



Minutes

Council Meeting

Tuesday 18 February 2025 at 6:00 pm

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

Councillors

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

Attachments referenced in these minutes can be located in the meeting agenda on East Gippsland Shire Council's [website](#).

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

Mayor Cr John White welcomed all to the Council meeting and acknowledged the traditional owners.

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.

1.2 Apologies

Nil

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

Motion

That the minutes of the Council meeting held Tuesday 17 December 2024 be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Bernie Farquhar

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Barry Davis 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 is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 18 March 2025 at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale commencing at 6:00 pm.

1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence

Nil

1.7 Open Forum

1.7.1 Petitions

Nil

1.7.2 Questions of Council

1.7.2.1 Planning Scheme Amendment C159

Mr Jonathan Smith submitted the following questions which were read out on his behalf by Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer:

Question 1: *“Dear Councillors, my question relates to the Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C159 voted on by Council 13 April 2021, in particular the proposal as it refers to lots 5a and 5b Gloria Ave. Metung. As the owner's representative of lot 5a (title registered in my wife's name) and in correspondence with the owner of lot 5b, we are very keen to consolidate these lots in accordance with the C159 proposal. We are considering consolidating them now as joint owners, in order to facilitate their sale.*

If we consolidated now, could a planning permit be issued ahead of the completion of C159 amendment?”

Question 2: *“What is the current status of the proposed C159 amendment and the anticipated date of completion? Thanks for your time.”*

Chris Stephenson General Manager Place and Community provided a response which is summarised below:

Response 1: Officers are aware of the layout issues associated with this property and we are seeking to rectify this as part of Planning Scheme Amendment C159egip. While technically the land can be consolidated, it would not be in accordance with the current restructure plan and so a planning permit could not be issued for the land, at the moment. Officers have been in contact with Mr Smith about this issue.

Response 2: Officers are currently preparing Planning Scheme Amendment C159egip to present to Council in May 2025. We will be seeking Council's permission to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning and to exhibit the amendment. If successful, all affected landowners will receive correspondence about the amendment and the amendment process.

1.7.2.2 Bus Stop, Great Alpine Road, Lucknow and Public Transport, Bairnsdale

Mr Chris Wispleare submitted the following questions which were read out on his behalf by Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer:

Question 1: *“As of this year, at least 14 children catch the school bus at the intersection of Lomandra Boulevard and Great Alpine Road. The current bus stop is just a big muddy patch strewn with rubbish. To reach it from the Brookfield Lakes estate, the children must cross a busy highway while traffic screams past at 100 km/h. (The 70 km/h speed limit is never enforced.). When will a safe, sheltered bus stop be built for the school children of Brookfield Lakes estate?”*

Question 2: *“Public transport within Bairnsdale is essentially non-existent. A few buses a day, mostly bereft of passengers, wander through the back streets of central Bairnsdale without providing the regular, wide-ranging service needed by passengers and seen in comparable towns such as Sale, Echuca, and Morwell. Will Council consider either (a) trialling a FlexiRide bus-on-demand system; or (b) running an electric minibus on an hourly circuit through the day to link the housing estates and CBD with essential locations such as the hospital, TAFE and railway station?”*

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

Response 1: It is a good question. I have been to the location and note that it is currently only a gravelled area to pull over. The Great Alpine Road is a road managed by the Victorian Government through Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). The responsibility for new and upgraded bus stops rests with Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and more broadly with DTP. We will raise your concerns about the safety of this current location and the need for an appropriate bus stop with PTV and the DTP.

Response 2: Thanks again a good question. Good public transport is so important for our community. Again, the responsibility for Public Transport rests with PTV and the DTP. We will raise your concerns with PTV.

1.7.2.3 Extractive Industries

Mr John Butler-Cole submitted the following questions which were read out on his behalf by Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer:

Question 1: *“When will council deliver a declared position and policy on proposed activities within the Shire, specifically Critical minerals Mining, wind and Solar Farming and grid connections, Gas prospecting and extraction?”*

Question 2: *“Where the above activities are decided centrally by State Ministers, who is responsible for total community advocacy and appropriate funding to obtain the optimum result for the East Gippsland community?”*

Chris Stephenson General Manager Place and Community provided a response which is summarised below:

Response 1: The last Council developed a position on [extractive industries](#), which is available on our website. This Council may wish to review or add to that position at some time in the future, but at present this remains Council's position.

In terms of solar industries, these are addressed under the planning scheme with the Minister for Planning being the determining authority. Council will provide information and advice into this process, and this advice will be determined by the specific location of a proposal.

Similarly, gas prospecting and extraction is determined by the Victorian Government and Council's role would be limited to providing input into any consultative processes that are set up through the relevant Department.

Response 2: This is a very complex question to which there is no neat answer. The first question referred to four separate project types, and in each of these, Council's role will differ slightly as does the responsibility of the proponents and agencies to seek Community views.

Council has a role to ensure that the agencies with the legislative powers in these areas are building requirements of strong and effective community engagement into the proponent's projects. This should then be the obligation of the proponent to fund and carry out to the satisfaction of the legislated agency.

1.7.3 Public Submissions

Nil

1.8 Items for Noting

Nil

2 Notices of Motion

2.1 Emergency Services Levy

Motion

That Council writes to:

- *the Municipal Association of Victoria;*
- *Rural Councils Victoria; and*
- *the Victorian Ratepayers and Residents Association;*

seeking those entities to write to the Treasurer of Victoria, the Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP outlining the significant financial impact of the proposed rates for the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund on Victorian property owners, and advocate for the proposed variable rates to be reconsidered.

Moved: Cr John White

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

3 Deferred Business

Nil

4 Councillor Delegate Reports

4.1 Cr John White

13/01/25 – Opening presentation – 33 Australian Speleology Federation event in Buchan
16/01/25 – Met with East Gippsland Resident Ratepayers Association
18/01/25 – 2025 Australia Day Awards Event
22/01/25 – Met with The Honourable Darren Chester MP and discussed advocacy priorities
23/01/25 – Citizenship Ceremony
26/01/25 – Attended Australia Day events in Lindenow and Bairnsdale
28/01/25 – Councillor Briefing days commenced for 2025
30/01/25 – Attended One Gippsland Mayor and Board Meetings
01/02/25 – Officiated the combined opening of the Krauatungalung Walk and Foreshore Park and Water Sports Pavilion
03/02/25 – Planning Consultation Meeting
03/02/25 – CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
06/02/25 – Chaired the Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee meeting
10/02/25 – Councillor Induction Session – Financial Literacy and Planning Consultation Meeting

4.2 Cr Arthur Allen

Rail Freight Alliance Meeting – 14 February 2025

Fourteen delegates attended the gathering with a number of apologies received from delegates unable to attend. The annual general meeting (AGM) was held first with chair report from Glenn Milne presented by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Deputy's report by Cr Michael Carr. The CEO delivered his report outlining the achievements of the past year.

Following the acceptance of the financial report, the position of Chair, vacant due to the retirement of Cr Glenn Milne, was filled. There being only one nomination for the position. Therefore, Cr Michael Carr was declared Chairman and Cr Katrina Rainsford Deputy. The late withdrawal of Parliamentary Secretary for Transport as guest speaker meant an early finish to the AGM. Immediately following the AGM was the ordinary meeting of the Alliance.

Given the number of new delegates present, the Chair asked each delegate to introduce themselves and their shires particular interest in the committee. In general, the view was that alone Shires only have small influence but as an Alliance the influence is greatly increased. A number spoke of the advantage of having a well-connected and researched person in Reid Mather for councils to call on for particular issues.

4.3 Cr Joanne Eastman

I attended my first Audit and Risk Evaluation Committee meeting in December, and the Local Community Road Safety Group and Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee meetings.

I attended the Citizen of the Year awards at Orbost Forest Park. The day was very well attended and despite the very hot weather, was a great success. Congratulations to the organisers for a very well-run function.

I joined Mayor White and Councillor Crook at the Citizenship ceremony on 23 January 2025, where 15 new citizens from all across the world pledged their commitment to Australia. The ceremony was a wonderful reminder that we should never take for granted how fortunate we are to live in this part of the world.

I joined an enthusiastic crowd at the Paynesville Foreshore for the Australia Day ceremony which was once again hosted by indefatigable Paynesville Sea Scouts and the Paynesville Lions Club. I also took the opportunity to attend a community organised meeting about the implementation of the Paynesville Growth Area Structure Plan. The event helped me gain a better understanding of community concerns and also provided the opportunity to inspect the new pavilion at the AJ Freeman Reserve as well as hear a community member's ideas for botanic gardens in Paynesville.

Participation in a number of planning consultation meetings about a number of controversial matters has provided invaluable opportunities to understand the complexity of some proposals that come before Council and the diversity of viewpoints. I took the opportunity to attend a 'Building the Future with your community' Masterclass. The Masterclass, an online workshop run by the Regional Australia Institute, gave Councillors across Australia the opportunity to hear about various successful approaches to challenges faced by Rural and Regional Councils such as post disaster recovery and transitioning from traditional industries.

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Assets and Environment

5.1.1 CON2025 1711 Provision of Design Services for Development of Multi-Use Indoor Facility, Lakes Entrance

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Confidentiality Notice

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 (**Confidential Attachment 1**) to this report is confidential because it contains private commercial information, which if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage, by disclosing financial information to competitors.

Motion

That Council:

- 1. accepts the tender submitted by SUTERSARCH PTY LTD trading as SutersARCH (ARCH) for CON2025 1711 Provision of Design Services for Development of Multi-Use Indoor Facility, Lakes Entrance for the contract amount of \$856,108.00 exclusive of GST on the condition that the funding agreement with Sports and Recreation Victoria is approved and signed;***
- 2. authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to finalise the terms and to sign the contract in the form proposed; and***
- 3. resolves that Confidential Attachment 1 to this report and all discussions relating to that attachment remain confidential.***

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.1.2	CON2025 1721 Supply Landfill Compactor MAV VP44019
Authorised by	General Manager Assets and Environment

Confidentiality Notice

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 **Confidential Attachment 1** to this report is confidential because it contains private commercial information, which if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

Motion

That Council:

- 1. accepts the quote submitted by BT Equipment Pty Ltd trading as Tutt Bryant Equipment for CON2025 1721 Supply Landfill Compactor MAV VP44019 for the submitted price of \$843,000.00 exclusive of GST;***
- 2. authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to finalise the terms and to sign the contract in the form proposed; and***
- 3. resolves that Confidential Attachment 1 to this report and all discussions relating to this attachment remain confidential.***

Moved: Cr Sonia Buckley

Seconded: Cr Barry Davis

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.2 Business Excellence

5.2.1 Councillor Representation Register 2024 - 2028

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council:

1. appoints:

- a) Cr Bernie Farquhar and Cr Joanne Eastman to the Economic Development Advisory Committee;***
- b) Cr Jodie Ashworth and Cr Arthur Allen to the Marina Consultative Committee;***
- c) Cr Ian Trevaskis to the Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee; and***
- d) Cr Sonia Buckley to the East Gippsland Local Community Road Safety Group; and***
- e) Cr Tom Crook and Cr Joanne Eastman to the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee; and***

2. notes the Councillor Representation Register 2024-2025 at Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.2.2 Community Vision 2040

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council adopts the revised Community Vision 2040.

Moved: Cr Sonia Buckley

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

6 Urgent Business

Nil

7 Confidential Business

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 Bernie Farquhar

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Barry Davis 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 7:01 pm.

7.1 Property Matter

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 Council business information being information that would, if released, prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations.

8 Close of Meeting

Mayor Cr John White declared the Council Meeting closed at 7:08 pm.