

New mayoral team

Cr Tom Crook of Eagle Point has been elected Mayor of East Gippsland Shire Council at a Statutory Meeting held on Thursday, October 26.

Cr Mark Reeves and Cr Arthur Allen were thanked for their service as mayor and deputy mayor, respectively, after two years in each role.

First elected in 2020, Cr Crook is in his third year on Council.

Cr Jane Greacen OAM was elected Deputy Mayor.

The new mayor said he is both humbled and excited to have been elected to the role, and pledged to work for "a better economy, a better environment, a better community, and a better place for us all to live.

"We need to be open, accountable and transparent – as Mayor that's the task I set for myself," Cr Crook said.

"I believe strongly in evidence-based decision-making, in acting with integrity, and doing the best we can."

Cr Crook is a strong advocate of working together with people to find common ground and positive approaches.

Referencing Council's vision statement, the new mayor said, "Together we can make East Gippsland an inclusive and innovative community that values our environment, puts people and communities at the centre of Council decision-making, and creates the conditions in which our communities can thrive."

Cr Crook has a keen focus on creating a sustainable future for the shire through renewable energy, improved land



Newly elected Deputy Mayor, Cr Jane Greacen OAM with newly elected Mayor, Cr Tom Crook and CEO Anthony Basford. The new Mayor says he will strive to create a better economy, a better environment, a better community, and a better place for us all to live.

management and tourism.

"We live in challenging times, and we face many adversities. With any challenge comes opportunity, and here in East Gippsland, we are well placed to grasp these opportunities and grasp the opportunities they present for our people, economy and environment."

Cr Greacen, a retired GP from Bairnsdale, reiterated her commitment to "healthy community and healthy country."

A live stream of the meeting is available on Council's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com.au/EastGippyTV

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14.

Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders past and present.

Council meeting in brief

At the the 17 October Council meeting, Council:

- decided to receive a petition to review books in its library collection. The petition was referred to the relevant General Manager for consideration and response.
- approved a planning application for a multi-lot subdivision and native vegetation removal at 10 Fullarton Drive, Paynesville, was discussed.
- received and noted the draft minutes of the Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting held on July 17, 2023.
- received and noted the Council Plan Progress Report for quarter four of 2022-23.
- adopted the 2022-23 Annual Report. Then Mayor Cr Mark Reeves delivered a Mayoral Term Address, reflecting on his 2022-2023 term. He noted that his focus was on community engagement, representing diverse communities, environmental stewardship, economic development and infrastructure improvement. Cr Reeves noted challenges such as the decision to bring forward the end of native timber harvesting and the ongoing need for disaster preparedness. He emphasised the importance of preserving cultural heritage, advocacy, and collaboration with community recovery committees. Cr Reeves also highlighted his personal commitment to lifelong learning and expressed gratitude to supportive individuals including his wife.

Watch the meeting 



CEO Anthony Basford (right) congratulated Cr Arthur Allen on his two terms as Deputy Mayor.



New Mayor Cr Tom Crook (right) was welcomed to the new role by former Mayor Cr Mark Reeves.



The new Mayor and Deputy Mayor both received unanimous support from the Councillors present.



It's time to bid farewell to those unwanted household chemicals.

Join us in partnership with Sustainability Victoria at our Detox Your Home event on Saturday 9 December, running from 9.00 am to 12.00 pm. We'll be located at the Bairnsdale Livestock Exchange, 11 Saleyard Road, Bairnsdale.

Detox Your Home offers a convenient and free service for households to safely dispose of unwanted items such as weedkiller, cleaning chemicals, old cooking oil and cosmetics.

It's important to remember that highly toxic items must never be disposed of in your regular rubbish bins, poured down the drain, or left on the nature strip during hard rubbish collections. Waste transfer stations cannot accept

household chemicals as they pose a risk of fire or explosion.

By attending this event, you'll help reduce the risk to human health and the environment, keep our waterways clean and prevent chemicals from reaching the landfill.

For a list of items that are accepted at these events, please check **Sustainability Victoria's website**. Keeping community safety in mind, Detox Your Home events are drive-through only and are contactless.

To secure your spot at the event, registration is essential. You can sign up at **Sustainability Victoria's website** or via **Eventbrite**.



Nominations are now open for

2024

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

**Nominate
someone
great!**

This is your chance to nominate someone who makes an important contribution to our local community or a community group that's held an outstanding event that deserves recognition.

Award categories are:

- **Citizen of the Year**
- **Young Citizen of the Year**
- **Community Event of the Year**

Nomination forms can be found at eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/community/australia-day or at any of our Service Centres.

NOMINATIONS CLOSE DECEMBER 3

For enquiries call 5153 9500
or email civicevents@egipps.vic.gov.au



COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Tuesday 14 November
Tuesday 28 November



Meetings at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale, start at 6pm and are streamed live on Council's website. The agenda is available the Friday before each meeting.

MY COUNCIL *My Community* | NOVEMBER 2023 3

2023-24 Season Hours
Orbost Outdoor Pool

Season Hours
Weekday Lap Swim guaranteed 6-9 am
Weekends guaranteed 11 am - 7 pm

Non-Peak
1 Nov - 16 Dec &
28 Jan - March 11
22C and Above
Weekdays
4-6 pm

Peak
17 Dec - 27 Jan
Guaranteed
weekday hours
11 am - 3 pm
22C and Above
Open 11 am - 7 pm

30C and Above
All Season
Every day
Open 10 am - 8 pm

Orbost Outdoor Pool opened on 1 November with extended guaranteed hours this year.

On weekdays, the pool is open from 6.00 to 9.00 am and 11.00 am to 7.00 pm on weekends regardless of weather. Keep in mind that the pool’s operational hours may vary depending on the time of year and temperature, so it’s always a good idea to check the latest updates on the **Orbost Outdoor Pool website**.

Orbost season passes are available and include a new perk this year: access to Lakes Entrance Aquadome and Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre (BARC) aquatic areas.

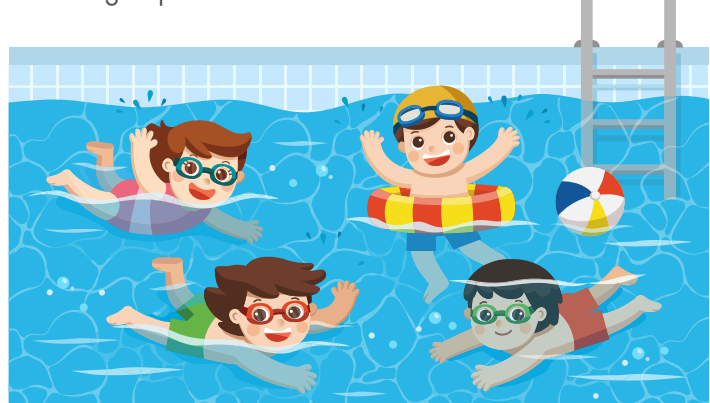
For all the water-loving parents and kids out there, Aqua Play Group returned on 8 November and will run on Wednesday mornings from 9.30 to 10.30 am.

Fitness classes begin on November 14 and run for four weeks. Tuesdays: Mini Triathlon at 7.30 am and Strength and Cardio at 9.00 am. Saturdays: Aqua Aerobics at 11.00 am and Pilates at 12.00 pm. Sign-ups can be made at the pool. Each class is \$15.40, with a concession rate of \$13.70. Bring a mate to receive 20 per cent off the class price.

Free Entry Fridays are from 3.00 pm until close at Orbost as well as the BARC and Lakes Entrance Aquadome pools.

And finally, don’t forget to mark your calendars for the Open Day on Saturday 2 December when entry will be free all day for everyone.

Stay tuned for more information on the next round of swim lesson sign-ups.



Commitment to carers



Former Mayor Cr Mark Reeves placing the Carers Victoria logo on the Bairnsdale Library entry.

Across the shire, more than 6,000 people are carers for their loved ones, with those numbers expected to rise. Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members or loved ones, and it can be a demanding and isolating role.

During National Carers Week (15-21 October), we announced our accreditation as a Carer Friendly Organisation through Carers Victoria. To receive this accreditation, our staff underwent training to equip them with tools to better understand carers’ diverse needs and offer enhanced support.

Now, our Customer Service Team and all of our buildings that are open to public, such as our business centres, libraries, service centres, performing arts space and our recreation centres, are classified as carer-friendly spaces. These spaces provide carers with a supportive environment to access vital resources, encourage community connections, promote program participation, and offer support group meeting venues.

Cash in your cans

Victoria’s Container Deposit Scheme began on Wednesday 1 November and will initially be available at six locations across East Gippsland:

Lakes Entrance, Mallacoota, Omeo, Orbost and the Bairnsdale Regional Landfill; along with a drive-in facility at the Tambo Waste Materials Recycling Facility in McMillan Street, Lucknow.

Six collection sites comprise either:

- Cashback depots
- Reverse vending machines (ranging in size and type)
- Over-the-counter returns

Council is not involved in operating any of the Container Deposit Scheme sites and will not have the authority to approve collection locations or types of collection points. Collection points must be registered and operate in accordance with Victorian Government guidelines – for which Return-It has the responsibility locally.

For more information, visit www.returnit.com.au/vic



Annual Report 2022-23 is here!

We're pleased to announce the release of our Annual Report for the 2022-23 financial year, highlighting significant achievements despite various challenges - most notably the forced closure of the timber industry - faced by both Council and the community.

Through active engagement with the community and our successful acquisition of federal and state government funding, we've managed to deliver our largest-ever capital works program while simultaneously maintaining our existing assets and essential services.

A critical facet of our advocacy efforts has revolved around addressing the forced closure of the timber industry, which has been brought forward to the end of 2023. Council successfully worked to secure transition funding to ensure the support of communities affected by this transformative change.

Council's advocacy covered a range of issues, with direct engagement in Canberra yielding impressive results:

- \$190,000 in Federal Government funding via the Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grant Program.
- \$1.5 million grant for the construction of the Air Ambulance Patient Transfer Station at Bairnsdale Aerodrome.
- \$1.2 million in Federal Government funding via the Federal Disaster Ready Fund, enabling Council to complete a comprehensive climate risk analysis to identify the likely impact of extreme weather and other climate events.

CEO Anthony Basford shared his insights, highlighting Council's commitment to continued development of major strategies and plans such as:

- the East Gippsland Sporting Masterplan;
- Marine and Coastal Management Plan;

- Housing and Settlement Strategy, Bairnsdale 2050; and
- the Reconciliation Action Plan.

These initiatives aim to ensure East Gippsland remains a place where people want to live, visit and invest.

Throughout the year, we navigated numerous challenges:

- Supply chain disruptions and escalating material costs impacted various projects.
- Flooding in parts of the shire, coupled with above-average rainfall, resulted in an increased workload for maintenance and emergency management teams, along with significant vegetation management work added to Council's normal schedule.

Council remains committed to supporting communities and volunteers with bushfire recovery and resilience.

A few highlights:

- Council reduced greenhouse gas emissions by a whopping 42 per cent
- Slashed 8,618km of vegetation



- Became a certified ECO Destination (Victoria's first!)
- Rolled out electronic vehicle chargers
- Replaced streetlights with energy-efficient LEDs
- Opened the first section of the Omeo Mountain Bike Trails
- Saw an incredible 292 per cent increase of visitors to our website
- In partnership with Wellington Shire Council, consolidated our data centres and adopted software to improve service efficiency and community engagement.

Community engagement played a pivotal role, with online portal Your Say proving successful in project consultations. We advocated for our community at various levels, including

federal advocacy and participation in One Gippsland. Additionally, we adopted the Culture and Creativity Strategy, guiding cultural development in the



shire, and engaged communities for the Housing and Settlement Strategy, ensuring transparency and responsiveness in our decision-making. Our commitment to community well-being was evident in the Libraries After Dark Program, which offered movies, talks, and socialisation opportunities, especially benefiting those living alone. We also implemented the state-wide immunisation program, enhancing public health services. Access audits were carried out to ensure inclusive and accessible facilities across the region, and we introduced Sensory Kits in emergency relief centers for children with sensory challenges.

We've also made a highlights video, which you can check out here:

youtu.be/yJd1niu6fml

The video highlights our activities, achievements, challenges and financial performance over the past financial year and informs the community on how the commitments in the Council Plan and annual budget were delivered.

The Annual Report is available online at **www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/council/annual-report** and as a hard copy from our Customer Service Centres.





Chair Yoga was a hit with everyone who attended.

Stellar Seniors Festival

Spanning the month of October and spilling over into early November, Seniors Festival 2023 delivered a full schedule of more than 50 events.

Various learning opportunities and activities brought seniors together as we celebrated them and embraced this year's festival theme: Learn, Love, Live.

Toward the beginning of the month, we kicked off with welcoming seniors to art gallery exhibitions, art therapy, fitness sessions, lawn bowling, tech savvy sessions and movie screenings.

Over 230 seniors attended Melissa Langton's free concert in early October

and shared that her performance put huge smiles on their faces and was fantastic. Others said that they were excited to continue to attend other festival activities across the month.

Some of our highest attended events included Michael Hinchey's talk on his experience living in Antarctica, Health and Wellness Session with naturopath Liz Gillman, Chair Yoga with Rhonda James, 'I Love Paris' the musical held at the Forge Theatre, and many U3A and Senior Club events.

Thank you to all our local partners for helping make this year's festival such a success.



The crowd was mesmerised by the vocals of Melissa Langton as she performed the best loved hits from the sixties"

Coota Storytime draws bumper crowd

A whopping 16 children and seven parents attended a day of crocodile-themed books and activities, including making crocodile puppets and a reading of Huw Lewis Jones book Croc O'Clock, a rendition of Never Smile at a Crocodile.

Social Inclusion Week Storytime

Join in on the fun at a special Storytime session to celebrate Social Inclusion Week beginning 21 November! The aim is to help all Australians feel included and valued, giving everyone the opportunity to participate fully in society. The Storytime session will include stories, songs and a craft activity. More details about upcoming Storytimes can be found on our [website](#) or call 5152 4225.

Storytime general information

Storytime sessions are for children aged 2 to 5.

The sessions run for 45 minutes and include stories, songs, dancing, poems, rhymes and craft activities.

- Encourages children to develop a love of reading, books and libraries at a young age.
- Stimulates imagination, ideas and interests.
- Teaches effective listening skills.
- Helps develop pre-reading skills.
- Introduces the library as a fun, inviting place to be for children and parents.
- Promotes awareness of library resources.
- Provides opportunities to socialise with other children and caregivers and have fun.

Note: Storytime takes a break in January. So be quick!



Mallacoota Service Centre recently resumed its much-anticipated Storytime sessions, and it exceeded all expectations.

Council in the Community



Members of the public came together down at Paynesville foreshore on Monday 30 October to meet with Council staff and Councillors to discuss projects, ideas and any issues of concern regarding their local community. Not to be put off by the windy weather, residents mingled with senior shire staff members and councillors, along with some of the local black swan residents.

No topic was off the table, with discussions ranging from the need for more footpaths to preparing for bushfire season. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to talk with the Mayor and Council representatives, who were happy to answer questions and discuss issues face to face. A delicious sausage sizzle was provided to those in attendance, facilitated by Paynesville Lions Club.



Council in the Community



Councillors and senior Council staff participated in Council in the Community site visits last month to meet with key community groups and organisations to discuss current and future activities and view works and projects.

The tour began at the Eagle Point Foreshore Trail, before moving on to view the Eagle Point Hub site.

Meetings were later held with the Paynesville Business and Tourism Association before a community lunch by the Paynesville foreshore, hosted by the Lions Club of Paynesville.

Afterwards, Councillors travelled to the Slip Road Maritime Precinct before finalising their trip at Bairnsdale Regional Landfill.

The trip was highly successful and gave valuable context for future decisions related to the physical environment and land use, zoning, community development and more.

Images top: The Eagle Point Foreshore Hub is coming along nicely. Councillors are pictured inside the building and on the deck.

Middle images: Councillors also visited the Tip Shop and landfill cells at Bairnsdale Landfill.

Bottom image: A tour of Slip Road Marina was also in order.



Meet Ben our new Omeo Mountain Bike Trails Coordinator

Omeo is being transformed into a world-class mountain biking destination, and to aid the process we have welcomed Ben Reeves.

The new and exciting role of Omeo Mountain Bike Trails Coordinator will see Ben lead the operations and development of the 121 km of trails as they're created.

Ben has a wealth of mountain bike industry knowledge and enthusiasm that will be essential to the successful growth and development of the trails and related mountain biking facilities.

So, Ben, what is a Mountain Bike Trails Coordinator? What do you do?

As the trail coordinator based in Omeo, I'll look after the day-to-day operations of Omeo Mountain Bike Trails, managing the trail-maintenance team who will ensure the trails are kept in the best condition possible all year round.

I also ensure regular trail audits are conducted along with associated maintenance duties, from clearing out drains to clearing trees that are blocking the trails.

And I'll be working with Council's team on marketing, events and emergency management.

Have you worked on something similar before? Tell us about your experience with mountain biking and trail towns.

I've volunteered for my local mountain bike club at Lysterfield since 2010, over that journey I've run trail-maintenance days plus small and larger scale events, held the position of Vice President,

President and Advocacy Manager.

My previous career working in sales saw me traveling to most states around Australia, and whenever possible I'd bring my mountain bike along for some after-work exercise or an extended holiday.

Some of the memorable locations include Fox Creek in South Australia, Atherton Forest in Cairns, Mt Stromlo in the ACT, and Derby, Wild Mersey, St Helens and Maydena in Tasmania.

I've ridden almost every main trail network in Victoria and currently live next to an 8km network owned by a local scout group where I help with basic maintenance.

I guess you could say it's in my blood!

What's your initial takeaway from your first few weeks of walking and riding Omeo's trails?

I'm very impressed and excited to see this ground-up community project come to life. The great support Council and the other local land managers have thrown behind the project should also be applauded. When finished, Omeo should be proud of the fact that they will have one of the biggest and most diverse trail networks in Australia.

What do you look for in a trail town?

Good accommodation, both short term for visitors and long term for staff is essential. Great places to eat and drink - mountain bikers love a cold beer after a ride! Facilities like toilets, signage, bike wash and carparking. Also having locals who live and breathe the sport helps



Ben is impressed with work on the trails done so

make visitors feel more welcome and more inclined to return. Plus, of course, many kilometres of epic riding, which Omeo will have in spades.

Where were you born and raised?

Born and raised on the Mornington Peninsula (aka Frankston South) where my mother still lives in our old family home.

Is this the career you saw yourself doing as a child?

Absolutely not! Back then this position didn't exist! The sport is still in its infancy, and I can see more of these positions created in the future which is exciting to be a part of.

What was your first memory of riding a bike?

Riding my old BMX with an orange Stack Hat and wedging an alloy can in the front wheel to make it sound like a motorbike.

Congrats, Councillors!

Cr Mark Reeves and Cr Mendy Urie were recognised at the recent Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Awards for their outstanding service as dedicated councillors.

Cr Mark Reeves received a Mayor Emeritus award for his three-year tenure as Mayor, which included serving as Mayor twice during this Council term and once during his first term on Council.

Cr Mendy Urie was celebrated for her impressive 10 years as a Councillor. She is also a Mayor Emeritus having served four terms as Mayor spanning from 2006 to 2009 and then again from 2020 to 2021.

The Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) Councillor Service Awards recognise the commitment, dedication and remarkable achievements of long-serving councillors across the state.



Cr Mendy Urie and Cr Mark Reeves with their MAV service awards.



Former then Mayor Cr Mark Reeves joined in the HoloLens demonstrations at the Bonang Hall as part of the Big Bonang event.

Wellbeing Spaces improves rural healthcare

For the first time, some of our remote districts will have in-community healthcare.

This year's Big Bonang event included the launch of Wellbeing Spaces at Bendoc, Goongerah and Tubbut.

The Wellbeing Spaces will provide community members with nursing services in addition to supporting the delivery of specialist services. This is done by partnering with visiting service providers, traditional telehealth and

merged-reality appointments.

Each Wellbeing Space will be staffed by a nurse one day per week. These communities now have flexible and private consulting rooms/meeting spaces to improve online access to telehealth, work and study.

The launch afternoon at Bonang Hall featured training and demonstrations, door prizes, non-clinical checks, the promotion of new services from the Wellbeing Spaces, and demonstrations

of Microsoft's HoloLens, which connect patients in remote parts of the shire to medical specialists using holographic technology called "merged-reality".

This community-led initiative is an excellent example of how working together brings about great achievements. We were delighted to be able to support the event, and it was great to see such a high community turnout.

Position on mining

Responding to growing interest in and development of extractive industry projects across the shire, we have set out expectations about future resource-extraction projects.

The Position Paper on Extractive Industries aims to provide clarity about what is important to us, East Gippsland's communities and project proponents as well as provide a foundation for advocacy. It calls on miners to ensure that resource-extraction projects are well managed and benefit local communities.

In the position paper, we commit to supporting active community involvement in the decision-making process surrounding extractive industry projects.

The paper puts us on the front foot regarding expectations that our communities are engaged, that social, environmental and health impacts are well managed, and that there is real benefit to local communities from any mining proposal.

It puts us and the communities we serve in a stronger position by stating early on what we expect of extractive industry proposals.

Our vision is to establish a framework where such projects

contribute positively to the shire, offer employment opportunities, safeguard our environment, and respect the rights of our Traditional Custodians.

Recognising that extractive industries do not pay rates, we'll be calling for royalties earned in our shire to be spent in our shire. We recognise the significant impact that extractive industries can have on our region, and we want to strike a balance that allows our communities to thrive and ensures responsible land use.

The Position Paper on Extractive Industries echoes our Advocacy Strategy call for an overhaul of the environment effects statement (EES) process and associated approval processes for extractive industries.

Responding to an EES is complex and costly, and has financial, social and human-resources implications, so we're advocating for an independent expert group be established, funded by the proponent or Victorian Government, to ensure technical integrity of an EES before it is allowed to be publicly exhibited. We are also calling for financial support to allow us and community members to participate in the EES process.



Bairnsdale Netball Association volunteers, representatives from our major contractor Cranes, Cr Tom Crook and General Manager Assets and Environment Fiona Weigall celebrate the new WORLD netball courts with the NetSetGo netballers.

New WORLD netball courts a game changer

We're happy to announce that the new netball courts at the WORLD Bairnsdale are open, and games are in full swing.

Bairnsdale Netball Association's new season got off to a fantastic start in October and the response from the community has been exceptional. We've seen 44 teams and more than 350 players join the twilight competition. Our new courts have transformed from six subpar courts into eight top-notch competition-standard ones. With a purpose-built marshal building, the precinct is taking shape. The pavilion construction is progressing well, and lighting is scheduled for installation soon. We thank the passionate volunteers who have driven this project since 2016. Your dedication and patience have been instrumental. We also appreciate the current committee's support.

The precinct is not quite finished. Power connections and lighting adjustments are still in the works. The project also includes completing the hockey complex and additional facilities.

This project has received significant investment from the state and federal governments, via the Victorian Government's Community Sports Infrastructure Stimulus Program and a low-interest loan scheme, underlining its importance for community sports.

As the season unfolds, we wish all teams and players the best of luck. The future of netball in Bairnsdale looks bright, and we eagerly await the pavilion's completion in 2024.



Local netballers have celebrated the opening of 8 regional level, competition-standard courts with a purpose-built marshal building.



Fiona Weigall (General Manager Assets and Environment, Jodie Stephenson (Bairnsdale Netball Association) and Cr Tom Crook mark the return of junior netball to the WORLD.

Council recognises staff service to community



CEO Anthony Basford emphasised the importance of the All Staff Event in recognising the work Council employees do in the community.

We celebrated our Annual All Staff Event on Wednesday, 18 October at the Riviera Christian Centre in Bairnsdale, recognising staff members who have gone above and beyond to serve the local community.

CEO Anthony Basford delivered an insightful address that emphasised the importance of the day in recognising the remarkable work done by Council employees.

He discussed Council's role in serving East Gippsland's diverse and growing community, and highlighted Council's

management of over \$1.2 billion worth of community assets.

Mr Basford underscored the need for the organisation to remain agile and adaptable, especially given the changing environment, increased expectations and evolving priorities.

A highlight of the event was the Staff Recognition Awards, following nominations being submitted throughout the year from peers and management. Award recipients were celebrated for demonstrating the organisation's staff values – Respect, Collaboration, Integrity and

Accountability.

The organisation had a number of significant achievements during the past year, including the completion of 45 capital projects, including the WORLD hockey and netball facilities, Mallacoota Skate Park, and the installation of additional water tanks across the shire to assist firefighters.

Mr Basford also celebrated Council's recognition through various awards and thanked long-serving staff members, some of whom have served for over 20 years.



The Staff Recognition Awards saw recipients celebrated for demonstrating the organisation's staff values – Respect, Collaboration, Integrity and Accountability.

Youth Art Prize award winners announced

Young artists from across the shire were recognised at the recent Youth Art Prize awards.

A crowd of 70 people gathered on Wednesday 25 October to view the artwork and see who won in each category.

For the past six years, the Youth Art Prize has continued to shine a spotlight on the up-and-coming creative talent in East Gippsland. Open to individuals aged 12 to 25 who live, work or study in the shire, artists submitted their various forms of artwork and were judged based on categories. If they clinched the top spot in their category, they got to take home \$300 in prize money.

The Indigenous Category was added this year and celebrates the artistic prowess of our First Nations young artists. The People's Choice award will be open until the end of November. Here are this year's winners.

Category winners

Media 2D: *Forget Me Not* - Kayla Jackson

Media 3D: *Bust* - Danielle Moss

Media Digital/Photography: *Wonderland* - Jorja Box

Media Indigenous Category: *Birth of baby girl* - Jordyn Tattersall

Age 12-15: *Frost* - Rusty Harris

Age 16-20: *Between Worlds* - Lily Nickless

Age 21-25: *I'm Stressed* - Romy Roberston

Special judges mention:

Portrait of Adam Clayton - Keara Cross

Unusual Situations - Leah Brutovic

Street Vibes - Danielle Boucher

The Youth Art Prize has consistently grown over the years, noted East Gippsland Shire Council Mayor Cr Tom Crook. The quality of the artwork is remarkable, making the judges' task of choosing winners a challenging one each year.

The exhibition will be at the Forge Theatre and Arts Hub until the end of November and can be viewed by booking an appointment on a Wednesday or Thursday with Chloe Peters or Andrea Court on (03) 5153 9500. The Youth Art Prize 2023 will be travelling to the Orbost Exhibition Centre and can be viewed from 11 December 2023 until 5 January 2024.

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Kayla Jackson won the 2D media category for their *Forget Me Not* piece.



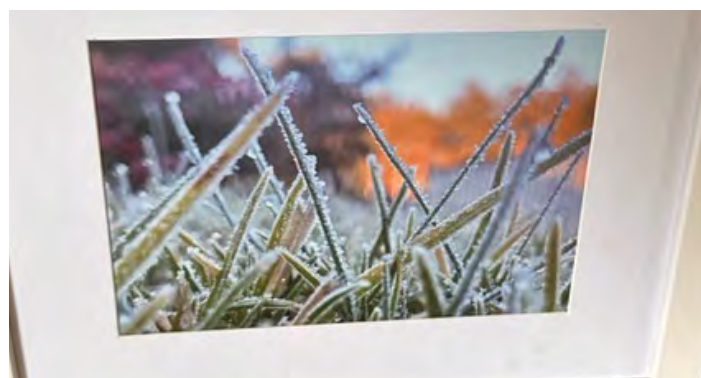
First place with *Forget Me Not* was Kayla Jackson with Cr Trevor Stowe and Cr Kirsten Van Diggele.



Lily Nickless, pictured with Cr Trevor Stowe and Cr Kirsten van Diggele, won the 16-20 age category for her work *Between Worlds*.



Rusty Harris, pictured with Cr Trevor Stowe and Cr Kirsten van Diggele, won the 12-15 age category with her piece *Frost*.



Rusty Harris' category-winning piece, *Frost*.



Lily Nickless - Between worlds.



Danielle Moss Bronze Lady.



For the 21-25 age category, Romy Roberston won with their watercolour piece I'm Stressed.



Jorja Box's snow-covered photograph Wonderland won the photography category.



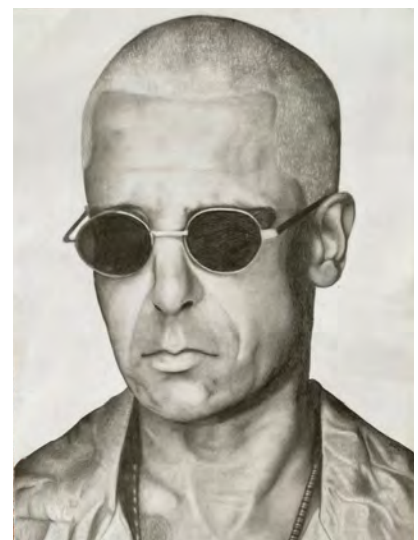
Leah Brutovic - unusual situations.



Street Vibes - Danielle Boucher.



Jordyn Tattersall's painted piece Birth of a baby girl won the Indigenous category.



Keara Cross Portrait of Adam Clayton.



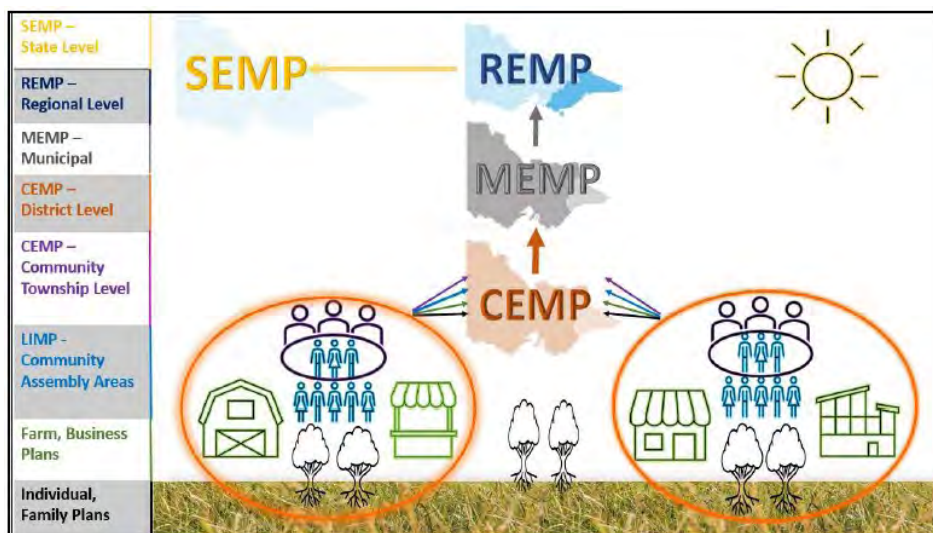
Omeo Holiday Park under new management!

We have awarded a new lease for the operations and management of the Omeo Holiday Park to Hotham Operations Pty Ltd.

Hotham Operations is part of the local and well-known Saltwater Properties Group and is very experienced in the tourism and accommodation industry. The five-year eight-month lease with further options to renew for up to 20 years commenced on Wednesday 1 November.

In January 2022 after significant flood where 150 guests were evacuated, we repaired the damage and re-opened the park in time for Easter bookings to be honoured. Since re-opening we have managed the park, engaging Caretakers Australia staff who have done an amazing job in the rebuilding of popularity and returning customers. Omeo Holiday Park is a picturesque park on the banks of Livingstone Creek. The park offers both powered and unpowered sites for guests and their pets.

We look forward to working with Hotham Operations to make further capital improvements to include self-contained accommodation and improved facilities.



LIMPS

We're enhancing community resilience by implementing NBN satellite facilities through the STAND program to provide public wi-fi in regional towns prone to isolation.

This infrastructure boosts community connections, particularly through Local Incident Management Plans (LIMPs). Omeo District has gone further with a Community Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) supporting seven communities.

Learn more at ourrecovery.com.au/omeo-region.

Additionally, we're strengthening critical infrastructure at assembly areas identified in LIMPs, including improving fire protection, switchboards, audio-visual equipment, and supporting generator installations.

We've also installed static water tanks and bores across the region.

Preparing for a safe summer: fire prevention in East Gippsland

Summer is just around the corner, and with it comes the heightened risk of bushfires.

The Bureau of Meteorology has recently forecast conditions that could increase the threat of wildfires in East Gippsland, so it is important to ensure that our communities are well-prepared to minimise the risk of fire.

Working together for a safer East Gippsland

We are committed to working hand in hand with fire-response agencies such as the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to protect our community.

To kickstart our fire prevention efforts, Municipal Fire Prevention Officers (FPO) are conducting property inspections. Their primary focus is on properties that may pose a fire risk to neighbours and the broader community.

Your role in fire prevention

Taking this opportunity to make your property fire-ready not only protects your home and loved ones, but also contributes to the overall safety of our community. It's crucial to address issues such as overgrown vegetation, long grass and debris.

Green waste disposal: easy and free

During November, residents can deposit green waste free of charge at our waste transfer stations. This is a fantastic opportunity to clear potential fire hazards.

Get in touch for more information

Fire prevention can be a complex task, so we can be contacted for further guidance or information.

We are urging all residents to prepare for the fire season ahead. By working together and staying vigilant, we can make East Gippsland a safer place for all of us. Stay safe, East Gippsland!

MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

Metung Splash Park set for summer fun

Summer is just around the corner, and Metung's Patterson Park is the place to be for a refreshing and exciting family adventure. The Metung Splash Park has officially opened its doors, offering an array of thrilling water features for kids and adults alike. From splash pads to interactive fountains, this water attraction promises a cool escape from the heat.

At the Metung Splash Park, children can play amid the water jets, dodge playful sprays, and beat the summer heat. Safety is a priority, with non-slip surfaces and designated seating areas for parents to keep a watchful eye on their little ones. The park is also wheelchair accessible, ensuring inclusivity.

Beyond water play, the park offers shaded picnic areas with barbecue facilities and well-maintained toilets. It's not just a place to cool down; it's a vibrant community hub where locals and visitors can come together.

Throughout the summer season, the Metung Splash Park will host a variety of exciting events and activities, from water balloon fights to family-friendly games. Be sure to check the park's schedule for upcoming events and maintenance updates on the Facebook page.



Bairnsdale 2050: Shaping the Future

Bairnsdale has a rare opportunity to become a regional centre for sustainable growth, job creation, and an exceptional quality of life. Over the next 25 years, the city will face a variety of challenges, including population growth, employment opportunities, climate change adaptation, and inclusivity. To address these challenges, the Bairnsdale 2050 project has been initiated to provide a clear vision for the city's future.

This ambitious project aims to replace the previous Bairnsdale Growth Strategy and involve the community in shaping the city's development to 2050 and beyond. Community members are invited to participate in the project by joining a panel or online forum. The goal is to gather insights and expertise from individuals with various backgrounds to ensure a comprehensive vision for Bairnsdale's future.

Apex Park Boat Ramp

Lakes Entrance's Apex Park is on the brink of exciting improvements, and your feedback is crucial. The project aims to upgrade the boat ramp and car park facilities in response to community input. The draft concept plan, available for community consultation, encompasses dedicated disabled parking, a fish cleaning station, formalized footpaths, and parking bays.

Your thoughts and ideas are essential in shaping these upgrades. You can contribute by taking a brief survey to express your opinions on the concept plan. The survey closes on November 30, 2023, so be quick.



MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE



Metung's new Shaving Point Boat Ramp is now open!

The boat ramp underwent upgrades to enhance the facilities for recreational boaters, and works were completed in time for the warmer months. The improvements included the installation of a new 99.3m concrete ramp, a ramp apron, a fixed jetty and a floating pontoon.

These enhancements have created additional docking space alongside the ramp, complete with recycled plastic fenders to safeguard boats during mooring. Wave panels have been introduced on the jetty to enhance protection when launching and retrieving. Remediation work has also been done to prevent sand build up.



Funding for these improvements came from Council and a \$577,000 grant from the Better Boating Fund. The primary objectives of this project were to alleviate congestion during peak boating seasons, address environmental concerns such as erosion and runoff, and enhance safety and accessibility. Mayor Cr Tom Crook expressed Council's pride in delivering these upgrades to the Shaving Point Boat Ramp. He emphasised the integral role that recreational boating and fishing play in East Gippsland, enriching the experiences of both locals and tourists who frequent the region's waterways.

We manage 31 boat-launching facilities across the shire, and we value the partnership and financial support from the Victorian Government in maintaining and upgrading these facilities. For further information, please visit [Your Say](#).

Cann River's transformative projects

Cann River is buzzing with activity as several significant projects are well under way, aimed at rejuvenating local infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience and boost economic growth. Demolition of the old skate park is already in progress, thanks to a generous \$561,000 grant from the Australian Government Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program. The new skate park will be ready to shred on just in time for the Christmas holidays.

Furthermore, Cann River has been chosen as the location for a Changing Places facility, providing essential amenities for visitors. The Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing has contributed \$180,000 to make this project a reality. In addition to these improvements, car parking options, road and drainage infrastructure, pedestrian links, and road pavement sealings have been enhanced, thanks to a \$1,060,000 investment from the Australian Government through the Infrastructure Investment Program.

The waste transfer station is also making progress, bringing us one step closer to a more efficient waste-management solution. With the input of a local advisory group and external advisors, a new site has been identified.

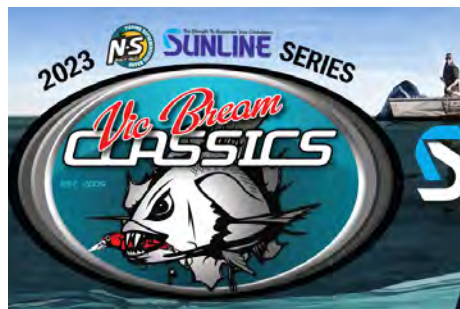
Stay updated on these projects by visiting the [Your Say](#) website.



What's on calendar



We are proud to support many major arts, sporting, cultural and community events each year. Here are some events hitting our region over the next couple of months.



NS Rods Sunline Bream Classic Grand Final, Mallacoota - Round 3

This catch and release bream tournament grand final series is a fantastic event with major sponsorship, great prizes all set in the beautiful town of Mallacoota. Running from 7.00 am to 4.00 pm, anyone can take part by registering to compete or visiting the town and supporting the competitors.

**25-26 November
Mallacoota**

[More information>>>](#)



Savour Metung – Food, Wine & Wellness Festival

Enjoy a sensational weekend in Metung on the Gippsland Lakes savouring the best of the region. Unwind while appreciating our shire's finest produce at the main event on the Metung Village Green. Meet the makers and sample a wide range of delicious foods, fine wines, craft beers, micro-distilled gins and zero-alcohol beverages from acclaimed eateries and award-winning local producers.

There will be live acoustic music and series of wellness workshops and activities across the weekend, which will offer opportunities to relax, rejuvenate and reconnect with nature.

**25 November
Metung Village Green**

[More information>>>](#)

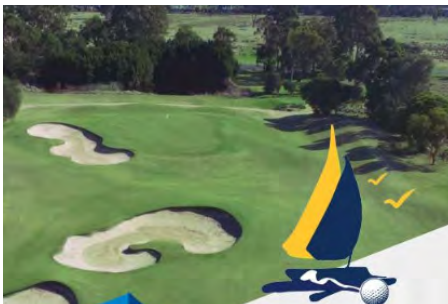


Great Vic Bike Ride

The Great Vic Bike Ride starts in Orbost and finishes in Wonthaggi nine days later. The East Gippsland section of the ride will start in Orbost then head to Buchan, Lakes Entrance and Paynesville, taking in the picturesque countryside of our region. There will be around 3000 riders and support crew camping in each of the towns. Riders of all ages, abilities and genders will line up, including up to 1000 riders of school age.

**23-28 November
Orbost, Buchan, Lakes Entrance
and Paynesville**

[More information>>>](#)



The Big Garage Subaru Pro-Am and Junior Pro-Am

The Bairnsdale Golf Club Pro-Am is a professional tournament with a minimum total prize purse of \$13,500. On the afternoon of Saturday 9 December, juniors from the local area and across Gippsland will have the chance to tee up alongside PGA professionals for a fun-filled nine-hole Junior Pro-Am.

**Junior Pro-Am - 9 December
Pro-Am - 10 December
Bairnsdale Golf Club**

[More information>>>](#)



Mountain Biking: Victorian Downhill Series, Round 2 – Mount Taylor

The Victorian Downhill Series is Victoria's premiere downhill mountain bike race series. The VDHS prides itself on providing fun and inclusive environment for riders of a wide variety of ages and skill levels. It provides a pathway to national and international racing for junior riders.

**2-3 December
Mount Taylor**

[More information>>>](#)



What's On at Forge Theatre and Arts Hub

The Forge Theatre and Arts Hub offers a range of shows to suit everyone. Some of our upcoming shows include:



Exit Stage Right, MAADAZ Dance Studio final performance
Saturday 2 December, 12.00 pm & 5.30 pm

For the past 12 years, MAADAZ has proudly presented its entertaining variety shows, but the time has come for MAADAZ to exit stage right after proudly presenting its 13th and final variety concert Exit Stage Right. Tickets for this two-hour show are \$27 and with special prices for children, students, families and pensioners. Bookings open!



Pace Live: A Celtic Christmas by A Taste of Ireland
Wednesday 6 December, 7.30 pm

After captivating audiences across the globe last year, the all-singing, all-dancing, family-friendly treat, 'A Celtic Christmas by A Taste of Ireland' is finally set to tour Victoria. The show will feature a powerful mix of traditional tunes, heartfelt ballads and your favourite carols. A Celtic Christmas combines incredible red-hot rhythms with jaw-dropping talent in an unforgettable night of storytelling, Irish charm and spectacular entertainment.



Jan Pianta School of Dance 'Emotional Rescue'
Saturday 9 December, 2.30 pm

Feelings are what make dancers artists and not athletes. Jan Pianta School's dancers express a specific feeling on stage, representing the song title they are performing to. It is dance as emotion in motion. Come along to support these wonderful local dancers. Ticket prices range from \$24.50 to \$28.50. Don't miss out.

For the most up-to-date information on shows or to book tickets, visit the Forge Theatre page on our website.



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Note: When emailing a Councillor, type "Att Cr (their last name)" in the subject line.

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