



Unconfirmed Minutes

Council Meeting

Tuesday 18 November 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

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

Our Strategic Themes

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

Index

1 Procedural	5
1.1 Recognition of Traditional Custodians	5
1.2 Apologies	5
1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest	5
1.4 Confirmation of Minutes	5
1.5 Next Meeting	5
1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence	6
1.7 Condolences	6
1.8 Open Forum	7
1.8.1 Petitions	7
1.8.2 Questions of Council	7
1.8.3 Public Submissions	13
1.9 Items for Noting	13
2 Notices of Motion	13
3 Deferred Business	13
4 Councillor Delegate Reports	14
5 Officer Reports	21
5.1 Chief Executive Officer	21
5.1.1 Project Management Overview	21
5.2 Place and Community	22
5.2.1 Planning Permit application 2024.373 - Buildings and works and removal of vegetation associated with Krauatungalong Walk Stage 4 - Lakes Entrance Foreshore	22
5.2.2 Tiny Homes - Notice of Motion Response	23
5.3 Assets and Environment	25
5.3.1 Waste and Recycling Service Review and Transition Plan	25
5.3.2 CON2026 1745 Expression of Interest for Construction and Operation of Compost Facility	26
5.4 Business Excellence	27

5.4.1 Service Review Policy	27
5.4.2 Organisational Performance Report July to September 2025	28
5.4.3 S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation Planning and Environment Act 1987	29
5.4.4 Council Meeting Resolution Register	30
5.4.5 Council Meeting Schedule 2026	31
6 Mayoral Term Address	32
7 Urgent Business	32
8 Confidential Business	32
8.1 Contract Matter	32
9 Close of Meeting	32

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

Cr Sonia Buckley declared a conflict of interest in relation to item 5.2.2 Tiny Homes - Notice of Motion Response, as a material conflict of interest due to having participated in preliminary discussions about a commercial venture.

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

Motion

That the minutes of the Council meeting held Tuesday 21 October 2025 be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Ian Trevaskis

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

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr 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 the Statutory Meeting for the election of the Mayor and, if determined, the Deputy Mayor. It will be held on Thursday 20 November 2025 at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale, commencing at 6.00 pm.

1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence

Nil

1.7 Condolences

Motion

That Council acknowledges the recent passing of Paul Pace, a valued member of East Gippsland Shire Council staff, and Peter Quinn, a respected member of the East Gippsland community who contributed many years of service to his community including through Council's Community Recovery Committee and extends its sincere condolences to both their families.

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Bernie Farquhar

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

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

1.8 Open Forum

1.8.1 Petitions

Nil

1.8.2 Questions of Council

1.8.2.1 Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatunglung Walk

Ms Gillian Smith submitted the following questions which was read out on her behalf by Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer:

Question 1: *“No budget has been given for the project, given the current economic climate where construction costs are escalating greater than inflation, will the council have enough funds to complete the walk in its entirety? We remember the footbridge fiasco.”*

Question 2: *“Do you realise that approving this permit, locals and tourists will lose beach access for swimming, boating and kayaking?”*

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

Response 1: The report before Council tonight relates to Council's role as the Responsible Authority under the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987. Project management and budget management arrangements will be undertaken by Council's project managers in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

Project details will be updated on the [Councils YourSay site](#) and any Council funding contributions will be considered as part of the budget process.

Response 2: It is acknowledged that the project will alter the current informal access arrangements to the foreshore. However, the existing boating access to private jetties will be retained and the proposal provides an overall enhancement of public recreational access via the constructed boardwalk.

Further access to the beach area will be provided. Currently erosion significantly impacts safe access to the beach across a significant area.

1.8.2.2 Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatunglung Walk

Mr Peter Neverauskas submitted the following questions which was read out on his behalf by Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer:

Question 1: *"It is unclear what the term "working conditions " in the proposal refers to. The conditions in a recommendation should be resolved, settled and certain, prior to the consideration of the recommendations to grant a permit. What does the council intend to do to rectify this?"*

Question 2: *"According to council's Mutual Respect Charter, safe workplace expectations for your staff is paramount. Why isn't the same respect shown towards ratepayers who will have a raised boardwalk built in front of their bedrooms compromising their safety and security?"*

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

Response 1: The Officer recommendation is that Council issues a Notice of Decision to approve the application subject to the conditions contained in Attachment 1. If approved, the permit will include those conditions.

Response 2: The proposed boardwalk is on Crown Land and is approximately 10-15 metres from the front property boundary of the adjoining houses. The recreational use of the boardwalk is not considered to present a direct risk to the safety and security of adjoining residents. The Council's decision must balance the concerns of adjoining private property owners against the overall public benefits to be provided by the proposal.

1.8.2.3 Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatunglung Walk

Mr Gary Vick submitted the following questions which was read out on his behalf by Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer:

Question 1: *"There has been consultation with local residents and conditions need to reflect any agreement with residents. The report presented tonight states recommended conditions to address objections are included which they are not. The recommendation must include all conditions confirming there will be no lighting, no handrails, and no elevated platforms as part of the buildings and works – notations on plans are not sufficient for this and there must be express conditions. Will council ensure this is achieved before the matter is considered?"*

Question 2: *"The Boardwalk and the sand remediation and erosion protection are inextricably tied. Council officers have negotiated and agreed this with adjoining residents / objectors. There is no such condition requiring the entirety of the works. What does Council propose to achieve this?"*

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

Response 1: The proposed Planning Permit conditions include:

- 1. The layout of the development must not be altered from the layout on the approved and endorsed plans without the written consent of the responsible authority.*

Plans provided in association with the application are endorsed as part of any permit issued and will form part of the permit.

The submitted plans do not include lighting, handrails or elevated platforms. If a permit is issued, it will therefore not allow for these elements to be included in the development. If they were to be included, this would require an amended planning permit application to be lodged.

Response 2: Please refer to my answer to the previous question. The submitted plans include delineation of the areas proposed for sand renourishment and revegetation and the placement of geotextile sand containment structures.

Proposed condition 1 of the Planning Permit states that:

The layout of the development must not be altered from the layout on the approved and endorsed plans without the written consent of the responsible authority.

Condition 16, derived from the Department Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Marine and Coastal Act consent states:

The works are to be carried out in accordance with the application form and supporting information and plans, received on 18 September 2025.

These plans include details of the sand renourishment, revegetation and erosion control measures. A Construction Environment Management Plan must also be submitted to and approved by DEECA. When approved, the plan will be endorsed and will form part of the permit.

1.8.2.4 Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatunglung Walk

Mr Maxwell Davenport asked the following questions:

Question 1: *“Could Council please clarify the future arrangements for the existing jetties, including responsibility for their management, any ongoing licence or liability requirements for current licence holders, and whether the jetties will be rebuilt or re-aligned under the proposed plans?”.*

Question 2: *“Could Council outline how existing private jetties and jetty rights will be managed as the project progresses, including whether they will be incorporated as public jetties, and how their ongoing maintenance needs and associated budgeting will be addressed?”.*

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

Response 1: These questions do not directly relate to planning report considered this evening.

There are two private jetties that are under licence from Department Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). These are located on public land/water currently. And the boardwalk is proposed on public land.

It is proposed that these jetties remain as private jetties with the same management responsibilities and liabilities on the part of the private licence holder.

The interface between the boardwalk and the existing jetties will be managed to ensure continued private access to the jetties and all abilities access along the boardwalk.

Response 2: It is proposed that the current private jetties remain as private jetties. Maintenance will remain the responsibility of the licence holder.

1.8.2.5 Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatunglung Walk

Mr Nicholas Hall asked the following questions:

Question 1: *“Councillors taken into account there will be a duplication of infrastructure if the boardwalk is built. There is already a footpath to Eastern beach.”*

Question 2: *“Are the Councillors aware Cunningham Arm is a listed Jamba and Camba listed area for migratory birds. It is also a listed Ramsar site for migratory birds. Have these issues been considered for your proposal.”*

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

Response 1: The proposed boardwalk provides an alternative recreational access along the Crown foreshore which will enhance the overall recreational experience for locals and visitors.

Response 2: A biodiversity assessment has been undertaken and endorsed by the Department Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). The plans incorporate, sand nourishment and retaining systems to stabilise the shoreline, minimise erosion and protect marine biodiversity. Conditions requested by DEECA have been included to ensure the appropriate management of biodiversity considerations.

Separate to this planning application the project was referred to the Commonwealth Government for consideration under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Act). The Commonwealth Government determined the project was not a controlled action under the Act as it did not have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance including conventions for the protection of migratory birds.

1.8.2.6 Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatunglung Walk

Mr Luke Roberts asked the following questions:

Question 1: *“Why is the Council still considering this boardwalk when after multiple meetings with Councillors, Mark Tickner and Emine Mestan where by all of the residence have clearly stated their valid reasons why they are unanimously opposed the Boardwalk which will adversely affect their lives and lifestyles and significantly devalue their properties.”*

Question 2: *“Has there been a maintenance schedule and budget allowed for. Nothing in the Report. The Shire is notorious for lack of funds and service in this area. Case in point Volunteers were needed to clean up the Stage 1 area two weeks ago. The area had become severely untidy.”*

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

Response 1: The Council, as Responsible Authority under the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987, is required to consider and determine the Planning Permit application. In doing so, Council must consider the objections and the requirements of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme.

It is acknowledged that adjoining residents object to the proposal, and those objections have been considered in the detailed design of the boardwalk, which has limited its overall height and excluded handrails as requested by the objectors. Council must balance the issues raised in the objections against the broader planning objectives relating to public access to the foreshore and improvement of access and recreational facilities for the broader public.

Response 2: The ongoing maintenance is not a component of the planning report tonight. The boardwalk will be maintained as part of Council's normal maintenance programs.

1.8.3 Public Submissions

1.8.3.1 Health of the Gippsland Lakes System

Ms Rebecca McLaren with three senior students, Pat, Ollie and Siara from Nungurner Primary School addressed Council on the health of the Gippsland Lakes System.

1.8.3.2 Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatungalung Walk

Ms Jennifer Monteleone addressed Council on Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatungalung Walk Stage 4 at Lakes Entrance and spoke at item 5.2.1.

1.8.3.3 Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatungalung Walk

Mr Bruce Hurley addressed Council on Planning Application 5.2024.373.1 - Krauatungalung Walk Stage 4 at Lakes Entrance and spoke at item 5.2.1.

1.8.3.3 Tiny Homes - Notice of Motion Response

Mr Isaac Carne addressed Council on the Tiny Homes - Notice of Motion Response and spoke at item 5.2.2.

1.9 Items for Noting

Nil

2 Notices of Motion

Nil

3 Deferred Business

Nil

4 Councillor Delegate Reports

4.1 Cr Arthur Allen

It has been busy since our last Council meeting!

23/10/25 - Cr Ashworth and I attended the Marina Consultative Committee meeting in the Shire Chamber and that evening, along with the Mayor and General Manager Assets and Environment attended the Lakes Entrance Action & Development Association town meeting at Lakes Entrance.

24/10/25 - The following day, along with Cr Trevaskis, I attended the opening of Stage One of the restored Orbost Rail Bridge.

27-28/10/25 - Councillors and Officers visited Ensay, Benambra, Omeo and Swifts Creek and met with community across a number of forums. Among the many things we did was to climb to the top of the Mountain Bike track at Mount Sam, we did it by car but still!

29/10/25 - The Mayor, Cr Ashworth and I attended the All Staff event at Riveria Christian Centre. There was a great atmosphere and congratulations to our staff who received special recognition.

03/11/25 - The CEO and I met with the new CEO of Vline to discuss a number of issues, not only concerning passenger rail but also freight.

05/11/25 - The Mayor, Cr Crook and I attended the launch of the 2026 Wooden Boat Rally Launch at Paynesville Yacht Club.

06/11/25 - Once again I was with the Mayor for the opening of the Changing Places facility adjacent the footbridge in Lakes Entrance.

07/11/25 - Rail Freight Alliance Meeting

10-12/11/25 – General Manager Assets and Environment and I travelled to Bendigo to attend the Australian Local Government Association Roads Congress held over two days, my report is listed separately.

13/11/25 - I attended the 50th Annual General Meeting of Gippsland Lakes Complete Health in Lakes Entrance.

14/11/25 - I had the honour and privilege of attending the opening of three milestone projects in Mallacoota, being the renewed street scape in the CBD, the renovated Mud Brick Hall and the expanded and enhanced Mallacoota Hall

2025 National Local Roads and Transport Congress – Australian Local Government Association Report

The day one “around the grounds” session of state delegates highlighted several major concerns: funding LGAs at 1% by the Commonwealth, “build back better,” the importance of freight movement, road safety, project delivery, the costs of native vegetation legislation, and disaster recovery. The session on road funding covered issues such as the road user charge and tips for applying for funding, including how councils assist the federal government in achieving their policy outcomes.

Senator Matt O'Sullivan, Shadow Minister for Roads, addressed delegates, although with no major revelations. Afternoon sessions focused on grant funding, asset management, and the path to a zero road toll. The Congress dinner on Tuesday evening was a valuable networking opportunity, with many councils facing issues similar to ours.

Wednesday's keynote speaker was the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Transport. Her address contained nothing new, but she took questions from the floor on topics including active transport funding, the inland rail project, investment in road safety, and her position on reducing speed limits, particularly on rural roads. The question that took my attention was a sugar coated one was what percentage of Commonwealth revenue local government receives when all sources are combined, implying it already exceeds 1%.

Subsequent sessions covered the circular economy in roads, managing infrastructure and coastal erosion, and freight and logistics.

The final session outlined the new program the Commonwealth will soon launch to manage and acquit grants.

4.2 Cr Jodie Ashworth

05/10/25 - I attended an evening at the Bairnsdale Sun Cinema for a special screening of the movie "Future Councils". The film takes eight young people on an epic adventure across Europe in a school bus powered by biofuel. The group want to understand and explore solutions to ensure there is a sustainable future for generations to come. This adventure leads to the creation of a Future Council where young, enthusiastic and passionate people work with big business to change the world. It was a great reminder that adults and children think differently and that listening and working together for the future with new and creative thinking might just be the key to a sustainable future for all in generations to come.

06/10/25 – Attended workshop provided for Councillors to review the 2024/2025 Annual Financial Statements.

07/10/25 - Attended the Annual joint Councillor and Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.

09/10/25 - Attended the online Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) Masterclass on "Clear and Courageous Communication with Divided Communities" with Dr Neryl East. This was an insightful presentation on how council decision makers don't necessary win friends, but can win respect by how we communicate.

10/10/25 - It was wonderful to see this event come together after the initial idea was discussed early in the 2025. The event titled *Welcome Back the Birds* offered plenty of opportunities to learn about the migratory birds that travel thousands of kilometres each year. It was great to see community groups, organisations, and agencies to come together with the community to share inspiring stories and initiatives connected to the Gippsland Lakes and catchments. The event provided hands on activities and live entertainment and was enjoyed by everyone.

Congratulations to Lisa at East Gippsland Catchment Authority and Martin at Greening Australia for their enthusiasm and passion in putting on this event for the community.

That evening, I attended the East Gippsland Art Gallery Trivia Night with fellow councillors including Cr Farquhar, Cr Eastman, Cr Buckley and Cr Crooke. It was nice to enjoy a social event together as a group and spend time with community members.

12/10/25 - I attended the Annual General Meeting of Friends of Gippsland Lakes. The guest speaker was Professor Peter Gell who talked about the Gippsland Lakes, wetlands and their Ramsar status. It was a great opportunity to hear his thoughts on the future of the Gippsland Lakes in terms of their ecological importance and the massive benefits of preserving those values for the environment.

16/10/25 - Attended the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Leadership in Advancing Gender Equality online as part of the Councillor Development Program, Social Impact Series. This workshop was presented by GenderWorks who are accredited providers of Workplace gender equality programs and training. This training provided information about the Gender Equality Act 2020 as Councils have a duty to promote gender equality and must comply with obligations under the act as part of the Code of Conduct. It was an important reminder that as elective representatives in our communities, Councillors must represent the diversity of interests and needs through our whole municipality.

17/10/25 - Audit and Risk Committee Performance Review workshop with fellow Councillors.

20/10/25 - Meeting with Senator Bridget McKenzie following her visit to Omeo and on her way to Sale, I joined fellow Councillors, the Mayor and CEO to discuss the priorities for East Gippsland.

23/10/25 - Marina Consultative Committee Meeting with Cr Allen.

Attended the East Gippsland Marketing Inc. (EGMi) Business Forum where industry leaders joined together to highlight East Gippsland's strengths and explore its challenges while networking with others across our region.

The overwhelming message was that East Gippsland is resilient, innovative and ready for growth. There are many opportunities ahead and collaboration is key. The health and wellbeing of our community is central to a thriving region and tourism is evolving and continues to play a vital part in attracting visitors to the region.

24/10/25 - Recorded a message for the "Let Our Voice Be Heard" as part of the Messages from East Gippsland project which invites children and young people to send a postcard to local decision makers and asks them to share the best and worst things about where they live and what would they do if they were the Mayor of East Gippsland. This project involved around 800 students, thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to this project.

Here is my message:-

CR JODIE ASHWORTH – (kindness, creativity, helping others)

Hi everyone! I'm Councillor Jodie Ashworth.

What really stood out in your *Messages from East Gippsland* was your kindness and creativity. So many of you wrote about helping people who are having a tough time – families with less money or people without homes. That caring makes our communities stronger.

And your ideas were fantastic – from banana trees and taco Tuesdays, to kids' art shows and ninja courses. You're imaginative, kind, and full of heart – and that's what makes East Gippsland an amazing place to grow up. Keep being kind, creative, and brave – your ideas really do matter!

25/10/25 - This date marked the anniversary of when the Local Government elections closed in 2024. I attended the 1st anniversary of the Women for Election, Women Leading Locally program with 21 other women who had been elected as Councillors in Victoria. It was great to catch up in person and to reconnect and discuss our insights, learnings and experiences and reflect on the last 12 months.

27-28/10/25 – Council in Community visit to Omeo and high country with fellow Councillors. It was great to connect with Community members and to listen to their feedback providing opportunities to discuss the challenges they face but also hear about all the achievements. Thank you to all the passionate local community committee members who volunteer their time to represent, contribute and care for their community organisations.

29/10/25 - I attended the All Staff event and would like to extend my thanks the CEO and Executive Team for the invitation. It was wonderful to meet staff and to see staff recognised and acknowledged by their peers for the contribution to the organisation and our community. Congratulations to all the award nominees and thank you to all Council staff.

That evening, I attended a Business Forum put on by the Paynesville and District Community Bank and listened to guest speakers David Robertson, Bendigo Bank Chief Economist and Scott Draper, Bendigo Bank Business Manager. David presented a wealth of information and expert insights covering global markets and trade wars, the local economy, jobs, business investment and the property market. It was great to catch up with community members and hear from one of Australia's highly regarded Economists.

08/11/25 - Having completed my first year as a Councillor and a year of professional development in all areas of Local Government it was great to catch up with my mentor and coach and four other Councillors from across regional and metro councils to celebrate at an in person meeting where we networked, shared our insights and reflected on the last 12 months.

10/11/25 - Attended the Paynesville Business and Tourism Association Annual General Meeting and network evening where I tabled my final report following my second year as President. I have proudly represented the organisation for many years and have enjoyed the opportunity to create, connect and maintain the relationships and partnerships with other community organisations resulting in fresh ideas and vibrant community events that brought people together and also strengthened the local economy.

12/11/25 - As a Councillor representative of the Audit and Risk Committee I attended a meeting to short list candidates for upcoming roles on the Audit and Risk Committee with the Mayor and CEO.

13/11/25 - Attended the online ALGWA Masterclass "2025 The good, the bad and what needs to change for women in local government in 2026". Guest speakers included Mayor Karen Foster from Moyne Shire in Victoria, Mayor Mary Duniam from Waratah Wynyard Shire in Tasmania and Mayor Audra Smith from Ashburton Shire in WA. It was interesting to hear different perspectives from each Mayor on their Shire's challenges and opportunities. There was a common thread between all three Mayors in their role as leaders in local government with all agreeing that more advocacy needs to be done with State and Federal Government to ensure local government representatives are being consulted with and that really engagement happens when decisions are being made that impact and effect our local communities.

4.3 Cr Ian Trevaskis

Timber Towns Annual General Meeting and 3 - Day Forum: 29 - 31 October 2025

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Wellington Shire Chambers on Friday 31 October. All positions were declared vacant and nominations were called for. All committee members were returned, with only one nomination for each position. Having got to know the group over the previous two days, I feel this was the right outcome. A general meeting followed.

The proposal to reduce speeds on rural roads was discussed, with overwhelming opposition to such a move.

Mark Coleman referenced seed funding and Wellington Shire's success in pursuing grants for the timber sector. I spoke about East Gippsland Shire's role in administering timber transition and fire recovery grants, noting both the successes and some omissions, as some secondary trades missed out entirely. I also highlighted that if the Swifts Creek mill closes, we would be left with only the Bairnsdale mill.

I floated the idea of producing a video to increase public awareness of the benefits of hardwood and showcased some local craftsmanship from the Orbost Arts Centre. This was well received.

The venue for the next Annual General Meeting was discussed, with Gannawarra Shire proposed due to the redgum sawmill at Koondrook using NSW timber.

Day 1 - The first day included visits to four mills and a presentation from Vince Hurley, CEO of Australian Sustainable Hardwoods in Heyfield. He explained their Tasmanian timber harvesting methods, which are very similar to Ian Cane's selective harvesting approach—minimising forest disturbance while remaining economically viable.

Day 2 - We began at 6.30 am, travelling to the Heyfield ASH hardwood manufacturing plant (calling it a mill would be an understatement). Nothing leaves the facility without being value-added, and the concept of a 36-metre beam or four-storey wooden affordable apartments is remarkable. Hardwoods clearly have a significant, yet underexplored, role in our built environment. I asked Vince whether reopening East Gippsland forests would benefit them; his response was a resounding "yes."

We then visited the HVP plantation at Holey Plains, a crop replanted after each harvest. They noted challenges such as illegal four-wheel driving and shooting for deer and kangaroos.

Next was Yarram Radial Timber, which uses a different sawmilling method with a claimed higher yield—also in hardwood. They are also developing biochar from sawdust and other by-products, which was very interesting.

We then visited the Ashburton Timber Mill, a small pine mill with a treated post section. What stood out was their practice of pre-pointing posts before treatment; pointing them afterwards compromises the integrity of the treated post, which could explain why many posts fail.

The final visit was to a large standard pine mill, providing a useful benchmark. The production speed was particularly impressive.

Ideas worth pursuing: seed funding, encouraging innovation, and selective timber harvesting.

4.4 Cr John White

23/10/25 - Rural Councils Victoria Annual General Meeting
23/10/25 - Lakes Entrance Action and Development Association - Annual General Meeting and Community Meeting
24/10/25 - One Gippsland - Priority Project Pitch Meeting
24/10/25 - U3A Nonagenarians Lunch
24/10/25 – Meeting with President Bairnsdale Chamber of Commerce
27/10/25 - Bairnsdale Chamber of Commerce - Major Projects Summit
27-28/10/25 - Council in the Community - Ensay, Benambra, Omeo and Swifts Creek
29/10/25 - Business Forum – Economic and Business Outlook for 2026
29/10/25 - All Staff Event
30/10/25 - Timber Towns Victoria - Members Dinner
31/10/25 - Timber Towns Victoria – Breakfast and Annual General Meeting
03/11/25 - East Gippsland Shire Council and V/Line
03/11/25 - Cup Eve Reception at Government House Victoria
04/11/25 - 27th Victoria Police Former Members Annual Luncheon
05/11/25 - Launch of the 2026 Paynesville Classic Boat Rally
06/11/25 - Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee Meeting
06/11/25 - Lakes Entrance Changing Places - Official Opening
06/11/25 - Planning Meeting
07/11/25 - Meeting with Mr Tom McIntosh MP
08/11/25 - Lindenow Lions Club 50th Anniversary Dinner
10/11/25 - Youth Ambassadors Committee Meeting
11/11/25 - Councillor Briefing Session
12/11/25 - Audit and Risk Committee Recruitment Meeting
12/11/25 - Aeris Resources (Stockman Project) Executive Visit
12/11/25 - Rotary Junior Community Awards 29th Year Presentations
14/11/25 - Big Bonang Arvo
17/11/25 - One Gippsland Meeting with Mr Tony Mahar
18/11/25 - Councillor Briefing Session and Council meeting
19/11/25 - Rotary Junior Community Awards 29th Year Presentations

4.5 Cr Joanne Eastman

I attended a seminar hosted by the Alliance for Gambling Reform. The Alliance is particularly concerned about the influence of lobbyists, and the State Government's glacial progress in addressing reform generally. Presenters included an addict who had unsuccessfully tried many ways – including self-exclusion apps - to stop gambling. Speakers looked at the concentration of gambling in low-income areas, the methods used by the industry to target new gamblers and highlighted the rapid growth of poorly regulated online gambling. This is a major concern as it is capturing many young people – including secondary age students – for whom there appears to be little or no restrictions on downloading gambling apps. The consequences can be dire for the young person, and their families. The Alliance is calling on Councils to mobilise community support to work together to influence positive reforms to reduce the prevalence of, and harm from, gambling.

I participated online in a seminar held by Moorabool Council hosted on illegal waste dumping. That Council has been forced to pay a \$500,000 fine (\$25 per resident) for the cleanup of waste that appeared to have been moved from private land to a roadside under Council control. Illegal dumping cleanup order - VCAT decision | Moorabool Shire Council. The seminar demonstrated how prevalent the problem of illegal waste is – particularly for shires closer to Melbourne – and how ineffective current regulations are in holding perpetrators accountable.

More than 500 people attended the hugely successful 'A Day in Bendoc' woodchop event on the 8 November. The event showcased this unique settlement and was a credit to the organisers and sponsors. There was something for everyone – including having the Benambra Green Shed open for the day. The number of children and young families attracted to the event clearly demonstrated the inaccuracy of stereotyping these more rural and remote communities as being in decline.

I joined a small but very enthusiastic group of staff and supporters at the opening of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Service Street Bairnsdale. Minister Ingrid Stitt presided and along with Tom MacIntosh explained how the Local is one of more than 20 across the State that have been established to address one of the significant gaps in support that was identified in the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The Bairnsdale Local is managed by Wellways, and partners with Gippsland Lakes Community Health and Latrobe Regional Health to provide a free walk-in service for people over the age of 26 who are experiencing mental health issues. It allows people to access immediate support for mental health issues without the need to get a doctor's referral. The Local is unique in its team-based approach that provides services such as counselling, peer support, creative therapies and prevention support to help address immediate needs and set people on the path to better management or recovery. Mental Health and Wellbeing Local - Wellways

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Chief Executive Officer

5.1.1 Project Management Overview

Authorised by Chief Executive Officer

Motion

That Council:

1. *endorses the eight Guiding Principles for inclusion and implementation into Council's Project Management Framework, being:*
 - a) *Needs Driven*
 - b) *Value for Money*
 - c) *Advocacy & Partnerships*
 - d) *Quality*
 - e) *Leveraging local strengths*
 - f) *Strategic Alignment*
 - g) *Belonging & Inclusion*
 - h) *Sustainable future; and*
2. *endorses an organisational project management commitment to:*
 - a) *due diligence at all stages, including project prioritisation;*
 - b) *greater collaboration across Council;*
 - c) *stronger engagement and communication;*
 - d) *a thorough approach to identifying, reporting and managing risks;*
 - e) *closing projects effectively; and*
 - f) *continuous improvement through evaluating projects and capturing learnings.*

Moved: Cr Joanne Eastman

Seconded: Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke for the motion: Cr Joanne Eastman and Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.2 Place and Community

5.2.1 Planning Permit application 2024.373 - Buildings and works and removal of vegetation associated with Krauatungalong Walk Stage 4 - Lakes Entrance Foreshore

Authorised by General Manager Place and Community

Public Submissions

Ms Jennifer Monteleone
Mr Bruce Hurley

Motion

That Council being the Responsible Authority and having considered all the relevant planning matters, determines that Planning Permit Application 5.2024.373.1 is consistent with the requirements and objectives of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme and therefore resolves to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit for the Buildings and Works and Removal of Vegetation Associated with Krauatungalong Walk Stage 4 (Lakes Entrance Foreshore), at Middle Street, Lakes Entrance, subject to permit conditions in Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Bernie Farquhar

Spoke for the motion: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Bernie Farquhar and Cr Tom Crook

Spoke against the motion: Cr Sonia Buckley and Cr Ian Trevaskis

Closed the debate: Cr Arthur Allen

CARRIED

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Joanne Eastman and Cr Bernie Farquhar

Against: Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Barry Davis, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White

Abstained: Nil

5.2.2 Tiny Homes - Notice of Motion Response

Authorised by General Manager Place and Community

Conflict of Interest

Cr Sonia Buckley, having declared a conflict of interest in relation to 5.2.2, left the meeting at 7.20 pm and was absent during the discussion on this item.

Public Submission

Mr Isaac Carne

Motion

That Council:

- 1. notes that a tiny home built as the only dwelling on a lot is regulated in the same way as any other form of dwelling;***
- 2. notes changes to the East Gippsland Planning Scheme (VC253) that enable the construction of small second dwellings without the need for a planning permit, subject to certain conditions;***
- 3. monitors the Surf Coast Shire Council Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOW) pilot program and, subject to evaluation of program results, include advocacy for appropriate regulation for THOWs as part of the East Gippsland Advocacy Strategy;***
- 4. notes that through the review of the East Gippsland General Local Law, Council has the further ability to consider allowing the occupation of a Tiny Home on Wheels (THOW) on private land with a current residence without the need for a local laws permit. The review of the General Local Law could also be used to develop appropriate criteria to address community safety, amenity of the subject site and surrounding areas, and environmental impact;***
- 5. as part of the review of the East Gippsland General Local Law, consult with the community about removing the current requirement that limits occupancy of a caravan or tiny home on wheels to a maximum of 28 days. The proposed change would allow longer-term occupancy, provided the occupant has ready access to proper sanitation, bathing, and drainage facilities within the developed residence on which the caravan or tiny home on wheels is located and investigate if an expedited review of this section of the East Gippsland General Local Law is feasible; and***
- 6. continues to promote diverse housing opportunities in accordance with the Objectives and Strategies of the East Gippsland Housing and Settlement Strategy (2023), including, but not limited to:***
 - a. diverse infill housing development in appropriate locations; and***
 - b. advocacy for social and affordable housing.***

Moved: *Cr Tom Crook*
Seconded: *Cr Ian Trevaskis*

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook and Cr Ian Trevaskis
Spoke against the motion: Nil
Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, 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 Sonia Buckley returned to the Council Chamber at 7.45 pm.

5.3 Assets and Environment

5.3.1 Waste and Recycling Service Review and Transition Plan

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Motion

That Council:

- 1. endorses the Transition Plan provided at Attachment 1 as the guiding framework for the future delivery of Council's waste and recycling services;***
- 2. authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to submit the endorsed Transition Plan to Recycling Victoria;***
- 3. confirms that the endorsed Transition Plan will be published on Council's website to ensure transparency and public access; and***
- 4. notes that any changes to specific waste services will be the subject of further community consultation and formal consideration by Council.***

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Bernie Farquhar

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook, Cr Bernie Farquhar and Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.3.2 CON2026 1745 Expression of Interest for Construction and Operation of Compost Facility

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Item 5.3.2 was withdrawn from business and will be considered at a future meeting.

5.4 Business Excellence

5.4.1 Service Review Policy

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council adopts the draft Service Review Policy, as presented at Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Joanne Eastman

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

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

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.4.2 Organisational Performance Report July to September 2025

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council:

- 1. endorses the full year forecast changes for operating and capital budgets, as included in the Organisational Performance Report for the period to 1 July to 30 September 2025; and***
- 2. notes that if endorsed, the Organisational Performance Report for the period to 30 September 2025, as provided at attachment 1 will be published on Council's website.***

Moved: Cr Sonia Buckley

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

Spoke for the motion: Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

Procedural Motion

That Council resolves to extend duration of the meeting by two hours.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

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

5.4.3 S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation Planning and Environment Act 1987

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council:

- 1. in the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, resolves that Hamish McIntosh, Statutory Planning Coordinator be appointed as an Authorised Officer for the purposes of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the regulations made under that Act;***
- 2. revokes the appointment of Royce Edwards as an Authorised Officer for the purposes of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the regulations made under that Act resolved by Council on 16 December 2024;***
- 3. authorises the Chief Executive Officer to remake and execute the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation to reflect the above changes to Authorised Officers; and***
- 4. notes that the Instrument will come into force immediately following resolution of Council and will remain in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it, or until the Officer ceases to be employed by East Gippsland Shire Council.***

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

Spoke for the motion: Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

5.4.4 Council Meeting Resolution Register

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Confidentiality Notice

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

Pursuant to section 66(5)(b) of the *Local Government Act* 2020, if released, the information discussed or considered in relation to this agenda item could undermine the integrity of Council decision-making processes, disclose sensitive discussions or deliberations, or reveal personal, legal, or commercial information that may prejudice Council or third parties.

Attendance

Cr Joanne Eastman left the Council Chamber at 8.31 pm.

Motion

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

Moved: Cr Barry Davis

Seconded: Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke for the motion: Cr Barry Davis and Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

Attendance

Cr Joanne Eastman return to the Council Chamber at 8.34 pm.

5.4.5 Council Meeting Schedule 2026

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Motion

That Council adopts the following Council Meeting dates for the 2026 Calendar year, to be held at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale, commencing at 6.00 pm:

<i>Tuesday, 17 February</i>	<i>Tuesday, 18 August</i>
<i>Tuesday, 17 March</i>	<i>Tuesday, 15 September</i>
<i>Tuesday, 21 April</i>	<i>Tuesday, 20 October</i>
<i>Tuesday, 19 May</i>	<i>Thursday, 12 November (Statutory)</i>
<i>Tuesday, 9 June</i>	<i>Tuesday, 17 November</i>
<i>Tuesday, 23 June</i>	<i>Tuesday, 15 December</i>
<i>Tuesday, 21 July</i>	

Moved: Cr Sonia Buckley

Seconded: Cr Tom Crook

Spoke for the motion: Cr Sonia Buckley and Cr Tom Crook

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

6 Mayoral Term Address

Mayor, Cr John White and Deputy Mayor, Cr Sonia Buckley reflected on their term of office.

7 Urgent Business

Nil

Motion

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

Moved: Cr Tom Crook

Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke for the motion: Cr Tom Crook

Spoke against the motion: Nil

Closed the debate: Nil

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

For: Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Tom Crook,
Cr 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 9.04 pm.

8 Confidential Business

8.1 Contract Matter

The information contained in this report is confidential under section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* because it relates to: (a) Council Business Information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations, if prematurely released.

Pursuant to section 66(5)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, if released, the information discussed or considered in relation to this agenda item could result in Council being placed at a commercial disadvantage during negotiations with the contracted business.

9 Close of Meeting

Mayor Cr John White declared the Council Meeting closed at 9.12 pm.