



# Councillor Briefing Notes

Tuesday 14 April 2026 at 9.30 am

273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875

## Attendance

### Mayor

Cr Jodie Ashworth

### Deputy Mayor

Cr Tom Crook

### Councillors

Cr Arthur Allen

Cr Sonia Buckley (Online)

Cr Barry Davis

Cr Joanne Eastman

Cr Ian Trevaskis

Cr John White

### Council Officers

Fiona Weigall

Stuart McConnell

Sarah Johnston

Chris Stephenson

Chief Executive Officer

General Manager Assets and Environment

General Manager Business Excellence

General Manager Place and Community

## Recognition of Traditional Custodians

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of this land and pays deep respect to all First Nations peoples and communities with enduring cultural connections to East Gippsland, who have cared for and nurtured Country for tens of thousands of years.

We honour and celebrate the rich diversity, living cultures, and ongoing contributions of all First Nations peoples who live, work, visit, and play across East Gippsland.

We also acknowledge the many First Nations communities who, together, continue to shape and contribute to the region we know as East Gippsland. The place where we, as Local Government, deliver services and support to our community.

## Apologies

Nil

## Absent

Cr Bernie Farquhar

## Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Cr John White declared a conflict of interest in relation to *item 4.1 Gippsland Critical Minerals - Environment Effects Statement*, as a general interest due to property ownership.

## Councillor Briefing Session

### Assets and Environment

#### 1.1 Workshop 8 Budget 2026/27 - Capital Works Budget 2026/27 Final Review

Councillors workshopped the draft Capital Works budget 2026/27, focusing on how projects are planned across the next four years and how current commitments are balanced with future works.

The discussions covered how projects are prioritised, how they are funded, and how different types of works - such as building upgrades, footpaths, pathways and community facilities - are presented to ensure information is clear and easy to understand for the community.

### External Presentation

#### 2.1 Discussion with Hon. Darren Chester MP, Federal Member for Gippsland

Councillors recently met with Hon. Darren Chester MP Member For Gippsland to discuss Council priorities and a range of key regional issues affecting East Gippsland.

The discussions provided an opportunity to share local perspectives and advocacy priorities, highlight matters of importance to the community and discuss how different levels of government can work together on issues impacting the region.

### Reports to Future Council Meeting (Report brought forward)

#### 3.1 Rate Cap Approach 2026/27

Councillors discussed their preferred Rate approach for 2026/27. This direction will now be incorporated into the development of the 2026/27 Budget.

## Place and Community

### 4.1 Gippsland Critical Minerals - Environment Effects Statement

#### Attendance

Cr Sonia Buckley (online) joined the meeting 1.35 pm.

Cr John White, having declared a conflict of interest in relation to 4.1, left the meeting at 1.36 pm.

Councillors received a high level update on the proposed Gippsland Critical Minerals project, noting that early stages of the State Government assessment process (Environmental Effects Statement) are underway. Council is not a decision-maker but will continue to monitor the process and engage as appropriate in the Technical Reference Group and as further information becomes available.

#### Attendance

Cr John White returned to the Council Chamber at 1.52 pm.

## Reports to Future Council Meeting

### 5.1 Planning Scheme Amendment C165egip - Corrections Amendment (Adoption)

Councillors were briefed on the draft report, Planning Scheme Amendment C165egip - Corrections Amendment (Adoption). Councillors noted the draft Council report, which will be submitted to the **21 April 2026** Council Meeting for consideration.

### 5.2 CONFIDENTIAL - Fuel Price Adjustment - Variation to Various Contracts to Address Fuel Price Risk

#### Confidentiality Notice

The information contained in the confidential attachment is confidential under section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* because it relates to: (a) Council Business Information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations, if prematurely released.

Pursuant to section 66(5)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, if released, the information discussed or considered in relation to this agenda item if released, the information discussed or considered in relation to this agenda item may compromise contract negotiations that are likely to be necessary in response to the current fuel price impacts.

Councillors were briefed on the draft report, Fuel Price Adjustment - Variation to Various Contracts to Address Fuel Price Risk. Councillors noted the draft Council report, which will be submitted to the **21 April 2026** Council Meeting for consideration.

### 5.3 Contract Matter

#### Confidentiality Notice

The information contained in this report is confidential under section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* because it relates to: (g) Private Commercial Information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that, if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

Pursuant to section 66(5)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, if released, the information discussed or considered in relation to this agenda item could impact the contractor.

#### Meeting Close

**Meeting closed at:** 3.15 pm

**Approved by:** Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer