



# Council Meeting Agenda

**Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 6:00 pm**  
Council Chambers (and by video conferencing)  
East Gippsland Shire Council Corporate Centre  
273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875



## 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.

## Council information

East Gippsland Shire Council live streams, records and publishes its meetings via webcasting ([youtube.com/c/EastGippyTV](https://youtube.com/c/EastGippyTV)) to enhance the accessibility of its meetings to the broader East Gippsland community.

These recordings are also archived and available for viewing by the public or used for publicity or information purposes. At the appropriate times during the meeting, any members of the gallery who are addressing the council will have their image, comments or submissions recorded.

No other person has the right to record Council meetings unless approval has been granted by the Chair.

In line with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Councillors are able to attend Council meetings electronically or in person and the meetings will be open to the public via livestreaming.

Members of the public are invited to view the Council Meeting livestreamed by following the link on Council's website or Facebook page.



## Councillors

Cr Tom Crook (Mayor)  
Cr Jane Greacen OAM (Deputy Mayor)  
Cr Arthur Allen  
Cr Sonia Buckley  
Cr Mark Reeves  
Cr Trevor Stow  
Cr Mendy Urie  
Cr Kirsten Van Diggele  
Cr John White

## Executive Leadership Team

Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer  
Wayne Richards Acting General Manager Assets and Environment  
Stuart McConnell Acting General Manager Business Excellence  
Martin Richardson Acting General Manager Place and Community

## Purpose of Council meetings

- (1) Council holds scheduled meetings and, when required, unscheduled meetings to conduct the business of Council.
- (2) Council is committed to transparency in decision making and, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council and Delegated Committee meetings are open to the public and the community are able to attend.
- (3) Meetings will only be closed to members of the public, in accordance with section 66 of the Act, if:
  - (a) there are clear reasons for particular matters to remain confidential; or
  - (b) a meeting is required to be closed for security reasons; or
  - (c) it is necessary to enable the meeting to proceed in an ordinary manner.
- (4) A meeting closed to the public for the reasons outlined in sub-rule 3(b) or 3(c) will continue to be livestreamed. In the event a livestream is not available:
  - (a) the meeting may be adjourned; or
  - (b) a recording of the proceedings may be available on the Council website.

## Governance Rules

A copy of East Gippsland Shire Council's governance rules can be found at  
<https://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/council/council-policies>

## Councillors pledge

As Councillors of East Gippsland Shire Council, we solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that we will consider each item on this agenda in the best interests of the whole municipal community.

## Vision

East Gippsland is an inclusive and innovative community that values our natural environment, puts community at the centre of Council decision-making, and creates the conditions in which communities can thrive.

## Our Strategic Objectives

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

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# 1 Procedural

## 1.1 Recognition of Traditional Custodians

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawal 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.

## 1.2 Apologies

Cr Kirsten Van Diggele

## 1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

## 1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held Tuesday 19 March 2024 and the Unscheduled Council Meeting held Tuesday 2 April 2024 be confirmed.

## 1.5 Next Meeting

The next Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 30 April 2024 at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale commencing at 6.00 pm.

## 1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence

## 1.7 Open Forum

### 1.7.1 *Petitions*

### 1.7.2 *Questions of Council*

### 1.7.3 *Public Submissions*

## 1.8 Items for Noting

# 2 Notices of Motion

# 3 Deferred Business

# 4 Councillor and Delegate Reports

## 5 Officer Reports

### 5.1 Business Excellence

#### 5.1.1 Service Centres and Library 12-month Trial

Authorised by      Acting General Manager Business Excellence

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#### Conflict of Interest

Officers preparing this report have no conflict of interest to declare.

#### Executive Summary

Council is required by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act) to deliver services in accordance with the service principles in Part 5 Section 106 of Act. This report provides Council with information on how the customer service centre and library services have been used across a 12-month trial period.

Council, at its meeting held on 8 November 2022, considered a report on the findings and recommendations of the Service Review - Service Centres and Libraries and endorsed a 12-month trial period. The trial commenced on 3 January 2023 and remains in place until Council determines how services will be delivered in the future. The trial has included increased investment, additional services, and minor changes to opening hours.

This report forms part of the decision-making process for Council as to future service provision. It was part of the recommendation adopted by Council in initiating the trial.

Overall, data collected across the trial suggests there has been similar use of services by the community. While use fluctuates across sites (day-to-day and throughout each day) there is no overriding trend to suggest the services are not being used across available opening hours.

Call Centre Officers are now co-located at more remote sites. This has supported service coverage in small teams, ensuring sites remain open, library programs are offered, and online services and customer response processing is supported. This also supports an efficient use of team resources to provide these services to the community. Library programs have recommenced in Mallacoota and Omeo.

Community sentiment expressed as feedback from library users and Friends groups continues to indicate that hours should not be reduced.

The introduction of a second mobile service has increased Council's reach into more remote communities, nursing homes and schools with smaller populations by more than 40%.

## Officer Recommendation

### *That Council:*

- 1. receives and notes this report and all attachments pertaining to this report;**
- 2. approves the continuation of opening hours for the Service Centres and Libraries based on the trial hours;**
- 3. approves making the two-vehicle mobile library service an ongoing service; and**
- 4. notes that data will continue to be collected on library and service centre use to inform future service delivery improvements and efficiencies, and will be tabled with Council as required.**

## Background

On 8 November 2022, after a detailed review of customer service and library services over two years, Council approved changes to the delivery of customer service and library services for a trial period of 12 months. The trial commenced on 3 January 2023 and included:

- Minor changes to opening times (refer **Table 1**).
- Investment in a second mobile library vehicle to increase service provision to remote, vulnerable and school communities.
- Council allocating an additional \$240,000 budget to support the trial.

**Table 1: Opening hours comparison**

| Site                        | Pre-12-month trial                                                                        | 12-month trial                                                                            | Difference                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bairnsdale Library          | 9.30 am to 6.00 pm Monday – Friday (Thursday to 9.00 pm); Saturday 9.30 am to 12.00 pm    | 9.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday – Friday (Thursday to 9.00 pm) and 9.00 am to 12.00 pm Saturday | 3 hours increase a week<br>        |
| Bairnsdale Corporate Centre | 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday - Friday                                                        | 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday - Friday                                                        | 2.5 hours decrease a week<br>      |
| Lakes Entrance              | 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday – Friday                                                        | 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday - Friday                                                        | 2.5 hours decrease a week<br>      |
| Mallacoota                  | 10.00 am to 2.00 pm Monday and Tuesday; 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm Wednesday, Thursday and Friday | 10.00 am to 2.00 pm Monday and Tuesday; 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm Wednesday, Thursday and Friday | Same<br>                           |
| Omeo                        | 8.30 am to 5.00 pm (lunch break closure had commenced prior to trial)                     | 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday – Friday (closed 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm)                           | 2.5 hours decrease a week<br>      |
| Orbost                      | 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday – Friday                                                        | 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday - Friday                                                        | 2.5 hours decrease a week<br>      |
| Paynesville                 | 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday - Friday                                                        | 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday - Friday                                                        | 2.5 hours decrease a week<br>      |
| Mobile Service              | 1 vehicle, 29 locations                                                                   | 2 vehicles, 51 locations                                                                  | Extra vehicle and 22 locations<br> |

*\*Call Centre hours (8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday – Friday) did not change. After-hours calls are serviced by an external contractor and on-call arrangements.*



As part of the initial service review, improvements were made to data collection to better inform future service delivery decisions. This data is presented as infographics and with comparison to the previous year, refer **Attachment 1**.

Interim data from the service review was presented to a Council meeting on 8 November 2022 and was publicly available.

## **Library services**

Public sentiment for retaining existing opening hours throughout the service review was strong from a discreet group of library users.

This sentiment is supported by the results of the Victorian Public Library Survey and Victorian Public Library Census. Led by Public Libraries Victoria in 2022 across all Victorian public libraries formed the basis of the [‘Inside our Public Libraries’ report](#). Locally, community engagement for the service review demonstrated that East Gippsland holds its library services in high regard.

### Self-service scanners

An initiative at the Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance libraries was the installation of self-service scanners. The scanners have enabled staff to move away from the loans desk, be on hand to help community members, and have greater flexibility to complete tasks within the collection.

Uptake in use has been consistent across Bairnsdale (two scanners) and Lakes Entrance (one scanner) with scanners in both locations responsible for about 25% of total loans.

Self-scanners accommodate 25,000 loans per quarter in Bairnsdale and 9,000 in Lakes Entrance. Loan volumes at other centres (Omeo 500 loans per quarter, Orbost 3,200, Paynesville 4,000, Mallacoota 1,000) do not warrant self-scanner investment.

### Loans

Analysis of library loans across all sites indicates loans are stable or increasing across most sites, particularly Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance, and are returning to pre-pandemic numbers. Loans at more remote sites are only marginally lower when comparing 2023 to 2022.

There is no significant difference, on average, as to when customers choose to borrow library items. Quieter loan days are, on average, about 75% of the volume of busier days.

### Programs

Library programs are offered at all sites and have been reestablished at Omeo and Mallacoota during the past 12 months. The reintroduction, which has been supported by the community, has been possible due to the changes in the team structure at these sites.

## **Mobile service delivery**

The trial supported a mobile service delivery model that reached more locations and offered not only library services but other Council services such as payments, enquiries, and community engagement opportunities.

The service commenced 22 May 2023 with the schedule of existing and new locations trialed for six months. Schedules were reviewed in November 2023.

The increase from 29 locations to 51 has resulted in Council providing easier access to services for people in their own communities, and an increase in people accessing these services over and above the usage rates for the previous single service.

Visitation has increased and library loans are up, while engagement opportunities have included place-based support, project updates, and third-party support services.

## **Service centres and call centre**

The change in operating hours for the Corporate Centre has had no impact on the community or operations.

Walk in traffic has increased to 14,991 (2022-23) from 11,687 (2021-22) and 9,077 in 2020-21 (COVID-impacted), which indicates that more in-person transactions are being conducted at the Corporate Centre than in the previous two years. Pre-COVID (2019 calendar year) walk in traffic was 14,753 at the Corporate Centre.

The co-location of call centre shifts across all service centres has provided additional resources at more remote sites with small teams. This has had a positive impact, limiting site closures and program cancellation due to planned and unplanned leave. It has supported the reintroduction of library programs at Omeo and Mallacoota. It also supports succession planning and capability uplift across our teams especially in remote areas.

Walk in enquiries across all sites are a mix of payments, pet registrations, rates enquiries, permit lodgements. The volume and request type fluctuates depending on the time of year and payment and registration cycles for key items such as rates and pet registrations.

### **Lakes Entrance**

The change in opening hours (9am to 5pm) has had no impact on the community or operations.

There has been a small increase in door count numbers, with customers returning to use the centre post-pandemic.

### **Mallacoota**

Opening hours were unchanged during the trial and the VicRoads agency service ceased on 31 January 2023.

Door count has fallen quarter-on-quarter in 2023 and is below 2022 levels. This is due to the absence of VicRoads agency services and a change in the delivery method of visitor information services.

All measures are down on previous years, except for program attendance (reinstated in 2023). Because of the already reduced opening hours at this site there is little excess capacity to be reallocated.

### Omeo

The change in opening hours (9am to 5pm and 1-hour lunch closure) has had no impact on the community or operations.

VicRoads agency service ceased on 31 January 2023, and the Bendigo Bank agency closed in March 2023. This has had a direct correlation to the significant reduction in door count.

Mornings are the busiest time, with the reintroduction of library programming being the major positive indicator in what is a downturn in customers.

Due to the Bendigo Bank and VicRoads services no longer being provided by the Omeo Service Centre, spare capacity of the team has been directed to support such things as processing online application forms, Customer Response activities, and assisting in the development of library programs.

The Omeo Service Centre also supports the Omeo Mountain Bike Coordinator and Place Facilitator with administrative support, meetings, and promotional activities.

### Orbost

The change in opening hours has had no impact on the community or operations.

There has been a small increase in customers every quarter of 2023 above 2022 figures, while library activities are on par with 2022.

The Orbost team supports the East mobile service delivery vehicle that operates out of Orbost with library stock supplies, reservations, administration and promotions.

### Paynesville

The change in opening hours has had no impact on the community or operations. One user of the community hall was initially impacted by the change in opening time; however, this has been resolved.

Library activities are generally up, except for loans. The latter would be explained by the proximity to the Bairnsdale Library (including public transport links) and digital borrowings.

Consistent and improving door count data has shown an intent by the community to use the centre.

### Customer Response

Separate to the service review, Council initiated a Customer Response project in 2023, with the intent to improve customer response quality and timeliness. Resourcing from within the Omeo Customer Service Team now supports this work as noted above.

## **Legislation**

As of 1 July 2021, all provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020* commenced. Some provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*, that have not been repealed, will remain applicable until such time as they are revoked.

This report has been prepared in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020*, section 106 Service performance principles.

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon the human rights detailed in the Victorian Government's Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

### *Gender Impact Statement*

In preparing this report the Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020* has been considered. The implications of the report have been assessed and are compliant with the obligations and principles of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

## **Collaborative procurement**

Not applicable to this report.

## **Council Plan**

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following strategic objectives set out in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Strategic Objective 1: 1.1 Council strives to provide equitable access to their services, support and facilities.

## **Council Policy**

Council has a Service Review Policy that was adopted in August 2021. The policy provides direction in relation to service performance principles stated in Section 106 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **Resourcing**

### *Financial*

On 8 November 2022, Council endorsed an additional \$240,000 to implement the trial which increased customer service resourcing and added the second mobile service.

The major additional service is for the second mobile service centre, which Council secured Victorian Government funding, through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program, to assist in the purchase and fit out of. The continuation of the second vehicle service requires a full-time resource.

Throughout the trial, productivity savings have been identified and implemented through different ways of working and better resource allocation.

To make the customer service trial arrangements permanent, an investment of approximately \$124,000 is required, this is partly to fund the additional mobile service centre.

If the recommendation is supported, cost offsets must be identified to fund this additional investment.

### *Human Resources*

The trial included the allocation of call centre shifts to be co-located and spread across Omeo, Orbost, Lakes Entrance, Mallacoota, and Paynesville service centres. This provides additional co-located resources to ensure consistent delivery of services. Having a multi-skilled workforce at service centres provides flexibility to adapt and supplement resources and limits centre closures.

There are no staff losses because of the recommendations in this report.

### *Risk*

The risks of this proposal have been considered. The outcome may prompt a range of responses from the community, which will be managed with proactive communications to user groups and the public.

### **Economic**

There are no economic impacts because of the officer's recommendations regarding the provision of council services.

### **Social**

East Gippsland has three incorporated 'Friends of the Library' groups – Bairnsdale, Paynesville and Lakes Entrance – who volunteer their time to support community use of the library.

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) recognises that library services can be enhanced by well supported volunteers and providing volunteers with meaningful community roles is a legitimate function of a public library service.

The change in hours has not impacted volunteering within the libraries.

### **Environmental**

There are no environmental impacts identified because of the recommendations in this report.

### *Climate change*

This report is assessed as having no direct impact on climate change.



## Engagement

Council shared interim data for the first three quarters of the trial period in December 2023. This was promoted through a media release in local newspapers, and the data made available on Council's website and directly to Friends groups. There has been no feedback on the data provided, or additional media interest generated. This contrasts with media interest and campaigning around the time of the trial period decision in 2022.

Community members and representatives of Friends groups have addressed Council through public questions at Council meetings on occasions throughout the trial. Customers attending mobile services have been canvassed on that service in developing the current schedule.

## Options

1. Adopt the continuation of opening hours and service provision from the 12-month trial, including an additional annual investment of \$124,000, as outlined in the finance section of the report. (**Recommended**); or
2. Return opening hours and service provision to pre-trial arrangements, except for external agency services. This will require additional investment; or
3. Reduce opening hours (as per November 2022 recommendation) at some centres as a cost-saving initiative but keep the second mobile service centre. This will result in a saving of \$124,000; or
4. Reduce opening hours (as per November 2022 recommendation) at some centres as a cost-saving initiative and discontinue the second mobile service centre. This will result in a saving of \$216,000.

## Attachments

1. Customer Service and Library Infographics 12 Month Trial 2023 [**5.1.1.1** - 9 pages]

# East Gippsland Shire Council

## **Service Centre & Library Data**

January-December 2023

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

# Bairnsdale Library

### January-March 2023

#### Door Count

41,076



(2022: 19,441)

January: 15,001 February: 12,575 March: 13,500

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

|                    | 2023   | 2022   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Enquiries          | 3,445  | 2,133  |
| Loans              | 26,174 | 27,738 |
| New members        | 228    | 224    |
| Program attendance | 782    | 784    |
| Computer bookings  | 3,754  | 908    |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

### April-June 2023

#### Door Count

28,627\*

(2022: 27,704)

April: 9,542\* May: 9,542\* June: 9,543\*  
Due to a faulty door counter, estimate can only be provided.

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

|                    | 2023   | 2022   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Enquiries          | 3,627  | 2,770  |
| Loans              | 22,121 | 26,612 |
| New members        | 211    | 214    |
| Program attendance | 1,614  | 1,231  |
| Computer bookings  | 1,879  | 1,338  |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

### July-September 2023

#### Door Count

38,989\*

(2022: 33,347)

July: 13,767\* August: 14,972\* September: 10,260  
Due to a faulty door counter, estimate can only be provided.  
September - new counter with improved functionality.

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

|                    | 2023   | 2022   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Enquiries          | 3,921  | 3,246  |
| Loans              | 29,587 | 24,624 |
| New members        | 213    | 251    |
| Program attendance | 1,329  | 1,359  |
| Computer bookings  | 1,946  | 1,721  |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

### October-December 2023

#### Door Count

29,269

(2022: 30,962)

October: 10,891 November: 10,579 December: 7,799

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

|                    | 2023   | 2022   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Enquiries          | 4,042  | 3,175  |
| Loans              | 27,750 | 28,630 |
| New members        | 190    | 180    |
| Program attendance | 1,113  | 1,110  |
| Computer bookings  | 1,740  | 1,593  |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

# Corporate Centre

### January-March 2023

Door Count

4,298



(2022: 3,680)  
January: 1,069 February: 1,666 March: 1,563

Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



### April-June 2023

Door Count

3,759



(2022: 3,605)  
April: 1,116 May: 1,488 June: 1,155

Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



### July-September 2023

Door Count

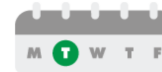
3,704



(2023: 3,708)  
July: 1,030 August: 951 September: 1,723

Customer Interactions

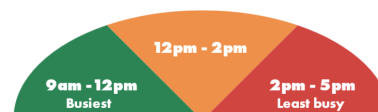
Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



### October-December 2023

Door Count

3,589



(2022: 3,226)  
October: 1,217 November: 1,392 December: 980

Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



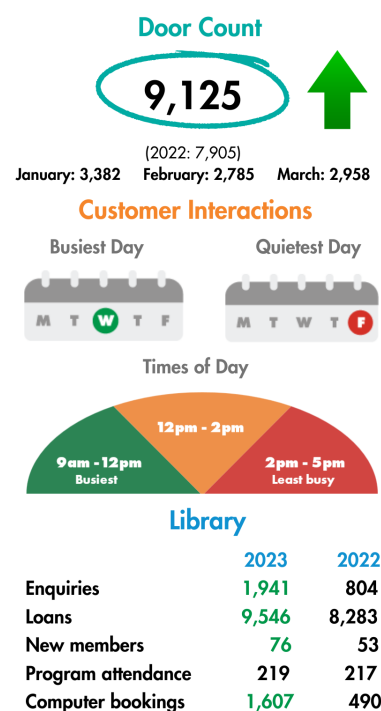
Times of Day



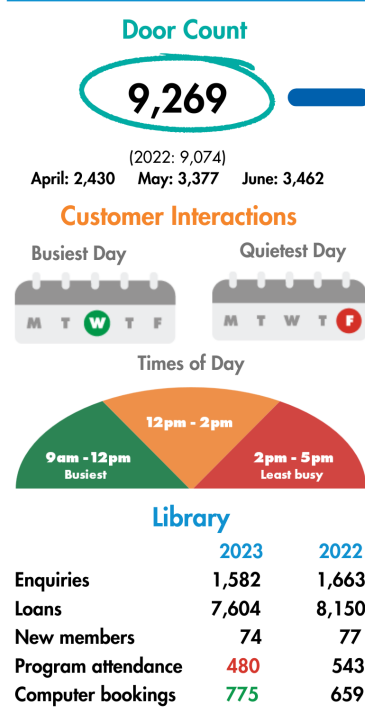
## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

# Lakes Entrance

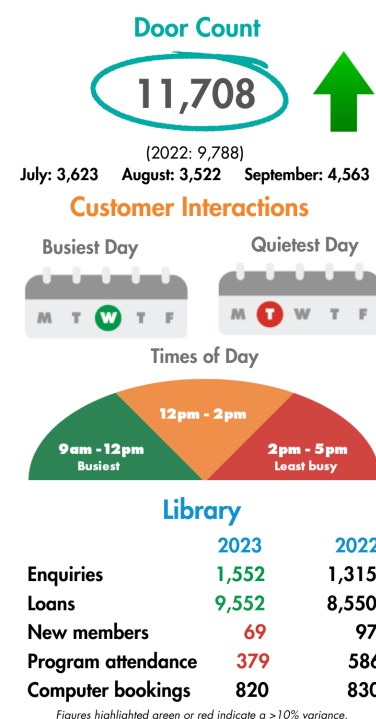
### January-March 2023



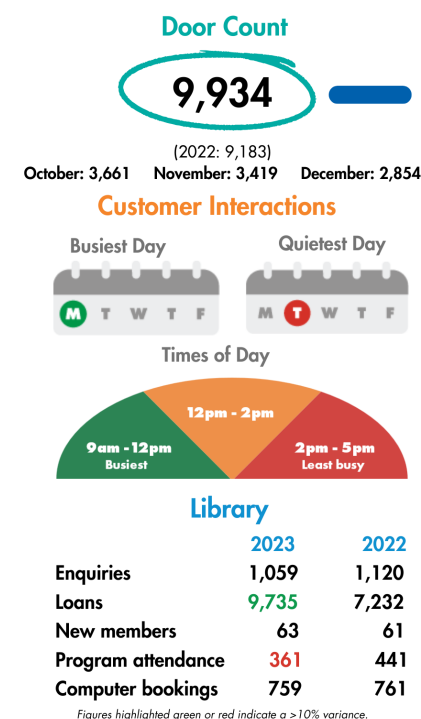
### April-June 2023



### July-September 2023



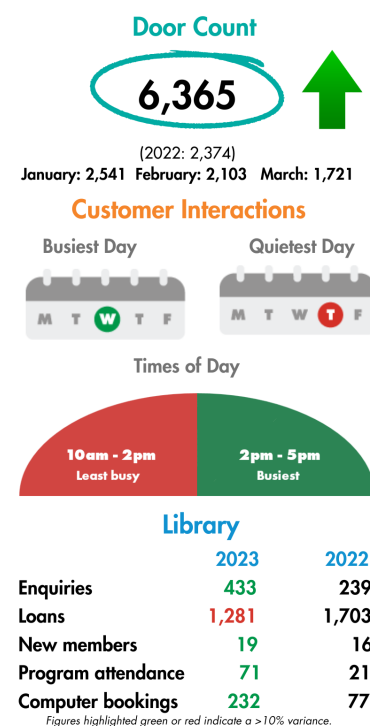
### October-December 2023



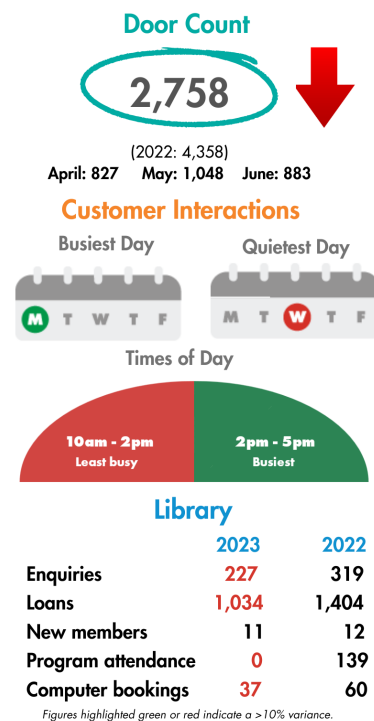
## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

# Mallacoota

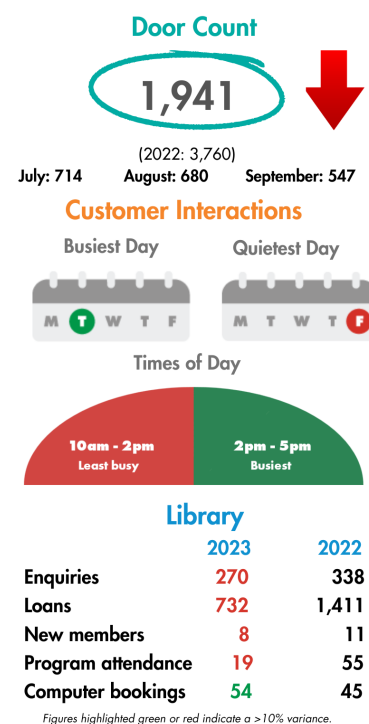
### January-March 2023



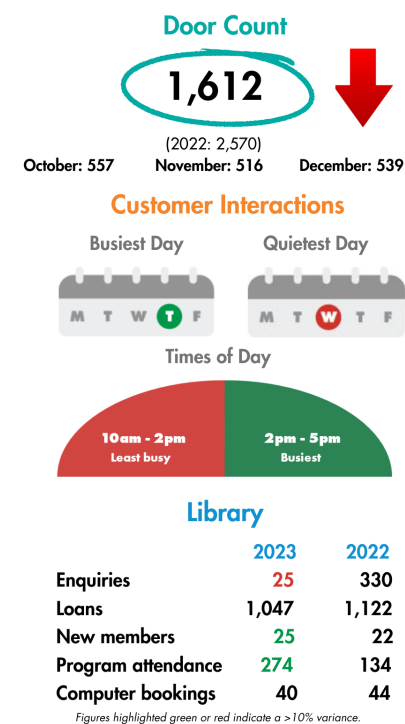
### April-June 2023



### July-September 2023



### October-December 2023



## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

# Omeo

## January-March 2023

## Door Count

3,931



(2022: 2,713)

January: 1,351 February: 1,097 March: 1,483

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023 | 2022 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Enquiries          | 146  | 212  |
| Loans              | 502  | 703  |
| New members        | 7    | 1    |
| Program attendance | 15   | 15   |
| Computer bookings  | 63   | 38   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.

## April-June 2023

## Door Count

2,660



(2022: 2,548)

April: 1,042 May: 926 June: 692

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023 | 2022 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Enquiries          | 144  | 387  |
| Loans              | 510  | 622  |
| New members        | 10   | 5    |
| Program attendance | 295  | 43   |
| Computer bookings  | 27   | 35   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.

## July-September 2023

## Door Count

1,947



(2022: 2,827)

July: 669 August: 625 September: 653

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023 | 2022 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Enquiries          | 98   | 286  |
| Loans              | 522  | 748  |
| New members        | 11   | 4    |
| Program attendance | 255  | 137  |
| Computer bookings  | 27   | 47   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.

## October-December 2023

## Door Count

2,176



(2022: 2,852)

October: 683 November: 851 December: 642

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023 | 2022 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Enquiries          | 25   | 153  |
| Loans              | 509  | 718  |
| New members        | 9    | 3    |
| Program attendance | 275  | 248  |
| Computer bookings  | 34   | 37   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.



## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

## Orbost

## January-March 2023

## Door Count

4,713

(2022: 4,546)

January: 1,585 February: 1,440 March: 1,688

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries          | 1,321 | 904   |
| Loans              | 3,652 | 3,442 |
| New members        | 34    | 22    |
| Program attendance | 203   | 199   |
| Computer bookings  | 738   | 173   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.

## April-June 2023

## Door Count

5,474

(2022: 4,982)

April: 1,214 May: 2,173 June: 2,087

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries          | 768   | 1375  |
| Loans              | 3,906 | 3,924 |
| New members        | 16    | 22    |
| Program attendance | 203   | 153   |
| Computer bookings  | 273   | 244   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.

## July-September 2023

## Door Count

6,472

(2022: 5,110)

July: 2,246 August: 2,119 September: 2,107

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries          | 1,021 | 1,401 |
| Loans              | 3,267 | 4,524 |
| New members        | 22    | 48    |
| Program attendance | 301   | 232   |
| Computer bookings  | 395   | 312   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.

## October-December 2023

## Door Count

5,579

(2022: 5,117)

October: 2,088 November: 2,037 December: 1,454

## Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



## Library

|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries          | 890   | 1,187 |
| Loans              | 3,386 | 3,512 |
| New members        | 22    | 28    |
| Program attendance | 217   | 182   |
| Computer bookings  | 321   | 279   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a &gt;10% variance.

# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

## Paynesville

### January-March 2023

#### Door Count

4,248



(2022: 5,293)

January: 1,625 February: 1,193 March: 1,430

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries          | 1,935 | 798   |
| Loans              | 4,570 | 5,309 |
| New members        | 41    | 30    |
| Program attendance | 285   | 284   |
| Computer bookings  | 543   | 177   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

### April-June 2023

#### Door Count

4,465



(2022: 4,920)

April: 1,100 May: 1,779 June: 1,586

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries:         | 1,250 | 935   |
| Loans              | 4,070 | 4,639 |
| New members        | 41    | 32    |
| Program attendance | 804   | 351   |
| Computer bookings  | 228   | 225   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

### July-September 2023

#### Door Count

5,507



(2022: 5,370)

July: 1,585 August: 1,820 September: 2,099

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries:         | 1,503 | 1,148 |
| Loans              | 3,807 | 5,293 |
| New members        | 44    | 37    |
| Program attendance | 640   | 477   |
| Computer bookings  | 293   | 275   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

### October-December 2023

#### Door Count

5,148



(2022: 4,651)

October: 1,840 November: 1,834 December: 1,474

#### Customer Interactions

Busiest Day



Quietest Day



Times of Day



#### Library

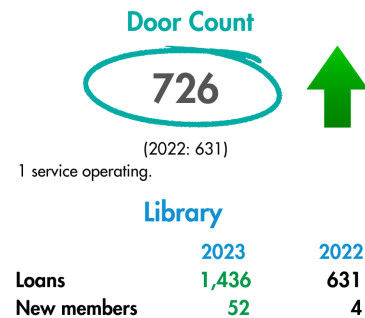
|                    | 2023  | 2022  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Enquiries          | 1,592 | 1,030 |
| Loans              | 3,521 | 4,186 |
| New members        | 17    | 22    |
| Program attendance | 577   | 441   |
| Computer bookings  | 236   | 231   |

Figures highlighted green or red indicate a >10% variance.

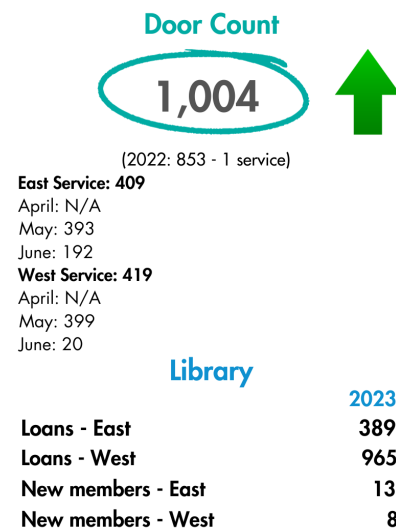
## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND LIBRARIES

# Mobile Service

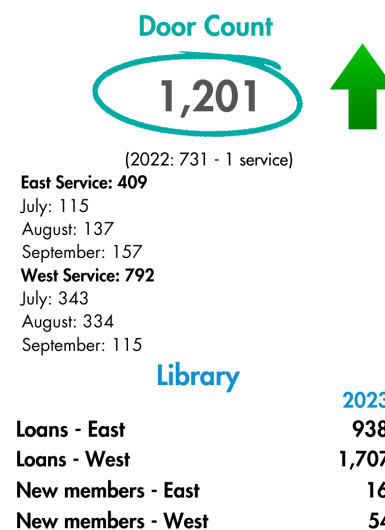
### January-March 2023



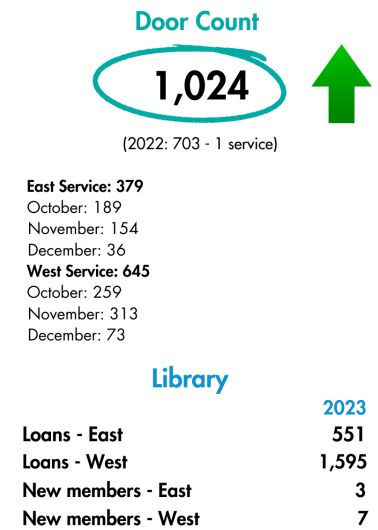
### April-June 2023



### July-September 2023



### October-December 2023



## 5.1.2 Advocacy Strategy 2024

Authorised by Acting General Manager Business Excellence

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### Conflict of Interest

Officers preparing this report have no conflict of interest to declare.

### Executive Summary

Council's Advocacy Strategy (Strategy) outlines the priorities of Council, in representing the community, that require the most attention and supports a strong program of advocacy activities to targeted audiences.

The Strategy is regularly updated, and this report provides an updated Strategy, available at **Attachment 1** for Council's consideration. The Strategy outlines Council's priorities for the final year of this Council term. The priorities include seven items identified as critical.

### Officer Recommendation

#### *That Council:*

- 1. receives and notes this report and all attachments pertaining to this report; and**
- 2. endorses the updated Advocacy Strategy 2024, provided at Attachment 1.**

### Background

The Strategy provides a clear mandate on how, when and what we advocate on to the Victorian and Australian governments, elected representatives and political parties and other decision makers.

Through Council's advocacy promotion it is a priority to explain the 'why' to both potential funding partners and our community for the planning, development and delivery of the many individual programs and services that the Council provides.

The Strategy is distributed to Ministers, Members of Parliament, decision makers and special interest groups as a platform to discuss the needs of East Gippsland. It has also formed the basis of motions to both the Australian Local Government Association and Municipal Association of Victoria.

Priorities are sourced from:

- the Council Plan and policies;
- Council resolutions as they arise;
- issues of the day as they arise; and
- Government budget and policy cycles, policy announcements, election cycles.

By defining the priorities and the 'ask' in our Strategy, it supports:

- the Mayor and Councillors, and senior officers appointed to represent the Council, with resources to enable effective advocacy;
- making representations at State and Federal government level for advocacy purposes that address Council's priorities for East Gippsland Shire;
- working closely with other partners who have a common interest in issues and participate in joint actions, where appropriate; and
- effectively engaging and communicating with our community on matters of advocacy priority.

The Strategy is supported by detailed information about the priority, the ask, the wider context of why it is a priority for Council, anticipated benefits, and what funding may be required to support initiatives.

The Strategy identifies seven 'critical' priorities that will be the primary focus of advocacy efforts in 2024:

- Digital connectivity
- National Disaster Recovery Funding reform
- Asset management
- Housing availability for workers
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- State-wide flood mapping integration provided
- Native timber industry transition

All other priorities in the Strategy will continue to be the focus of advocacy efforts and will be utilised as opportunity arises or further developed as required.

The Strategy also outlines Council's position papers, formally adopted by Council.

## **Legislation**

As of 1 July 2021, all provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020* commenced. Some provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*, that have not been repealed, will remain applicable until such time as they are revoked.

This report has been prepared in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* section 9 and section 58.

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon the human rights detailed in the Victorian Government's Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

## **Gender Impact Statement**

In preparing this report the Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020* has been considered. The implications of the report have been assessed and are compliant with the obligations and principles of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. The need for a Gender Impact Assessment has also been assessed.

## **Council Plan**

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following strategic objectives set out in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Strategic Objective 5: 5.2 Strong relationships with government, partners and stakeholders are maintained and strengthened to advocate for the community.

The advocacy priorities align to the strategic objectives in the Council Plan, under the banners of Our Communities, Our Place, Our Environment, Our Economy, and Our Council.

## **Council Policy**

Council's Advocacy Policy guides the approach to the development of the Advocacy Strategy.

## **Resourcing**

### *Financial*

This report does not have financial implications.

### *Plant and equipment*

There are no plant and equipment implications associated with this report.

### *Human Resources*

There are no implications for human resources.

### *Risk*

Risk associated with Council's advocacy is mitigated by having a Council-endorsed mandate for the advocacy priorities as outlined in the report. Risk is also mitigated through advocacy priorities not listed here being endorsed separately as required at future Council Meetings.

## **Economic**

There may be economic benefit to the Shire if advocacy to government results in initiatives being funded or changes to government policy are made.

## **Social**

There may be community benefit if advocacy to government results in initiatives being funded or changes to government policy are made.

## **Environmental**

There may be environmental benefit realised if advocacy to government results in initiatives being funded or changes to government policy are made.

### *Climate change*

This report is assessed as having no direct impact on climate change.

## **Attachments**

1. Advocacy Strategy 2024 [**5.1.2.1** - 17 pages]



# **East Gippsland Shire Council**

## **Advocacy Strategy**



## Acknowledgements

*East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidjawan people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland and their Elders past and present.*

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## East Gippsland – who we are

The Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidjural people - the Traditional Custodians - have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years and represent the second largest population of Aboriginal people in Victoria. Council values their living culture and practices and their right to self-determination.

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.

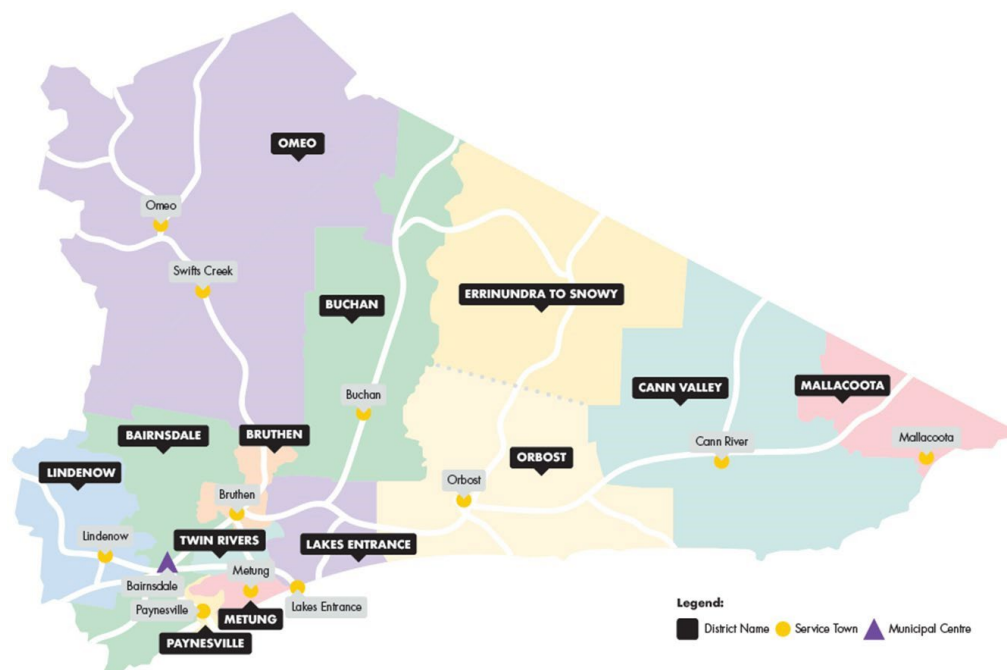
The past 30 years have seen East Gippsland evolve from its rural origins to a flourishing economic and tourism region in eastern Victoria, drawing more than one million visitors each year.

The region has kept its identity and sense of place as it has grown. The shire is the second largest in Victoria and 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 characterise the region and surround our communities.

With its fertile soils, good rainfall and temperate climate, East Gippsland has diverse agriculture and horticulture sector renowned nationally for its highly quality produce.

As East Gippsland has matured as a region, its communities have also developed and diversified. Residents, both new and old, continue to understand the importance of place and our direct relationship to where we live.



## Shire profile – a snapshot

### Population



48,922 (2040: 57,799)  
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: 3.2% (Victoria 1.9%)  
 Over 60 years old: 32.7% (Victoria 23.9%)  
 Born overseas: 11.9% (Victoria 12.4%)

### Major towns by population



Bairnsdale: 17,609  
 Lakes Entrance: 8,687  
 Paynesville: 6,438  
 Orbost: 4,015

### Community



Cultural belonging – 41% of the community highly value their long-standing cultural connections and sense of community and belonging  
 Connection to country – 77% of community members strongly value the natural environment in which they live

### Economy



Registered businesses: 13,562  
 Economic output: \$6.196 billion  
 Gross Regional Product: \$3.105 billion  
 Jobs in the region: 19,190  
 Unemployment rate: 4.2%  
 Visitors to the region: 1.4 million

### Environment



378,470 kWh of solar generated yearly by solar panels on Council facilities  
 100% of streetlights are LED  
 1 licensed landfill, 1 unlicensed landfill, 45 known legacy landfills, 16 stand-alone waste transfer stations, 10 waste transfer trailers, 600+ public litter bins, 150+ public recycle bins, 22,000+ residential kerbside collection services  
 398km of roadside weeds treated

### Land roads and bridges



2,970km of formed roads  
 191 road bridges  
 25 footbridges  
 260km of footpaths  
 8,539 culverts (131 major culverts)

## Our advocacy

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.

### OUR COMMUNITIES



**An inclusive and caring community that respects and celebrates diversity.**

### OUR PLACE



**Planning and infrastructure that enriches the environment, lifestyle, and character of our communities.**

### OUR ENVIRONMENT



**A natural environment that is managed and enhanced.**

### OUR ECONOMY



**A thriving and diverse economy that attracts investments and generates inclusive local employment.**

### OUR COUNCIL



**A transparent organisation that listens and delivers effective, engaging and responsive services.**

## Priorities

The advocacy priorities as outlined are for a point in time. The document needs to be fluid to adapt to changes as they occur in our region and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Council will promote these priorities in its advocacy to the Australian and Victorian governments. The priorities have been identified as either issues seeking support or capital works projects that require funding.

This document provides an overview of each item. Detail supporting the identified priorities can be found in Advocacy Strategy supplement information sheets and on Council's website.

## Our critical priorities

This Strategy contains seven 'critical' priorities that will be the primary focus of advocacy efforts.



### Digital connectivity

**Increase the resilience of telecommunications infrastructure during disasters, improve the quality and extent of coverage to support regional living, provide equitable access to services and digital technologies.**

#### What we are asking for

- Voice and data telecommunications are managed and regulated as an essential service, and emergency roaming is mandated for all carriers.
- Mandatory infrastructure reliability standards that support emergency services, government and community.
- Independent investigation into the widespread telecommunications infrastructure failures in the February 2024 storm event with clear recommendations and a plan for Gippsland to enhance system resilience.
- Investment to enhance the resilience of infrastructure in the context of climate change.
- A community partnership model in remote areas that maintains back-up infrastructure (i.e., generators) prior to and during events, improving reliability.



### National Disaster Recovery Funding reform

**Disaster funding arrangements, at state and national levels, that ensure relief and recovery funds are directed to community resilience activities.**

#### What we are asking for

- A fit-for-purpose disaster relief and recovery funding program which acknowledges the effects of consecutive and compounding disasters in a changing climate.
- Expanding the scope of funding allocations to better support the costs incurred by local government authorities associated with disaster response and relief work, and the rebuilding of assets
- Ensuring funds, and claims processes, are aimed at ensuring community resilience outcomes, including provision for betterment.
- A reasonable, evidence-based claims process.



### Asset management

**Asset maintenance is funded through a non-competitive format by the Australian and Victorian governments based on need and local government size.**

#### What we are asking for

- Change in policy change to allow funding to be allocated to asset maintenance.
- Change to funding programs to see more funding allocated on need rather than competitive funding rounds.
- A continuation of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund (federal).
- Reintroduction of the Local Government Infrastructure Program (state).
- An annual asset maintenance funding allocation indexed to Council's asset portfolio and capacity to manage this portfolio.



### **Housing availability for workers**

**Availability of housing at reasonable prices to support the attraction of critical workers for support services, businesses, and industry.**

#### **What we are asking for**

- Increase access to housing, at a reasonable price, for workers in East Gippsland communities.
- Continued access to funding such as the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund to support the provision of suitable housing, including supporting infrastructure to support housing.
- Recognition of the challenges small rural and remote communities face in providing sufficient rental residential stock to support existing and emerging businesses and industries
- Acknowledgement that short-term accommodation opportunities for property owners in East Gippsland's tourism destinations is a contributing factor to the limited availability of worker accommodation in those areas.
- Investigate opportunities to establish partnerships to support worker accommodation.



### **Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

**To support net zero emissions by 2050.**

#### **What we are asking for**

- That local government and the private sector are provided access to funded programs to support the Australian and Victorian government commitments to net zero emissions by 2050, and in line with the Second National Action Plan the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework National Action 13 and 24 are implemented.
- Matching funding of \$250,000 per annum to co-invest in a climate change and adaptation program that covers 10% of Victoria.



### **State-wide flood mapping integration**

**That Victoria's planning schemes include updated flood mapping to better identify and mitigate flood risks. This benefits all Victorians by helping us build more resilient communities and infrastructure.**

#### **What we are asking for**

- The Victorian Government to lead, coordinate and resource the amendment of planning schemes to include updated flood mapping.
- A coordinated state-wide approach is employed to the planning scheme amendments.
- Support from the Victorian Government to address the challenge local governments face when working in isolation to reconcile community viewpoints with the consistent application of state policies.



## Native timber industry transition

**A new approach to native forest silviculture is adopted that provides for forest health, reduced bushfire risk and benefits for a range of forest users including high value timber production. That impacted workers, business and communities are effectively supported in their transition.**

### What we are asking for

- That the Victorian Government adopts a new approach to silviculture that maintains or improves forest health and reduces vulnerability to the impacts of bushfire, while also providing high value sawlogs for timber processing as outlined in Council's position paper *Native Timber Harvesting in East Gippsland*
- Transparent accounting of funds allocated to support transition resulting from the Victorian Government's decision to cease native timber harvesting on public land with a particular focus on funding allocated to and invested in East Gippsland.
- A clear plan for management of East Gippsland's forests, including investment in the necessary management of the forests to ensure their health, effective management of bushfire risk and use by a range of forest users – delivering jobs for impacted communities.
- Extension of the development of Local Development Strategies to impacted communities that have not yet made an effective transition and bringing forward investment that delivers economic development and jobs, in line with the decision to bring forward closure of the industry.
- Effective whole of Victorian Government commitment to the delivery of committed projects and services in affected communities, including commitments from the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires for replacement and development of public land infrastructure.

## Our other priorities



### Develop performing arts and culture centre

**The ask:** \$500,000 in funding support to identify the appropriate space and undertake detailed design for a regional performing arts/arts centre and a broader cultural precinct.



### Investment in waste management transition

**The ask:** That the Victorian Government make a commitment that at least 50% of Council landfill levies collected will be provided back to Council, on a non-competitive model, to support the transition of waste services required by Recycling Victoria policy and reduce associated cost increases to ratepayers.



### Active ageing

**The ask:** Funding for awareness campaigns, events and activities to implement programs to improve physical and mental wellbeing strategies, support services that encourage participation and awareness around the focus areas of housing (older women and homelessness), respect and social inclusion (ageism, volunteers, carers), and communication and information (digital literacy, access to lifelong learning).





### Coastal hazards and assets renewal

**The ask:** That the Victorian Government commits to an ongoing funding stream to support the aspirations of the Marine and Coastal Act, that this funding stream be open to local governments to access, and a collaborative approach be taken with other public land management agencies. That the Victorian Government commits to an ongoing allocation of an initial \$2m per annum for the management of seawall replacement and coastal hazards.

Regular and ongoing funding for local government to assist with the management of Crown land foreshores and inundation management.



### Long-term bushfire recovery services

**The ask:** Victorian and Australian governments commit to supporting bushfire recovery support services for a minimum of five years post a major event, with a particular focus on wellbeing related services such as mental health support.



### Homelessness

**The ask:** A dedicated (non-competitive) funding allocation from social housing funding programs such as the Victorian 'Big Housing Build' and that clear guidelines are provided to support community partnerships to tackle homelessness.



### School crossing supervision

**The ask:** The Victorian Government fully funds school crossing supervision and not impose costs on ratepayers and residents for a service that is unrelated to core local government functions.



### Develop natural resource management strategic partnerships

**The ask:** The Victorian Government develops and implements a multi-disciplinary, decentralised approach for natural resource management policy to support the local management of natural resources in accordance with local conditions across the state.



### Financial Assistance Grants

**The ask:** The Australian Government restores funding for local government Financial Assistance Grants to a level equal to at least 1 per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue and addresses the rural and metropolitan rates divide that results in an imbalance in the capacity of rural councils to service communities and for rural ratepayers to service rates.



### Council rates – CPI and rate cap and financial sustainability

**The ask:** That the Victorian Government considers the volatility in CPI when setting rate caps and considers other means tested methods to apply the rate cap in an equitable way across the industry. This may include a stepped approach so rural and remote councils have a higher percentage cap than metropolitan councils with larger rate bases. Financial sustainability of local governments should be a key consideration of council rating and funding mechanisms.



### Industrial land supply

**The ask:** To overcome market failure, the Victorian Government supports Council to enable planning for and rezoning of industrial land in Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance, including provision of funding and other resources that support strategic planning for growth and development (as previously provided by the Streamlining for Growth program).



### Marlo shared paths

**The ask:** The Victorian Government supports the community aspiration of connecting Marlo to Orbost and Cape Conran with shared paths to enhance access to employment, education, health services; tourism experiences and major retail centres.



### EES process overhaul

**The ask:** The Victorian Government review the EES framework and that the process takes into account the financial and resource burden on local government in engaging and representing local interests, and that an independent expert group be established and funded by the proponent or Victorian Government to ensure the technical integrity of the EES. Support from the Municipal Association of Victoria and Rural Councils Victoria to establish a local government working group that has a focus on improving processes and outcomes for community and local government throughout the application process.



### Benambra – Corryong Road alignment

**The ask:** \$4m in funding to undertake the necessary detailed design, costings and feasibility analysis to facilitate sealing the remaining 65km of the road. This will support farming and livestock transport industries, improve social and commuter traffic safety, facilitate and increase in tourist traffic between East Gippsland and the Upper Murray and allow tourists to access the eastern end of the new Great River Road.



### Bairnsdale Arterial Roads upgrades

**The ask:** Funding to realign seven roads to intersect with Bullumwaal Road at a 90-degree angle at a cost of \$250,000 per intersection. Funding is committed for the detailed design of the duplication of the Mitchell River Bridge, in recognition of its importance to regional connectivity and interstate freight routes.



### Great Alpine Road widening

**The ask:** That funds are committed to continue the widening and corner treatments of the Great Alpine Road, recognising the strategic importance of this road to connect communities and industries, access to snowfields and mountain biking infrastructure, and provide uninterrupted road access during times of emergency.



### Biodiversity strategies including weed and pest management

**The ask:** The Victorian Government provides Council, as a Crown land manager, an initial \$1 million pa over the next four years to:

- Revegetate and manage weed infestation in burnt areas
- Map and manage local roadside vegetation and reserves

- Manage Crown reserves
- Manage fire affected and hazardous trees and risks to public safety associated with bushfire impacts.

Funding for pest management to be significantly increased to \$500,000 pa and an ongoing commitment made to the funding. Private land managers are adequately supported and funded to manage pests and weeds, and the community environment sector (Agriculture Victoria and DEECA) are funded to provide land advice to landowners on an ongoing basis.



### Native vegetation removal processes and cost impost

**The ask:** That the unintended consequences of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* on management of key infrastructure and community services be reviewed. The intent of the EPBC Act is supported, however, several instances where an EPBC referral has been required on sites that have previously been used for other purposes and significantly disturbed and are surrounded by other development has led to long delays and major cost escalations. For regional and remote local government areas with high environmental value in close proximity to townships and lower rate base, this is inequitable.



### Strategic fire breaks and roadside vegetation management

**The ask:** In addition to the \$5 million allocated to DEECA for the creation of the strategic firebreaks, the Victorian Government makes a funding commitment for the ongoing management of these firebreaks.



### Reinstate Regional Airports Program funding

**The ask:** That the Australian Government reinstates its Regional Airports funding program to support the continued upgrade of regional airports to meet changing CASA regulations and aircraft size. Regional airports provide essential connections for communities to access health and other services and local government can not fund these upgrades without the partnership the funding program brings.



### Gippsland Lakes health audit

**The ask:** Financial support for the appropriate agency to undertake a full audit of the health of the Gippsland Lakes, building on the work of the already committed to a one-year \$350,000 project assessing the vulnerability and sensitivity of the RAMSAR-listed wetlands.



### The Hub and Bairnsdale Neighbourhood House Precinct

**The ask:** \$600,000 to implement the masterplan to transform the current Council-owned site into a true collaborate education centre.



### Education

**The ask:** Victorian Government finalises funding for the final stage of the upgrade of Bairnsdale Secondary College and support the regional delivery of tertiary educations ensuring accessibility for East Gippsland students. Additional funding and support for regional students to either study remotely or having to relocate for tertiary education is also nnecessary.



### Lakes Entrance training walls

**The ask:** Funding for Gippsland Ports to replace critical marine infrastructure at the entrance to Bass Strait, Lakes Entrance. This infrastructure is critical to the ongoing viability of townships along the edge of the Gippsland Lakes. The deterioration of this infrastructure represents a significant current risk to several townships.

## Our position papers



### Extractive industries in East Gippsland

Council supports high-benefit, low-impact extractive industries, where our communities continue to thrive, where our environment is protected and where neighbouring activities and future land uses are protected. [Read the paper here.](#)



### Native timber harvesting in East Gippsland

Council supports a high quality, low volume native timber harvesting industry where our communities continue to thrive, forests have multiple uses and biodiversity is protected. [Read the paper here.](#)

## Delivered priorities

- Bairnsdale Aerodrome – lengthen and strengthen runway
- Bushfire rebuild support and preparedness
- Eastern Beach Road, Lakes Entrance intersection improvements
- Funding for design of Lakes Entrance indoor stadium
- Gippsland Agriculture Centre

## Strategic partnerships in advocacy

East Gippsland Shire Council has formal alliances with organisations and peak bodies to advocate and influence decisions on policies and funding for the region where our priorities align. Through these partnerships we can benefit by targeting common objectives while still maintaining our uniqueness, independence and diversity of interests.

We work closely with our border councils including Wellington, Towong, Alpine and Bega Valley shires and Snowy Monaro Regional Council to explore opportunities for cross border initiatives.

The following illustrates some of these key partnerships and key priorities, supported by detailed strategies.

### One Gippsland

Is a peak regional advocacy body for the Gippsland region that brings together local government, industry and education providers to address the key challenges and opportunities faced in our region.

Key priorities include:

- Increasing digital connectivity throughout Gippsland
- Progressing major transport infrastructure and services to open Gippsland to new business, visitors and residents
- Renewable, clean and community energy initiatives
- Hero tourism destinations and Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism
- Encouraging innovation and investment to sustainably grow our key industries, including capitalising on the region's food and fibre strengths
- Expanding programs that support and enable our most vulnerable communities and people

### Timber Towns

Council is a member of Timber Towns Victoria, an incorporated Local Government Association representing the interests of municipal councils in relation to forestry on both public and private land.

The organisation advocates for the interests of local government on the impact of timber related issues on local government and their communities, particularly roads infrastructure.

In addition, the partnership provides information and advice to members on planning requirements for plantation development and sustainable land use practices.

### South East Australia Transport Strategy (SEATS)

Established to advocate for an effective integrated transport network that stimulates economic growth that is sustainable and sensitive to the environment and enhances communities.

The objective is to significantly improve the efficiency of the transport network across the region, support sustainable growth, boost the economic competitiveness, improve employment prospects and enhance communities through improved, safer access to vital health, education, sport and recreational, government agencies and business services.

### **Rail Freight Alliance**

The Rail Freight Alliance is made up of Victorian rural, regional and metropolitan councils, to advocate for:

- Rail standardisation of all key rail lines in Victoria
- Upgrading and connecting to a National Rail Freight Network
- A competitive, independent and open access rail freight system
- Seamless freight logistics that will facilitate efficient rail freight movement

Council's advocacy on rail freight aligns with the One Gippsland policy position.

### **Municipal Association Victoria**

Produces submissions and reports on behalf of the local government sector and publish a range of information and resources to build the capacity of councils and support their delivery of services to local communities.

Key focus areas include:

- Zero waste
- Township fire protection
- Impacts of COVID-19
- Emergency management
- Environment and water
- Planning and building
- Public Health and safety
- Social planning and community services
- Transport and infrastructure

### **Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)**

Partnership in advocacy on state and federal budget initiatives with a significant focus on sustainability of rural communities including:

- Impacts from natural disasters
- Regional infrastructure strategies
- Rural land use strategies
- Health and wellbeing of rural communities

### **Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)**

The peak body for local government at the national level advocating for local government's interests with the Australian Government. Core local government policy priority areas as agreed in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan are:

- Financial sustainability
- Roads and infrastructure funding
- Waste reduction and recycling
- Stronger community resilience
- Addressing the risks of climate change

## Supporting reference information

East Gippsland Shire Council: [Council Plan 2021 - 2025](#)

Gippsland Regional Plan 2021 – 2025: [Gippsland Regional Plan 2021 - 2025](#) and [Summary](#)

Timber Towns Victoria: [Strategic Plan 20122 - 2025](#)

SEATS East Gippsland Projects: [SEATS East Gippsland Advocacy Projects](#)

Rural Councils Victoria: [RCV Advocacy Priorities](#)

Municipal Association Victoria: [MAV Advocacy](#)

Australia Local Government Association: [Strategic Plan 2024 - 2026](#)

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## 6 Urgent Business

## 7 Confidential Business

### 7.1 Funding Agreement to Support Bushfire Rebuilding

Under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* a meeting considering confidential information may be closed to the public. Pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the information contained in this report is confidential because it contains private commercial information, which if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

## 8 Close of Meeting