



Unconfirmed Statutory Meeting Minutes

Thursday 20 November 2025 at 6:00 pm

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

Councillors

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

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
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Index

1 Procedural.....	4
1.1 Chief Executive Officer presiding	4
1.2 Recognition of Traditional Custodians	4
1.3 Apologies	4
1.4 Next meeting	4
2 Term of Office of Mayor.....	5
3 Election of Mayor	6
4 Office of Deputy Mayor.....	7
4.1 Establishment of Office of Deputy Mayor	7
4.2 Election of Deputy Mayor	8
5 Close of Meeting	8

1 Procedural

1.1 Chief Executive Officer presiding

In accordance with section 25(3)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) the Chief Executive Officer, Ms Fiona Weigall, chaired the meeting until the Mayor was elected.

1.2 Recognition of Traditional Custodians

Ms Fiona Weigall, Chief Executive Officer, 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.

1.3 Apologies

The Hon. Tim Bull MP
The Hon. Darren Chester MP

1.4 Next meeting

The next Council Meeting is to be held on Tuesday 16 December 2025 at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale commencing at 6.00 pm.

2 Term of Office of Mayor

Section 26 of the Act requires that before the election of the Mayor a Council must determine by resolution whether the Mayor is to be elected for one or two years.

In addition, section 26 requires the election for the next Mayor to be held on a day that is close to the end of the term, decided as reasonably practicable.

Motion

That Council resolves to determine that the term of office of the Mayor will be for a one-year term.

Moved: Cr Arthur Allen

Seconded: Cr Sonia Buckley

Spoke for the motion: Nil

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,
Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

3 Election of Mayor

The Act, pursuant of section 25, requires *at a Council meeting that is open to the public the Councillors must elect a Councillor to be the Mayor of the Council.*

Any Councillor is eligible for election to the office of Mayor.

Section 25 of the Act stipulates that *the Mayor must be elected by an absolute majority of the Councillors*. An absolute majority as defined by section 25(7) of the Act *means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council*. Governance Rule 6.4 requires that the election of the Mayor must be carried out by show of hands.

The Chief Executive Officer called for nominations from Councillors for the position of Mayor.

Cr Ian Trevaskis nominated Cr Sonia Buckley.

Cr Sonia Buckley accepted the nomination.

Cr Bernie Farquhar nominated Cr Jodie Ashworth.

Cr Jodie Ashworth accepted the nomination.

As there was more than one candidate, Fiona Weigall, Chief Executive provided an opportunity for nominated Councillors to speak to their candidacy for the position of Mayor.

Fiona Weigall, Chief Executive Officer conducted the voting process in the order of nominations.

Cr Sonia Buckley received four votes, with votes cast by Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Barry Davis, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White.

Cr Jodie Ashworth received five votes, with votes cast by Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Joanne Eastman and Cr Bernie Farquhar.

In accordance with Section 25(6) of the Act, and with Cr Jodie Ashworth receiving an absolute majority of votes (five votes), the Chief Executive Officer declared Cr Jodie Ashworth duly elected as Mayor of East Gippsland Shire Council for a one-year term.

Procedural note

The newly elected Mayor made a ceremonial speech outlining her priorities for the year ahead, and congratulatory statements were made by Councillors.

At this point, the Mayor, Cr Jodie Ashworth took the Chair and presided over the remainder of proceedings.

4 Office of Deputy Mayor

4.1 Establishment of Office of Deputy Mayor

The Act, in section 21, provides *that the Deputy Mayor must perform the role of the Mayor and may exercise any powers of the Mayor if:*

- a) *the Mayor is unable for any reason to attend a Council meeting or part of a Council meeting; or*
- b) *the Mayor is incapable of performing the duties of the office of Mayor for any reason including illness; or*
- c) *the office of Mayor is vacant.*

Motion

That Council resolves to establish the office of the Deputy Mayor

Moved: Cr Joanne Eastman

Seconded: Cr Arthur Allen

Spoke for the motion: Nil

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,
Cr John White

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

Following the resolution to establish the office of the Deputy Mayor, Mayor, Cr Jodie Ashworth commenced proceedings to elect the Deputy Mayor.

4.2 Election of Deputy Mayor

The election of the Deputy Mayor was conducted by the Mayor in accordance with section 27 of the Act and the Governance Rules (Rule 6 – Election of Mayor), specifically, Governance Rule 6.4 which states that the election of the Deputy Mayor must be carried out by show of hands.

Cr Jodie Ashworth, Mayor called for nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor.

Cr Ian Trevaskis nominated Cr Sonia Buckley.

Cr Sonia Buckley accepted the nomination.

Cr Arthur Allen nominated Cr Tom Crook.

Cr Tom Crook accepted the nomination.

As there was more than one candidate, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Mayor provided an opportunity for nominated Councillors to speak to their candidacy for the position of Deputy Mayor.

Cr Jodie Ashworth, Mayor conducted the voting process in the order of nominations.

Cr Sonia Buckley received four votes, with votes cast by Cr Sonia Buckley, Cr Barry Davis, Cr Ian Trevaskis and Cr John White.

Cr Tom Crook received five votes, with votes cast by Cr Arthur Allen, Cr Jodie Ashworth, Cr Tom Crook, Cr Joanne Eastman and Cr Bernie Farquhar.

In accordance with Section 25(6) of the Act, and with Cr Tom Crook receiving an absolute majority of votes (five votes), Cr Jodie Ashworth, Mayor declared Cr Tom Crook duly elected as Deputy Mayor of East Gippsland Shire Council for a one-year term.

Procedural note

The newly elected Deputy Mayor made a ceremonial speech outlining his priorities for the year ahead, and congratulatory statements were made by Councillors.

5 Close of Meeting

Cr Jodie Ashworth, Mayor declared the Council Meeting closed at 6.38 pm.