



Council Meeting Agenda



Tuesday 16 September 2025 at 6:00 pm
Council Chambers (and by video conferencing)
East Gippsland Shire Council Corporate Centre
273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875



Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and 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.

Council information

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

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

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

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

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

Councillors

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

Executive Leadership Team

Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer
Stuart McConnell General Manager Assets and Environment
Sarah Johnston General Manager Business Excellence
Chris Stephenson General Manager Place and Community

Purpose of Council meetings

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

Governance Rules

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

Councillors Pledge

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

Vision

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	7
1.1 Recognition of Traditional Custodians	7
1.2 Apologies	7
1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest	7
1.4 Confirmation of Minutes	7
1.5 Next Meeting	7
1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence	7
1.7 Condolences	7
1.8 Open Forum	7
1.8.1 <i>Petitions</i>	7
1.8.2 <i>Questions of Council</i>	7
1.8.3 <i>Public Submissions</i>	7
1.9 Items for Noting	8
2 Notices of Motion	15
3 Deferred Business	15
4 Councillor Delegate Reports	15
5 Officer Reports	16
5.1 Assets and Environment	16
5.1.1 Raymond Island Ferry Pass Review	16
5.1.2 Bairnsdale Airport Runway Upgrade	30
5.1.3 Renewal East Gippsland Road Management Plan	44
5.2 Business Excellence	74
5.2.1 Councillor Support and Expenses Policy	74
5.2.2 Summary of Councillor Briefing Sessions	98
5.3 Place and Community	110
5.3.1 Annual Allocation Policy Review	110
5.3.2 Confirmed Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee Minutes and Unconfirmed Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes	121

6 Urgent Business	133
7 Confidential Business	133
7.1 Personnel Matter	133
8 Close of Meeting	133

1 Procedural

1.1 Recognition of Traditional Custodians

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawal people as the Traditional Custodians of this land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with country. The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years.

Council value their living culture and practices and their right to self-determination. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders, past, present, and future.

1.2 Apologies

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held Tuesday 19 August 2025 be confirmed.

1.5 Next Meeting

The next Council Meeting is an unscheduled meeting to be held on Tuesday 7 October 2025 at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street Bairnsdale commencing at 1.00 pm.

1.6 Requests for Leave of Absence

1.7 Condolences

That Council acknowledges the tragic loss of two dedicated members of Victoria Police, Senior Constable Vadim de Waart-Hottart and Leading Senior Constable Neal Thompson, who lost their lives in the line of duty on 26 August 2025.

1.8 Open Forum

1.8.1 *Petitions*

1.8.2 *Questions of Council*

1.8.3 *Public Submissions*

1.9 Items for Noting

In accordance with section 54(5)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a copy of the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report is to be tabled and subsequently recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Attachments

1. Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report - January to June 2025 [**1.9.1.1** - 6 pages]



Audit and Risk Committee

Biannual Report

January to June 2025



Introduction

East Gippsland Shire Council (Council) is required to establish an Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) under section 53(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

Additionally, section 54(1) of the Act requires councils to prepare and approve a Committee Charter (the Charter) which specifies the Committee's objectives, authority, composition, tenure, roles and responsibilities along with reporting, administrative and governance arrangements.

A periodic review of the Charter was undertaken by the Committee at its February meeting which resulted in only one change being recommended. The proposed change was presented to Council and the revised Charter was adopted 16 April 2025. The amendment is further explained later in this report.

Section 54(5)(a) of the Act also requires the Committee to prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes its activities, findings and recommendations. A copy of this report must also be provided to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for tabling at the next practicable Council meeting.

This Report outlines the activities of the Committee for the reporting period (January to June 2025).

Membership

The Committee is comprised of seven members: four independent members (one of whom is Chair), the Mayor of the day and two Councillors appointed by Council. The current membership of the Committee, including any changes that occurred during the reporting period, is set out below:

Council Representatives

Mayor, Councillor John White
Councillor Jodie Ashworth
Councillor Joanne Eastman

Independent Members

Ms Celeste Gregory (2025 Chair)
Ms Claudia Goldsmith
Mr Jason Hellyer
Ms Susan Lloyd

Meetings and Attendance

In accordance with the Charter, an ordinary meeting is held once each quarter and a joint meeting with Councillors is held annually in September to discuss:

- Council's audited draft financial report and performance statement; and
- the Committee's self-assessed performance evaluation for the previous financial year.

As detailed in the Charter, a quorum will exist if four (4) or more Committee Members are present, and the number of external Independent Members present is equal to or greater than the number of Councillor members. Meetings during the reporting period complied with quorum requirements.



The Committee met two times during the reporting period:

Meeting Date	Type
26 February 2025	Ordinary Committee Meeting
26 May 2025	Ordinary Committee Meeting

In accordance with the Charter, Councillors who are not members of the Committee may attend meetings of the Committee as observers. Through the Chair, non-member Councillors may ask questions in relation to matters listed on the agenda but may not participate in discussion.

The Chief Executive Officer, General Manager Business Excellence, Manager Governance and Regulatory Services and Committee Secretariat will, when practicable and appropriate, attend all meetings of the Committee. Other members of Council staff may be invited to attend meetings to present reports.

Attendance during the reporting period is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Member	Role	26 Feb	26 May
Celeste Gregory	Independent Chair	✓	✓
Claudia Goldsmith	Independent Member	✓	✓
Susan Lloyd	Independent Member	✓	✓
Jason Hellyer	Independent Member	✓	✓
Cr John White	Mayor	✓	✓
Cr Jodie Ashworth	Councillor Representative	✓	✓
Cr Joanne Eastman	Councillor Representative	✓	✓

Attendance Key ✓ = In Attendance ✕ = Apology ⊖ = Not Required

Internal Audit

A key responsibility of the Committee is to monitor Council's internal audit program. The internal audit function of Council is supported by the engagement of independent Internal Audit professionals to provide analysis and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk, and management controls.

A three-year Strategic Internal Audit Plan was endorsed by the Committee in May 2023 and approved by Council in August 2023. The Committee monitors the delivery of the plan at each meeting.

A representative from Crowe Australasia attended each Committee meeting to provide an update on the progress of the Internal Audit Plan and to present results for each audit undertaken.



Implementation of Audit Recommendations

In accordance with the Committee's Charter, the Committee is also responsible for monitoring progress on actions required to achieve rectification of any issues identified following an Internal Audit. At the meeting held on 26 May 2025, the Committee noted the following progress:

Internal Audit Area	Number of Actions							
	In Quarterly Report	Completed	On Schedule	Behind Schedule	Not Commenced	On Hold	Not Updated	Withdrawn
Payroll	1	1						
Child Safety Standards	2	1	1					
Governance	5	2	3					
Procurement Tendering	3	2	1					

External Audit

The Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) appointed RSD Audit to complete external audits of East Gippsland Shire Council, as required by the *Audit Act 1994*. A representative of RSD Audit attends meetings as required.

The 2024/25 Interim Management Letter was presented to the Committee at its meeting of 26 May 2025.

Annual Work Program

The meeting agenda is driven by the Committee's Annual Work Program, which was formally endorsed at the meeting held 26 February 2025. The matters from the Annual Work Program considered by the Committee at each meeting are provided in **Table 2**.

Key Highlights

The key highlights for the Committee during the current reporting period were:

- An amendment was made to the Audit and Risk Committee Charter to vary the term of the Chair. From a Committee perspective this was supported unanimously. It resulted in the current chair being voted in, uncontested for a third term. This has resulted in continuity of the chair and expertise as a presiding member remaining in an ongoing position.
- The Committee received a comprehensive budget and strategic view of financial sustainability for the current fiscal year and ten years respectively. It is evident a large amount of time has been taken to review the financial sustainability for Council and ensure ratepayers are being considered in delivery of services whilst maintaining compliance.
- The Committee provided input into the audit plan and recommended audits which would provide a level of assurance the Committee would like to have visibility of within the scope of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.



- Cyber security is forefront of Council and the work being undertaken is commendable to ensure the safeguarding of privacy information and ensure council can continue providing services with limited to no disruption.
- As a Committee it was noted the Chief Finance Officer will be going into retirement and we thanked Ms Liz Collins for her contribution and wished her well for the future.

The Committee received and considered reports/information on the following key areas of interest:

- A comprehensive risk framework was received with recommendations however with compliments of the work completed by Officers.
- An expansive amount of work has been undertaken in Occupational Health and Safety and it was noted by the Committee. An area the Committee are looking to see more information on is psychosocial risks as these become more heightened in a local government context.
- At the February meeting, the Committee received the Artificial Intelligence Policy along with the proposed approach. Although an organisational policy, it was pleasing to see the proactive approach to an ever developing and fast pace change to technology.

The Committee also received and considered a number of reports that are confidential in accordance with section 3 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Accordingly, these have not been included in the above key highlights or areas of interest.



TABLE 2

Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Program 2025		February		May	
Reports	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Officer Reports					
Organisational Performance Quarterly Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Quarterly Councillors' Expenses Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Quarterly Strategic Risk Management Report (Inc Risk Register)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Biannual Occupational Health and Safety Report			✓	✓	
Quarterly Major Insurance and Legal Claims Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ICT and Cyber Security Update	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Report - 6 Month Report			✓	✓	
Asset Valuations			✓	✓	
Audit Matters					
Internal Audit Plan Progress Update	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Internal Audit Recommendations - Actions Update Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Internal Audit Plan Delivery - Annual Review	✓	✓	x	✓	
External Auditor - Financial Year Audit Strategy	✓	✓			
External Auditor - Interim Management Letter			✓	✓	
Committee Matters					
Actions Arising Update	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Annual Report - Completed Actions Arising	✓	✓			
Annual Work Program - Adoption	✓	✓			
Biannual Activity Report	✓	✓			
Annual Work Program - Progress Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Charter Review	✓	✓	✓	x	
Annual Performance Assessment			✓	✓	
Emerging Issues					
Quarterly Emerging Issues Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Strategic Focus Areas - Presentations					
Strategic Risk Management	✓	✓			
Unplanned Reports					
Auditor-General's Report on the Results of 2023-24 Audits: Local Government				✓	
Financial Sustainability				✓	
Draft Council Plan 2025-29 - Themes and Outcomes				✓	
Municipal Monitors Report - Moonee Valley Council				✓	
Internal Audit Report - Workforce Planning				✓	

2 Notices of Motion

3 Deferred Business

4 Councillor Delegate Reports

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Assets and Environment

5.1.1 Raymond Island Ferry Pass Review

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Purpose

This report seeks Council's endorsement to make changes to the Raymond Island Ferry resident pass system, addressing key issues with the current portable pass model. The proposed changes aim to improve equity in pass allocation, reduce operational challenges, and support the ongoing financial sustainability of the ferry service.

Key Points

Background

The Raymond Island Ferry provides essential access between Raymond Island and Paynesville, supporting thousands of crossings annually and serving residents, visitors, and service providers. The service is guided by the Raymond Island Ferry Charter **Attachment 1**, which affirms Council's commitment to ensuring Raymond Island residents can access their homes.

Historically, owners of developed land on Raymond Island were issued two free annual vehicle passes, each linked to a specific vehicle registration and affixed to the vehicle windscreen. These passes were non-transferable, and additional passes could be purchased at full cost.

In 2022, a report was presented at Councillors request, to review options to make changes to the resident pass system. The option endorsed was a shift to a single free pass per property, but to make the pass portable. The portable pass system was introduced in August 2022, followed by the introduction of an exempt portable pass application for government agencies and not for profit entities.

Since the introduction of the portable pass system several unintended consequences have emerged:

- The portable nature of the pass has led to operational challenges when passes are forgotten, introducing a point of contention when attempting to board the ferry, that was avoided when eligibility was visibly displayed via fixed vehicle stickers.
- The portable nature of the pass, combined with the absence of a tracking mechanism, means usage cannot be monitored and there is a risk of unauthorised sharing or resale.
- All pensioners who own developed land are eligible for a second portable pass. As a result, single pensioners may receive two passes, whereas other households receive one, creating an inconsistency in allocation.
- Renters are excluded from eligibility, as passes are issued to owners of developed land, not occupants. Previously, when two fixed passes were issued, landlords typically passed one to tenants and retained one for personal use.

- The current exemption model for government agencies and not-for-profit groups does not distinguish between those that provide direct, ongoing benefit to Raymond Island and those that do not; this raises equity concerns and cost implications, particularly as not-for-profits typically lack revenue while government agencies may have capacity to contribute financially.

Budget Summary

The Raymond Island Ferry operates at a significant annual cost to Council, with the highest portion of revenue generated through the sale of day passes. There has been a year on year rise in day pass income which is attributed to increased visitor numbers.

In the 2023–2024 financial year, the service recorded an annual operating loss of \$1.55 million. During the 2024–2025 financial year, the unaudited annual loss was \$0.89 million, and the 2025–2026 budgeted loss is expected to be \$1.82 million due to the added cost of slipping.

2024-2025 Revenue Breakdown

- Annual pass revenue: \$49,110
- Day pass revenue: \$332,612
- Total pass revenue: \$381,722

These figures highlight the limited cost recovery achieved through the current fee structure.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. notes the challenges presented by the current portable pass system for Raymond Island residents and the feedback received from selected stakeholders and representatives of Raymond Island residents;***
- 2. adopts a preferred resident pass system based on:***
 - a. revocation of the current portable pass system;***
 - b. issue annually two free fixed “sticker” passes to the owners of developed land on Raymond Island; and***
 - c. issue one free fixed “sticker” pass to the lessee of a rental property on production of suitable evidence that they are renting a residential premises on Raymond Island (note that short-stay rentals are not eligible for a free pass);***
- 3. implements the new resident pass system for the 2026/27 year following further consultation with the residents of Raymond Island and other stakeholders and inclusion of any relevant refinements following consultation;***
- 4. issues a second pass (at no cost) to the owners of developed land on Raymond Island as an interim measure until the implementation of the new pass system in the 2026/27 financial year;***
- 5. issues one pass (at no cost) to the lessee of a rental property (on production of suitable evidence that they are renting a residential premises on Raymond Island, not including short-stay rental) as an interim measure until the implementation of the new pass system in the 2026/27 financial year;***
- 6. notes that officers will provide further advice to the Raymond Island community within the next two weeks about how and when the additional passes will be distributed;***
- 7. notes other elements of the Raymond Island Ferry Fees will remain unchanged from those adopted in the 2025/26 East Gippsland Shire Council budget;***
- 8. notes that where a person has purchased an annual pass for 2025/26 and no longer requires the pass due to any changes outlined in Recommendation 4 or 5 then a pro-rata refund will be offered;***
- 9. notes that officers will continue to investigate cost effective options to implement a walk-on fee for non-residents of Raymond Island and consult with relevant stakeholders with the intention to implement a walk on fee for non-residents of Raymond Island for 2026/27;***
- 10. determines that emergency services and not-for-profit entities providing regular services on Raymond Island are exempt from paying a fee to access the Raymond Island ferry; and***
- 11. notes that officers will continue to investigate more contemporary ways of managing access to the Raymond Island Ferry service.***

Strategic Alignment

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following theme in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 4: Managing Council well

Outcome – Decision-making is streamlined, efficient, and responsive to community needs

Consultation/Community Engagement/Impacts

The Raymond Island Ferry Service Charter includes a guiding principle that residents should not incur a fee for access to their homes. This is currently met through the provision of a free vehicle pass and free walk-on access for residents.

This principle has been strongly supported in submissions from the Raymond Island Community Association (RICA), which has advocated for free ferry access for all residents who drive, regardless of property ownership.

However, broader community feedback reflects a diversity of views. While some budget submissions support increased subsidy through the provision of more passes for Raymond Island residents, others questioned the ferry's high operating costs and the need for improved cost recovery.

Through this review, Council is considering what constitutes a reasonable baseline level of free access for Raymond Island residents, consistent with the intent of the Raymond Island Ferry Service Charter.

Meetings were held with representatives from the Raymond Island Community Association (RICA) and the Paynesville Business and Tourism Association (PBTA) to discuss operational challenges associated with the current portable pass system and understand any impacts on residents since the introduction of portable passes. Points of contention were identified, including difficulties when passes are forgotten, and inconsistencies in eligibility were discussed. Representatives may be supportive of a change in the pass system if it improves equity and reduces points of contention for residents when accessing the ferry.

RICA also recommended that Council investigate number plate recognition technology as a long-term solution to improve ferry access management. This system, used in other settings such as Mount Hotham, allows for automated verification of vehicle access and reduces the need for manual enforcement. This technology would serve the same purpose as fixed vehicle stickers, providing a verifiable link between a vehicle and its access entitlement.

Opportunities and Risks

The current portable pass system allows for misuse through sharing or resale, resulting in the risk of revenue leakage and fraud.

Using fixed vehicle stickers would streamline ferry operations by providing a clear visual identifier, allowing staff to verify access without needing to manually check or handle passes.

The current system excludes renters, creating perceived inequity; updated eligibility criteria would improve fairness and community trust.

The current system often results in residents forgetting their portable passes, which can delay boarding and create a point of contention at the ferry; transitioning to fixed vehicle stickers would eliminate the need for residents to remember or present a pass, streamlining access and reducing the potential for disputes or delays at the point of entry.

The current exempt travel application process lacks clear eligibility criteria, increasing the risk that free travel is granted to organisations that do not provide a direct benefit to Raymond Island, resulting in revenue leakage.

Climate change

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

Conflicts of Interest

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

Attachments

1. Raymond Island Ferry Service Charter [5.1.1.1 - 9 pages]

East Gippsland Shire Council Service Charter Raymond Island Ferry

East Gippsland Shire Council (Council) operates a vehicle and passenger Ferry service between Raymond Island and Paynesville. As part of Council's commitment to provide quality service, Council has developed a Service Charter or 'level of service' commitment for the operation of the Ferry, including the provision of services during Ferry outages.

Purpose

This Charter is a statement of Council intent to more clearly define service standards for transport connectivity between Paynesville and Raymond Island. . The Charter provides overarching, principles-based policy guidance, as well as procedural guidance on specific operational issues. The Charter is a guiding but not legally binding instrument. The Charter is based on recommendations endorsed by Council at its meeting on 5 May 2020 and Council reserves the right to review and modify this Charter as required. Major changes to the Charter will be undertaken in consultation with service users.

The purpose of this Charter is to:

- Provide a set of guiding principles to be used to guide the operations of the Ferry,
- Provide a statement outlining service levels for transport connectivity and related services between Paynesville and Raymond Island;
- Provide clarity of service provision for Ferry patrons, emergency services agencies, utilities providers and other service providers;
- Serve as a basis for developing future contracts for the operation of the Raymond Island Ferry service;
- Contribute to increased certainty of service levels and associated costs; and
- Provide improved customer service through increased consistency, communication and understanding of service standards and arrangements.

Scope

This Service Charter covers:

- Guiding principles for operation of the service
- Scheduling of the service including operating times and emergency management.

East Gippsland Shire Council - Service Charter - Raymond Island Ferry Version 2 June 2023 Page 1

- Ferry Passes
- Arrangements for Ferry outages (planned and unplanned)

The Service Charter does not cover user fees (other than in the Principles), which are set by Council as part of its annual budget process.

Principles guiding service delivery

The Raymond Island Ferry service is delivered in accordance with the following principles:

1. Provide a safe service;
2. Excellent customer service;
3. Provide a timely and reliable service;
4. Operate the service in accordance with all relevant acts and regulations;
5. Ongoing communication and co-operation with the Principal, Ferry patrons, emergency services and other relevant stakeholders;
6. Provide an environmentally friendly and responsible service; and
7. Enhancement of Council's image through the operation of the service.

Service Effectiveness

1. Transport connectivity to Raymond Island will always be constrained by the fact that it is an island with no direct road from the mainland.
2. The Ferry aims to provide reliable, efficient and effective access for persons, vehicles and services.
3. The Ferry provides a safe service that minimises the risk of harm to persons and property arising from its operations.
4. Council provides an alternative services during outages to provide a minimum level of access and minimise inconvenience caused by disruptions to the Ferry service.

Service Efficiency

1. Efficient use of resources including the Ferry itself, related infrastructure, operating and maintenance personnel, and alternate passenger and vehicle vessels.
2. Ongoing communication and co-operation between the Ferry Operator, Ferry patrons, emergency services and other relevant stakeholders.

Financial

1. In that the Raymond Island Ferry is a core service; ratepayers of East Gippsland should equitably share the cost of the service.

2. Residents of Raymond island should not incur a fee for access to their homes.

Community

1. The Ferry service will be managed and operated to address community needs and to ensure equity and access.
2. The unique character of the Ferry will be exploited to contribute to the amenity of the Raymond Island and Paynesville, visitors and the East Gippsland community.

Level of Service

Scheduling

1. Variations to Standard Operating Schedule

In the event of weather temperatures exceeding 32°C the Master of the Ferry has responsibility to ensure safety of the vessel and passengers. The master of the Ferry shall exercise absolute discretion on increasing the amount of Ferry trips against the advertised timetable as a continuous service to alleviate the risks to patrons being in vehicles for extended periods during extreme heat. This will continue until the Master is satisfied it is again safe to resume normal timetabled operations.

Alternatively, if adverse weather conditions present dangerous tidal systems in the MacMillan Strait or other unsafe operating conditions determined by the Master, the Master of the Ferry has responsibility to ensure safety of the vessel.

Accordingly, the Master shall exercise absolute discretion on reducing or ceasing the amount of Ferry trips against the advertised timetable until it is again safe to resume normal timetabled operations.

Ferry Passes

Council issues a variety of different Ferry passes, with a requirement that:

1. All drivers with a valid annual Raymond Island Ferry pass must display this pass at all times or pay the appropriate fee for travel.
2. Passes must not be copied or duplicated;
3. Transferable Passes are for the use of persons usually resident in the address to which the pass has been issued.
4. Those not abiding by the conditions of use and payment for the Ferry Service are subject to penalties described in the East Gippsland Shire Council General Local Law Part 8.

Ferry operating times

Council commits to develop and publicise a Ferry Timetable that will be readily available to passengers via Council's website and / or fixed signage at both the Raymond Island and Paynesville waiting areas. Council will where possible also use electronic signage to advise of any temporary changes to the timetable.

The Ferry operators will make every effort to follow the published timetable, other than in emergency events or other events beyond the Ferry operators' control.

1. Seasonal Peak Periods:

East Gippsland Shire Council - Service Charter - Raymond Island Ferry Version 2 June 2023 Page 4

A continuous service will operate during peak periods. This will be at the discretion of the Ferry Master.

During Winter school and public holidays, an immediate return trip will only operate when the Ferry is full. This will be at the discretion of the Ferry Master.

An additional operator shall be provided to provide greater efficiency and manage risk during these seasonal peak times with approval given by the Superintendent.

2. Emergency evacuation

The Ferry service will be available 24 hours a day for evacuation in the event of major emergencies.

Transportation during an emergency will include emergency service responding vehicles and walk-on passengers only. Emergency service vehicles will always have priority.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, and the emergency management command and control protocols operating at the time, the Ferry Master may be required to act on direction of another authority. However, the Ferry Master will retain absolute control over the physical operation and safe passage of the Ferry itself.

3. Suspending of the Ferry service

The Master may suspend the service at any time, without notice, if the Master determines that continuing the service may expose the operators or passengers to unacceptable risk. Such situations include, but are not limited to, passengers adversely affected by alcohol or drugs, displaying agitated behaviour, exhibiting a dangerous weapon, or not following the operator's directions to the extent that safety is compromised. In such events, the service will be suspended, and Police will be called. Subject to Police advice, the operator will determine when it is safe to resume normal service.

Abuse or threatening behaviour towards Operators and/or other passengers will not be tolerated.

Ferry outages

1. Definition of services to be provided during Ferry outages:

Council's Raymond Island Ferry Operations team will aim to provide a range of alternate services when the Ferry is not able to operate. This will dependant on current weather conditions and availability of extra resources.

These service disruptions are described generally as an “outage”, either planned or unplanned. During an outage the services that replace the Ferry and other associated arrangements are generally described as “outage services”.

Planned outages generally relate to an outage requiring minor or major maintenance in which the Ferry is deemed unsafe for use. Council will provide advanced notice of a planned outage allowing for residents and other commuters to appropriately prepare. Unplanned outages generally occur without notice where the Ferry required immediate maintenance. Therefore appropriate advanced notification is not possible.

The expected duration of the outage will influence which outage services are activated. An outage up to 24 hours will only activate the water taxi and standby barge. An outage exceeding 24 hours may result in additional services being provided.

Council will seek to reduce the frequency of “out of water” survey and maintenance interventions for the Raymond Island Ferry to achieve a balance between risk and Ferry maintenance requirements.

Water Taxi

A Water Taxi will be provided for outages up to 24 hours or longer. When in operation, the following measures for the use and operation of the Water Taxi apply:

- The Master of the water taxi is responsible for the safety of the vessel and passengers. The Master shall exercise absolute discretion on all matters of vessel and passenger safety.
- Emergency response will take priority over all other water taxi services.
- The water taxi will operate from a single landing point on Raymond Island (Public Jetty to the north of the Ferry terminal or the Raymond Island boat ramp Jetty (depending on weather conditions) and a single landing point in Paynesville - this maybe the boardwalk near the Ferry shelter or the Gippsland Lakes Yacht Club boat ramp jetty.
- The water taxi service will be provided for the same hours of operation as the Ferry when the Ferry is in normal service.
- An emergency stand-by service will be provided for emergency services.
- The water taxi will be free to all passengers during normal Ferry operating hours.
- Shelter will be provided at the Paynesville water taxi landing for the comfort of passengers where possible.

- The Master will attempt to accommodate mobility aids and patrons with special needs to the extent of the vessel's design and safety parameters.
- The configuration of water taxi landing platforms will aim to provide all-ability access.
- Operators of mobility scooters must display adequate competence in the operation of the mobility aid in the conditions prevailing for boarding and disembarking from the water taxi. (i.e. a floating platform subject to movement from sea state and wind).
- Passengers with pets or bicycles will be conveyed subject to the discretion of the Master as to loading arrangements and compatibility with other passengers, luggage, and animals either waiting or being conveyed. [Patrons with pets or bicycles, other than bicycle commuters/school children should seek to avoid times of peak demand (0700-0900 and 1500-1700) to minimise being required to wait until passenger only demand has been met].
- Dogs will be limited to those belonging to one family per trip with a maximum of two dogs. A dog may be refused boarding at the discretion of the vessel Master for safety reasons.
- Pets must be accompanied by a person capable of exercising effective control and must be on a suitable control lead or caged. All pets must always travel and remain at the rear (stern) of the water taxi.
- No more than two bicycles will be transported at the same time as the vessel is conveying passengers, other than at the Master's discretion.
- Dangerous goods and flammable liquids in small quantities and in suitable approved containers may be carried on the outside of the water taxi and at the absolute discretion of the Master. Gas cylinders are not permitted to be carried on the water taxi.
- Local schools and A'Beckett Park will be notified of these arrangements in advance of planned outages.

Barge

A Barge shall be made available for outages expected to exceed 24 hours, with the following measures for use applying:

- The Master of the barge has responsibility to ensure safety of the vessel and passengers and accordingly shall exercise absolute discretion on all matters of vessel and passenger safety.

- Emergency response will take priority over all other barge services.
- The barge is not available as a general commuter service..
- Access to the barge will only be available to:
 - Those vehicles (including vehicle and trailer combinations) that in the sole judgement of the Master can be conveyed safely. (this may vary from time to time depending upon sea state, wind and water levels). Caravans and small trailers will generally be unsuitable for carriage and will only be accepted where they meet all necessary safety requirements to the Master's satisfaction.).
 - Trade services and utilities providers providing urgent repair / maintenance to Raymond Island properties and infrastructure that for safety or similar compelling reasons cannot reasonably be postponed until the Ferry returns to service.
 - Trades service providers (registered businesses normally based on Raymond island) with vehicles that are specifically "tool of trade" vehicles that the service provider requires to be available on the mainland in order to perform their normal trade services. (tool of trade vehicles should be interpreted to include utilities, trucks, vans, tool trailers with specialised trade equipment and/or materials. Passenger vehicles operated by trades people are not included in this category).
 - Injured wildlife transport.
 - Mobility scooters that cannot be safely conveyed on the Water Taxi but can be safely conveyed on the Barge.
 - Vehicles delivering goods / products that the recipient could not have reasonably foreseen as being required and/ or cannot reasonably be expected to await a delay in delivery. (i.e. the recipient would suffer significant financial or other loss or damage). Inconvenience does not fall within this category nor do non-essential goods deliveries.
 - Vehicles conveying essential service providers and their equipment (visiting health/medical or home help services) for service provision that cannot reasonably be delayed, or the service provider cannot reasonably be expected to use the Water Taxi, or, it is unreasonable for the recipient to attend service provision on the mainland via the Water Taxi.
- Fee for service trips will be available to customers who do not meet the criteria for free passage at a fee determined by Council.

Temporary Car Parking

For outages exceeding 24 hours:

- Council will aim to ensure that temporary car parking is designated on public land within Paynesville during extended outages.
- Public safety lighting may be provided in designated car park area/s where practicable to do so.
- Normal parking restrictions will be monitored and enforced in areas outside of the designated temporary car parks to ensure parking is available for visitors.
- Additional disabled parking bays will be made available adjacent to the water taxi landing where practical and possible to do so.

Communication

The arrangements applicable for Ferry outages will be communicated to customers and other stakeholders through:

- the East Gippsland Shire Council Website and social media pages.
- Raymond Island Community Association.
- Normal SMS and dynamic signage arrangements.
- Printed notices on the Ferry and at the Paynesville Service Centre.
- Mail-out to Raymond Island Residents and other known users of the Ferry service (for scheduled, extended outages only).

Courtesy Bus

A courtesy bus will be made available during planned outages by Council but not operated by Council.

The operation of bus service is not an obligation of Council. Operation of the bus is dependent on the Raymond Island community's voluntary operation of the bus.

The bus service will operate during the hours the Ferry would normally operate and will travel a defined route determined by the bus service operator.

On-demand deviation from the prescribed bus service route will be accommodated where possible, where the service is pre-booked via mobile phone and SMS notification.

Dangerous goods and flammable liquids are not to be carried on the bus.

Animals, other than assistance dogs, are not permitted on the bus.

5.1.2

Bairnsdale Airport Runway Upgrade

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Purpose

To seek Council's endorsement to progress the Bairnsdale Airport Runway Upgrade project, and to outline the project's strategic significance for East Gippsland. This report outlines the project's objectives, stakeholder support, associated risks, and future opportunities, ensuring Councillors are fully informed with the project's direction.

Key Points

Project Description

The Bairnsdale Airport Runway Upgrade is a strategically significant infrastructure project developed in response to long-standing operational limitations and future regional needs. The project is guided by the Bairnsdale Airport Masterplan, which was endorsed by Council in 2020, and supported by technical and strategic documents.

The Master Plan identifies Bairnsdale as having the second highest number of fixed-wing patient retrievals of any regional airport in Victoria, highlighting its critical role in the state's air ambulance network now operated by Toll Aviation. It is estimated that Air Ambulance Victoria (AAV) conduct on average two to three patient retrievals per day. The airport also facilitates regular refuelling for AAV's AW139 helicopters and more recently the fixed wing King Air 260, which both operate under pavement concessions due to the current runway's low strength rating and aircraft exceeding the published coding and physical characteristics.

Many comparable regional airports across Victoria are capable of supporting AAV operations. The King Air 260 aircraft used by AAV requires a minimum Code 2 runway. Bairnsdale Airport, with a runway measuring 1098 metres by 18 metres and classified as Code 1, does not meet this requirement.

In contrast, Mildura Airport provides two runways, one measuring 1830 metres by 45 metres (Code 4) and another at 1139 metres by 30 metres (Code 2). West Sale Airport has a runway of 1803 metres by 30 metres (Code 3), while LaTrobe Airport offers a 1430 metre by 23 metre runway (Code 3). Mt Hotham Airport includes a 1460 metre by 30 metre runway (Code 3). Warrnambool Airport also supports operations with two runways, one at 1372 metres by 30 metres (Code 3) and another at 1069 metres by 23 metres (Code 2). These runways demonstrate a higher level of infrastructure suitable for the operational needs of Air Ambulance Victoria.

Beyond its operational capacity, Bairnsdale Airport plays a vital role in community health and wellbeing. Its capacity to support timely aeromedical retrievals ensures that residents across East Gippsland have access to critical care, particularly in time-sensitive situations. The airport's infrastructure directly influences the region's ability to respond to medical emergencies.

In late 2024, Toll Aviation acquired Pel-Air from Rex Holdings, becoming Ambulance Victoria's new fixed-wing aircraft partner. This acquisition significantly expanded Toll's aeromedical capabilities, adding a fleet of 10 aircraft including eight King Air B200/300 series turboprops and two Pilatus PC-24 jets under long-term contracts with both the NSW and Victorian governments. Toll Aviation now operates both rotary and fixed-wing services for AAV, integrating helicopter and aircraft operations under a unified aeromedical framework.

Toll Aviation has been actively engaged with East Gippsland Shire Council regarding runway infrastructure at Bairnsdale. In its formal Letter of Support, Toll emphasised that “critical life care relies heavily on dependable infrastructure,” and strongly endorsed the proposed runway extension to 1,600m and widening to 30m as essential to future-proof operations. Aircraft operating above 5,700kg Maximum Take-off Weight (MTOW) such as the King Air 260 require broader pavement widths and stronger surfaces to operate safely and efficiently. The current reliance on annual pavement concessions is not sustainable long-term solution, and Toll has indicated that improved infrastructure would remove operational constraints and enhance emergency response capabilities.

During the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires, Bairnsdale Airport served as a critical hub for aerial emergency response across East Gippsland. The airport supported between 90 and 110 aircraft movements per day. Due to limited hardstand areas and inadequate pavement strength, many heavy helicopters had to operate from adjacent land and temporary facilities.

The existing runway measures 1,098 metres in length and 18 metres in width, with a pavement classification number (PCN) of 11. This low-strength rating restricts the types of aircraft that can safely operate from the airport and has necessitated the use of pavement concessions.

Pavement concessions allow aircraft exceeding the published weight or physical characteristics of the runway to operate under conditional approval. However, this practice is not recommended for long-term use. By continuing to rely on pavement concessions, the airport operator assumes the risk associated with allowing aircraft that exceed the published specifications to operate on infrastructure not designed for such use.

The proposed upgrade will extend the runway to 1,600 metres in length and 30 metres in width, with a strengthened pavement capable of supporting heavier aircraft. This will eliminate the need for concessions, improve safety, and increase the airport’s capacity to support emergency services and future commercial operations.

The project remains a high priority. The upgrade is essential to ensure the airport can continue to meet the region’s emergency response needs, support medical retrievals, and safeguard the airport’s role in regional aviation.

Funding

The project was originally funded through the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery program, recognising the airport’s critical role during the 2019–20 bushfires.

The budget for this project is \$14,680,243 made up of two parts:

- Grant funding: \$9,680,243 (subject to final confirmation).
- Council contribution: \$5,000,000

Environmental Approvals

The runway upgrade project requires the removal of approximately 11.087 hectares of native vegetation, including areas of protected Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland. As a result, the project is subject to environmental approvals under both Commonwealth legislation (EPBC Act 1999) and relevant Victorian environmental regulations.

Initial advice from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) indicated that a 40-hectare offset would be required to compensate for the loss of this threatened ecological community.

Council is currently working with a consultant to finalise the offset strategy for DCCEEW's consideration.

Related Projects and Considerations

Taxiway C rehabilitation. This project involves the renewal of Taxiway C and the adjoining apron area, which have experienced significant pavement failures. The rehabilitation will restore reliable access for aircraft taxiing between hangars and the main runway. As the primary taxiway, its functionality is essential to support the increased aircraft movements and operational capacity enabled by the runway upgrade.

Supporting Information

Supporting documentation includes relevant correspondence, provided at **Attachments 1 to 5**.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. endorses the proposed lengthening, strengthening and widening of the Bairnsdale airport runway as outlined in this report to future proof the airport for use by emergency services and support community health, wellbeing and safety; and***
- 2. notes that a revised masterplan will be developed for Council approval prior to further development of the Bairnsdale airport (except for renewal of Taxiway C).***

Strategic Alignment

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following themes in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 1: Community wellbeing and social responsibility

Outcome – A connected and inclusive community, where no one is left behind.

Theme 2: Prosperity

Outcome – Thriving, self-sufficient communities with strong local businesses and social enterprises.

Theme 3: Making the most of what we've got

Outcome – Our assets are well maintained, utilised and meet community needs.

Consultation/Community Engagement/Impacts

Master Plan Consultation

The development of the Bairnsdale Airport Masterplan was informed by targeted consultation with a range of stakeholders including Council, airport users, tenants, and airline representatives. Engagement activities included Council briefings, public drop-in sessions, stakeholder interviews, and phone calls with external stakeholders. Key themes and feedback from this consultation included:

- *Infrastructure requirements:* Stakeholders consistently highlighted the need for improved runway capacity, pavement strength, and support facilities such as hangars, improved terminal and a dedicated patient transfer station which is now constructed.
- *Operational constraints:* Feedback identified limitations in current infrastructure affecting emergency services, aviation operations, and community safety.
- *Security and access:* Concerns were raised about better security fencing in some areas, gate access, and the need for better delineation between airside and non-airside zones.
- *Heritage and opportunities:* There was strong interest in preserving WWII hangars and enhancing the airport's role as a gateway to Bairnsdale through tourism.

Formal letters of support were received from key emergency and aviation stakeholders, including the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Toll Aviation. These organisations operate Victoria's State Air Bases and provide critical air ambulance services respectively, and their input helped shape the scope and urgency of the runway upgrade.

DEECA, in its Letter of Support **Attachment 1**, states:

"Aircraft contracted to Victoria are critical to the State's emergency response efforts... With current forecasts predicting an upward trend in emergency activity... it is more important than ever that our fleet can operate safely and efficiently."

"The upgrade will remove the current need for two of Victoria's State Fleet aircraft to seek annual pavement concession approvals... [and] increase flexibility in the types of aircraft that can be based at Bairnsdale."

Toll Aviation confirms in its Letter of Support **Attachment 2**:

“Critical life care relies heavily on dependable infrastructure... The proposal to extend the current runway length to 1600m in addition to widening the runway to 30m would be seen as very favourable.”

“Aircraft operating at above 5,700kg Maximum Take-off Weight... may require 30m of runway width to be able to operate... Toll Aviation recommends that this is considered in order to future proof operations.”

Economic and Social Impacts

The airport's capacity to facilitate emergency medical transfers and disaster response directly supports community health outcomes and resilience, whilst underpinning the region's health infrastructure. Its reliable operation ensures timely access to critical care for residents across East Gippsland, particularly during emergencies and natural disasters, reinforcing its importance as a key community asset.

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service confirms in its letter of support **Attachment 3**:

“A regular air service would dramatically reduce travel time, increase patient safety, and improve health outcomes by ensuring more timely access to life-saving and life-enhancing services. It would also allow metropolitan health specialists to fly in and consult locally, improving continuity of care and enabling more services to be delivered closer to home.”

“Access to a regular passenger air route is a key enabler for attracting and retaining high-calibre clinical staff to rural and regional areas... With a reliable air service, BRHS would be in a stronger position to offer flexible fly-in/fly-out arrangements and support ongoing professional development, which are essential for sustaining a high-quality health workforce.”

“The safe and fast delivery of time-sensitive medications such as chemotherapy agents... cannot be delivered by road-only logistics due to the distance from Melbourne... Having access to regular air freight would enable BRHS to provide more responsive care, minimising delays in treatment and supporting increased local access to services.”

“The capacity to quickly transport critical equipment and replacement parts during clinical emergencies or outages would significantly strengthen our clinical readiness and resilience.”

Gippsland Lakes Complete Health confirms in its letter of support **Attachment 4**:

“Enhanced air connectivity would transform health outcomes for our community. Specialist appointments that currently require overnight stays and significant financial burden would become manageable day trips. This is particularly crucial for our clients with chronic conditions requiring regular specialist monitoring, families with children needing paediatric subspecialty care, and older adults managing multiple health conditions.”

“The upgrade would strengthen GLCH's capacity to deliver comprehensive healthcare. We could expand our visiting specialist programs, knowing that consultants could travel efficiently to East Gippsland. Our telehealth initiatives would be complemented by improved face-to-face specialist access, creating more flexible care pathways for our clients.”

“Improved connectivity supports our workforce sustainability... Enhanced transport links would make East Gippsland more attractive to qualified professionals, knowing they could maintain professional networks and access continuing education opportunities in Melbourne more easily.”

“The airfield upgrade represents exactly the kind of forward-thinking infrastructure investment that builds stronger, healthier communities.”

Bairnsdale Aero Club, in its recent letter to Council **Attachment 5**, highlights the community value of extending runway 04/22:

“The benefits to the local community of an extended runway for better aircraft access, ambulance services and emergencies surely outweighs a small area of native grasses?”

Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities

The scheduled review of the Bairnsdale Airport Master Plan in 2025–2026 presents an opportunity to ensure the Master Plan remains accurately aligned with projected costs, Councils vision and any new developments.

The Bairnsdale Airport runway upgrade presents a range of strategic opportunities. While Regular Public Transport (RPT) services are a potential future outcome, the primary upgrade focus is to improve infrastructure and preparedness to support medical retrievals, emergency response, and safeguard the airport’s role in regional aviation.

Opportunities include:

- Strengthening regional emergency response infrastructure and capabilities.
- Enabling larger aircraft operations and removing reliance on conditional pavement concessions.
- Improving compliance with aviation safety and regulatory standards.
- Positioning Bairnsdale Airport for future commercial aviation services, enhancing regional connectivity.
- Supporting economic development through increased aviation activity, visitation and potential private sector investment.

Risks

Failure to proceed with the upgrade presents several significant risks:

- Without the upgrade, the airport’s role in emergency response and regional aviation will be compromised in the future, due to larger aircraft from DEECA and Air Ambulance not being able to use the airport.
- If external funding is lost, the full financial burden of any future runway upgrade would fall on Council and ratepayers, potentially delaying the project by several years and increasing total costs to council by two to three times due to inflation and rising construction material prices.
- Delays in securing funding or approvals have already impacted project milestones.
- Council has already invested in design and feasibility work, and losing funding would render these sunk costs ineffective, requiring rework and potentially new assessments to meet future funding criteria.
- The current reliance on pavement concessions for critical aircraft operations is not sustainable and continued use of infrastructure below required standards poses long-term safety and compliance risks.

- Aircraft in the higher weight category are typically governed by more stringent regulations. Toll Aviation warns that future-proofing operations of all kinds requires infrastructure that conforms to prescribed coding and published runway physical characteristics.
- Pavement strengths are designed and rated to accommodate specific aircraft types within an acceptable range of weights and aircraft codes. While conditional pavement concessions are sometimes approved, ongoing long-term concessions are not common or recommended. They place the airport operator at risk by allowing continued use of a lower strength pavement for aircraft exceeding published specifications.

The upgrade is essential for maintaining Bairnsdale Airport's role in emergency response, particularly for air ambulance and bushfire operations. Without the upgrade, the airport's ability to support larger aircraft and rapid deployment during emergencies would be compromised.

The outstanding finalisation of the necessary vegetation offsets to support the runway extension present some risk to Council. However, it is anticipated that these requirements will be finalised prior to Council being asked to approve a contract for the runway works. Thereby mitigating this risk.

Climate change

This report considers potential climate change risks and impacts relevant to the Officer recommendation and aligns with the applicable climate change functions, categories, and legislative obligations, as detailed below:

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020 (including ss. 8-9)

Category

Emergency Management: Consideration is given to climate change in all elements of the Planning, Preparation, Response, Recovery (PPRR) process.

Conflicts of Interest

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

Attachments

1. DEECA Letter of Support Bairnsdale Airport [5.1.2.1 - 1 page]
2. Toll Aviation Letter of Support Bairnsdale Airport [5.1.2.2 - 1 page]
3. Bairnsdale Regional Health letter of support [5.1.2.3 - 2 pages]
4. Gippsland Lakes Complete Health letter of support [5.1.2.4 - 2 pages]
5. East Gippsland Aero Club - highlighting community value of extending runway [5.1.2.5 - 1 page]



Department of Energy, Environment
and Climate Action

13/8 Nicholson Street,
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002
deeca.vic.gov.au

25 March 2025

Dear Stuart McConnell,

SUPPORT FOR BAIRNSDALE AIRPORT UPGRADE

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) supports aerial firefighting, emergency response, and land management activities across Victoria with numerous aviation providers.

Aircraft contracted to Victoria are critical to the State's emergency response efforts and are heavily relied upon to protect people, property, and the environment from bushfires and other emergencies every year. With current forecasts predicting an upward trend in emergency activity over the coming years, it is more important than ever that our fleet can operate safely and efficiently.

DEECA supports the proposal to upgrade Bairnsdale Airport, as it will remove the current need for two of Victoria's State Fleet aircraft to seek annual pavement concession approvals. This is due to existing limitations in the airport's Maximum Take-Off Weight (MTOW) capacity. The upgrade will also increase flexibility in the types of aircraft that can be based at Bairnsdale, thanks to the higher MTOW thresholds.

The upgrade will also support future decisions around the strategic placement of aircraft at Bairnsdale, enabling faster response times and a broader range of capabilities during emergencies. This will help ensure the safe and efficient operation of firefighting aircraft throughout the season.

DEECA is grateful for the current support of Bairnsdale Airport towards the positioning of Victoria's current aerial services and for any further assistance that can be provided to DEECA, its partner agencies (CFA, FRV, EMV and Parks Victoria), aircraft operators and the Victorian community.

Please contact me if you have any questions at terry.roberts@deeca.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Terry Roberts
Director Forest and Fire Assets

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be protected under the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. It will only be used or disclosed to appropriate Ministerial, Statutory Authority, or departmental staff in regard to the purpose for which it was provided, unless required or authorized by law. Enquiries about access to information about you held by the Department should be directed to foi.unit@deeca.vic.gov.au or FOI Unit, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, PO Box 500, East Melbourne, Victoria 8002.



OFFICIAL



Toll Aviation Fixed Wing
Suite 7.04, 4 Dawn Fraser Avenue
Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

Thursday 27 March 2025

Dear East Gippsland Shire Council,

Please accept this letter of support for the planned runway and airport upgrades at Bairnsdale Airport.

Toll Aviation (operating on behalf of Air Ambulance Victoria) supports the efforts of regional airports in Victoria to improve the safety of aircraft operators and passengers using the airports or aerodromes, and also to facilitate improved delivery of health care and emergency services.

Critical life care relies heavily on dependable infrastructure and for the vital service that Air Ambulance Victoria provides for the people of rural Victoria, this infrastructure is predominantly the airports servicing the rural towns.

Toll Aviation considers the following airfield facilities or features relevant towards the safe and efficient operations of the fixed wing fleet of four (4) Beechcraft King Air 360/260 aircraft for Ambulance Victoria.

- **Well-maintained, compliant and serviceable airfield lighting.** Ambulance work is a 24-hour operation, and many life-saving operations are conducted after daylight.
- **Well-maintained runways and taxiways.** A well-sealed runway reduces the likelihood of stone damage to the propellers of the aircraft.
- **Runway width and length.** This is a consideration of safety of flight. The proposal to extend the current runway length to 1600m in addition to widening the runway to 30m would be seen as very favourable. Aircraft operating at above 5,700kg Maximum Take-off weight, depending on their performance supplements issued by the manufacturer may require 30m of runway width to be able to operate, with that in mind, Toll Aviation recommends that this is considered in order to future proof operations of all kinds where some aircraft will require a minimum 30m width. Aircraft in the higher weight category are typically governed by more stringent Regulations.

Aircraft using Certified Aerodromes must conform to the prescribed coding applied to the runway as defined by aircraft specifications and published runway physical characteristics.

- **Pavement strength.** Airports with sealed runways may also wish to consider the ACN / PCN pavement strength rating to accommodate larger aircraft.
- **Reliable automatic weather reporting.** Many regional airports provide VHF Automatic Weather Information Service (AWIS), which pilots can access in flight. This is a high value tool for pilots on air ambulance services. Aircraft are often diverted in flight to airfields where an emergency retrieval is required. These automatic weather services play an important role in the pilot's decision to divert or not.
- **Covered facilities.** Many regional airports provide under cover areas for safe patient transfer in inclement weather conditions.
- **Wildlife management.** A constant threat to flying operations is the presence of wildlife on runways. A wildlife strike will generally ground an aircraft and potentially compromise a critical life-saving retrieval. Where possible at non certified aerodromes, before night landings, the ground ambulance will conduct a runway clearing drive. Airports should consider the integrity of safety fencing at the airports to mitigate wildlife incursion to the runways.

If you have any additional queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Kind regards

Fred Collas

Chief Pilot/GMFO Fixed Wing, Toll Aviation

Toll Government and Defence

Email: Frederic.collas@pelair.com.au

Mobile +61 418 665 136

Our ref: PA:BP

15 August 2025

Fiona Weigall, CEO
 East Gippsland Shire Council
 273 Main Street
 Bairnsdale VIC 3875

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Advocacy for Healthcare Demand for Regular Commercial Passenger & Freight Air Services to Bairnsdale

On behalf of Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (BRHS), I am writing to urge East Gippsland Shire Council to prioritise the establishment of regular commercial passenger and freight air services to Bairnsdale in support of increasing equitable access to high-quality healthcare, workforce sustainability, and community wellbeing across our region.

As East Gippsland's principal public health provider, we are responsible for delivering acute, aged, and community health services to a dispersed, growing and ageing population. Our ability to do this safely and effectively is increasingly challenged by the lack of reliable air connectivity with Melbourne.

The establishment of regular commercial passenger and freight air services to Bairnsdale is essential to BRHS for the following reasons:

1. Improving Access to Specialist Medical Services

Many members of our community require regular travel to Melbourne to access complex or specialist medical services at Metropolitan Tertiary and Specialist Centres. This includes oncology, cardiology, paediatrics, and other specialist consultancy and inpatient care needs. For most, this means long road journeys that are physically, financially, and emotionally taxing, particularly for the elderly, those with disabilities, and people managing chronic illnesses.

A regular air service would dramatically reduce travel time, increase patient safety, and improve health outcomes by ensuring more timely access to life-saving and life-enhancing services. It would also allow metropolitan health specialists to fly in and consult locally, improving continuity of care and enabling more services to be delivered closer to home.

2. Enhancing Clinical Workforce Recruitment and Retention

Access to a regular passenger air route is a key enabler for attracting and retaining high-calibre clinical staff to rural and regional areas. Currently, the absence of a commercial service to Bairnsdale acts as a deterrent for metropolitan-based specialists, locum doctors, allied health professionals, and senior clinical leaders considering work in East Gippsland due to the onerous travel.

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service

Day Street Campus 122 Day Street Bairnsdale VIC 3875 **P** (03) 5150 3333 **F** (03) 5152 6784

Ross Street Campus Ross Street Bairnsdale VIC 3875 **P** (03) 5152 0222 **F** (03) 5152 4464

CBD Campus 183 Main Street Bairnsdale VIC 3875 **P** (03) 5150 3300 **F** (03) 5152 2501

PO Box 474 Bairnsdale VIC 3875 **E** email@brhs.com.au **www.brhs.com.au**

We are increasingly competing with other regional centres for the same health professionals. We often lose out due to the lack of timely travel options. With a reliable air service, BRHS would be in a stronger position to offer flexible fly-in/fly-out arrangements and support ongoing professional development, which are essential for sustaining a high-quality health workforce.

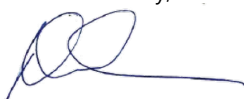
3. Timely Delivery of Critical Medications

Freight air services are equally vital. The safe and fast delivery of time-sensitive medications such as chemotherapy agents and other time sensitive medications cannot be delivered by road-only logistics due to the distance from Melbourne with most time sensitive preparations only having a 4-hour active life once prepared. BRHS has seen an increasing number of cancer related treatment plans requiring time sensitive medication delivery. Currently, many of these patients are required to attend other larger centres for this care resulting onerous travel by road with subsequent displacement from home and time off work (loss of wages). Having access to regular air freight would enable BRHS to provide more responsive care, minimising delays in treatment and supporting increased local access to services. Additionally, the capacity to quickly transport critical equipment and replacement parts during clinical emergencies or outages would significantly strengthen our clinical readiness and resilience.

East Gippsland should not be disadvantaged due to its geography. The lack of timely access to care through reduced transport options continues to widen the health equity gap between our region and our rural counterparts with accessible commercial aviation services.

We believe that a collaborative and concerted advocacy approach is essential to convening a regional partnership of health, industry, and government to assess and support a sustainable model for commercial aviation at Bairnsdale Airport.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Abraham
Chief Executive Officer

CC. BRHS Board of Directors.

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service

Day Street Campus 122 Day Street Bairnsdale VIC 3875 **P** (03) 5150 3333 **F** (03) 5152 6784
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PO Box 474 Bairnsdale VIC 3875 **E** email@brhs.com.au **www.brhs.com.au**



15 August 2025

Fiona Weigall
Chief Executive Officer
East Gippsland Shire Council
273 Main Street
Bairnsdale VIC 3875

Dear Fiona,

I write to express Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH) Services' strong support for the proposed upgrade of Bairnsdale airfield to accommodate passenger flights. This development represents a significant opportunity to address longstanding health equity challenges that affect our community across East Gippsland.

As CEO of GLCH, I see daily the barriers our clients face when accessing specialist medical services. Our clinical teams regularly coordinate care for people requiring urgent specialist consultations in Melbourne, with many facing difficult choices between costly travel, extended time away from family, or delayed treatment. The current transport options create genuine hardship for families already managing complex health conditions.

Enhanced air connectivity would transform health outcomes for our community. Specialist appointments that currently require overnight stays and significant financial burden would become manageable day trips. This is particularly crucial for our clients with chronic conditions requiring regular specialist monitoring, families with children needing paediatric subspecialty care, and older adults managing multiple health conditions.

The upgrade would strengthen GLCH's capacity to deliver comprehensive healthcare. We could expand our visiting specialist programs, knowing that consultants could travel efficiently to East Gippsland. Our telehealth initiatives would be complemented by improved face-to-face specialist access, creating more flexible care pathways for our clients.

Beyond direct health benefits, improved connectivity supports our workforce sustainability. Regional health services face ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining clinical specialists. Enhanced transport links would make East Gippsland more attractive to qualified

professionals, knowing they could maintain professional networks and access continuing education opportunities in Melbourne more easily.

The broader community benefits align directly with GLCH's commitment to supporting health and wellbeing across East Gippsland. Improved connectivity strengthens local economic development, which creates healthier communities through increased employment opportunities and stronger local services.

GLCH serves over 50,000 people across East Gippsland through our integrated health and community services. We understand the ripple effects that improved transport infrastructure creates for community well-being. This upgrade would reduce health inequities that currently disadvantage regional Victorians and strengthen the viability of comprehensive healthcare delivery in our region.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how GLCH could support this initiative through our community engagement networks or by providing health impact data that demonstrates the need for improved connectivity.

The airfield upgrade represents exactly the kind of forward-thinking infrastructure investment that builds stronger, healthier communities. GLCH is pleased to support this important development for East Gippsland.

Yours sincerely,



Anne-Maree Kaser
Chief Executive Officer

4 August 2025

Ms Fiona Weigall
Chief Executive Officer
East Gippsland Shire Council

Dear Ms Weigall

We wish to ask a number of questions of Council in relation to the development of Bairnsdale Airport.

Several Airport Master Plans have been presented over the years but current activity does not seem to be reflective of what has been planned, especially for aviation use.

Council's objective is, by reference to the Masterplan 2020; to **"facilitate and support economic and community development through the provision of appropriate infrastructure and services"**.

Extension of Runway 04/22: A key vision to improve aircraft services is the extension of runway 04/22. This plan appears to have been dismissed due to a "Biosis" report "Bairnsdale Airport Runway Extension Project 2023" indicating the presence of Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grasses on site.

Having read this report, it seems the Native Grasses are only of concern on around 40% of the study area which was restricted to 11 hectares. Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grasses occur all over Gippsland according to DEECA reports, even though they are only 5% as prevalent as they were in the past. Exactly what the 5% is of is not clear.

The benefits to the local community of an extended runway for better aircraft access, ambulance services and emergencies surely outweighs a small area of native grasses?

Hanger Space: The lease of Hanger Space provides a significant income to Council and is, of course, an aviation related activity valuable to aircraft owners. It would appear that there is no longer lease space for hangers available to be built. Why is this?

Agricultural Activity: Given the native grass concerns regarding the extension of Runway 04/22, what are the implications for future projects of the Agricultural Hub and any other activities that will disturb the grounds within the Airport Perimeter?

We look forward to hear your response to the above questions.

Sincerely

Rob Taylor
President
East Gippsland Aero Club

Cc darren.chester.mp@aph.gov.au

5.1.3

Renewal East Gippsland Road Management Plan

Authorised by General Manager Assets and Environment

Purpose

To seek Council adoption of a revised Road Management Plan following detailed review and public consultation.

Key Points

As a part of the *Road Management Act 2004* and the *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016*, Council is required to undertake a review of its Road Management Plan every four years. The purpose of the review is to determine if the current levels of service, inspection, maintenance and repair outlined in the document are still at a level which the community is accepting of, and that Council can deliver within budgetary and resource constraints internally as well as through our Routine Maintenance Contract (RMC).

The last review completed in 2021 included some changes to response times and intervention levels as benchmarked against not only other local Councils that border East Gippsland, but also with large rural Councils with a similar demographic. As part of the review of this document, a minimum of 28 days of community consultation is a legislative requirement, with this consultation now being completed.

Council officers have reviewed the East Gippsland Road Management Plan and made the draft revised Road Management Plan (**Attachment 1**) available for public comment. This process has now been completed, consultation considered, and a final draft compiled for Council adoption.

Key feedback received and changes in the draft presented for adoption, compared to that released for public comment, include:

- **Update to hierarchy of roads** – the Local Roads Data Reconciliation Project requires Council to align its hierarchy of roads with the Victorian Grants Commission (VGC) to continue to be eligible for Disaster Relief Funding. This new classification will also have an impact on how annual funding allocations are determined by the State Government.
- **Community feedback** – the feedback received mainly focused on pothole repairs, a stronger focus on road maintenance as opposed to other community assets, and a particular increased focus on more footpath connections and footpath infrastructure across all communities. The Final Draft of the Road Management Plan notes these concerns and references our response through intervention levels. Comments around the quality of work are actively dealt with through quality control and not directly referenced in this document.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the draft Road Management Plan 2025 as presented at Attachment 1.

Strategic Alignment

Based on the most recent data available through Council's asset register, Council is currently achieving 96% compliance with the service levels outlined in its Road Management Plan, in line with our required intervention levels.

Recent community surveys indicated some dissatisfaction with our road maintenance. In reviewing the Road Management Plan, we have sought to clarify service levels and align them where practical with community expectations, our recently developed Road Safety Strategy and with our Council Plan.

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following theme in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 3: Making the most of what we've got

Outcome – Our assets are well maintained, utilised and meet community needs.

Collaborative Procurement

No procurement is required in the preparation of this document.

Consultation/Community Engagement/Impacts

The preparation of the draft Road Management Plan was informed by community feedback received across a range of recent engagement processes including those associated with the development of the Council Plan and the Asset Plan.

The draft Road Management Plan was released for a 28 days consultation period as required under legislation. Comments received are summarised earlier in the report.

Opportunities and Risks

The document is critical in determining the point at which the intervention levels minimise not only risk to the road users/community safety, but also risk to Council as a business from possible litigation and ensuring that the organisation has the resources available to keep our road network at a level that provides the service expected by the community.

Climate change

This report considers potential climate change risks and impacts relevant to the Officer recommendation and aligns with the applicable climate change functions, categories, and legislative obligations, as detailed below:

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020 (including ss. 8-9).

Road Management Act 2004 (ACT NUMBER 12/2004 VERSION 067)

Category

Asset Management: Climate change is considered in the design and maintenance of assets and includes responses to direct and indirect impacts.

Conflicts of Interest

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

Attachments

1. FINAL DRAFT East Gippsland Road Management Plan - 2025 (Clean Document no tracked changes) [5.1.3.1 - 27 pages]

APPENDIX 1



**ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN
2025**

Schedule of Changes & Amendments

Document	Date	Description	Authorised By	Approved
Original	23/11/04	Version 1.0	Council Report	Council
Revision 1	02/06/09	Updated links, adding walking tracks, Force Majeure clause, updated bridge and resheet program information, updating footpath service criteria	Council Report	Council
Revision 2	26/10/2015	Updated references to Council Plan, Policies/Strategies, Contracts & Current Legislation and Updated quantity and extent of Council Maintained road assets.	Council Report	Council
Revision 3	5/9/2017	Updated references to Council Plan, Policies/Strategies & Current Legislation and Updated quantity and extent of Council Maintained road assets. Review of Intervention Levels and Response Times.	Council Report	Council
Revision 4	22/06/2021	Updated references to Council Plan, Policies/Strategies & Current Legislation and Updated quantity and extent of Council Maintained road assets. Review of Intervention Levels and Response Times.	Council Report	Council
Revision 5				

Contents

CONTENTS	3
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2.1 Purpose of this Plan	4
2.2 Relationships with other documents	4
2.3 Assets included in the Plan	5
2.4 Assets not included in the Plan.....	7
2.5 Road management and maintenance agreements.....	7
2.5.1 Arterial roads	7
2.5.2 Agreements with adjoining municipalities	7
2.6 Key stakeholders	8
2.7 Road management structure	8
2.8 Road Management Act 2004	10
2.9 Duties of road users	10
2.10 Responsibilities of adjoining landowners	11
2.10.1 Property access (driveways)	11
2.10.2 Footpaths and overhanging vegetation	11
2.10.3 Roadworks/openings – Works Within Road Reserve	12
2.11 Force Majeure.....	12
3.1 Background data.....	13
3.1.1 Public road register	13
3.1.2 Road hierarchy	13
3.1.3 Asset condition and inspection regimes	14
3.2 Maintenance plan.....	17
3.2.1 Routine maintenance	18
3.2.2 Periodic maintenance	19
3.2.3 Maintenance procedures and standards of work.....	20
4. MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.....	21
4.1 Notice of incidents and road condition reports	21
4.2 Customer request management	21
5. PLAN IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING.....	22
APPENDIX A – ROUTINE MAINTENANCE LEVELS OF SERVICE	23
APPENDIX B – PUBLIC ROAD REGISTER.....	27
(NOT PROVIDED DUE TO ITS SIZE – CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM COUNCIL’S WEBSITE).....	27

1. Executive Summary

Revision: 5		Page 3 of 27
-------------	--	--------------

The Road Management Plan sets out Council's policies, service delivery and actions relating to the local road network.

The objective of the plan is to:

- identify those roads and related infrastructure for which Council is responsible;
- adopt road management standards which include the nature and frequency of road inspections, the tolerable level of defects, and the time taken to repair defects;
- identify the road management systems used by Council to discharge its duty to inspect, maintain and repair public roads for which it is responsible;
- demonstrate to stakeholders that the road network is managed effectively; and to
- comply with the legislative requirements of the *Road Management Act 2004*.

This is a dynamic document and is reviewed at regular intervals as outlined in Chapter 6.

Copies of this Road Management Plan may be inspected or obtained at Council's Bairnsdale Corporate Centre and Paynesville, Omeo, Lakes Entrance, Orbost or Mallacoota Service Centres or via Council's website at <http://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au>.

2.1 Purpose of this Plan

The road network in East Gippsland is significant and varies throughout the municipality in dimensions and construction. The network comprises of 3046 kilometres of formed roads (of which 1363 kms are sealed), 191 road bridges & 27 footbridges, 360 kms of footpaths and 9363 culverts (including 129 major culverts). There also exist numerous other features including signs, street furniture and kerb and channel.

The significant value and importance of the above road assets requires that they be managed in a safe and efficient way, while providing the necessary levels of service.

2.2 Relationships with other documents

Asset Management Policy and Asset Plan

Council's Asset Management Policy adopted 24 August 2021 and Asset Plan adopted on 23 June 2025

The purpose of the policy was to broadly outline why asset management is relevant to Council and provide guidance in developing Asset Management Plans. The objective of the strategy was to develop a structured set of actions aimed at enabling improved asset management.

Other key documents

Revision: 5		Page 4 of 27
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Other key documents that are linked to this asset management plan include:

- Council Plan 2025-29
- East Gippsland Shire Council Asset Plan 2026-2035
- Annual Business Plan and Budget
- Road Maintenance Service Contracts

2.3 Assets included in the Plan

A road network, like any major asset, has a number of individual and distinct components. From an asset management point of view, the components of most interest are:

- components that are key contributors to performance (to satisfy stakeholder needs and safety);
- components that are the most expensive (in terms of life cycle costs) ; and
- components that are the most prone to deterioration or need for ongoing management interest.

Therefore, for the management of the road network, the components of most interest include road formations, pavements (the road surfacing and structural layers that support the traffic loading), drainage, bridges, traffic control equipment, [road related](#) street furniture and footpaths.

Subject to **section 2.4** the assets covered by this plan include all [road infrastructure](#) and road-related infrastructure within those roads and ancillary areas identified in Council's Public Road Register.

Figure 2.3 below identifies the key asset types and quantities that are covered by this plan. This information has been extracted from the best information sources available at the time. There is a Council commitment to ensure the assets register and quantities listed below are maintained as identified in **Section 6 – Plan**

Improvement and Monitoring.

Revision: 5		Page 5 of 27
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Figure 2.3 Key assets covered by this plan

<u>Road Surface</u>		<u>Drainage</u>	
Sealed	1363 kms	Kerb & Channel	587kms
Unsealed	1683 kms	Culverts	8558m
Total	3046 kms	Table Drains	25,933m
<u>Footpaths and Constructed Walking Tracks</u>			
Footpaths and Constructed Walking Tracks *		360kms	
<u>Road Bridges</u>		<u>Other Road Infrastructure</u>	
Timber	3	Safety Barrier	31.58 kms
		Signs & Delineators	n/a
		Street Furniture	n/a
Concrete & Steel	188	Roadside Structures	n/a
		Roadsides	n/a
Major Culverts	132	Raymond Island Ferry	See note **
Floodway's	29		

n/a – information not yet available

** Walking tracks/ trails that are not within the road reserve of those roads identified in Council's Public Road Register are not included in this Plan. Also Walking tracks/trails on foreshore and/or river frontage land (irrespective of construction type,) for which Council is Committee of Management, are not included in this Plan*

*** The Raymond Island Ferry forms an important part of East Gippsland's road network, its management and operation, however, comes under separate legislation and is therefore currently beyond the scope of this document.*

2.4 Assets not included in the Plan

2.4.1 General

Subject to those agreements outlined in **Section 2.5** or any relevant Codes of Practice this Road Management Plan does not cover any of the following:

- roads and/or road related infrastructure on roads not identified in Council's Public Road Register (eg. un-constructed roads, laneways or tracks that have historically not been maintained by Council);
- utility related assets (either publicly or privately owned) that provide, or intend to provide, water, sewerage, gas, electricity, telephone, telecommunications or other like services;
- other non-road related infrastructure such as rail infrastructure (including boom gates and level crossings), mailboxes or roadside furniture and fences erected by utilities;
- driveways/ crossovers;
- private roads or car parks; and
- other non-municipal roads and related infrastructure (eg State, Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning and Parks Victoria roads).

2.5 Road management and maintenance agreements

2.5.1 Arterial roads

Under Section 37 of the *Road Management Act* Council is responsible for the following components of an arterial road:

- roadsides in "urban areas" [as defined under the Act but limited by Section 107](#);
- any pathways, other than those on freeway reserves;
- service roads; and
- the median strip between an arterial roadway and a service road.

Beyond these limits there are several areas that have historically been maintained by Council but are the responsibility of Department of Transport and Planning . To ensure that the current levels of service continue, Council has entered into several arrangements with Department of Transport and Planning to transfer and/or delegate road management functions refer to Code of Practice – Operational Responsibility for Public Roads published in the Victorian Government Gazette s267.

2.5.2 Agreements with adjoining municipalities

East Gippsland shares municipal boundaries with three other Victorian councils. For most of those roads that cross these boundaries the limits of demarcation for road management responsibilities are clearly defined. There are, however, several boundary roads for which the limits of responsibility are unclear. To address this Council has entered into an agreement with Wellington Shire Council, with whom it shares all but one boundary road, Beverley's Road, Glenaladale, to clearly define management responsibilities.

Revision: 5		Page 7 of 27
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2.6 Key stakeholders

The following key stakeholders are recognised as having an interest in the service provided by the local road network:

- Residents and businesses who reside and operate within the East Gippsland Shire Council municipality.
- All road users, vehicular, pedestrian, cyclists, those with disabilities or restricted mobility, tourists and visitors.
- Adjoining Municipalities;
- Other road authorities including VicRoads, Regional Roads Victoria, Department of Transport and Planning, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action(DEECA) and Parks Victoria emergency services authorities such as Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority (CFA), Ambulance Victoria, State Emergency Services (SES)
- Utility providers such as water, sewerage, gas, electricity and telecommunication as prescribed in Section 3 of the *Road Management Act 2004*;
- Councillor's, East Gippsland Shire staff through management of assets, contractors, customer experience and financial management of the road network

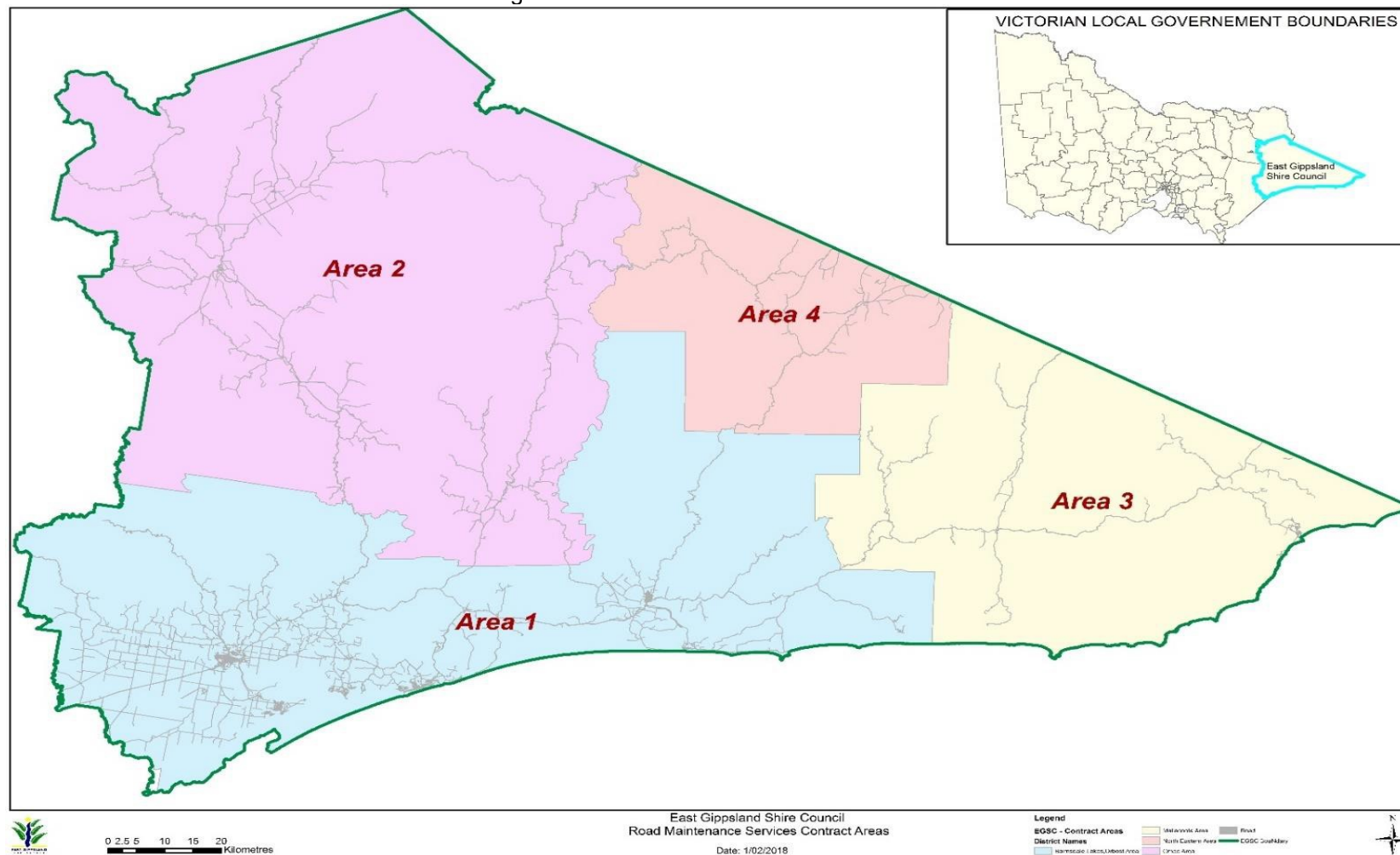
2.7 Road management structure

With the amalgamation of the five former councils in 1995 all external works, including the maintenance of East Gippsland Shire's road network and related infrastructure, were outsourced. Due to its geographic size the Shire was broken down into four distinct regions – Area 1 Bairnsdale/Lakes Entrance/Orbost, Area 2 Omeo/Buchan/ Swifts Creek/Ensay/Benambrabra Area 3 Cann River/Mallacoota, Area 4 Bonang/Bendoc (see **Figure 2.7a**).

Road maintenance contracts exists for these areas they closely monitored and managed by Council's Assets & Environment Directorate.

Revision: 5		Page 8 of 27
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Figure 2.7a External service contract areas



2.8 Road Management Act 2004

The *Road Management Act 2004* seeks to ensure efficient and safe management of the road network for all road users.

2.9 Duties of road users

Under Section 17A of the *Road Safety Act 1986*: -

A person who drives a motor vehicle on a highway must drive in a safe manner having regard to all the relevant factors, including the: -

- Physical characteristics of the road;
- Prevailing weather conditions;
- Level of visibility;
- Condition of the motor vehicle;
- Prevailing traffic conditions;
- Relevant road laws and advisory signs;
- Physical and mental condition of the driver.

Road users other than a person driving a motor vehicle must use a highway in a safe manner having regard to all relevant factors.

A road user must -

- have regard to the rights of other road users and take reasonable care to avoid any conduct that may endanger the safety or welfare of other road users;
- have regard to the rights of the community and infrastructure managers in relation to road infrastructure and non-road infrastructure on the road reserve and take reasonable care to avoid any conduct that may damage road infrastructure and non-road infrastructure on the road reserve;
- have regard to the rights of the community in relation to the road reserve and take reasonable care to avoid conduct that may harm the environment of the road reserve.

2.10 Responsibilities of adjoining landowners

2.10.1 Property access (driveways)

In accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004* Council is not responsible for driveways and pathways on road reserves that provide access to land adjoining a road. Property owners are responsible for maintaining driveways and the immediate surrounds impacted on by a driveway in a safe condition. The extent of responsibility of landowners for driveway access is depicted in **Figure 2.10.1**.

The maintenance responsibility of landowners includes the removal of non-approved modifications to kerb & channel driveway crossings and the ongoing clearing and cleaning of driveway culverts / structures.

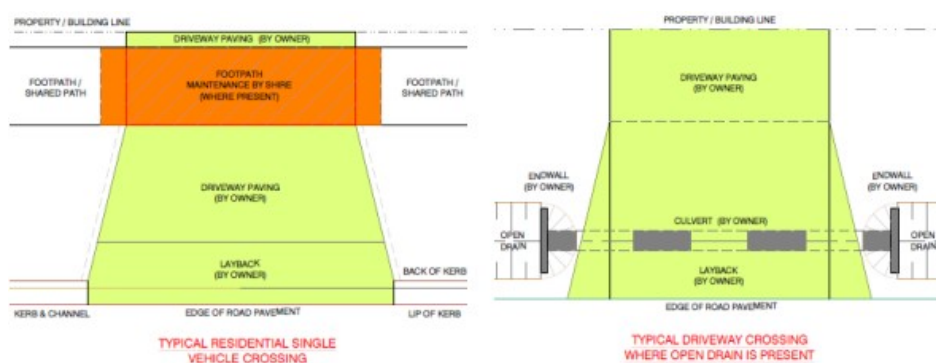


Figure 2.10.1 Limits of Maintenance Responsibility for Driveway Access Pursuant to **Section 2.10.3** landowners are responsible for ensuring that the installation of driveways and new crossings over footpaths and channels are within the design standards specified by Council.

2.10.2 Footpaths and overhanging vegetation

In accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004* and *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016* landowners must not allow any tree or plant in or growing on land owned or occupied by him or her to obstruct or interfere with the passage of traffic by: -

- overhanging any footpath or other part of the road used by pedestrians so that it gets in the way of pedestrians or is likely to cause injury or damage;
- extending over any part of the road in such a way that it -
 - obstructs the view between vehicles;
 - obstructs the view between vehicles and pedestrians where they come close to each other;
 - obscures a traffic control item from an approaching vehicle or pedestrian;
 - obscures street lighting; or
- otherwise constitutes a danger to vehicles or pedestrians or compromises the safe and convenient use of the road;

- Council has responsibility to ensure that the landowner does not allow private assets to become a hazard.

2.10.3 Roadworks/openings – Works Within Road Reserve

In accordance with Section 63 of the *Road Management Act 2004* a person must not conduct any works in, on, under or over a municipal road without the written consent of Council and subject to the requirements of A Guide to Working in the Road Reserve by VicRoads July 2015. This does not apply if the person is required to conduct the works by specified requirements specified in or under any other Act and the works are conducted in accordance with these requirements refer to VicRoads A Guide to Working in the Road Reserve July 2015.

2.11 Force Majeure

Council will make every endeavour to meet all aspects of its Road Management Plan. However, in the event of natural disasters and other events including, but not limited to fires, floods, droughts and the like, together with human factors, such as a lack of Council staff or suitably qualified Contractors, Council reserves the right to suspend compliance with its Road Management Plan under Section 83 of the Victorian Wrongs Act 1958 as amended.

In the event that the Chief Executive Officer has to consider the limited financial resources of Council and its other conflicting priorities pursuant to Section 83 of the above Act, meaning Council's Plan cannot be met, the Chief Executive Officer will write to Council's Officer in charge of its Road Management Plan and inform them that some, or all, of the timeframes and response times are to be suspended.

Once the events beyond the control of Council have abated, or if the events have partly abated, the Chief Executive Officer will write to Council's Officer responsible for the Council's Plan and inform them which parts of the Plan are to reactivated and when.

Revision: 5		Page 12 of 27
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3. Maintenance Management

3.1 Background data

3.1.1 Public road register

Under Section 19 of the *Road Management Act 2004* all road authorities are required to keep a register of public roads specifying the roads in respect of which it is the coordinating authority. The Register of Public Roads includes The Register of Public Roads includes roads that are managed in accordance with the East Gippsland Shire Council Road Management Plan, where the East Gippsland Shire Council is the coordinating road authority as determined in conjunction with Section 17 of the Road Management Act 2004.

Full Listing of the East Gippsland Shire Council Public Road Register can be found on council's website: www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au

3.1.2 Road hierarchy

To improve the effectiveness of asset management East Gippsland Shire Council has allocated its roads and footpaths to categories or sub-networks. In this way, roads and footpaths with similar purposes are treated consistently with respect to decisions on standards and levels of service, regardless of legal or administrative classification. Roads have been allocated to a category on the basis of indicators such as function, traffic volume, percentage of heavy vehicles, travel speed, and strategic significance. Footpaths have been allocated to a category on the basis of traffic volume.

Figures 3.1.2a and 3.1.2b list the classifications and their definitions for both the road and footpath network.

Revision: 5		Page 13 of 27
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Figure 3.1.2a Road Hierarchy

ROAD HIERARCHY	
Classification	Description
State/VicRoads Arterial	Roads under the responsibility of an authority other than Council.
Urban Sub Arterial	Roads of this classification primarily provide a linkage between significant residential, industrial and commercial nodes and or the arterial road network. These roads have an identifiable origin and destination (eg suburbs, industrial areas or places of significance).
Urban Collector	Roads of this category primarily provide a route between and through residential, industrial and commercial areas and convey traffic to the Urban Link or Arterial Road network system.
Urban Access Major	A road, street, court or laneway that primarily provides direct access for abutting residential, industrial and commercial properties to their associated nodes with minimal to no through traffic.
Urban Access Minor	An un-constructed road that provides direct access or a laneway that provides secondary access for abutting residential, industrial and commercial properties.
Rural Sub Arterial	Roads of this classification primarily provide a direct linkage between significant population centres and major traffic generators such as residential, industrial, commercial, agricultural and tourist areas and declared roads. These roads have an identifiable origin and destination (eg townships and places of significance).
Rural Collector	Roads of this classification primarily provide a route between, and through, residential, industrial, agricultural, tourist and forest traffic nodes and the Rural Link and/or Arterial Road network.
Rural Access Major	A road or laneway in this category primarily provides direct access for abutting Residential, Industrial, Commercial, and in other locations, Forestry, Tourist and Agricultural properties and connect into either the Link, Collector or Arterial Road network. There is minimal to no through traffic.
Rural Access Minor	Roads that are un-constructed but provide direct access for abutting property or roads that provide direct access for vacant abutting property.

Figure 3.1.2b Footpath Hierarchy

FOOTPATH HIERARCHY	
Classification	Description
High Traffic	Major retail areas, schools, hospitals, elderly homes.
Medium Traffic	Tourist and significant volume pedestrian areas.
Low Traffic	Low volume pedestrian areas, residential areas, constructed walking tracks and shared use paths.

3.1.3 Asset condition and inspection regimes

Documenting the condition of road assets is crucial to determining the standards of maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal required to deliver the target level of service.

Revision: 5	Page 14 of 27
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Quantitative (workload) and qualitative (intervention levels) indicators of maintenance standards are sensitive to the condition of the asset at any point in time.

Inspections of the road network form the cornerstone of the maintenance program. In order that the need for maintenance is properly assessed, and that safe passage for road and path users is maintained, it is necessary to carry out regular surveys and inspections. These fall into two categories: -

Condition surveys

Overall condition of the asset is determined from a lifespan and renewal expenditure planning perspective as such these inspections are not intended to identify or record individual specific defects.

Hazard inspections

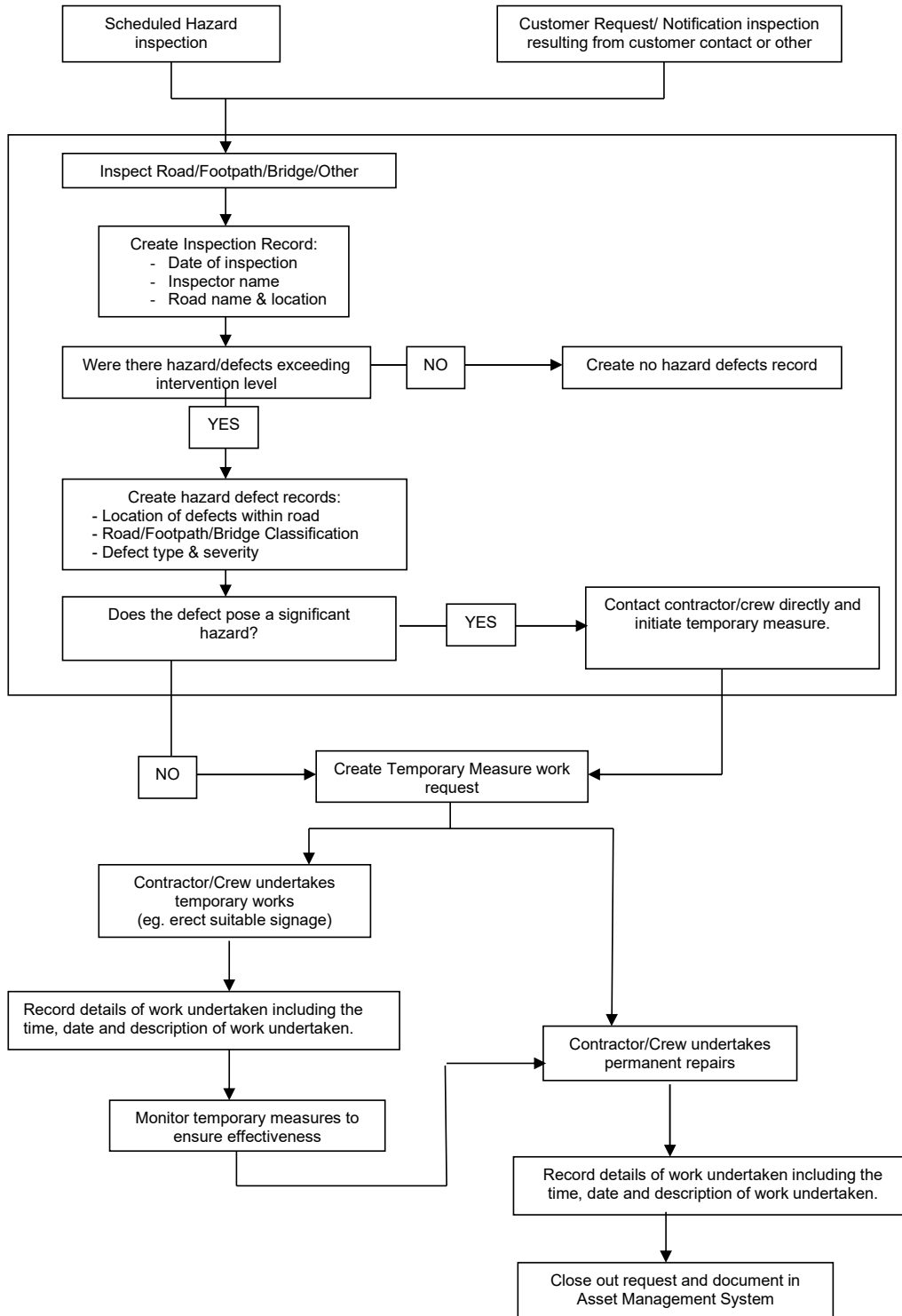
These are designed to identify those defects that exceed the stated intervention levels considered likely to create a danger or serious inconvenience to the public. These inspections follow the principles established within the road and footpath hierarchy and the routine maintenance levels of service outlined in **Appendix A**.

The monitoring of the road and footpath network between condition assessments is a combination of the proactive formal hazard inspections carried out at pre-determined intervals and reactive inspections in response to reports of potential hazards by members of the public or staff.

Figure 3.1.3a Inspection Frequencies

CLASSIFICATION	INSPECTION INTERVAL	
	DEFECT	CONDITION
Roads		
Arterial (Department of Transport)	n/a	n/a
Sub Arterial	Once in a 4-month period	5 Years
Collector	Once in a 7-month period	5 Years
Access Major	Once in a 14-month period	5 Years
Access Minor	Once in a 14-month period	n/a
Footpaths and constructed walking tracks		
High Traffic Footpaths	Once in a 7-month period	
Medium Traffic Footpaths	Once in a 14-month period	
Low Traffic Footpaths	Once in a 18-month period	
Bridges and related structures		
	(Level 2)	(Level 1)
Bridges - concrete and concrete and steel	60 months	24 months
Bridges – load limited timber and timber and steel	As determined following Hazard (Level 1) Inspections but not greater than 24 months	12 months
Bridges – timber and timber and steel	24 months	12 months

Figure 3.1.3b Hazard Inspection Process



3.2 Maintenance plan

Sealed and unsealed roads deteriorate as a result of repeated traffic loading and environmental influences such as climate and soils. Maintenance is carried out to ensure the safety of traffic and to sustain the serviceability and appearance of the road and its associated facilities.

Road maintenance involves remedying the defects that occur from time to time and providing treatments such as resurfacing which slow down the rate of deterioration. For management and administrative purposes maintenance is divided into two categories: routine and periodic. Generally, routine maintenance is funded through Council's operational budget while periodic maintenance is funded through the capital works budget.

3.2.1 Routine maintenance

Routine maintenance is carried out to ensure the safety of traffic and to sustain the serviceability of the road and its associated facilities within the stated acceptable intervention levels. General road maintenance activities are delivered under Contract by external service providers (refer s 2.5 and s 2.7 for details) and that maintenance of footpaths and minor road related structures (eg signs) is undertaken by in-house works crews to ensure a timely and cost effective response to repair defects exceeding intervention levels identified in routine hazard inspections.

3.2.1.a Proactive maintenance

Proactive maintenance covers those activities that occur on a regular consistent schedule and are designed to proactively maintain an asset within the predefined level of service. Examples of these activities include: - but not limited to

- Grading
- Pothole patching
- Crack sealing
- Roadside vegetation regrowth clearing / slashing / weed spraying
- Shoulder maintenance / Edge breaks
- Culvert cleaning
- Clearing/cleaning of open drains
- Picking up of rubbish within road reserves
- Minor bridge maintenance such as tightening of fixtures and cleaning scuppers
- Grinding of footpaths

General routine maintenance is undertaken on a cyclic schedule based on geographic regions. Such maintenance works at below intervention levels are undertaken at Council's absolute discretion and are not for the purpose of hazard or risk reduction but more for the purpose of benefitting the long-term condition and lifespan of the respective assets.

3.2.1.b Reactive maintenance

Reactive maintenance is that group of activities that address isolated and random defects exceeding stated intervention levels that occur within the road network. Examples include surface defects, damaged signage and obstructions in traffic lanes. These activities are usually undertaken as a result of notification or inspection.

Appendix A lists the intervention levels (tolerable levels of defect) and response times used by Council for routine – reactive type maintenance.

Temporary measures

In the event that repairs are unable to be undertaken within the prescribed response times, because of the nature of the repair required, level of resources required or workload, temporary measures may be implemented to reduce the risk of an incident until such time as maintenance or repair works can be completed. Examples of such measures include: -

- erection of appropriate warning signs;
- temporary repairs

Where warning signs are erected, or temporary repairs undertaken these treatments are to be inspected and maintained as required on a weekly basis.

Emergency works

Emergency works are works required to be undertaken to ensure the safety of road users and the public as a result of an emergency incident. Emergency works could include traffic incident management, response to fires, floods, storms and spillages, and assistance under the Victorian State Emergency Response Plan. Emergency works are provided by way of a 24-hour callout service.

In the event of widespread or extreme events the response times documented within **Appendix A** may not be achievable due to resource limitations at the time. In such instances works will be prioritised based on the classification of the asset (i.e. traffic type and volume), the defect type and its severity. Refer to s 2.11 Force Majeure

3.2.2 Periodic maintenance

Activities that come under the heading of “periodic maintenance” include sealed road resurfacing, gravel road resheeting and bridge rehabilitation.

Sealed road resurfacing program

The Road Resurfacing Program is an annual program that involves both the road surface and road pavement. The primary focus is for the renewal/replenishment of the surface however, small repairs to the road pavement need to occur prior to the application of the new treatment.

The annual Road Resurfacing Program (Reseal Program) is currently developed by ranking the overall condition of road segments (as identified by the sealed road surface inspection). This information is then used by the relevant officer/contractor through a series of site visits to refine the list and make decisions on for example, the worst roads, traffic type and volume, the most appropriate treatment and estimated costs.

Council reviews its capital works program annually and considers road funding.

Gravel road resurfacing program

The development of the annual gravel road resurfacing program is undertaken in a similar manner to that used for the Sealed Road Resurfacing Program. Unsealed roads requiring resheeting are identified primarily through the unsealed road surface inspection process or by notification. The roads are then prioritised based on traffic type and volume and estimated cost.

Bridge rehabilitation and renewal program

The bridge renewal program is generally a 'reactive' program because the demands greatly outstrip Council's financial capacity. Subject to this capacity works are ranked in priority order using the following principles:

- A load-limit severely restricting functionality.
- Availability and convenience of any alternative access.
- Traffic type and volume.
- Ability to stage any necessary upgrade to better fit budget constraints.

Footpath rehabilitation program

Council has implemented an annual program to rehabilitate the network. The program utilises the ongoing footpath condition/hazard inspections to prioritise works based on a combination of defect severity and footpath classification (ie traffic type and volume). Utilising this method ensures that those areas of greatest risk to path users are addressed first Council's in-house concrete crew is responsible for delivering the majority of the footpath rehabilitation program, ensuring timely and cost-effective program delivery.

3.2.3 Maintenance procedures and standards of work

The standards and procedures used for maintenance works are documented in Council's service agreement contracts.

These service agreement contracts consider various industry standards, geographic and climatic conditions as well as Council's capacity to deliver.

Intervention levels are used in conjunction with minimum maintenance frequencies to determine maintenance actions for each asset (this is important because many maintenance activities are driven by customer requests and the intervention levels provide guidance in assessing risks and prioritising reactive maintenance works).

The Service Agreement Contracts provide clear identification of the scheduled activities, workload indicators and performance criteria, as well as documenting the minimum quality/standard of materials and workmanship for each scheduled activity. These items are reviewed when contract tenders are being prepared – typically every 5-7 years.

Revision: 5		Page 20 of 27
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4. Management Systems

A management system is a combination of processes, data and software applied to provide the essential outputs for effective asset management such as reduced risk and optimum infrastructure investment.

The management systems utilised by East Gippsland include: -

All Asset Data

Inspections, Defects and associated actions

History of all works completed

4.1 Notice of incidents and road condition reports

Pursuant to Sections 115 and 116 of the *Road Management Act 2004* Council will, within 14 days of receiving notice of an incident arising out of the condition of a public road or infrastructure, carry out an inspection of the condition of the part of the public road or infrastructure specified in the notice and prepare a report which will include:

- a statement of the condition of the relevant part of the road or infrastructure
- photographs, where appropriate, showing the condition of the site of the incident
- reference to any relevant plan, policy or policy decision relating to the construction, maintenance or repair of the road or infrastructure
- a summary of any inspections, reports, maintenance and repairs conducted on the road or infrastructure in the period of 12 months before the incident

4.2 Customer request management

Council receives customer service requests through a variety of means. Usually these will be in the form of a telephone call to Council's switchboard or through direct contact with customer service staff at any one of Council's business centres.

To minimise response times (in line with Council's customer service charters) and to ensure that a permanent record is kept, requests are recorded and transmitted to the relevant department/contractor using a computerised Customer Request Management System. The process involved in managing requests involves the initial recording, its referral for action/attention, recording action taken/proposed to be taken and, finally, the closing off and filing of the request.

5. Plan Improvement and Monitoring

To ensure the effective development and implementation of this plan, a review will be undertaken in accordance with the statutory requirements and timeframes specified by the *Road Management (General) Regulations 2005* and will reflect any changes or alterations.

The review will include, but not limited to: -

- audit and review of maintenance response times (to confirm whether maintenance works were delivered on time);
- review of inspection frequencies (to ensure appropriateness);
- review of levels of service (to ensure appropriateness);
- review of road classifications (to ensure appropriateness);
- review of customer feedback/contact;
- random audit of maintenance works (to confirm whether maintenance works were delivered to the specified quality).

Subject to the results of the review any amendments required to be made to the Plan will be undertaken pursuant to Section 54 of the *Road Management Act 2004*.

The Plan may also be updated if or when the Road Asset Management Plan changes significantly through internal continuous improvement processes.

Appendix A – Routine Maintenance Levels of Service

			RESPONSE TIME¹									
			Urban				Rural					
Service Criteria	Defect Type	Description of Hazard (Defect requiring intervention)	SUB ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	ACCESS MAJOR	ACCESS MINOR		SUB ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	ACCESS MAJOR	ACCESS MINOR	
Road Surface (General)	Obstructions & substances in traffic lane	Any fallen trees, rubbish, waste material, foreign matter, oil spills, snow and other slippery substances, animal carcasses or accumulation. Granular materials on the traffic lane of sealed roads which may constitute a hazard. > 5m2 in area	24 Hours			48 Hours		24 Hours			7 Days	
Sealed Road Surface	Pot Holes	Where the pothole exceeds 50mm in depth and 300mm in diameter.	7 Days	14 Days	30 Days	60 Days		7 Days	14 Days	30 Days	Not Applicable	
	Rutting & Depressions	If the rutting/depression exceeds 50mm in depth under a 1.2 metre straight edge.	14 Days	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days		14 Days	30 Days	60 Days		
	Shoulders	When a 50 mm drop from the sealed pavement edge occurs for more than 100 metres	14 Days	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days		14 Days	30 Days	60 Days		
	Kerb & Channel – Raised or sunken	Channel raised or sunken greater than 50mm in comparison to the road surface for more than 300mm length	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	90 Days		30 Days	60 Days	90 Days		
Unsealed Road Surface	Pot Holes	When pothole measuring 100mm or more in depth and 300mm diameter	Not Applicable		30 Days	12 months³		7 Days	14 Days	30 Days	12 months³	
	Rutting	When frequency of rutting of 100mm depth or more in a trafficked area			60 Days			7 Days	14 Days	30 Days		
Revision: 5			Page 23 of 27									

Revision: 5

Page 23 of 27

	Corrugations	When frequency of corrugations measuring 30mm or more in depth is equal to or more than a concentration of corrugations of a 30-metre length				60 Days		7 Days	14 Days	30 Days	
	Surface Scour	Transverse and longitudinal scouring to depth of 50mm or more having a length of 30 metres or more				60 Days		7 Days	14 Days	30 Days	
	Loose Material	Build-up of loose material exceeding 100mm. depth				60 Days		7 Days	14 Days	30 Days	
	Coarse Surface	material more than 40mm in size penetrating the surface by more than 30mm.				60 Days		7 Days	14 Days	30 Days	
Drainage	Side entry pits, culverts, table drains (cut off/run off) and open drains (constructed)	Culvert, pit or waterway obstructed causing 100mm or greater ponding to occur on the trafficable area	7 Days			30 Days		7 Days			30 Days
	Drainage Pit (Lids/Surrounds)	Drainage pit lid and/or surround suffering significant structural damage or movement and/or missing in pedestrian areas or traffic lanes	48 hours					n/a			
Signs & Delineation	Signage (Regulatory, Safety & fire plug markings)	Sign is missing, poorly located or damaged to an extent that makes it substantially ineffective.	14 Days	30 Days	60 Days	12 months		14 Days	30 Days	60 Days	12 months
	Guide Posts	Missing or damaged guideposts at a critical location ² making them substantially ineffective.	14 Days	30 Days	60 Days			14 Days	30 Days	60 Days	
	Line-marking	Linemarking illegible or confusing at a critical location ² .	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days			30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	
Vegetation	Tree Clearance over roadways	Clearances for overhanging branches or limbs within an envelope from the back of shoulder and/or kerb and a minimum of 4.5m height clearance over pavement and the trafficable portion of shoulders.	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days			30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	

	Roadside and Shared Path Vegetation	Vegetation that restricts design sight distance to intersections or restricts viewing of regulatory or safety signs ³ on roads or sight distance and signage along shared paths	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days			30 Days	60 Days	90 Days		
Roadside Structures	Guardrail	Guardrail damaged at a critical location ² .	30 Days			n/a		30 Days			n/a	
	Utility access pits (lids & surrounds)	Pit lid and/or surround having significant structural damage and/or missing	Notify Appropriate Service Provider within 48 hours								n/a	
Bridges	Structural damage	Significant damage affecting structural performance	24 Hours			n/a		24 Hours				

Service Criteria	Defect Type	Description of Hazard	RESPONSE TIME		
			Footpath Classification		
			HIGH TRAFFIC	MEDIUM TRAFFIC	LOW TRAFFIC
Footpaths and shared paths	Trip hazards	Vertical level differential of lips, rutting and scouring greater than 30 mm in height and depressions and heaves greater than 30mm over a 1.2m flat edge. Crack width greater than 30 mm. Loose material & debris greater than 30mm in depth.	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days
	Tree Clearance over, and vegetation growth alongside or across, pedestrian paths	Vegetation intruding into a clearance envelope between the edges of path and a minimum of 2.5m height clearance over path. Weeds and tree roots along edges and with encroachment of 300mm over a 5 mtr distance.			

Service Criteria	Defect Type	Description of Hazard	HIGH TRAFFIC	MEDIUM TRAFFIC	LOW TRAFFIC
Gravel Constructed Paths	Pothole	Hole diameter greater than 200mm and 50mm in depth	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days
	Uneven Surface/Scouring/Erosion	Depth of greater than 50mm over an 2 mtr section			
	Tree Clearance over, and vegetation growth alongside or across, pedestrian paths	Vegetation intruding into a clearance envelope between the edges of path and a minimum of 2.5m height clearance over path. Weeds and tree roots along edges and with encroachment of 300mm over a 5 mtr distance.			

A "Safety Sign" is a road sign that provides the driver with advice on the safe use of the road.

¹ *The response time is measured in calendar days from the time the hazard is recorded by, or notified to, Council.*

² *A critical location is a location where the road alignment and/or pavement width and/or geometry are identified by additional markings or furniture to guide the travelling public.*

³ *Defect types and response times do not apply to roads that are unformed and lack suitable pavement material (e.g. earth road/track)*

Revision: 5		Page 26 of 27
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Appendix B – Public Road Register

(Not provided due to its size – can be downloaded from Council’s website)

5.2 Business Excellence

5.2.1 Councillor Support and Expenses Policy

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Purpose

This report presents the draft Councillor Support and Expense Policy (Policy) for Council's consideration and formal endorsement.

Key Points

Council maintains a Policy in accordance with section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act), which outlines the requirement for Councils to adopt and maintain an expenses policy for the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Councillors and members of delegated committees (where applicable).

The Policy supports Councillors in performing their duties by reimbursing reasonable expenses and setting clear expectations around entitlements. The Policy outlines reimbursement procedures, complies with regulatory requirements, and provides for childcare and carer-related expenses. It also covers allowances, professional development, reporting, and access to resources, ensuring Councillors can fulfil their roles effectively and without disadvantage.

The Policy was last adopted by Council in August 2021 and is required to be reviewed at least once per Council term. As part of this latest review, a set of guiding principles has been incorporated to strengthen the Policy's clarity and intent. These principles reinforce Council's commitment to reasonable reimbursement, proper conduct, equitable access to support, and transparent use of public funds. They also promote inclusive participation by recognising the needs of Councillors from diverse backgrounds, including carers.

Additionally, this revision of the Policy, provided at **Attachment 1**, included minor updates to the reimbursement process, accommodation provisions, and vehicle use arrangements.

Further improvements have also been proposed to strengthen clarity, flexibility, and alignment with sector guidance, including:

- Replacing fixed Australian Tax Office room rates with a general 4-star accommodation standard to improve flexibility and consistency.
- Moving meal allowance amounts to a separate schedule, allowing for easier updates without requiring formal Policy revision.
- Introducing a new section on professional development entitlements and procedures, based on Local Government Victoria guidelines, including:
 - Annual prescribed professional development;
 - Processes for requesting additional professional development; and
 - Associated budget considerations.
- Requiring all reimbursement claims to be submitted within 60 days of incurring the expense, or by the end of the Council term in an election year.

- Clarifying that Council must not indemnify a Councillor for legal costs associated with internal arbitration (under section 143 of the Act) or a Councillor Conduct Panel hearing (under section 154), unless it is determined that legal representation is necessary to ensure procedural fairness.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. adopts the draft Councillor Support and Expenses Policy as provided at Attachment 1; and***
- 2. Notes that further benchmarking be undertaken, with information to be presented to Council within six months outlining options to recognise and potentially enhance support for remote councillors, in acknowledgment of the additional costs and time commitments associated with participating in Council activities from remote locations.***

Strategic Alignment

This report aligns with Council's legislative responsibility to maintain an Expenses Policy under section 41 of the Act, ensuring governance frameworks remain current and compliant. By regularly reviewing and updating this Policy, Council reinforces its commitment to transparency, accountability, and equitable support for Councillors.

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following theme in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 4: Managing Council well

Outcome – Council operates transparently and effectively with public trust

Consultation/Community Engagement/Impacts

The Policy has been informed by benchmarking with 28 Victorian Councils and considers sector-wide expectations and best practice. It is an internal governance document and does not trigger specific community consultation obligations. However, Council ensures public transparency through reporting and publication of Councillor expenses on Council's Website.

Opportunities and Risks

The review and update of the Policy presents an opportunity to reinforce Council's commitment to good governance, accountability, and equity in supporting Councillors. The incorporation of sector-informed principles and benchmarking enhances transparency and ensures alignment with legislative and community expectations.

Operationally, the revised Policy provides clearer procedures for reimbursement and use of Council resources, reducing ambiguity and the risk of inconsistent application. It also supports Councillor wellbeing and participation, particularly for those in remote areas or with caring responsibilities.

Climate change

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

Conflicts of Interest

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

Attachments

1. Councillor Support and Expenses Policy [5.2.1.1 - 21 pages]



Councillor Support and Expenses Policy

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Table of Contents

1.	Purpose	4
2.	Scope	4
3.	Context	4
4.	Statement	4
4.1	Principles.....	5
5.	Allowances	5
5.1	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor allowances	5
5.2	Remote Area Travel Allowance	6
5.3	Applications for Remote Area Travel Allowance	6
6.	Resources, Facilities and Support.....	6
6.1	Name Badge and Business Cards.....	6
6.2	Building Access	6
6.3	Office Accommodation.....	6
6.4	Administrative Support.....	7
6.5	Representative Memberships	7
6.6	Meals and Refreshments	7
6.7	Information and Communications Technology	7
6.8	Insurance	7
6.9	Legal Support	8
6.10	Applications for Reimbursement of Legal Expenses	9
7.	Expenses and Reimbursements	9
7.1	Reimbursement of Expenses Generally.....	9
7.2	Travel Expenses.....	9
7.3	Accommodation and Meals	10
7.4	Childcare Expenses.....	10
7.5	Care Related Expenses.....	11
7.6	All Abilities Access.....	11
7.7	Exclusions	11
7.8	Applications for Reimbursement of Expenses.....	12
8.	Professional Development	12
8.1	Annual Professional Development.....	12
8.2	Conferences and Seminars	12
8.3	Budget.....	13
8.4	Applications for Professional Development.....	13
8.5	Accountability	13
9.	Motor Vehicles	14
9.1	Motor Vehicle Options	14
9.2	Fines and Infringements	15
9.3	Servicing and Maintenance	16
9.4	Vehicle Breakdown and Accidents.....	16

9.5	Use of Council Vehicles during the Election Period	16
10.	Reporting.....	16
11.	Roles and Responsibilities	17
12.	Definitions	18
13.	Human Rights	18
14.	Gender Equality	18
15.	Risk Reference	18
16.	References and Supporting Documents	19
16.1	Applicable Legislation	19
16.2	Applicable Policy and Procedure	19
16.3	Supporting Documents	19
17.	Review and Revision History	19
17.1	Administrative Updates.....	20
17.2	Document Control Disclaimer	20

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1. Purpose

This Policy supports Councillors to perform official council duties, by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed and provides guidance on:

- allowances;
- reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses;
- professional development;
- administrative support and the provision of resources and facilities; and
- reporting requirements.

The policy is intended to ensure that Councillors are supported to perform their duties without disadvantage.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors of the East Gippsland Shire Council (Council).

In the event Council establishes a Delegated Committee, the provisions of this Policy relating to the reimbursement of expenses will apply to a member who is not a Councillor (if any), as if they were a Councillor.

3. Context

Council must adopt and maintain a Council Expenses Policy under section 41 of the Act that must:

- a) specify procedures to be followed in applying for reimbursement and in reimbursing expenses;
- b) comply with any requirements prescribed by the regulations in relation to the reimbursement of expenses;
- c) provide for the reimbursement of childcare costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role; and
- d) have particular regard to expenses incurred by a Councillor who is carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*.

4. Statement

This Policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act's principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.

Councillor duties are those performed by a councillor as a necessary part of their role, in achieving the objectives of council. These duties may include (but are not limited to):

- meetings of the Council, a delegated committee, its advisory boards, advisory or consultative committees;
- meetings, briefing sessions and civic or ceremonial functions convened by the Mayor or Council or a delegated committee;

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Page 4 of 21

- meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which a Councillor has been appointed as Council representative or is authorised by Council to attend in their role as a Councillor;
- meetings, functions or other official role as a representative of the Mayor or Council or a delegated committee;
- other meetings, inspections, community forums or events attended by a Councillor in the course of their duties as a Councillor; and
- conferences, seminars, events and professional development being undertaken by a Councillor.

4.1 Principles

Council is committed to ensuring that Councillor out-of-pocket expenses are managed responsibly, transparently, and in line with community expectations. The following principles will guide the reimbursement and management of Councillor expenses:

Principle	Statement
Accountability	All expenses must be reasonable, necessary and directly related to a Councillor's official duties, with clear justification and supporting documentation provided when submitting claims.
Transparency	Expense claims and reimbursements will be documented, reported, and made available in accordance with Council's governance and transparency obligations.
Prudent Use of Public Funds	Claims must reflect genuine costs incurred and must not include excessive or unjustifiable expenses.
Ethical and Responsible Conduct	Councillors must act with integrity, honesty, and professionalism when incurring and claiming expenses.

5. Allowances

5.1 Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Allowances

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance pursuant to section 39 of the Act and in accordance with the determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*.

Allowances paid to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor cannot exceed the amount specified in the relevant determination by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not entitled to receive an allowance as a Councillor while receiving the allowance as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

A Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect, in accordance with section 39 (5) of the Act, to receive:

- a) the entire allowance to which they are entitled; or
- b) a specified part of the allowance to which they are entitled; or
- c) no allowance.

Allowances are taxable income and are paid fortnightly in arrears. Personal taxation implications are the responsibility of individual Councillors.

5.2 Remote Area Travel Allowance

The Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal provides for a remote area travel allowance which is updated annually. Refer to attached schedule 1.

If a Council member normally resides more than 50 kilometres by the shortest possible practicable road distance from the location or locations specified for the conduct of ordinary, special or committee meetings of the Council, or any municipal or community functions which have been authorised by Council resolution for the Council member to attend, the Council member is entitled to be paid an allowance for each day on which one or more meetings or authorised functions were attended by the Council member, up to a maximum amount per annum.

The remote area travel allowance is not paid on days that there are no meetings or authorised functions.

5.3 Applications for Remote Area Travel Allowance

Applications for payment of a Remote Area Travel Allowance must:

- be made using the *Remote Area Travel Allowance Claim form* available in the Councillor Portal;
- be submitted within 60 days¹ of attendance at the event/meeting;
- include details of the date, location, purpose of the meeting; and
- odometer reading at the start and end of journey for kilometres travelled on each occasion.

Late claims will not be accepted.

6. Resources, Facilities and Support

Council will provide resources, facilities and support to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors to enable them to effectively perform their roles.

6.1 Name Badge and Business Cards

Each Councillor will be provided with a name badge and business cards.

6.2 Building Access

Each Councillor will receive a swipe card enabling access to the Nicholson Room and public area at the Corporate Centre at 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale.

6.3 Office Accommodation

A Mayoral office is located at the Corporate Centre at 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale, for use by the Mayor for purposes directly related to their official Council duties.

Councillors may use the Nicholson Room for purposes directly related to their official Council duties.

¹ Where there is an upcoming Council election, all claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted by the end of the Council term.

6.4 Administrative Support

Administrative support will be made available by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to assist the Mayor in performing their official Council duties and to assist Councillors with diary management and responses to correspondence, enquiries and requests for service as part of their official Council duties.

Council's letterhead stationery is only available for official Council business and may be used by Councillors only when approved by the CEO.

Council business papers, personal mail and other Council information will be forwarded electronically. If, and when circumstances render it necessary, documents may also be placed in Councillors' lockers at the Corporate Centre.

6.5 Representative Memberships

Council will organise and pay for collective Council or individual Councillor membership to peak Australian Local Government industry bodies.

6.6 Meals and Refreshments

Where Council or Committee meetings are held at times which extend through normal mealtimes, Council will provide suitable meals served on the premises. Alcohol will not be provided.

6.7 Information and Communications Technology

Councillors will be provided a computer with a laptop and bag, access to email, a mobile phone and a working from home kit (dual monitors, keyboard, mouse and headset) for Council business. Councillors will be provided with access to a printer located at the Corporate Centre.

Where the CEO deems it necessary, support for internet connectivity at a Councillor's residence will be provided.

All equipment provided by Council is to be used only for the purpose of performing official Council duties and remains the property of Council. All equipment must be returned at the end of the Council term of office or upon retirement/resignation of the Councillor.

6.8 Insurance

Councillors are covered under the following Council insurance policies on a 24-hour basis while discharging the duties of office of Councillor, including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council's representative:

- Public Liability;
- Professional Indemnity;
- Councillors and Officers Liability;
- Personal Accident (accompanying partners are also covered); and
- Corporate Travel.

These policies will apply to claims that arise from an occurrence in connection with Council business.

Items of Council equipment provided to Councillors to assist in performing their role, including motor vehicles, are covered for damage or theft under Council's insurance policies. Councillors are expected to exercise due care in protecting the equipment from damage or theft. Personal items and effects left in Council vehicles are not covered by Council's insurance policies.

Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not. Councillors will pay the excess on the vehicle policy or any policy covering other items of Council equipment provided to Councillors to assist in performing their role, if they are found to have not taken due care in protecting the vehicle or equipment from damage or theft.

6.9 Legal Support

Where legal proceedings are brought against a Councillor in connection with an act or omission in their functions as a Councillor, a Councillor may be entitled to have legal costs up to \$2,500 reimbursed. Legal costs will not be reimbursed for any defamation action brought by a Councillor.

In accordance with section 43A of the Act, Council must not indemnify a Councillor for legal costs incurred where the expense relates to:

- a) an Internal Arbitration Process under section 143 of the Act; or
- b) a Councillor Conduct Panel Hearing under section 154 of the Act.

A Councillor who is a party to these processes does not have a right to representation unless otherwise determined by an Arbiter under section 141(2)(c) of the Act or a Councillor Conduct Panel under section 163(2)(b) the Act. Such determinations will only be made by an Arbiter or Councillor Conduct Panel if it is considered that a party requires representation to ensure the process or hearing is conducted fairly. In these circumstances, a Councillor may seek reimbursement of representation expenses in accordance with this section.

In addition to the above, the CEO must refuse reimbursement in the following circumstances:

- a) to the extent the costs are unreasonable;
- b) the costs have been incurred through the engagement of a lawyer from a legal firm not on the Municipal Association of Victoria panel, or pre-approved by the CEO;
- c) the CEO considers the matter for which reimbursement of legal costs is sought is or was outside the Councillor's official Council duties; or
- d) the CEO considers the Councillor has not acted in good faith or lawfully or properly in relation to the matter for which reimbursement of legal costs is sought.

A Councillor may seek reimbursement up to \$2,500 per request, and no more than two requests per financial year can be made by an individual Councillor.

Councillors must engage a lawyer from a legal firm on the Municipal Association of Victoria panel or otherwise as approved by the CEO prior to any expense being incurred, otherwise they will not be granted reimbursement.

A Councillor will repay any reimbursed costs where there is a finding by a court, tribunal, or regulatory authority in relation to the matter the Councillor has not acted in good faith or has acted unlawfully or improperly.

6.10 Applications for Reimbursement of Legal Expenses

Applications for reimbursement of legal expenses must be:

- made in accordance with section 7.8 of this Policy; and
- accompanied by a declaration that the matter for which reimbursement of legal costs is sought related to their role as a Councillor and that they have acted in good faith and not unlawfully or improperly.

7. Expenses and Reimbursements

7.1 Reimbursement of Expenses Generally

Councillors are entitled to the reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

All expenses provided under this policy will be for a purpose specific to the functions of holding civic office. Allowances for general expenses are not permitted under this policy.

In accordance with Section 40(1) of the Act, Councillors will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that:

- are bona fide expenses;
- have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; and
- are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

Reimbursement of any expense not specifically provided for in this Policy will require approval by the CEO.

7.2 Travel Expenses

Council will pay for the costs of Councillors' travel if it is required for official Council duties, in accordance with the below guidelines.

Where travel is by air, economy class will be the standard.

Where travel between Bairnsdale and Melbourne and return is by train a reserved ticket will be purchased to guarantee you a specific seat in the reserved carriage(s).

All interstate travel proposed to be undertaken by a Councillor and paid for by Council requires prior approval by the CEO.

All international travel proposed to be undertaken by a Councillor and paid for by Council requires prior approval by a formal resolution of Council.

7.3 Accommodation and Meals

Requests for accommodation by Councillors will generally be supported where travel arrangements prevent the Councillor from returning to their usual place of residence by 7:00pm, subject to CEO approval.

Councillors who reside in the more remote areas of the Shire are encouraged to stay overnight following Council meetings, events and functions that conclude well after normal business hours. The cost of this accommodation will be met by Council.

When a Councillor is required to stay overnight and meals are not provided by Council or at a function attended in an official capacity, the Councillor will be reimbursed for meals as indicated in the table below. Refer to Schedule 1 for meal expense limits.

Meal Type	Reimbursement Entitlement
Breakfast	The day following an overnight stay
Lunch	The day before and following an overnight stay, if required
Dinner	The night of an overnight stay

Councillors will be provided with a reasonable standard of accommodation. As a guide a standard room or four-star accommodation is considered appropriate with the most cost-effective option to be provided. Councillors may accept room upgrades if the upgrade is at no additional cost to Council.

All bookings for accommodation are to be made by the Councillor Support Officer.

Where meals are not included at meetings, conferences, seminars and professional development events, Councillors can be reimbursed for meals and beverages in accordance with the amounts determined by the ATO. Councillors are not permitted to seek reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses to cover meals or refreshments for anyone other than themselves.

7.4 Childcare Expenses

Council will reimburse the cost of childcare where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor to perform their role. The reimbursement of childcare will be capped at the Federal Government hourly rate for in-home care per family and the rate will be applied in accordance with the Federal Government recommendations.

Reimbursement for childcare costs by Council is limited to:

- a child or children aged less than 13 years;
- costs associated with childcare only and no other household duties;
- costs of childcare not covered by other entitlements such as the Australian Government Child Care benefit;
- childcare services that are operating as a registered business in Victoria; and
- childcare services that are not a relative or household member.

Subject to prior approval by the CEO, a Councillor with dependent children who is attending a conference or seminar at which a designated children's program is provided may enrol their dependent children in that program at Council's expense.

7.5 Care Related Expenses

For Councillors who would otherwise be a primary care giver for immediate family members who are elderly or sick, have a disability or mental illness, or a care relationship for children up to 15 years old, Council will, subject to the requirements of this section, reimburse the cost of expenses incurred in order to provide care for the relevant person when the Councillor who would otherwise be the primary care giver is engaged in discharging their duties as a Councillor.

For Councillors who are in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*, Council will, subject to the requirements of this section, reimburse the cost of expenses incurred in order to provide care for the relevant person when the Councillor who would otherwise be providing the care is performing their duties as a Councillor.

Council will only reimburse Councillors for carer expenses paid to:

- an accredited care provider; or
- a person providing care who does not:
 - a) have a familial or like relationship with the Councillor or member of a delegated committee; or
 - b) reside either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor or member of a delegated committee; or
 - c) have a relationship with the Councillor or member of a delegated committee or their partner such that it would be inappropriate for Council to reimburse monies paid to the care provider.

Care expenses may include hourly fees as paid by the Councillor to a care provider and/or agency booking fees if applicable.

7.6 All Abilities Access

Where possible, Council will meet reasonable expenses to assist a Councillor with a disability to perform their official Council duties.

7.7 Exclusions

In addition to any exclusions outlined in other sections of this Policy, Council will not reimburse the following expenses:

- a) any costs arising from a breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws,
- b) expenses incurred which:
 - are not bona fide expenses;
 - have not been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; or
 - are not reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role;
- c) the cost of the purchase of any alcohol; and
- d) any costs incurred for immediate family members/associates/partners to attend conferences and events (other than in the case of attendance of a Councillor's partner at a conference or seminar where the presence of their partner is necessary to support the business or representational needs of Council).

7.8 Applications for Reimbursement of Expenses

All applications for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses must be:

- made using the *Councillor Expense Reimbursement* form available in the Councillor Portal²;
- submitted within 60 days³ of the expense being incurred;
- accompanied by proof of expenditure, such as a tax invoice (credit card/EFT receipts will not be accepted);
- specify the name and purpose of the event/function associated with the expenditure; and
- signed by the Councillor to declare that the expense meets the requirements of section 40(1) of the Act.

Late claims will not be accepted.

Applications for reimbursement of expenses related to personal vehicle use must include the odometer reading at the start and end of each trip and will be referenced back to the Councillors diary for accuracy. If a journey includes elements of both performing the role of a Councillor and private use, only a proportion of travel commensurate with performing the role of a Councillor can be claimed.

Reimbursements will not be approved without sufficient evidence and will be paid by accounts payable on a fortnightly basis into the nominated bank account after approval is given by the CEO.

8. Professional Development

For the purposes of this section, **professional development** is defined as any activity that improves and/or increases the professional knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness of a Councillor. This includes (but is not limited to) activities such as courses, workshops, conferences, seminars and coaching.

8.1 Annual Professional Development

Section 33A of the Act requires all Councillors to complete professional development training each year of their term, beginning in the year following their election. This training must address the matters prescribed by Regulation 6A(2) and on completion, Councillors must make a written declaration before the Chief Executive Officer by 31 December, (or 1 September in an election year). Failure to do so will result in the allowance being withheld until the training is completed and a declaration made (section 33B).

Council will deliver annual training to the Councillor group to cover the prescribed matters, however Councillors can request support under this policy to undertake additional professional development activities to address specific skills or knowledge gaps, or areas of interest.

8.2 Conferences and Seminars

Attendance at relevant conferences and seminars is considered necessary for effective representation and advocacy for the Shire and supports the professional development of Councillors in their role.

² If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, reimbursement claim forms will be made available in the relevant Committee's portal.

³ Where there is an upcoming Council election, all claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted by the end of the Council term.

Councillors may attend seminars and conferences that:

- relate directly to performing official Council duties; or
- are organised by a Local Government peak body/association; and
- have a demonstrable benefit for the East Gippsland Shire community.

Councillors must discuss proposed attendance at conferences and seminars with the CEO.

8.3 Budget

Each Councillor may access up to \$5,000 per financial year to fund approved additional professional development activities, including attendance at conferences and Seminars. With prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer, Councillors may access additional funding in a specific year provided the expenditure does not exceed \$20,000 across the four-year term of office, or pro-rata equivalent for Councillors appointed between general elections.

8.4 Applications for Professional Development

Councillors are required to discuss their interest in undertaking professional development activities with the CEO in the first instance.

To assist the discussion, Councillors are encouraged to provide the following information:

- details of the activity and any supporting information (for example a brochure or website link);
- how the activity will support and/or improve your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Councillor;
- cost of the activity;
- time commitment required;
- additional expenses that may be incurred such as travel and/or accommodation; and/or
- whether the activity can be completed within the Council term.

All arrangements associated with approved Councillor professional development activities (including registration, travel and accommodation/meals) will be organised through the Councillor Support Officer.

8.5 Accountability

Where Professional Development activities involve interstate or overseas travel Councillors must complete a *Record of Interstate or Overseas Travel* form providing details of the date, destination, purpose and total cost of the travel.

After attending a conference or seminar Councillors are required to provide a report to the next Council meeting. The summary should outline the benefits of the professional development activity to themselves personally, to Council and/or the East Gippsland Shire community.

9. Motor Vehicles

Several key principals underpin the provision and allocation of vehicles to Councillors, with the following applicable:

- a) Travel is a requirement of Councillors and vehicles are made available primarily to support the Councillor to perform their role.
- b) The type of vehicles provided will be fit for purpose for performing the role of a Councillor.
- c) Vehicles will be selected in the most cost effective, environmentally conscious, and socially responsible way.
- d) Private use of vehicles will require a contribution by the beneficiary commensurate with the additional costs incurred for that use.

9.1 Motor Vehicle Options

Councillors are provided with a range of options related to travel using motor vehicles for Council Business. These options include:

- provision of a Council vehicle with full private use;
- provision of a Council vehicle for business use only; and
- use of a Council Fleet vehicle or private vehicle.

Council has set targets for the take up of electric vehicles in the Council fleet, in the Council Plan, which electric Councillor vehicles will assist to achieve.

All vehicles will be provided with a first aid kit. Vehicles which are used in isolated and remote areas may also be fitted with additional safety and telecommunication equipment. Smoking is not permitted in any Council vehicle.

Option 1: Council Vehicle, Full Private Use

Councillors may elect to be provided with use of a Council vehicle that is available for use for both performing the role of a Councillor and private purposes, subject only to the restriction outlined in section 9.5 *Use of Council Vehicles during the Election Period*.

As a general policy, small to medium-sized cars and SUVs will be allocated. However, alternative vehicle types may be approved at the discretion of the CEO. Councillor vehicles are turned over on a four-yearly cycle. The organisation will not provide six-cylinder vehicles unless there is a specific business need, with the fleet predominantly four-cylinder or hybrid vehicles. Vehicles will generally be of a mid-range specification. Electric models will be made available if supply and servicing networks are adequate within the municipal district, vehicles are fit for purpose in performing the role of a Councillor and represent a cost-effective option.

The Councillor will be required to make a contribution, as determined by Council from time-to-time, via a deduction from their Councillor allowance, the proportion of the total vehicle ownership costs, that it is equivalent to the proportion of private use. The selection of vehicle type by the Councillor will have a bearing on these costs.

Councillors are required to keep a logbook of vehicle use for performing the role of a Councillor and private usage for a three-month period during the first 12 months of the Council term, at a minimum. Further data collection may be required throughout a Councillor's term to validate the arrangements in place.

A Councillor's annual contribution in recognition of the private use component of their Councillor vehicle will be revised and adjusted if necessary, based on logbook data.

SUVs will be fitted with a standard tow-pack acknowledging this is a standard item on this type of vehicle.

Requests for additional equipment or accessories may be made to the General Manager Assets and Environment for review before approval by the CEO. If approved, additional vehicle equipment or accessories will be fitted at the Councillor's expense. Accessories requiring any structural modification to the vehicle or effecting its roadworthiness or safety systems will not be considered.

A vehicle provided under this category entitles the Councillor and the Councillor's immediate family to use the vehicle for private use and for the Councillor to perform their role.

A copy of the driver's licence for each Councillor and their nominated alternate driver must be provided.

In the event of a Councillor taking a leave of absence, or when suspended or stood down, they will return their vehicle to a nominated location. Councillors are not required to make a private use vehicle contribution during this time.

Option 2: Council Vehicle, Business Use Only

Provision of a Council vehicle for business use only is to be made available to a Councillor for performing their role only if the cost of that vehicle is determined to be less than their estimated travel reimbursement expenses, representing the lowest cost option. A determination regarding provision of a Council vehicle for business use only requires approval by the CEO with consideration to logbook data and Councillors proximity to Council Fleet vehicles.

A vehicle provided in accordance with this option is for the sole purpose of the Councillor performing their role and must not be used for private purposes. A logbook detailing use must be maintained.

No contribution to vehicle costs is required from a Councillor in accordance with this option.

Option 3: No Vehicle

Where a Councillor does not elect to be provided with a Council vehicle, they are to utilise Council Fleet Pool Vehicles. Where the use of Council Fleet Pool Vehicles is not possible or practical, Councillors may make a claim for reimbursement for use of their own private vehicle for performing their role as a Councillor.

The rate of reimbursement for use of privately-owned vehicles is set at the Australian Taxation Office rate for motor vehicle expenses, based on the cents per kilometre method, adjusted annually.

A claim for private use of privately-owned vehicles must be made in accordance with section 7.8 of this Policy.

9.2 Fines and Infringements

Under no circumstances will Council reimburse or pay the cost of any fine or expenses incurred by the driver of a Council vehicle if that person infringes against road traffic regulations, local laws of any local government with respect to parking restrictions, or any other regulation that relates to the use of vehicles. The onus for the payment of a fine or other cost resides with the offender.

9.3 Servicing and Maintenance

Where a vehicle has been allocated to a Councillor, the Councillor will ensure the vehicle remains in a clean and tidy condition.

It is the Councillor's responsibility to ensure that the vehicles are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended servicing schedule and remain in a roadworthy condition at all times. This responsibility is limited to ensuring that regular fluid and tyre pressure checks are carried out, vehicle servicing is current, and any obvious tyre, windscreen or other wear or abnormal noises are reported to the Councillor Support Officer.

Councillors will make their own arrangements for servicing of their vehicle with the relevant dealership. Details are provided on the Councillor Vehicle Information Sheet which is located in the glove box.

9.4 Vehicle Breakdown and Accidents

All Councillor vehicle related matters, including breakdowns and accidents, must be reported to the Councillor Support Officer.

Procedures relating to breakdowns and accidents are provided on the Councillor Vehicle Information Sheet found in the glove box of Councillor's vehicles.

In instances where multiple at-fault incidents result in damage to Council vehicles, Councillors may be required to contribute (in each case) up to \$400 to the cost of insurance excess costs. For drivers under the age of 25, the contribution will additionally include any excess that applies above the standard excess nominated in Council's vehicle insurance policy.

9.5 Use of Council Vehicles during the Election Period

During the Election Period, Councillors are not permitted to use Council vehicles in connection with election campaigning, unless a full private use arrangement is in place.

10. Reporting

All reimbursements and expenses paid to or for Councillors or members of a delegated committee will be recorded and categorised as either:

- travel expenses;
- professional development expenses; or
- expenses to support the performance of the role.

Details of all Councillor expenses will be provided to the Audit and Risk Committee quarterly.

A summary of Councillor expenses will be published on Council's website following the report to the Audit and Risk Committee. Councillors can view the report in the Audit and Risk Committee meeting papers.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The following teams or positions have direct and/or supporting responsibilities associated with this Policy:

Position	Roles and Responsibilities
Councillors	Understand and act in accordance with their responsibilities and compliance with this Policy.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	<p>Advise all Councillors and members of delegated committees of their responsibilities under this Policy.</p> <p>Approve claims for reimbursement of Councillor's out-of-pocket expenses.</p> <p>Approve support, expenses and reimbursements which are not specifically identified in this Policy.</p>
Manager Governance and Regulatory Services	<p>Review the Policy to reflect legislative requirements and best practice for transparency of Councillor expenses and reimbursements of out-of-pocket claims.</p> <p>Provide advice to Councillors regarding support, expenses and out-of-pocket reimbursement.</p>
Councillor Support Officer	<p>Support Councillors to comply with this Policy by providing training and education on completing applications for reimbursement of expenses or professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Provide quarterly reports to the Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p>Making necessary arrangements for travel, accommodation or professional development.</p> <p>Processing all forms submitted under this Policy for review and approval by the CEO.</p> <p>Advise the CEO of any discrepancies that may occur with claims.</p>
Finance Team	Process reimbursements of expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.
Member of a Delegated Committee (who is not a Councillor)	Understand and act in accordance with their responsibilities and comply with this Policy.

12. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Act	Local Government Act 2020.
Chief Executive Officer	The person appointed by a Council under section 44 of the Act to be its Chief Executive Officer or any person acting in that position.
Council	East Gippsland Shire Council.
Councillor	A person who has been elected to the office of "Councillor" of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Delegated committee	The meaning given in the Act.
Council Officer	A current member of East Gippsland Shire Council staff with the authority to engage in activities on behalf of Council.
Shire	The geographic area of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Staff	All staff engaged by East Gippsland Shire Council, including all full-time, part-time, and casual employees, labour hire agency staff and contractors.

13. Human Rights

Council is committed to upholding the Human Rights principles as outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter). This Policy has been assessed as compliant with the obligations and objectives of the Charter.

14. Gender Equality

This Policy has considered the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in its preparation and has been assessed as not requiring an Equity Impact Assessment (EIA) as it does not impact on members of the community.

15. Risk Reference

This Policy is implemented as a control to mitigate risks in the following categories:

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Environmental		Technology and Information Management	✓
Health and Safety	✓	Assets, Facilities and Security	✓
Project, Product and Service Delivery		Human Resources	
Financial and Economic	✓	Procurement	✓
Leadership and Political Awareness	✓	Corporate Governance and Compliance	✓
Reputation and Corporate Image	✓	Legal	✓

16. References and Supporting Documents

16.1 Applicable Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

16.2 Applicable Policy and Procedure

- Governance Rules
- Council Representation Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Vehicle Policy

16.3 Supporting Documents

- Local Government Inspectorate Report – Councillor expenses and allowances: equitable treatment and enhanced integrity
- Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination – Refer Schedule
- Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal – Allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors – Refer Schedule

17. Review and Revision History

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Review Summary
1	25/08/2020	Council	Update to comply with <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and update information relevant to actual practice, including removal of forms in appendix.
2	24/08/2021	Council	Reviewed in relation to <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and Local Government Inspectorate Report – Overview of Councillor support and expenses policy.
3	19/11/2021	CEO	Administrative change approved by CEO to include reference to tow pack for SUVs and 4x4s.
4	08/11/2022	Council	Updated to reflect Councillor Allowances as per the Tribunal outcome and updated Standards of accommodation and meals to reflect ATO allowances
5	16/02/2023	CEO	Remote Travel Allowance clause updated to reflect the increase in allowance, as per LG Remuneration Tribunal advice dated 8 December 2022.
6	07/07/2023	CEO	Administrative updates – Remote Travel Allowance increased to reflect Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Review Summary
			Annual Adjustment Determination 2023 and Standard of accommodation and meals to reflect ATO Determination TD 2023/3
7	16/07/2024	Acting CEO	Administrative updates – Remote Travel Allowance increased to reflect Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal Annual Adjustment Determination 2024 and reasonable meal allowance to reflect ATO Determination TD 2024/3
8			

17.1 Administrative Updates

Minor amendments to this document may be required from time to time. Where amendments do not materially alter the intent of a document, they will be made administratively and approved by the Document Owner.

17.2 Document Control Disclaimer

Printed copies of this document are considered uncontrolled. Please refer to the Corporate Document Register on Council's intranet to access the most current version of this document.

Schedule 1: Allowance Rates for Reimbursement of Expenses

Allowance Type	Rate
Allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal	East Gippsland Shire Council – Category 2 Effective from 1 July 2025 - (\$ per annum) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor \$115,347 • Deputy Mayor \$ 57,673 • Councillors \$ 35,049
Remote Area Travel Allowance Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal	Effective from 1 July 2025 \$48.90 for each day on which one or more meetings were attended, up to a maximum of \$6,112.50 per annum
Meal Allowance Expense amounts Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination	Tier 2 Country Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast \$34.75 • Lunch \$39.10 • Dinner \$66.65 Other Country Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast \$31.15 • Lunch \$35.55 • Dinner \$61.30 Melbourne or other capital cities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast \$34.75 • Lunch \$39.10 • Dinner \$66.65
Private Vehicle Use Reimbursement for Travel Australian Taxation Office	88 cents per kilometre for 2025-26

5.2.2 Summary of Councillor Briefing Sessions

Authorised by General Manager Business Excellence

Purpose

To provide a summary of topics discussed at recent Councillor Briefings.

Key Points

Councillor Briefings, while not formal decision-making forums, play a critical role in providing Councillors with information necessary for effective decision-making at formal Council meetings.

The provision of publicly available summaries of topics discussed during Councillor Briefings represents an opportunity to further enhance community understanding and trust in Council's deliberative processes.

At its meeting held on 10 June 2025 Council resolved to release summaries of Councillor Briefing session discussion topics in the monthly Council Meeting agenda to provide the community with greater insight into Councillor Briefing discussions.

This report includes notes from Councillor Briefings held on:

- Tuesday 12 August 2025;
- Tuesday 19 August 2025;
- Tuesday 26 August 2025; and
- Tuesday 2 September 2025.

The notes from each of these Councillor Briefings are provided in **Attachments 1–4**.

Recommendation

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

Strategic Alignment

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following theme in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 4: Managing Council well

Outcome – Council operates transparently and effectively with public trust

Climate change

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

Conflicts of Interest

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

Attachments

1. Councillor Briefing Notes - 12 August 2025 [**5.2.2.1** - 2 pages]
2. Councillor Briefing Notes - 19 August 2025 [**5.2.2.2** - 2 pages]
3. Councillor Briefing Notes - 26 August 2025 [**5.2.2.3** - 3 pages]
4. Councillor Briefing Notes - 2 September 2025 [**5.2.2.4** - 3 pages]



Councillor Briefing Notes

Tuesday 12 August 2025 at 11.00 am

273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875

Attendance

Mayor

Cr John White

Deputy Mayor

Cr Sonia Buckley

Councillors

Cr Arthur Allen

Cr Jodie Ashworth

Cr Barry Davis

Cr Joanne Eastman

Cr Bernie Farquhar

Cr Ian Trevaskis

Council Officers

Fiona Weigall

Stuart McConnell

Sarah Johnston

Chris Stephenson

Chief Executive Officer

General Manager Assets and Environment

General Manager Business Excellence

General Manager Place and Community

Absent

Cr Tom Crook

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil

Councillor Briefing Session

Presentation

1.1 Anglicare Financial Counselling

Councillors received a presentation from Anglicare Victoria outlining the financial counselling services they provide.

The presentation highlighted the crucial role these services play in supporting community members facing financial stress and helping them work towards financial stability.

Council's Hardship Policy ensures that people experiencing genuine financial difficulty due to illness, job loss or natural disasters have a fair way to seek assistance. Council has a strong working relationship with Anglicare Vic.

1.2 Developer Presentation

Councillors received a presentation on development opportunities in Bairnsdale.

1.3 Councillor Professional Development Session: Planning Skills Workshop

Councillors had a two-hour workshop with a Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Planning trainer on Councillors role in planning processes, policies, and legislation.

General Business

Rates Notice

Councillors discussed the Rates Notice and layout prior to being distributed to the community.

Meeting Close

Meeting closed at: 5.36 pm

Approved by: Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer



Councillor Briefing Notes

Tuesday 19 August 2025 at 2.30 pm

273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875

Attendance

Mayor

Cr John White

Deputy Mayor

Cr Sonia Buckley

Councillors

Cr Arthur Allen
Cr Jodie Ashworth
Cr Tom Crook

Cr Barry Davis
Cr Bernie Farquhar
Cr Ian Trevaskis

Council Officers

Fiona Weigall
Stuart McConnell
Sarah Johnston
Chris Stephenson

Chief Executive Officer
General Manager Assets and Environment
General Manager Business Excellence
General Manager Place and Community

Apologies

Cr Joanne Eastman

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil

Councillor Briefing Session

Council Meeting Agenda Discussion

1.1 Council Meeting Agenda Discussion

Councillors and Officers reviewed the agenda for the Council meeting today, Tuesday 19 August 2025 and raised any matters for discussion prior to the meeting.

Councillors and Officers discussed petitions, public submissions, request to speak and order of the Council meeting, as there will have a large number of members of the community speaking and attending in the gallery.

Meeting Close

Meeting closed at: 4.43 pm

Approved by: Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer



Councillor Briefing Notes

Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 10.00 am

273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875

Attendance

Mayor

Cr John White

Deputy Mayor

Cr Sonia Buckley (Online)

Councillors

Cr Arthur Allen

Cr Jodie Ashworth

Cr Tom Crook

Cr Barry Davis (Online)

Cr Joanne Eastman

Cr Bernie Farquhar

Council Officers

Fiona Weigall

Stuart McConnell

Sarah Johnston

Chris Stephenson

Chief Executive Officer

General Manager Assets and Environment

General Manager Business Excellence

General Manager Place and Community

Apologies

Cr Ian Trevaskis

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil

Councillor Briefing Session

Business Excellence

1.1 Strategic Risk Management

Councillors were briefed on the draft Risk Management Policy, inclusive of proposed Appetite and Tolerance Statements for discussion and to understand Councillors risk appetite. This will inform further work on the policy prior to it being presented to Council for formal consideration.

1.2 Local Law Review

Councillors were workshopping and discussed information regarding requirements for making and reviewing the local laws.

Place and Community

2.1 Release of the East Gippsland Investment Prospectus

Councillors were provided with an overview of the East Gippsland Investment Prospectus that identifies and promotes the key investment opportunities across the region and will directly support delivery of the Council Plan 2025–2029 and the Economic Development Strategy 2022–2032.

2.2 Reconciliation Action Plan Update

Councillors were provided with an overview of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2025–2027 which is an operational framework that supports Council's commitment to reconciliation, cultural safety, and inclusive service delivery.

Assets and Environment

3.1 Raymond Island Ferry Portable Passes

Councillors discussed a range of requirements for fees and charges for the Raymond Island Ferry and considered potential options to address some of the current challenges with the portable pass system, while balancing broader financial implications.

Reports to Future Council Meeting

4.1 Bairnsdale Airport Runway Upgrade

Councillors were briefed on the Bairnsdale Airport runway upgrade project, detailing strategic importance, funding arrangements, stakeholder support, and risks. Councillors noted that a report will be presented to Council on the 16 September 2025 for consideration.

General Business

Discussed Community site visits and when these were to occur.

Meeting Close

Meeting closed at: 6.08 pm

Approved by: Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer



Councillor Briefing Notes

Tuesday 2 September 2025 at 10.00 am

273 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875

Attendance

Mayor

Cr John White

Deputy Mayor

Cr Sonia Buckley (Online)

Councillors

Cr Arthur Allen

Cr Jodie Ashworth

Cr Tom Crook

Cr Barry Davis (Online)

Cr Joanne Eastman

Cr Bernie Farquhar

Cr Ian Trevaskis

Council Officers

Fiona Weigall

Tegan Vanderslik

Sarah Johnston

Chris Stephenson

Chief Executive Officer

Acting General Manager Assets and Environment

General Manager Business Excellence

General Manager Place and Community

Apologies

Stuart McConnell General Manager Assets and Environment

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil

Assets and Environment

1.1 Road Maintenance, Renewal and Upgrade Process

Councillors were briefed on Council's road maintenance, renewal and upgrade processes.

Business Excellence

2.1 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting 25 August 2025

Councillors were briefed on outcomes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 25 August 2025, noting that the full minutes from the meeting will also be presented formally to Council via inclusion in a future Council Meeting.

2.2 Annual Report 2024-25 - 2nd Draft

Councillors were briefed on the draft Annual Report 2024-25.

2.3 **CONFIDENTIAL** Personnel Matter

Confidentiality Notice

The information contained in this report is confidential under section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act* 2020 because it relates to: (f) Personal Information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

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 disclose personal information about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), including performance expectations and employment-related matters.

Place and Community

3.1 Open Space Strategy

Councillors were briefed on the draft East Gippsland Shire Council Open Space Strategy 2025-2035. The Strategy aims to establish a strategic vision and provide a high-level overarching long-term framework to guide the future planning, development, provision, and management of open space within East Gippsland. The strategy will be complemented with an additional Bushland Strategy (work in progress) that will provide similar guidelines for the management of natural areas. The Strategy has included extensive consultation and will be released to the community for one final round of consultation prior to being brought to Council for formal consideration.

3.2 Slipway Proposed Concept Plan

Councillors were briefed on the proposed site layout and future improvement options for the Old Slipway in Lakes Entrance, noting that the site is currently under an existing commercial lease and licence.

3.3 Holiday Trading Activation Workshop

Councillors workshopped the development of a holiday trading activation program over the peak trading period, with a focus on initiatives that support economic outcomes across the Shire.

Reports to Future Council Meeting

4.1 Annual Allocation Policy Review

A final draft of the annual allocations policy was discussed with the Councillors, with the policy guiding how funds to support minor maintenance are allocated across approximately 80 volunteer run committees of management managing recreation reserves and halls. Councillors noted the draft report, which will be submitted to the Tuesday 16 September 2025 Council Meeting for consideration and that further work is also being undertaken to review the criteria used to set the allocation amounts. This review will lead to further amendments of the policy at a later date.

4.2 Councillor Support and Expenses Policy

Councillors were briefed on proposed changes to the draft Councillor Support and Expenses Policy. These changes which stemmed from an earlier workshop with the Councillor group. The Policy specifies the requirement for Councils to establish and maintain an expenses policy that addresses the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Councillors and members of delegated committees, where applicable. Councillors also discussed how the vast size of the shire could be considered within the policy settings to ensure that remote candidates are encouraged to stand for Council. The draft policy will now be presented to Council on Tuesday 16 September 2025 Council Meeting for consideration.

Meeting Close

Meeting closed at: 4.25pm

Approved by: Fiona Weigall Chief Executive Officer

5.3 Place and Community

5.3.1 Annual Allocation Policy Review

Authorised by General Manager Place and Community

Purpose

The report seeks Council approval to adopt a revised Annual Allocation Policy that governs funding to community groups managing local facilities.

Key Points

Council's Annual Allocations policy provides the basis for equitable allocation to Committees of Management (Committees) responsible for community and recreation facilities throughout East Gippsland.

The Annual Allocation policy has been reviewed and transcribed to the new Council policy template. The only change is the removal of the Schedule of Committees of Management in receipt of Annual Allocations, all other functions remain the same.

Officers have removed the Schedule of Committee of Management in Receipt of Annual Allocations from the policy to allow Council to be more flexible in the adjustment of the schedule, without seeking a Council motion to approve changes.

The schedule appended to this document details the current Committee's receipt of annual allocations.

Funding Model

Council reserves the right to reduce or cease funding to any Committee which:

- Is unable to demonstrate a community benefit deriving from the Committee operations
- does not fairly or equitably charge user groups or clubs to generate reasonable income levels based on the standard of the facility
- is self-sufficient and/or operates significant fundraising or commercial interests.

The current payment formula (Table 1) does not allow Council to provide funds that would promote the usage of facility. It encourages Committees to build and/or improve the facility to raise the value and revenue.

Asset Valuation

The valuation of assets is a key factor within the policy. Officers note that currently the property valuation on some facilities is decreasing. At many sites this results in the Annual Allocation decreasing while maintenance costs increase. This will be a factor that is reviewed in a future review of the policy.

Total Annual Allocation (AA) payments have increased considerably over the last 4 years, due to rising value of a few facilities,

<u>Year</u>	<u>AA Total Cost</u>
2020-21	\$222,351.73
2021-22	\$246,212.93
2022-23	\$268,713.93
2023-24	\$289,024.63
2024-25	\$293,442.94 (as per current policy)

Predicted rising land value will continue to increase the Annual Allocation Payment

Officers wait for an independent valuation to be completed prior to any funds being allocated.

The breakdown of allocation for the current policy includes a split of Council managed facilities, Crown owned and Crown managed facilities and privately owned and privately managed facilities. The 2024 allocation is in table 1 below.

Table 1

	Number	2024 Allocations
Council managed	33	\$ 186,678.24
Crown owned & crown managed	38	\$ 90,931.65
Private/Trust	4	\$ 15,833.05
Total Allocation		\$ 293,442.94

Recommendation

That Council adopts the draft Annual Allocation Policy as presented at Attachment 1.

Strategic Alignment

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following theme set out in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 1 – Community Wellbeing and Social Responsibility

Outcome – A connected and inclusive community, where no one is left behind

Priority – We work with local communities to deliver a shared future

Consultation/Community Engagement/Impacts

The current policy is being revised and presented with no significant change.

Council Officers are currently reviewing the criteria used to determine annual allocations. Following this review the policy will again be revised with more changes expected. The policy will then be re-presented to Council for consideration.

It is via this process more broader community consultation and engagement will take place.

In the interim, there is a need for Council to have a current Annual Allocations policy to guide the release of funds in 2025/26.

Opportunities and Risks

There is risk if the policy is not adopted, allocations to Committees for the 2025/26 financial year will be delayed. With delayed funding some Committees will find it challenging to keep some of their assets operational.

Climate change

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

Options

Option 1 – adopt an amended version of the existing Annual Allocations Policy that inherits the current funding allocation formula and delegations.

Option 2 – do not adopt amended version of the existing Annual Allocations Policy.

Conflicts of Interest

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

Attachments

1. Annual Allocation Council Policy [5.3.1.1 - 8 pages]



ANNUAL ALLOCATIONS POLICY

(COMMITTEES OF MANAGEMENT
FACILITIES / RECREATION RESERVES / COMMUNITY HALLS)

Table of Contents

1. Purpose.....3

2. Scope3

3. Context3

4. Statement.....3

4.1 Sub-Heading3

5. Roles and Responsibilities3

6. Definitions.....4

7. Human Rights.....4

8. Gender Equality.....4

9. Risk Reference5

10. References and Supporting Documents.....5

10.1 Applicable Legislation:5

10.2 Applicable Policy and Procedure:5

10.3 Supporting Documents:5

11. Review and Revision History5

11.1 Administrative Updates5

11.2 Document Control Disclaimer.....6

1. Purpose

To provide equitable allocation of funds to Incorporated Committees of Management ('Committee') who are responsible for community and recreation facilities throughout East Gippsland Shire.

2. Scope

This Policy will guide Council officers on the annual allocation of funds to Committees of Management ('Committee') who are responsible for community and recreation facilities throughout East Gippsland Shire.

3. Context

Council plays a crucial role in supporting recreation and community facilities across the shire. These facilities are vital for promoting physical activity, social connection, and overall well-being among residents of all ages and abilities. By actively supporting and investing in these spaces, Council aims to create accessible and inclusive opportunities for leisure, learning, and community engagement, enhancing the quality of life for everyone in the region.

4. Statement

This policy provides fair and consistent funding formula for the distribution of annual funding to a committee that occupies a facility on Council-owned or Council-managed Crown land, or, where land is occupied under an acceptable deed or trust for non-profit bodies incorporated within East Gippsland Shire who are gazetted managers by the Department Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)>

4.1 Calculation of annual funding assistance allocations

The following formula will be used to determine annual funding allocations to Committees:

Annual Funding Allocation (AFA) = CBP + MM + CA + PO + WS + MO

Where:

CBP = Community Benefit Payment

MM = Minor Maintenance allocation

CA = Consumer Affairs Victoria annual statement lodging fee for incorporated associations

PO = Post office box annual rental

WS = Water service charge for larger tapplings

MO = Amount in lieu of mowing (where applicable).>

4.2 Community benefit payment

The base level of Council funding to Committees is the Community Benefit Payment, which will be

calculated as follows:

- \$250 for halls and small reserves

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Version Number:

Next Review Date:

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Page 3 of 8

- \$375 for combined hall and small reserve facilities
- \$500 larger reserves and indoor sports centers.

4.3 Minor maintenance

Council's contribution towards minor maintenance will be equivalent to 1% of Council's capital improved valuation of the relevant Committee's buildings, up to a maximum annual minor maintenance contribution per Committee of \$10,000, or the Committee's 2012/13 minor maintenance allocation, whichever is the greater amount

4.4 Fixed Costs

The following fixed costs are included in annual allocation payments, where the costs have been incurred by Committees:

- Post office box rental, to encourage Committees to have a fixed mailing address regardless of a change in office bearers;
- Consumer Affairs Victoria annual statement lodging fee, to ensure Committees comply with the minimum standard in financial reporting; and
- Water meter service charges up to a maximum of a 50mm water meter, to encourage Committees to have the correct sized meter rather than one which is larger than required.

4.5 Annual financial return and activity report

The disbursement of an annual allocation payment to a Committee will be made following the Committee's submission to Council of satisfactory financial statements, and report on the activity of the Committee and the users of its facility.

Committees will be required to provide Council with a copy of the Committee's financial statements for the most recent financial year, as well as other relevant financial details as Council may require, such as user annual fee's

This process enables Council officers to undertake a proper review of each Committee's financial position, including income and expenditure prior to an annual funding allocation being made.

Committee's will be required to provide information about themselves and user groups as requested to allow Council officers to measure against council policies

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following teams or positions have direct and/or supporting responsibilities associated with this Policy:

Position	Roles and Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	Overall responsibility for policy implementation and compliance

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Document Number:
Version Number: 6

Next Review Date:
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Page 4 of 8

Position	Roles and Responsibilities
General Manager Place and Community	Responsibility for policy implementation and compliance. Approval of Committees to receive a Annual Allocation
Manager Finance	Manage the relevant responsibilities and processes associated with management accounting, financial accounting and asset accounting services
Manager Recreation Facilities	Oversee the calculation and distribution of annual allocation funds and provide strategic oversight of this policy and provide recommendations to the General Manager and Council in accordance with this policy as required
Community Facilities Projects Officer	Undertake the calculation and distribution of annual allocation funds, ensuring that allocations are made only to eligible Committees and in accordance with this policy

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6. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Action Officer	Member of East Gippsland Shire Council staff responsible for answering or responding to a request for information.
Community	People who live in East Gippsland; People and organisations who are ratepayers in East Gippsland; and People and organisations who conduct activities in East Gippsland.
Contractor	Person or company engaged to undertake works for Council, including service providers / service partners.
Council	East Gippsland Shire Council.
Councillor	A person who has been elected to the office of “Councillor” of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Council Officer	A current member of East Gippsland Shire Council staff with the authority to engage in activities on behalf of Council.
Responsible Officer	The staff member of East Gippsland Shire Council who has responsibility for the general area/subject matter to which a record pertains.
Shire	The geographic area of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Staff	All staff engaged by East Gippsland Shire Council, including all full-time, part-time, and casual employees, labour hire agency staff and contractors.
Volunteer	Formally recognised, unpaid member of the public who assists with the provision of Council services e.g. Visitor Information Centre, Library.

7. Human Rights

Council is committed to upholding the Human Rights principles as outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter). This Policy has been assessed as compliant with the obligations and objectives of the Charter.

8. Gender Equality

This Policy has considered the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in its preparation and has been assessed as not requiring an Equity Impact Assessment (EIA).

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Document Number:
Version Number:
Next Review Date:

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Page 6 of 8

9. Risk Reference

This Policy is implemented as a control to mitigate risks in the following categories:

Risk Category	✎ Risk Category	✎
Environmental	Technology and Information Management	
Health and Safety	Assets, Facilities and Security	
Project, Product and Service Delivery	Human Resources	
Financial and Economic	Procurement	
Leadership and Political Awareness	Corporate Governance and Compliance	
Reputation and Corporate Image	Legal	

10. References and Supporting Documents

10.1 Applicable Legislation:

Gender Equality Act 2020

Local Government Act 2020

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

10.2 Applicable Policy and Procedure:

Asset Management Policy

Code of Conduct

Customer Response Policy

Procurement Policy Enter

10.3 Supporting Documents:

Council Plan 2025 –2029, Theme 1 – Community wellbeing and social responsibility.

Committee of Management agreements between Council and the respective Committees.

Schedule of current committees.

Privacy and Human Rights Consideration Enter Text

11. Review and Revision History

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Review Summary
Original	28/02/2000	Council	Approved

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Document Number:

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Page 7 of 8

	03/10/2006	Council	Amended facilities listing / Approved
4249960	05/04/2011	Council	Comprehensive review and new formula / Approved
5267022	07/05/2013	Council	Approved
7188656	09/05/2017	Council	Amended

11.1 Administrative Updates

Minor amendments to this document may be required from time to time. Where amendments do not materially alter the intent of a document, they will be made administratively and approved by the Document Owner.

11.2 Document Control Disclaimer

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Page 8 of 8

5.3.2 Confirmed Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee Minutes and Unconfirmed Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes

Authorised by General Manager Place and Community

Purpose

This report provides Council with the confirmed minutes of the Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee (ASAC) meeting held on 8 May 2025, provided at **Attachment 1** for noting and the unconfirmed minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meeting of 29 May 2025, provided at **Attachment 2** for noting.

Key Points

The **ASAC** provides advice, guidance, and recommendations to Council on matters that affect the agriculture sector in East Gippsland and its communities.

The roles and responsibilities of the ASAC are set out in the Charter.

Key agenda items for discussion at the 8 May 2025 meeting included a discussion with TAFE Gippsland on Education Pathways for Agriculture. Council Officers provided an update on the East Gippsland Saleyards Review and presented Council's approach to roadside weed and pest management. A presentation provided an overview of Council's financial approach to the draft budget. Committee members drew attention to concerns of U.S imposed tariffs on beef.

Importantly, this was the final meeting of the current cohort of ASAC members, with eight members completing their four-year term. Committee members provided reflections on achievements and members were acknowledged for their service and participation.

The following advice for Council was minuted:

1. Confirm whether Council will nominate a representative to join the Tertiary Education working group focused on developing an industry-responsive training model.
2. Update on the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange review to be provided at the August ASAC meeting following consideration by Council.
3. Council to consider methods to increase education for weed management and advocacy into Government around adequate funding.
4. Form a sub-group to meet with the Manager Planning and Development to:
 - Provide an overview of the Council's Planning functions affecting agricultural activity
 - Enable ASAC members to raise and discuss Planning matters of interest
 - Provide a forum for ASAC feedback on Planning matters affecting the agricultural sector
 - Facilitate an understanding of the role of Council in land use planning.
5. Include a dedicated agenda item at the next meeting to allow time for discussion on the economic impacts of offshore renewable energy projects in the Gippsland region.

The **EDAC** provides advice, guidance and recommendations to Council on matters that affect Economic Development in East Gippsland and its communities.

The roles and responsibilities of the Committee are set out in the Economic Development Advisory Committee Charter.

Key agenda items for discussion at the 29 May 2025 meeting included discussion on Cyber security awareness, Forestry Transition Advocacy and Regional Marketing. Council's Manager Economic Development provided an update on activities and deliverables under Focus Area 2 of the Economic Development Strategy – A High Value and Sustainable Food and Fibre Sector.

The following advice for Council was minuted:

1. Develop a campaign or utilise existing government assets around cybersecurity awareness for businesses, featuring real-life examples and advice on the council's website. Work with other parts of Council to rollout education for older adults through community groups and organisations.
2. Maintain and expand one-on-one business support linked to the Forestry Transition Fund, with updates to be shared at the next meeting.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the:

1. ***confirmed minutes from the Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee (ASAC) meeting held on 8 May 2025; and***
2. ***unconfirmed minutes from the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meeting held on 29 May 2025.***

Strategic Alignment

This report has been prepared and aligned with the following theme in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 2: Prosperity

Outcome – Thriving, self-sufficient communities with strong local businesses and social enterprises.

Climate change

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

Conflicts of Interest

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

Attachments

1. Confirmed Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee Minutes - 8 May 2025 [**5.3.2.1** - 5 pages]
2. Unconfirmed minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee Minutes - 29 May 2025 [**5.3.2.2** - 4 pages]

East Gippsland Shire Council Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee

Confirmed Minutes

For meeting held on
Thursday 8 May 2025

7.30am to 9.30am Council Chambers 273 Main Street Bairnsdale



1. Procedural

Attendees: Alison Gunn, Bruce Weston, Wayne Dredge, Dave Caldwell, Jen Smith, Ken Eckersley, Nick Blanford, Cr. Ian Trevaskis, Cr. John White, Fiona Weigall, Chris Stephenson, Prue McTaggart, Kaylene Wickham.

Guests: Kate Allen, Martin Richardson, Sam Forbes, Stuart McConnell, Tegan Vanderslik.

Online: Rod Hayes, Trevor Caithness

Guests: Laura MacPherson, Louise Underhill,

Chair: Mayor Cr. John White.

Minute taker: Andie McCullagh (EGSC).

Item 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

Item 1.2 Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced with a welcome and a moment of reflection on the significance of the occasion, as it marked a transition in committee membership. The Chair acknowledged the valuable contributions of outgoing members, highlighting the strong camaraderie and notable achievements of the committee over the years.

Apologies were noted by Bec Hemming, Emily Richardson, Matt Zagami.

Item 1.3 Confirmation of previous minutes

Moved: Ken Eckersley

Seconded: Bruce Weston

Item 1.4 Declaration of conflict of interest

Nil

2. Discussion

Item 2.1 Education Pathways for Agriculture

Laura MacPherson, CEO, TAFE Gippsland

Louise Underhill, Head of Food and Fibre Department, TAFE Gippsland

Presentation provided by TAFE Gippsland on Education Pathways for Agriculture.

The committee discussed concerns about students entering the workforce lacking soft skills, initiative, and understanding of workplace expectations. Updates to training packages now include core units on communication, time management, and organisation. TAFE Gippsland also offers support services to build these capabilities.

Despite rising enrolments, a shortage of work-ready graduates—particularly in agriculture—persists. Industry feedback highlights gaps in professional conduct and practical readiness, attributed in part to the 2014 closure of agricultural colleges.

A new, industry-responsive training approach is being explored. A business case is underway, supported by a working group with volunteers from the fishing and vegetable sectors. Council staff were invited to nominate a representative. A roundtable session will be held to advance the initiative.

The committee acknowledged the issue's importance and endorsed the formation of the working group. Presenters expressed appreciation and commitment to continued collaboration.

Actions:

Formation of Tertiary Education Small Working Group

Responsibility: TAFE Gippsland

TAFE Gippsland will initiate and coordinate the formation of a small working group to prepare a business case for the proposed training model. This group will include select industry representatives and stakeholders with relevant expertise including Food and Fibre Gippsland. ASAC members Wayne Dredge and Jen Smith to be involved.

Council Representation on Tertiary Education Working Group

Responsibility: EGSC, Economic Development Unit

Confirm whether Council will nominate a representative to join the Tertiary Education working group focused on developing an industry-responsive training model.

3. Reports

Item 3.1 Council Updates

3.1.1 Prue McTaggart, Manager Economic Development and Tourism

The Economic Development update focused on committee membership, noting that expressions of interest had been received and new member appointments are pending formal council approval at the Council Meeting on 20 May.

3.1.2 Stuart McConnell, General Manager Assets and Environment, and Tegan Vanderslik, Acting Manager Council Enterprises

Saleyards Review Update

Council is reviewing the saleyards' business model to ensure long-term sustainability and industry-standard management. An external consultant's report was shared with councillors and the committee earlier this year, prompting engagement with local farmers through events and surveys (66 responses, mostly sellers, limited agent input). Key user values include proximity, reliability, and community support. Suggested improvements focus on infrastructure, technology, and marketing. Some dissatisfaction was noted regarding pricing and competition.

Strong support remains for Council involvement, with a preference for local leadership. An internal team is analysing the data, with findings due to councillors in May and an update to

the committee in August. Members encouraged presenting findings to agents to build a stronger positive saleyard culture.

Actions:

Saleyards Review Update

Responsibility: EGSC, Manager Commercial Enterprises

Update on the Saleyards Review to be provided at the August ASAC meeting following consideration by Council.

3.1.4 Kate Allen, Natural Environment Coordinator

Weed Control – Education, Funding, and Cross-Subsidisation Models

The Natural Environment Coordinator presented Council's approach to roadside weed and pest management, explaining the process to guide spraying and prioritise high-risk areas through inspection and assessments. An outline was provided on how Council operates within state legislation and funding constraints, including the use of registered contractors. The presentation covered monitoring challenges such as regrowth, highlighted the role of community reporting, and noted improvements in mapping and record-keeping, with a focus on achieving long-term cost savings through more consistent, targeted spraying.

The committee raised the need to shift from reactive to proactive measures, calling for increased investment in education to address the root causes of weed spread. The inadequacy of current funding was raised and the need to continue advocacy efforts for more.

The discussion progressed to potential new models for managing roadside weeds, such as incentivising adjacent landholders with rate discounts to maintain vegetation themselves, arguing this could be more cost-effective than Council's direct intervention. Concerns were raised about the legislative and insurance implications of such models.

The group was encouraged to provide formal advice to Council, particularly as budget planning was underway. Suggestions included:

- Greater focus on education vs reactive spraying;
- Investigation of cross-subsidisation or rebate models;
- The use of local landowners for vegetation control;
- Identification and prioritisation of clean areas to prevent new infestations.

There is funding for pest management from Landcare that groups are able to apply for to assist in this space as well. It was noted that groups need assistance with administration support though.

Action:

Weed control education and advocacy

Responsibility: EGSC, Natural Environment Coordinator

Council to consider methods to increase education for weed management and advocacy into Government around adequate funding.

**3.1.5 Sarah Johnston, General Manager Business Excellence and
Liz Collins, Manager Finance**

Valuations and Rate Differentials

The presentation and discussion provided a detailed overview of Council's financial approach in the draft budget. It was explained that Council revenue comes not only from rates but also from grants and user fees. In response to cost-of-living pressures, Council has

chosen to set a lower rate cap—below both CPI and the state government's cap of 3%. This decision creates financial pressure, requiring millions of dollars in savings to the budget.

The distribution of rates was explained as being designed to be equitable and simple, with the 2% increase spread evenly across property classes. It was noted that there seems to be a paradox that individual property rates can still increase even when valuations decrease, which occurs due to balancing mechanisms and the broader structure of rate distribution.

Council made a deliberate effort to support the farming sector by reducing the farming differential to its lowest level in recent years. This was in response to councillor feedback and community advocacy.

3.1.6 Martin Richardson, Manager Planning and Development

Due to time constraints, Martin was unable to present on his planned agenda topic but offered to address individual queries and suggested smaller group meetings for those interested. Martin highlighted the urgent matter of the Ballantine Solar Farm application at 280 Bengworden Rd, which has been formally advertised.

He clarified that the Council's role is to submit feedback to the Minister and communicate to the community that Council is not the decision-maker on solar farm applications. Community members must submit objections directly to the Minister, as the final decision rests with the Minister and there is no VCAT appeal option. Martin encouraged community members to review the information online and submit their feedback through the official channels

Action:

Form a sub-group to meet with the Manager Planning and Development

Responsibility: EGSC, Manager Planning and Development and meeting Secretariat

Form a sub-group to meet with the Manager Planning and Development to:

- Provide an overview of the Council's Planning functions affecting agricultural activity;
 - Enable ASAC members to raise and discuss Planning matters of interest;
- Provide a forum for ASAC feedback on Planning matters affecting the agricultural sector;
 - Facilitate an understanding of the role of Council in land use planning.

Item 3.2 Circulated Reports for noting by exception

3.2.1 East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

3.2.2 Agribusiness Development Officer

Item 3.3 Actions from previous meeting

Item 3.4 ASAC Achievement

Item 3.5 Committee member reflections on past four years on committee

The meeting featured heartfelt thanks and acknowledgements for the collaborative work of the committee.

Several attendees reflected on the committee's effectiveness and praised its collaboration, with one member noting it was the best committee they had served on. There was a suggestion to resume trips like a visit to Orbost to foster stronger team connections. It was acknowledged that being physically present in communities has improved understanding and connection.

A formal review of the committee is planned, and members will be contacted individually for feedback to guide its future direction.

4. General Business

Item 4.1 Opportunity for members to raise other matters

4.1.1 Jen Smith, Manager Gippsland Agriculture Group

Presentation on Gippsland Red Meat Conference and Gippsland Lamb Trail

The committee received a presentation on the Gippsland Agricultural Group's Red Meat Conference, held every 18 months to address current issues facing farmers. Key speakers included Professor Richard Eckart and farmer Ben Young. The event demonstrated strong community engagement and introduced the "Digging Deeper" podcast to build trust and share real-life challenges.

A pilot project for MSA lamb grading was launched to add value to the regional beef and lamb industry. Feedback from the conference identified areas for improvement, including engagement strategies, panel updates, and inclusion of non-farmers.

Future actions discussed included securing ongoing funding for the lamb grading trial and improving communication platforms to better support local producers.

4.1.2 Other matters

A member raised the U.S. imposing **tariffs on beef**, with the point made that the reasoning behind it was misunderstood. It was agreed that such actions pose unnecessary risks, potentially harming entire countries.

A request was made to add an agenda item for the next meeting, proposing a discussion on the **offshore renewable energy** projects being developed on the Gippsland coast and their potential economic impact.

The conversation then shifted to the impacts of **wind farms on local industries**. It was noted that the Council needed to collaborate with stakeholders to address these impacts. A member highlighted the importance of advocacy to ensure communities affected by these projects benefit.

It was also suggested that lessons could be learned from international examples, particularly from Scandinavian countries, where early renewable energy developments faced challenges. The need to avoid repeating past mistakes was highlighted, with a focus on ensuring long-term success without the need for costly decommissioning.

Action:

Inclusion of Offshore Renewable Energy Discussion in Next Agenda

Responsibility: EGSC, Committee Secretariat

Include a dedicated agenda item at the next meeting to allow time for discussion on the economic impacts of offshore renewable energy projects in the Gippsland region.

5. Meeting Close

Item 5.1 Meeting closed at 9.50am

Chair, Mayor Cr. John White

Remaining meetings for 2025:

- 7 August 2025
- 6 November 2025

East Gippsland Shire Council Economic Development Advisory Committee

Unconfirmed Minutes

For meeting held on
Thursday 29 May 2025
9.00am to 11.00am Council Chambers 273 Main Street Bairnsdale



1. Procedural

Attendees: Andrea Lane, Angela Hutson, Gabby Moore, Liz Mitchell, Nicholas Kavadis, Cr. John White, Cr. Bernie Farquhar, Cr. Joanne Eastman, Chris Stephenson, Prue McTaggart.

Guest: Kaylene Wickham

Online: Tanya Taylor

Observer: Cr. Sonia Buckley

Chair: Mayor, Cr. John White

Minute taker: Andie McCullagh (EGSC)

Item 1.1 Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Item 1.2 Apologies were noted from Fiona Weigall, Michelle Brooker, Stephen Angus and Steve Holmes.

Item 1.3 **Confirmation of previous minutes 12 September 2024**

Moved: Nicholas Kavadis

Seconded: Angela Hutson

Item 1.4 **Declaration of conflict of interest**

Nil

2. Discussion

Item 2.1 **Economic Development Strategy Update**

Prue McTaggart, Manager Economic Development

Kaylene Wickham, Agribusiness Development Officer

Dive into Focus Area 2: A High Value and Sustainable Food and Fibre Sector

The economic development strategy update focused on Focus Area 2, which targets the high-value and sustainable food and fibre sector. This sector constitutes nearly half of the Shire's export value and contributes approximately \$356 million annually, supporting about 1,600 jobs and involving over 1,100 businesses. Key industries include horticulture—particularly in the Lindenow Valley and surrounding river systems—award-winning wineries, and Victoria's largest commercial fishing fleet based in Lakes Entrance.

The government's objective is to double agricultural output by 2030 to further stimulate regional economic growth and sustainability.

Council maintains an Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee established in 2021 to serve as a liaison between the agricultural community and Council, facilitating sector engagement.

Current priorities under the Economic Development Strategy include increasing and protecting agricultural and fishing productivity to generate income from local assets. A key action under this strategy involves the adoption and incorporation of the rural land use planning strategy into the planning scheme. This responsibility falls under the Planning Unit. Although the strategy has been developed, its integration into the planning scheme is on hold due to prioritisation of other significant amendments.

Additional activities supporting the strategy include partnerships with agencies to deliver workshops, promote regenerative agriculture practices, conduct research, and advocate for improved water access and licensing. Specific projects include ongoing work on Snowy River water licenses as part of the Future of Orbost initiative and pilot programs integrating renewable energy on farms.

Input was sought on potential improvements for strengthening connections between the agricultural sector and other local industries.

3. General Business

Item 3.1 Matters from Economic Development Advisory Committee members

Cyber Security Threats to Business Operations - Nicholas Kavadis

Discussion on the increasing frequency and sophistication of cyber threats, and the implications for organisation's risk management and resilience strategies.

A key concern raised was how Council can better connect different community groups—including businesses, families, and the elderly—with cybersecurity resources and education. There was interest in how past initiatives could be expanded to support a wider audience.

A recent Council initiative was successful in helping small businesses understand basics such as email security, social media protection, and data backup. Many benefited, but it was acknowledged that cybersecurity threats now extend beyond just business operations to the broader environment they operate in (e.g. household devices, shared networks).

Several risks were discussed where business devices are used in homes, often shared with children. Examples included:

- Children accessing business laptops and inadvertently clicking malicious links.
- Inadequate home network protection (e.g. off-the-shelf modems with poor security).
- Personal habits that expose devices to breaches (e.g. mixing work and home use).

The discussion highlighted actual incidents, including:

- A business losing \$40,000 due to compromised email and banking details.
- Users clicking fraudulent emails that resulted in encrypted systems and lost data.
- Identity theft cases (e.g. Dave, a well-known local paramedic) that caused long-term impacts, including compromised phone numbers and ATO accounts.

Members stressed the importance of tailoring cybersecurity education:

- Parents and kids need guidance on separating personal use from business devices.
- Elderly residents are unlikely to engage with digital campaigns and would benefit more from printed information in local newspapers.
- Younger people might respond better to peer-led or real-life storytelling approaches.

Data Privacy and Internet Tracking

A question was raised about how frequently people read privacy policies and how tracking technologies (cookies, IP monitoring) collect user data online. While some tracking is necessary for functionality, there is a growing need for tools that anonymise user activity.

Actions:

Cybersecurity Awareness:

Responsibility: EGSC, Manager Economic Development

Develop a campaign or utilise existing government assets around cybersecurity awareness for businesses, featuring real-life examples and advice on the council's website. Work with other parts of Council to rollout education for older adults through community groups and organisations.

Item 3.2 Council updates

Chris Stephenson, General Manager Place & Community

Forestry Transition Advocacy

Recent feedback has raised concerns that the forestry transition program feels too short-term, rigid, and bureaucratic. There's strong interest in longer-term, community-led funding models, such as a trust, to allow greater flexibility and ownership.

Local voices are calling for stronger engagement, more responsive processes, and clearer communication that reflects the broader community impact - not just the timber industry.

Council Officers have been working locally to support and connect businesses into funding opportunities however efforts have often gone unrecognised and under-resourced. Coordination between state agencies is also proving difficult, with interest in a more integrated, whole-of-government approach - similar to past models where senior department staff were based regionally.

Confusion also remains around expectations to grow local production alongside major plantation shifts.

There's a shared commitment to the region's long-term wellbeing.

Actions:

Continue targeted engagement with businesses on forestry transition:

Responsibility: EGSC, Manager Economic Development

Maintain and expand one-on-one business support linked to the Forestry Transition Fund, with updates to be shared at the next meeting.

- Tanya Taylor left the online meeting at 10.29.am

Item 3.3 Economic Development and Tourism Department update

Prue McTaggart, Manager Economic Development

A report on the Economic Development and Tourism department's current activities is provided at Attachment 3.

Visit, Live, Work and Invest

Update on Regional Marketing transition.

Discussion and opportunity for input to inform Council's future marketing activities.

The discussion centered on tourism marketing strategies, highlighting the interactions and roles of local, regional, state, and national tourism bodies.

It was noted that the local tourism body focuses more on the immediate area, while the regional organisation targets Melbourne and South East Victoria, and the state body has a broader interstate focus. Given the border location of the region, there was consensus that more effort could be made to increase interstate visitation. The discussion also included ideas to improve visitor access to information, such as using QR codes displayed prominently in accommodation venues to link visitors directly to tourism resources.

Further emphasis was placed on the distinction between marketing for tourism and marketing aimed at attracting people to live, work, and invest in the region. It was stressed that if the Council intends to manage marketing strategies internally rather than outsourcing, significant resources—in terms of funding and staffing—will be required. Proper expertise and adequate budget are essential for effectively owning and executing these strategies.

Some concerns were raised regarding the regional tourism organisation's effectiveness, with feedback suggesting that its current performance may not be fully meeting expectations, particularly in delivering strategic outcomes for the area. It was noted that with clearer performance measures and stronger alignment to local priorities, the organisation could better support regional growth. Council may wish to explore opportunities for more active collaboration or complementary approaches to regional marketing to help maximise benefits for the community.

The importance of cultural tourism as a major growth area was underscored, with recognition that it is a key message that should be more strongly supported and resourced within the local tourism promotion.

Item 3.4 Actions from previous meeting

Ongoing efforts related to the forestry transition were acknowledged. Targeted one-on-one engagement with local businesses has proven effective, and several new opportunities emerging from these conversations are being pursued via the Forestry Transition Fund. A more detailed update on this work will be provided at the next meeting.

4. Meeting Close**4.1 Meeting Closed at 11:02am**

Chair, Cr. John White

Upcoming meeting dates:

- Thursday 28 August 2025
- Thursday 27 November 2025

6 Urgent Business

7 Confidential Business

7.1 Personnel Matter

The information contained in this report is confidential under section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* because it relates to: (f) Personal Information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

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 disclose personal information about the Chief Executive Officer, including performance expectations and employment-related matters.

8 Close of Meeting