



Unconfirmed Minutes

Council Meeting

Monday 23 June 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 (Deput Mayor), Arthur Allen,
Jodie Ashworth, Tom Crook, Barry Davis, Joanne Eastman,
Bernie Farquhar (Online), 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 custodians.

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and 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 values 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

Sarah Johnston General Manager Business Excellence declared a conflict of interest in relation to item 5.2.2 CON2025 1702 Construction of Barks Avenue T-Intersection Lakes Entrance, as a general interest due to a family connection with one of the contractors.

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

Motion

That the minutes of the Council meeting held Tuesday 10 June 2025 be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Jodie Ashworth

Seconded: Cr Sonia Buckley

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr Barry Davis, Cr Joanne Eastman, 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 15 July 2025 at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale commencing at 6.00 pm.

Procedural Note

At this point in proceedings, Mayor Cr John White acknowledged Sebastian Bromley from Lucknow Primary School who observed the meeting from the public gallery as part of his Rotary Junior Community Awards program. To acknowledge Sebastian's participation in this community program, the Mayor presented Sebastian with a Council pin.

1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence

Nil

1.7 Condolences

Motion

That Council notes the recent passing of Dr David Hollands, of Orbost, and Dr Geoffrey Brown, of Bairnsdale, and extends its condolences to their families.

Moved: Cr Ian Trevaskis

Seconded: Cr Sonia Buckley

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

Attendance

Cr Bernie Farquhar joined the meeting electronically at 6.08 pm.

Procedural Note

At this point in proceedings, the Mayor Cr John White confirmed with Cr Bernie Farquhar that he could hear the meeting and see the other Councillors in attendance. Cr Farquhar also confirmed that he was participating from a secure location to ensure that any confidential deliberations would remain confidential.

1.8 Open Forum

1.8.1 Petitions

Nil

1.8.2 Questions of Council

Nil

1.8.3 Public Submissions

Nil

1.9 Items for Noting

Nil

2 Notices of Motion

Nil

3 Deferred Business

Nil

4 Councillor Delegate Reports

4.1 Cr Arthur Allen

Having been on leave at the last meeting, I will start this report from May 22, when I joined other Councillors and staff at Cann River for a celebration of the community through five years of recovery. It was a day to acknowledge the resilience of the Cann River community and to talk with people about their journey and experiences.

On May 29, along with other Councillors, I attended the Elders Lunch at Club Eastwood—a great day and a chance to meet a number of friends. Well done to Courtney as MC and to our staff for the organisation of the day.

On June 6, I attended *Rising Strong* at the Forge Theatre and Arts Hub for a very interesting day of learnings and experiences of the fires and the recovery. Well done to our staff for a great day.

On June 10, I had the honour of attending a farewell function for past Mayor and Councillor Mark Reeves on the occasion of his retirement from the Department of Education. A number of speakers spoke glowingly of his achievements and his vision. Well deserved, Mark.

On June 12, I joined Councillor Eastman and the Mayor for a Citizenship Ceremony at St Mary's Parish Centre. It was a big event with 36 candidates and was a day of joy and fun for all of us involved.

4.2 Cr John White

21/05/25	National Simultaneous Storytime
22/05/25	5 Years On Celebrating Community Recovery in Cann Valley
23/05/25	One Gippsland Mayoral, Board and Local Government Meetings
26/05/25	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
27/05/25	East Gippsland PSA Neighbourhood Policing Forum
29/05/25	Economic Development Advisory Committee
29/05/25	Elders Lunch – Reconciliation Week
06/06/25	Rising Strong East Gippsland's Path to Community Resilience
10/06/25	Victorian Government Treaty Information Forum
10/06/25	Governor General – Bairnsdale Library
11/06/25	Governor General – First Responders Civic Reception Breakfast
12/06/25	Citizenship Ceremony
12/06/25	Lindenow South and Wy Yung Recreation Reserve Lighting Projects Photo Opportunity
13/06/25	Meeting with the Hon Darren Chester
14/06/25	Paynesville Fire Brigade Annual Dinner 2025
15/06/25	Meet our 2025 Trekkers – Bairnsdale RSL
16/06/25	St Mary's Primary School – Grade 4 Student visit
19/06/25	Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Information Session
20/06/25	One Gippsland – Offshore Wind Presentation
20/06/25	East Gippsland Winter Festival Opening – VIP Function

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Business Excellence

5.1.1 Adopt Council Plan 2025-2029

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council adopts the Council Plan 2025-2029, as provided at Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Sonia Buckley

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 Adopt Council Budget 2025/26

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council:

1. *adopts the Budget 2025/26 as provided at Attachment 1 (including the schedule of fees and charges) in accordance with section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020;*
2. *in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020, declares the following:*
 - (a) *An amount of \$73,692,414 be declared as the amount that Council intends to raise by general rates, municipal charge and waste collection charges, which is calculated as follows:*

CATEGORY	INCOME
	\$
General Rate	41,251,552
Commercial / Industrial	5,954,178
Farm Rate	6,030,944
TOTAL RATES	53,236,674
Municipal charge	8,442,193
Waste levy	1,675,299
Waste Charges	
Kerbside Waste/recycling collection (120 litre bin)	1,340,118
Kerbside Waste/recycling/green waste collection (120 litre bin)	8,735,364
Additional household waste bin	98,500
Additional Green/Recycling bin	51,986
Rural Waste Collection Charge	112,280
Total Waste Charges	10,338,248
TOTAL CHARGES	73,692,414
TOTAL RATES AND CHARGES	

(b) The general rate be declared for the period commencing 1 July 2025 and concluding on 30 June 2026:

i) It be further declared that subject to paragraph (iv) of this Part, the general rates be raised through the application of differential rates.

ii) The following rates in the dollar apply to property classifications:

Category	% of General rate	Rate in the \$
General/Residential Rate	100%	0.00271314
Commercial/Industrial Rate	129%	0.00349995
Farm Rate	74%	0.00200773

iii) Differential rates apply to rateable properties with the following characteristics:

(a) General
General land is any land that is:

- **Used primarily for residential purposes; or**
- **Unoccupied but zoned Residential, Township or Rural Living under the East Gippsland Shire Council Planning Scheme; or**
- **Any land that is not defined as Farmland or Commercial/Industrial Land.**

(b) Commercial and Industrial
Commercial and Industrial Land is any land used primarily for:

- **the manufacture, or production of, or trade in, goods or services; or**
- **Obviously adapted for the primary use of commercial or industrial purposes; or**
- **Occupied primarily for the purpose of service delivery for tourism leisure and/or accommodation; or**
- **Unoccupied but zoned Business, Industrial, Mixed Use, Special Use or Comprehensive Development Zone under the East Gippsland Shire Council Planning Scheme; or**
- **Conforming to East Gippsland Shire Council guidelines for the classification of property as Commercial/Industrial Land.**

(c) Farmland

Farmland is defined as any land which:

- **Is used primarily for a farming or agricultural business; and,**
- **Conforms to the definition of “farm land” as specified within the Valuation of Land Act 1960; and,**
- **Conforms to East Gippsland Shire Council guidelines for the classification of property as “farm land” as stipulated within East Gippsland Shire Council’s “Application for Farm Rate”; and**
- **The ratepayer has Primary Producer status with the Australian Taxation Office and be located in a Farm Zone in accordance with Council’s planning scheme, or have a permit from Council to operate a farming business.**

- iv) Council has determined that the application of a differential rate for Farm and Commercial/Industrial Land will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions.**
- v) Council has determined that the differential percentage applied to Commercial/Industrial properties for the Economic Development Discretionary fund be 5 percent.**
- vi) Council has determined it will provide a rate rebate equivalent to \$65.47 to eligible properties in the ownership of pensioners who qualify for a Victorian Government approved pension rebate. This rebate is provided in accordance with section 169(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1989 and supports the development of the municipality in that it helps support pensioners to keep and stay in their own homes.**

(c) Municipal Charge

- i) A municipal charge be declared for the period commencing 1 July 2025 and concluding on 30 June 2026.**
- ii) A municipal charge be declared for the purpose of covering some of the administrative costs of Council.**
- iii) The municipal charge be the sum of \$257.00 per each rateable property in respect of which a municipal charge can be levied.**

(d) Waste Levy Charge

- i) An annual service charge Waste Levy of \$51.00 be declared for the period commencing 1 July 2025 and concluding 30 June 2026 to cover the increased costs levied by the Environment Protection Authority on the operation of landfills as well as the increased compliance costs required for the operation of landfills.**
- ii) The charge to be levied on each property to which a municipal charge is applied.**

(e) Waste Collection Charge

- i) A charge for kerbside collection of waste with recycling, and for kerbside collection of waste with recycling and green waste, and a rural waste collection charge be declared for the period commencing 1 July 2024 and concluding on 30 June 2025 as follows:**

Kerbside Waste/recycling collection (120 litre bin)	\$414.00
Kerbside Waste/recycling/green waste collection (120 litre bin)	\$473.00
Additional household waste bin	\$250.00
Additional Green/Recycling bin	\$187.00
Rural Waste Collection Charge	\$280.00

- (f) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to levy and recover the general rates, municipal charge, waste levy, kerbside waste with recycling collection charge, kerbside waste with recycling and green waste collection charge and rural waste collection charge as per section 167 of the Local Government Act 1989.**
- (g) Council allows the following payment options in accordance with section 167 of the Local Government Act 1989, as well as options outlined in Council's Financial Hardship Policy and other options available for individual circumstances:**

In Full	Four Instalments
15 February 2026	30 September 2025
	30 November 2025
	28 February 2026
	31 May 2026

- (h) Interest on unpaid rates and charges will be charged in accordance with section 172 of the Local Government Act 1989; and**

- 3. unlock the budgeted funds quarantined in December 2022 to support Home and Community Care transition and Aging Well which is funded under the Draft Council Plan action to Engage with older residents to promote involvement in the community, knowledge sharing and enhancing their sense of purpose and well-being.**

Moved: Cr Jodie Ashworth

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

CARRIED

**For: 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: Cr Arthur Allen

Abstained: Nil

5.1.3 Adopt Four-Year Rating and Revenue Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council adopts the Four-Year Rating and Revenue Plan 2025/26 - 2028/29, as provided at Attachment 1.

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

5.1.4

Adopt 10-Year Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2034/35

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council adopts the 10-Year Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2034/35, as provided at Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Jodie Ashworth

Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

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 Assets and Environment

5.2.1 Adopt Asset Plan 2026 - 2035 and Asset Management Policy

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Motion

That Council:

- 1. adopts the Asset Plan 2026–2035 as provided at Attachment 1; and***
- 2. adopts the Asset Management Policy as provided at Attachment 2.***

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

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 CON2025 1702 Construction of Barkes Avenue T-Intersection Lakes Entrance

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Confidentiality Notice

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

Pursuant to section 66(5)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, if released, the information discussed or considered in relation to this agenda item would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage, by disclosing financial information to competitors.

Conflict of Interest

Sarah Johnston General Manager Business Excellence having declared a conflict of interest in relation to 5.2.2, left the meeting at 7.41 pm and was absent during the discussion on this item.

Attendance

Cr Joanne Eastman left the Council Chamber at 7:47 pm and did not return.

Motion

That Council:

- 1. accepts the tender submitted by Cranes Asphaltting & Bitumen Sealing Pty Ltd for CON2025 1702, Construction of Barkes Avenue T-Intersection Lakes Entrance for the contract amount \$526,524.83 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 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 Bernie Farquhar, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

Attendance

Sarah Johnston General Manager Business Excellence returned to the Council Chamber at 7.50 pm.

6 Urgent Business

Nil

7 Confidential Business

Nil

8 Close of Meeting

Mayor Cr John White declared the Council Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.