executive Officer; and*
8. *provide advice to the Chief Executive Officer when the Chief Executive Officer is setting the agenda for Council meetings; and*
9. *perform civic and ceremonial duties on behalf of the Council.*

Further, in section 19 of the Act, the Mayor has the following specific powers:

1. *to appoint a Councillor to be the chair of a delegated committee*
2. *to direct a Councillor, subject to any procedures or limitations specified in the Governance Rules, to leave a Council meeting if the behaviour of the Councillor is preventing the Council from conducting its business; and*
3. *to require the Chief Executive Officer to report to the Council on the implementation of a Council decision.*

The Deputy Mayor must perform the role of the Mayor, and may exercise the Mayoral powers, in any of the following circumstances, as outlined in section 18 of the *Local Government Act*:

1. *the Mayor is unable for any reason to attend a Council meeting or part of a Council meeting; or*
2. *the Mayor is incapable of performing the duties of the office of Mayor for any reason including illness; or*
3. *the office of Mayor is vacant*

Councillor briefings

Councillors have a responsibility to be well-informed, participate respectfully in debates, and make considered decisions. To support this, Councillor briefings are generally held every Tuesday from 10am to 5pm, depending on the length of the Agenda.

These briefings allow Councillors to seek clarification and provide feedback on proposals and reports that will later come to Council for decision. They are an essential part of the Council process, helping Councillors understand complex issues and options.

Agendas and reports are prepared and provided in advance. Councillors are expected to read and consider all relevant documentation prior to the briefing to ensure the briefing is productive and purposeful.

During briefings, Councillors receive both verbal and written information, which may lead to a Council report. This environment encourages open and frank discussions, allowing Councillors to provide feedback to staff while they prepare formal advice. It is important to note that these briefings are not decision-making forums.

Council meetings

Council meetings are where Councillors meet to debate Council business, set strategic objectives and make decisions on behalf of the community.

Council holds regular Council meetings, generally every three weeks, to conduct the ongoing business of the Council and unscheduled Meetings may also be held from time to time. Councillors can attend Council meetings electronically or in person and the meetings will be open to the public via livestreaming. The *Local Government Act 2020* allows for confidential information to be discussed in closed meetings, not open to the public.

Each year, Council adopts a schedule for its Council meetings, which is available on our website under Council Meetings [eastgippsland.vic.gov.au](https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)



Council committees

Councillors may be appointed as members of our advisory committees, which play an important role in the governance, decision making and community participation in the municipality. Nominations for Councillor representation on various committees and advisory groups occur annually.

The following table contains a list of all advisory committees established by Council that are in operation and the purpose for which each committee was established:

Committee	Purpose
Audit and Risk Committee	The Audit and Risk Committee's role is to monitor and provide advice to Council on financial reporting, internal control, compliance, and risk management. It does this through the provision of independent advice on matters relevant to its Charter, to assist Council decision-making.
Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee	Considers, and makes recommendations to Council on the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selection and appointment of an Independent Member • performance monitoring of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), including with respect to achievement of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) • annual review of the CEO's performance, including against the KPIs • CEO's remuneration • recruitment and appointment (or reappointment) of a CEO, if required.
Disability Advisory Committee	Provides advice on things that matter to people with a disability in the region. It seeks to maximise the contribution being made by Council and its partners by working with a common agenda to create a more inclusive and accessible East Gippsland.
East Gippsland Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee	Provides advice, guidance, and recommendations to Council on matters that affect the agriculture sector in East Gippsland and its communities.
East Gippsland Economic Development Advisory Committee	Provides advice, guidance, and recommendations to Council on matters that affect economic growth across the municipality.
East Gippsland Livestock Exchange Consultative Committee	Is a platform for consultation with key stakeholders on the operations of the livestock exchange. The group also discusses industry matters that may impact the livestock exchange business.
Marina Consultative Committee	Provides advice, guidance, and recommendations to Council on the need for existing and emerging services, and overall sustainable management of Council's marina business.

Councillor Code of Conduct

On Wednesday 25 June 2024, the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* (the Amendment Act) was given Royal Assent. The Amendment Act includes reforms to strengthen council leadership, capability and councillor conduct, improve early intervention and effective dispute resolution and strengthen oversight mechanisms.

The following changes will come into operation on 26 October 2024:

- ongoing mandated training for Mayors and Councillors will be introduced to expand the existing induction training requirements for Councillors;
- improvements to the Councillor Conduct Framework including the power to establish in regulations a model Councillor Code of Conduct and increased severity of sanctions available for Councillor misconduct; and
- improve the operation of provisions relating to the Councillor Conduct Framework.

Further information can be found at localgovernment.vic.gov.au



The purpose of Code of Conduct is to set out the standards of conduct that will guide Councillors collectively and individually in undertaking their roles, duties and obligations as set out in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

A good working relationship between Councillors, the Mayor, the Chief Executive Officer, and Council staff is fundamental to an effective Council. The Councillor Code of Conduct is a key document for Councillors as it sets out these relationships and the conduct expected of Councillors and covers:

- treatment of others;
- performing the role of Councillor;
- compliance with good governance measures;
- councillors not discrediting or misleading Council or the public; and
- standards not limiting robust discussion.

Councillor allowances

Councillors receive a yearly allowance. Paid fortnightly, it includes an amount equivalent to the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution. The allowance is set each year by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. Council's Councillors Support and Expenses Policy provides guidance to Councillors on:

1. allowances for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors;
2. the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of official Council duties for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors, and members of delegated committees; and
3. Councillor support to enable the performance of their official Council duties.

For further information, please visit:

[eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/
council/councillor-expenses-
and-reimbursements](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/council/councillor-expenses-and-reimbursements)



[vic.gov.au/allowances-
mayors-deputy-mayors-
and-councillors-annual-
adjustment](http://vic.gov.au/allowances-mayors-deputy-mayors-and-councillors-annual-adjustment)



We have customer service centres in six locations, providing access to Council and library services, and meeting room facilities.



VEC key dates

Time and date	Activity
Monday 9 September	Election offices open
9 am Monday 9 September to 12 noon Tuesday 17 September	Nomination period Anyone wishing to stand as a candidate must lodge their nomination with the election manager during this period. Candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires also close at 12 noon Tuesday 17 September
10 am Wednesday 18 September	Ballot draws
Monday 7 October to Thursday 10 October	Ballot packs distributed Ballot packs are mailed to all enrolled voters in a random order over 4 days.
6 pm Friday 25 October	Close of voting Completed ballot material must be in the mail or delivered to the relevant election office by 6 pm.
12 noon Friday 1 November	Deadline for inclusion of postal votes The election manager will include ballot material if satisfied it was signed by voters before 6 pm Friday 25 October (close of voting).
Monday 4 November to Friday 15 November	Results declarations (anticipated) Results for all elections will be officially declared during this period.

Candidate information

The following information is a summary extract from the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC) Candidate Handbook produced to provide guidance for anyone who wishes to nominate as a candidate in the 2024 Victorian local Council elections.

The handbook outlines the electoral law that directly relates to candidates. It is not a substitute for the law and should be read in conjunction with the Act and the Regulations.

We strongly encourage you to make an appointment with the Election Manager of your Council early in the nomination period.

1. Nominating as a Candidate

- a) **Visit www.vec.vic.gov.au** for the candidate handbook
- b) **Complete** mandatory candidate training



All local council candidates must complete the Local Government Victoria (LGV) local government candidate training. This training is required even if you are currently or have already been a Councillor.

You must provide the time and date you completed the training when submitting your nomination form. Training must be completed within 2 years before the election day for the election in order to be valid, so you can complete this in advance.

If you have not completed this training, you are not eligible to nominate as a Councillor.

For more information on this mandatory training, contact Local Government Victoria or visit: localgovernment.vic.gov.au



- c) **Nominate** with the VEC by 12 noon Tuesday 17 September 2024

To nominate, you must complete and lodge a Nomination form. You can prepare your nomination form:

- online using our Candidate Helper tool – this is the fastest and easiest way to complete your Nomination form; or
- by picking up a hard-copy form from the election office.

You must lodge your nomination form by appointment with the Election Manager of the Council you are nominating in. You can book your nomination appointment by calling the VEC's Candidate Services team from 20 August or the election office directly from Monday 9 September 2024. Phone numbers for the election office will be listed on the VEC website.

2. Candidate statements

The candidate statement is made up of your statement text and photograph. This is optional, however if you choose to submit a statement, it must be lodged with the election manager before 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September 2024.

Candidate statements and photographs are included in ballot packs mailed to voters and are also published on the VEC website after the statement lodgement period closes.

3. Candidate questionnaire

The candidate questionnaire is a prescribed set of questions. All candidates' answers will be published on the VEC website. Candidates' answers to the questionnaire will also be available from the election office on request. If a candidate has not provided responses to the questionnaire or only partially answered the questionnaire voters will be advised of this.

Completing and lodging candidate questionnaires is optional, however if you choose to submit a questionnaire, it must be lodged with the election manager before 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September 2024.

Find out more information and resource visit [Local council candidate resources | Victorian Electoral Commission](#)



The Forge Theatre in Bairnsdale is East Gippsland's 362-seat performing arts centre, presenting over 90 visiting and local shows and performances each year from drama, comedy, music, children's theatre, dance, physical theatre and musicals.



Election period

Council's Election Period Policy (Policy) was adopted by Council at the Ordinary Meeting held on 30 April 2024. The Policy ensures that all general elections of the East Gippsland Shire Council are conducted in a manner that is ethical, fair, and equitable and are publicly perceived as such.

The Policy applies to all current Councillors, all candidates to the General Election, the Chief Executive Officer, Delegated Committee Members, and all Council staff, who must comply with this Policy during an Election Period, regardless of whether they intend to nominate, or have already nominated as a candidate for election.

Prior to a General Election, Council enters the 'Election Period' (also commonly known as 'caretaker mode'). The purpose of the Election Period is to avoid actions and decisions which could be seen to be influencing voters or which will have a significant impact on the incoming Council.

The Act defines the Election Period as the period that starts at the time that nominations close on nomination day and ends at 6.00 pm on election day.

For the 2024 General Election, the Election Period commences at 12.00 pm Tuesday 17 September 2024 and concludes at 6.00 pm Saturday 26 October 2024.

A copy of the Policy can be found on Council's website.



Council showcases its service and projects at the annual East Gippsland Field Days.



Election signage and electioneering

The display and placement of political advertising and activities on roads, footways and private property is strictly controlled within the Shire of East Gippsland. The requirements are outlined in 4.18 Electoral Signage and Electioneering of the Election Period Policy.

Councillors, like other candidates, must comply with the East Gippsland Planning Scheme and General Local Law requirements regarding electoral signage and electioneering in public places.

Penalty: 10 Penalty Units

East Gippsland Planning Scheme requirements

Clause 52.05-10 of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme – Signs not requiring a permit.

Despite any provision in a zone, overlay, or other particular provision of this scheme, a permit is not required to construct or put up for display any of the following signs:

A sign with a display area not exceeding 5 square metres publicising a local educational, cultural, political, religious, social, or recreational event not held for commercial purposes. Only one sign may be displayed on the land, it must not be an animated or internally illuminated sign and it must not be displayed longer than 14 days after the event is held or 3 months, whichever is sooner. A sign publicising a local political event may include information about a candidate for an election.

General Local Law requirements

Part 6, Division 1, Section 43 – Advertising Signs

A person must not, without a Permit, erect or place an advertising sign on any part of a road, road reserve or Council land or cause or authorise another person to do so.

Both the East Gippsland Planning Scheme and the General Local Law provide for penalties for any breaches detected by authorised officers.

Election campaign donations

All candidates who nominate in Council elections are required to submit an 'Election Campaign Donation Return' to the Chief Executive Officer within 40 days after election day.

Candidate returns must detail any gifts, goods, or services worth \$500 or more received during the donation period for use in connection with their election campaign. This applies to all candidates, whether elected or not, and whether they received campaign donations or not.

The 'donation period' is defined as the period beginning 30 days after election day in the previous election and ending 30 days after election day in the current election.

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* the Chief Executive Officer must:

- submit a report to the Minister specifying the names of the persons who were candidates in the election, and the names of those candidates who submitted an election campaign donation return; and
- make a summary of each election campaign donation return received available on Council's website until entitlement for the next general election; and
- ensure that a copy of an election campaign donation return is available for inspection for a period of four years from the date it is given.

View the **East Gippsland Shire Council Election Campaign Donation Return Summary**.



Requesting information

Council may receive requests for information from candidates during the election period. All candidates must have access to the same level of information wherever possible.

To enable this to occur, an Information Request Register will be maintained during the election period. This register will be a publicly available document and will record all requests relating to electoral matters, and non-routine requests for information by Councillors and election candidates, as well as the responses provided.

Any candidate may, upon request, obtain a copy of the Information Request Register by contacting the Manager Governance by emailing feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au.

The Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, may at their discretion automatically circulate to all candidates a response to any request recorded in the Information Request Register.

Newly elected Council

Establishing the new Council requires several important activities, including signing the Councillor Code of Conduct, being sworn-in, electing a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and scheduling Council meeting and briefing dates.

Post-election steps for Councillors:

- Welcome pack: You will receive a comprehensive welcome pack.
- Oath or Affirmation of Office: Elected Councillors will take the oath or affirmation of office, with family and friends invited to attend.
- Mandatory forms: Councillors must submit Personal Interests Returns and election campaign donation forms.

From your first day as a Councillor until the end of 2024, you will experience an intense period requiring your availability for induction, Council briefings, and meetings. You may wish to consider taking annual leave from work commitments to ensure your attendance at all mandatory induction training sessions.

Areas that will be covered are:

- Introduction to key staff members and directorates.
- Comprehensive induction program covering roles, responsibilities and Council operations.
- Familiarisation with the meeting procedures, agendas and decision-making processes.
- Understanding of long-term goals and priorities of Council.

Mandatory Councillor induction program

As required by the *Local Government Act 2020*, all candidates elected will be required to undertake mandatory induction training within four months of election, which is aimed at setting you up for success in the role of a Councillor.

We are developing a proposed program that includes the required activities, training and support to help you understand your responsibilities, to provide opportunities for you to get to know each other and for the Executive Leadership Team to carefully listen to and understand your priorities.

These activities will help you agree on shared goals and actions that will shape the Council Plan and Budget 2025/26. Developing and agreeing on a Council Plan and Budget is one of the most important strategic activities you will undertake in your first six months as a Councillor.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will also be required to undertake mandatory training within one month of being appointed to office.

Councillors will also be required to undertake annual professional development, as prescribed by the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*.

Note: The Induction Program overview, provided on the next page, is indicative only and will be subject to change.

STAGE	WEEK 1		WEEK 2		WEEK 3		WEEK 4 AND BEYOND		ANNUAL
	Welcome	Engage	Prepare	Connect	Equip	Understand	Expand	Embed	
AIM	Introduction to the role and key people	Engage with Councillor-elect	Get to the know the role and each other	Build positive relationships	Learn more about Local Government	Build awareness about key groups	Develop deeper understanding of the role	Integrate learnings into practice and behaviours	Continued learning and bonding
CULTURE AND WAYS OF WORKING	Introduction to CEO Introduction of Councillor Support Officer Councillor Handbook Councillor Induction Program overview Councillor Transition Citizen to Councillor Official photos Technology rollout	Introduction to and presentations by General Managers Meet with Managers Initial lean building session	1:1s with CEO 1:1s with each Councillor	1:1s with Facilitator Key community interest areas First Council Meeting preparation		Meeting Schedule	Media training	1:1s with CEO	1:1s with Facilitator Team building refresh
LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS	Role of Council Role of Councillors Role of CEO Entitlements Staff interactions Strategic vs Operational	Oath/Affirmation of Office Role of Mayor, Deputy Mayor Prepare for Statutory Meeting Term of Office Overarching Governance and Support Principles Statutory Meeting - Mayoral Election	Corporate Planning Governance Rules and Meeting Etiquette Unbiased decision making Mock meeting Delegation Professional Development Overview Council Plan	Code of Conduct Integrity – e.g. confidential information, conflict of interest Advocacy Strategy Media and community engagement	Finance Overview Asset Management Procurement Overview Planning 101 Council Meeting	Advisory Committees, incl Audit and Risk Committee Councillor Representation Oversight and integrity agencies Community Visits	Public Transparency Freedom of Information Privacy Strategic Planning Statutory Planning Finance Advanced Mock meeting Council Meeting	Gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness Code of Conduct Advanced Governance Rules and Meeting Etiquette Rates Specialist Council Plan	Code of Conduct Statutory Planning Advanced Finance Refresher Valuer General's Office on annual valuations Site visits to key Capital Expenditure Projects Community Visits
EXTERNAL AND COMMUNITY			Community Visits Community Vision	Meet local members	Community Vision		Meet Advisory Committee members Community Vision	Site visits to key Capital Expenditure Projects Community Visits	

Contact us

Bairnsdale

Corporate Centre
273 Main Street
Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm

Lakes Entrance

18 Mechanics Street
Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm

Mallacoota

70 Maurice Avenue
Monday and Tuesday 10.00 am - 2.00 pm
Wednesday to Friday 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm

Omeo

179 Day Avenue
Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm
Monday 9.00 am - 10.30 am
Tuesday 9.00 am - 12.00 noon
Wednesday 9.00 am - 12.00 noon

Orbost

1 Ruskin Street
Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm

Paynesville

55 The Esplanade
Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm

 **5153 9500**

 **eastgippsland.vic.gov.au**

 **EastGippyShire**

 **PO Box 1618, Bairnsdale 3875**

