

# A message from your Mayor

As you receive your 2025–26 rates notice, I wanted to highlight how Council is working to keep increases low, and what your rates pay for.

This year, Council has made a conscious decision to limit the rate increase to 2.0% – below the State Government’s 3.0% rate cap – and less than CPI. This is a direct response to rising cost-of-living pressures on our community. The increase will be balanced through continued efficiency targets, supported by the development of a Financial Sustainability Strategy, which will outline a framework to deliver future savings and efficiencies.



Your rates fund the delivery of essential services and infrastructure we all rely on – including roads, parks and gardens, waste and recycling, libraries, emergency management, sport and recreation, health, and local laws – across our large and diverse rural shire.

As part of this year’s budget development, we asked for your input early – and we thank the almost 1,000 people who took the time to share their feedback.

You told us about the local improvements that matter to you. Some of these ideas are already being implemented as day-to-day operational improvements, while others are reflected in our Council Plan.

For this year’s Budget, major areas of investment include a significant capital works program, alongside strong investment in asset maintenance – so everyone can continue to benefit from safe and accessible roads, buildings, open spaces and community facilities.

In 2025/26 our maintenance budget includes:

- Roads and bridges: \$17.3 million
- Parks and gardens: \$6.2 million
- Buildings: \$2.7 million
- Waste management: \$14.2 million

We’re also continuing to advocate strongly on State-imposed costs such as the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) levy. Following a six-month campaign, we helped secure a freeze on ESVF increases for farmers in 2025–26. However, this levy – which Council must collect and pass on to the State – still increases the total bill for many ratepayers.

We continue to advocate for its removal.

You can find more details about this charge and available rebates at [sro.vic.gov.au/esvf](http://sro.vic.gov.au/esvf) or by calling the Victorian Government support line on 1300 819 033. Additional information is also included in the 2025/2026 Rates Information brochure.

For more about how rates are calculated, payment options, or to view the Council Budget, Council Plan or Rating Strategy, please visit our website.

Thank you for your contribution to making East Gippsland a thriving, connected and sustainable region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John White".

**CR JOHN WHITE**

Mayor

 (03) 5153 9500

 [eastgippsland.vic.gov.au](http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au)

 EastGippyShire

 PO Box 1618, Bairnsdale 3875

