



Councillor Briefing Notes

Tuesday 31 March 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

Cr Joanne Eastman

Cr Bernie Farquhar (Online)

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

Cr Barry Davis

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Cr Ian Trevaskis declared a conflict of interest in relation to item 2.1 *Workshop 6 Budget 2026/27 – Budget Engagement, Fees and Charges and First Cut Operational Budget*, as a general interest due to a family member's involvement with a community committee.

Councillor Briefing Session Assets and Environment

1.1 Workshop 5 Budget 2026/27 - Capital Works Budget 2026/27

Attendance

Cr Bernie Farquhar joined the meeting online at 9.40 am

Councillors discussed the proposed Capital Works Budget 2026/27 program, focusing on delivering essential projects that are ready for delivery, affordable and aligned with Council priorities. The program has been refined to better reflect Council's capacity to deliver, with projects prioritised based on safety, asset condition, funding requirements and readiness. Feedback from the discussion will inform further refinement of the draft budget as part of the ongoing budget process.

Attendance

Cr Bernie Farquhar left the meeting at 11.45 am and did not return.

Urgent Discussion

Councillors discussed with Officers CON2026 1789 Bairnsdale Runway Extension and Lighting Construction Works and the confidential attachments prior to be considered at the unscheduled Council meeting.

Business Excellence

2.1 Workshop 6 Budget 2026/27 - Budget Engagement, Fees and Charges and First Cut Operational Budget

Councillors workshopped the draft 2026/27 budget considering community feedback, proposed user fees and charges, and early financial projections. Feedback from budget engagement was reviewed, including themes around community facilities, arts and culture, tourism assets and cost of living pressures, with guidance provided on how this feedback should be reflected in the draft budget. The draft budget and proposed fees will be further refined before being presented at a future Councillor briefing and formal Council meeting.

Meeting Close

Meeting closed at: 5.07 pm

Approved by: Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer