



Minutes

Council Meeting

Tuesday 21 July 2026 at 6.00 pm

**Council Chambers (and by video conferencing)
East Gippsland Shire Council Corporate Centre
273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875**

Councillors

Jodie Ashworth (Mayor), Tom Crook (Deputy Mayor), Arthur Allen, Sonia Buckley (Online), Joanne Eastman, Bernie Farquhar, Ian Trevaskis, and John White

Attachments referenced in these minutes can be located in the meeting agenda on East Gippsland Shire Council's [website](#), with summaries of Council Briefings also available under [Council Briefings](#).

Vision

To foster inclusive, connected, communities and places where all East Gippslanders prosper, and endeavour not to leave anyone behind.

Our Strategic Themes

1. Community Wellbeing and Social Responsibility
2. Prosperity
3. Making the Most of What We've Got
4. Managing Council Well

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1 Procedural

1.1 Recognition of Traditional Custodians

Mayor Cr Jodie Ashworth welcomed all to the Council meeting and acknowledged the 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.

1.2 Apologies

Cr Barry Davis (Leave of Absence)
Sarah Johnston General Manager Business Excellence

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

Motion

That the minutes of the Council meeting held Tuesday 23 June 2026 be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Ian Trevaskis

Spoke for the motion: Cr Arthur Allen and Cr Ian Trevaskis

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

1.5 Next Meeting

The next Council Meeting scheduled is to be held on Tuesday 18 August 2026 at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale commencing at 6.00 pm.

1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence

Nil

Procedural Note

At this point in proceedings, Mayor Cr Jodie Ashworth acknowledged the following students who observed the meeting from the public gallery as part of their Junior Rotary Community Awards program:

- Coby Trewin from St Mary's Primary School; and
- Rachel Salisbury from Swan Reach Primary School.

To acknowledge their participation in this community program, the Mayor presented each student with a Council pin.

1.7 Open Forum

1.7.1 Petitions

1.7.1 Omeo Justice Precinct and Civic Centre Masterplan

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council:

1. *receives the petition;*
2. *notes that the petition will be referred to the Executive Manager Place and Community for a report to a future Council Meeting; and*
3. *notes that the Chief Executive Officer will arrange for Council Officers to write to the head petitioner advising them of these actions.*

Moved: **Cr Sonia Buckley**

Seconded: **Cr Tom Crook**

Spoke for the motion: Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
 Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

1.7.2 Questions of Council

1.7.1 The Curlip

Mr Stan Weatherall asked the following questions:

Question 1: *“Is the Council still of the opinion that the Curlip should not be sited on Council land?”.*

Question 2: *“What financial contribution is Council able and willing to make to this project?”.*

Mr Stuart McConnell General Manager Assets and Environment provided a response which is summarised below:

Response 1: Council initiated a public expression of interest process for parties to express interest in the Curlip. This expression of interest included a condition that the vessel not be relocated to Council land, reflecting the risks and liabilities associated with placement on Council land.

The vessel was previously located on public land in Paynesville and Council incurred significant costs relocating the vessel (both to fabricate a cradle and transport) when it had outstayed its approved time and the responsible group was not able to relocate it.

Response 2: Council does not have a provision for financial support of this project in the current budget.

Any support would need to be considered along with other requests through the community grants process.

The current vessel is a replica of the original and has been the subject of significant public funding as part of the original project. As part of that, Council provided \$30,000 for a Business Case. Council also incurred significant costs to remove the vessel from the Paynesville foreshore when the group had outstayed their approvals.

1.7.3 Public Submissions

Nil

1.8 Items for Noting

Nil

2 Notices of Motion

Nil

3 Deferred Business

Nil

4 Councillor Delegate Reports

4.1 Cr Jodie Ashworth

07/07/26 - Councillor Briefing Session
08/07/26 - Gippsland Critical Mines - Fingerboards Demo Pit Tour
09/07/26 - Omeo Stakeholders Meeting
10/07/26 - Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust Family Day - National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week
11/07/26 - Gippsland Regional Australian Local Government Women's Association Victoria Meeting
12/07/26 - Bairnsdale Pony Club Photo Opportunity - Community Impact Grant
13/07/26 - Rural Land Use Workshop
14/07/26 - Councillor Briefing Session
15/07/26 - Citizenship Ceremony
16/07/26 - Official Opening - Hoddinott Street Playground Upgrade
16/07/26 - Community Visit Sarsfield
18/07/26 - Taste of the World Event - East Gippsland Winter Festival

4.2 Cr Joanne Eastman

Citizenship Ceremony

On June 18, I joined the Mayor, Councillor Allen and Councillor Farquhar at the first Citizenship Ceremony held at the WORLD centre to congratulate 32 residents from 15 different countries on being awarded citizenship.

These joyful ceremonies are one of the best things about being a Councillor. It is wonderful to see how much the occasion means to the participants and to be able to reaffirm our own pledges to Australia.

NAIDOC March

I joined hundreds of people at this year's NAIDOC march celebrating 'Fifty Years of Deadly'. NAIDOC truly is a celebration of Aboriginal culture, and the march is a joyful event that is getting bigger every year.

It was wonderful to see the increasing support for the march with many businesses along the route displaying balloons or banners and people stopping and waving to the marchers.

Congratulations to the organisers. The future is in good hands.

Professional Development

Role of Councillors and Governance Training

I participated in the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Essentials for Local Government Councillors program, which focused on the roles, responsibilities and governance obligations of elected representatives.

The program examined the distinction between strategic and operational functions, helping Councillors understand where they can appropriately influence outcomes while maintaining good governance practices.

The training reinforced the role of Councillors as a key link between Council and the community, identifying local issues, representing community views, and communicating Council decisions and initiatives.

It also highlighted the unique challenges faced by Councillors in rural communities, where strong local connections can make conflicts of interest more complex to identify and manage.

A key theme was the importance of accountability, effective governance and informed decision-making. Councillors discussed balancing community expectations with their responsibility to ensure Council delivers on its adopted strategies and plans.

The program emphasised the value of considering diverse perspectives, actively seeking out underrepresented voices, and ensuring decisions are based on accurate and complete information. Robust decision-making processes were identified as essential to achieving good governance outcomes and maintaining community trust.

Conflict of Interest and Apprehended Bias Training

Councillors also participated in professional development regarding conflicts of interest (COIs) and apprehended bias in Council decision-making.

The session outlined that a conflict of interest arises where a Councillor's private interests can conflict with their public duty in relation to a matter requiring a Council decision. Councillors were reminded that conflicts must be assessed on the facts of each individual matter and declared where required.

The training also covered apprehended bias, which occurs where a fair-minded observer might reasonably perceive that a Councillor has not approached a matter with an open and impartial mind. Unlike COIs, apprehended bias is a common law principle rather than a statutory requirement.

Councillors were advised that while they may express views and engage with their communities, they should avoid conduct that could suggest a predetermined position or prejudgement of a matter. The importance of maintaining an open mind and making decisions in the best interests of the municipal community was reinforced.

4.3 Cr Bernie Farquhar

15/07/26 - Citizenship Ceremony - The Citizenship Ceremony was very enjoyable and well presented. Interesting where new citizens arrived from. I think there were about 15 different countries represented.

18/07/26 - Tastes of the World - A great evening well attended and very enjoyable.

19/07/26 - Locale Learning with Emma Broomfield: Mastery guide 3 Essential skills for Council Chamber.

The key topics covered included:

- listening with an open mind;
- speaking with persuasion and humility; and
- bringing strategic mindset.

This was the fifth or sixth webinars that I have now completed with eight other Councillors from across Australia. I would highly recommend this to other Councillors to consider and complete.

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Assets and Environment

5.1.1 East Gippsland Livestock Exchange Commercial Review - Final Report

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Motion

That Council:

- 1. notes the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange Commercial Review Final Report as provided at Attachment 1.; and*
- 2. notes that Officers will progress implementation of the recommended direction as outlined in the report.*

Moved: Cr John White

Seconded: Cr Ian Trevaskis

Spoke for the motion: Cr John White, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr Joanne Eastman

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.1.2

21 Year Lease - 70-78 Lucknow Street East Bairnsdale

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Motion

That Council:

- 1. approves a 21-year term for the lease to the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative for the property at 70-78 Lucknow Street East Bairnsdale for children's and administrative purposes; and***
- 2. authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to undertake a community engagement (notice of intent to enter into a lease) process in respect of the 21-year term lease to the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative for the property at 70-78 Lucknow Street East Bairnsdale for children's and administrative purposes.***

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook and Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.1.3 East Gippsland Shire Council Submission to the draft Victorian Waterway Management Strategy

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Motion

That Council retrospectively endorses the East Gippsland Shire Council's submission to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's draft Victorian Waterway Management Strategy as provided at Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Joanne Eastman

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook and Cr Joanne Eastman

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.2 Projects and Planning

5.2.1 Planning and Development - Council Policies for Review

Authorised by General Manager Projects and Planning

Motion

That Council:

- 1. adopts the Planning Delegation Policy as provided at Attachment 1;***
- 2. adopts the Development Plan Policy as provided at Attachment 2;***
- 3. adopts the Development Compliance Policy as provided at Attachment 3; and***
- 4. authorises the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate to amend the adopted Policies without formal Council consideration, if the amendments required are of a minor administrative nature.***

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook and Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.3 Place and Community

5.3.1 Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee (ASAC) – Minutes of Meeting 21 May 2026

Authorised by Executive Manager Place and Community

Motion

That Council receives and notes the Unconfirmed Minutes from the Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee meeting held on 21 May 2026.

Moved: Cr John White

Seconded: Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke for the motion: Cr John White and Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.4 Business Excellence

5.4.1 CON2026 1797 Public Space Closed Circuit TV - Maintenance and Support- Panel of Providers

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

Confidentiality Notice

The information contained in the **Confidential Attachment 1 Tender Evaluation Report for Contract No. CON2026 1797 Council Managed Closed-Circuit TV (CCTV) Network – Maintenance and Support** 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—(ii) 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 includes detailed tender evaluation and pricing information, the disclosure of which would unreasonably expose the business to disadvantage.

Motion

That Council:

- 1. establishes a panel of suppliers for CON2026 1797 Council Managed CCTV Network – Maintenance and Support;***
- 2. awards appointment to the panel for CON2026 1797 Council Managed CCTV Network – Maintenance and Support to the tenderers identified as the preferred tenderers in the Tender Evaluation Report provided at Confidential Attachment 1, for an initial term of three years, inclusive of annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments;***
- 3. authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to exercise, for CON2026 1797 Council Managed CCTV Network – Maintenance and Support, the two contract extension options, each for a period of up to 36-months, inclusive of annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments, at Council's sole discretion;***
- 4. authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to finalise the terms of and to execute the necessary contract documents;***
- 5. notes that engagement of suppliers from the panel will occur on an as-needed basis in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy provisions for panel arrangements;***
- 6. notes that the successful tenderers and contract details will be published on Council's website following execution of the contract documents and after unsuccessful tenderers have been formally notified; and***
- 7. resolves that Confidential Attachment 1 to this report and all discussion relating to it remain confidential.***

Moved: *Cr Bernie Farquhar*

Seconded: *Cr Ian Trevaskis*

Spoke for the motion: Cr Bernie Farquhar and Cr Ian Trevaskis

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
 Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.4.2 Review and Rescission of Council Policies

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council rescinds the following Council-adopted policies:

- a) Advocacy Policy;***
- b) Coastal Inundation and Erosion Planning Policy;***
- c) Council Marinas Power Policy;***
- d) Media Policy;***
- e) Public Space Closed Circuit Television Surveillance Policy; and***
- f) Quick Response Capital Fund Policy.***

Moved: Cr Bernie Farquhar

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

Spoke for the motion: Cr Bernie Farquhar and Cr Tom Crook

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
 Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.4.3 Council Resolutions Register

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

Confidentiality Notice

The information contained in the confidential attachments is confidential under section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* because it relates to: (h) Confidential Meeting Information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a).

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 undermine the integrity of Council decision-making processes, disclose sensitive discussions or deliberations, or reveal personal, legal, or commercial information that may prejudice Council or third parties.

Motion

That Council receives and notes this report and all attachments pertaining to this report.

Moved: Cr Tom Crook
Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook and Cr Arthur Allen
Spoke against the motion: Nil
Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White
Against: Nil
Abstained: Nil

5.4.4 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council notes the confirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held Monday 25 May 2026, as presented at Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Bernie Farquhar

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
 Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

6 Urgent Business

Nil

Motion

That Council resolves to move into confidential business pursuant to section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Joanne Eastman

Spoke for the motion: Nil

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Joanne Eastman, Cr Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

The meeting was closed to the public at 7.20 pm.

7 Confidential Business

7.1 Contract Matter

The information contained in this report 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 would unreasonably prejudice Council's position in relation to the current procurement process, the proposed re-procurement of the works, and associated contractual, legal and probity matters, including Council's dealings with tenderers and potential commercial negotiations.

8 Close of Meeting

Mayor Cr Jodie Ashworth declared the Council Meeting closed at 7.36 pm.