



LATROBE CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING

**HELD IN KERNOT HALL, MORWELL AND VIA
AUDIO-VISUAL LINK
AT 6:00 PM ON 23 FEBRUARY 2026
CM632**

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Cr Sharon Gibson, Mayor	Newborough Ward
	Cr Dale Harriman, Deputy Mayor	Loy Yang Ward
	Cr David Barnes	Boola Boola Ward
	Cr Leanne Potter	Budgerie Ward
	Cr Joanne Campbell	Jeeralang Ward
	Cr Adele Pugsley	Moe Ward
	Cr Darren Howe	Tyers Ward
	Cr Steph Morgan	Yallourn Ward
Officers:	Steven Piasente	Chief Executive Officer
	James Rouse	General Manager Community Liveability
	Jody Riordan	General Manager Infrastructure & Sustainability
	Nathan Kearsley	General Manager Organisational Performance
	Alba Elling	Manager Governance
	Georgia Kavaris	Coordinator Council Business
	Kaitlyn Boram	Governance Officer
Apologies:	Cr Tracie Lund	Morwell River Ward
	Tim Ellis	General Manager Investment & Growth

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Resolutions in this minutes document should be read in conjunction with the published agenda for the 23 February 2026 Council Meeting.

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND

The Mayor read the acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land.

2. MOMENT OF REFLECTION

The Mayor invited everyone to observe a minute of silence, to reflect on Council's responsibility to the community it serves. To take this time to consider the impact of Council's decisions and to maintain a spirit of collaboration and respect.

3. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Apologies from Cr Lund and Mr Ellis.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOTION

Moved: Cr Harriman

Seconded: Cr Pugsley

That Council confirms the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 15 December 2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Pugsley declared a general or material interest under Section 128 of the *Local Government Act 2020* in respect to Item 8.3.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Gibson acknowledged the contribution of Willow House and the Don Coupe Memorial swim undertaken by the Moe Swimming Club.

Cr Campbell acknowledged the passing of both James Douglas Tantau and Nanette Phelan.

Cr Morgan acknowledged the Kamphuis family who celebrated 70 years in Australia and the Autumn season program at the Latrobe Regional Gallery.

Cr Harriman acknowledged Jack White and the Traralgon T-birds basketball team.

Cr Pugsley acknowledged the Lions Club and Australia Day, as well as those nominated for Australia Day awards.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

Public Questions on Notice

In accordance with the Governance Rules, members of the public can lodge a question on notice by no later than midday one business day before the Council meeting in order for the question to be answered at the meeting. There was one public question.

Question

From: Phillip Edwards

Topic: Councillor involvement in Committees

Question:

- a. Does council have a policy of delegating councillors to work with selected local community management committees?
- b. Does councillors being associated with a community based committee imply that Council or councillors are legally responsible for the governance and activities of the committee?

Response:

- a. On an annual basis, Council appoints Councillors to various Council committees including a Delegated Committee, Community Asset Committees, Statutory Committees, Advisory Committees and Project Reference Groups, as well as to a number of external committees or groups. The most recent committee appointments were made at the Council Meeting on 15 December 2025, with the minutes showing all appointments being available on Council's website.
- b. External committees have governing structures and rules that are created and maintained by those committees. Requirements for each committee depends on any relevant legislation applicable to it.

Public Speakers

There were no public speakers.

NOTICES OF MOTION

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

Item Number 8.1 23 February 2026

Infrastructure and Sustainability

2026/01 URGENT ACTIVATION OF TRAFFIC SIGNALLING – BANK STREET INTERSECTION

MOTION

Moved: Cr Campbell

Seconded: Cr Harriman

That Council:

- 1. writes to the Victorian Minister for Public and Active Transport and the Victorian Minister for Roads and Roads Safety to request the urgent prioritisation of the design and installation of the interlinking system required between the traffic signals and the upgraded rail signalling system at the Bank Street, Traralgon and the Princes Highway Intersection; and**
- 2. requests a detailed delivery schedule from the responsible agencies outlining timelines for completion of the system, inclusive of the activation of the Traffic Signals.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments

Nil

Procedural note:

Cr Gibson vacated the position of Chair at 6:26pm. Cr Harriman assumed the Chair at 6:26pm for Items 8.2 and 8.3.

2026/02 ADVOCACY FOR INCREASED RECOGNITION OF GUIDE DOGS

MOTION

Moved: Cr Gibson

Seconded: Cr Pugsley

That Council:

- 1. notes the essential role of guide dogs and assistance dogs in enabling people with a disability to safely and independently participate in the community;**
- 2. supports amendments to the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic) to:**
 - (a) explicitly recognise guide dogs and assistance dogs as essential disability aids; and**
 - (b) recognise that an attack or other interference by a dog towards a guide dog or assistance dog can have non-physical impacts that compromise the animal's capacity to perform its trained functions, which in turn directly affects the safety and independence of the person with a disability;**
- 3. requests that the Mayor write to the State Government advocating for a review of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic) to specifically provide for physical and non-physical harm caused to guide dogs and assistance dogs.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments

Nil

Procedural note:

Cr Pugsley left the meeting for Item 8.3 at 6:33pm.

2026/03 IMPACTS OF V/LINE TRAIN TIMETABLE CHANGES ON GIPPSLAND COMMUTERS

MOTION

Moved: Cr Gibson

Seconded: Cr Morgan

That Council:

1. notes the recent changes to the V/Line Gippsland timetable introduced on 1 February 2026 as part of the State Government's Big Switch timetable review;
2. acknowledges that the earliest Gippsland service to Southern Cross now arrives in Melbourne later and this service previously enabled Gippsland residents—particularly tradespeople and other early-shift workers—to reach workplaces in Melbourne by 7:00am;
3. recognises the concerns raised by local residents who can no longer arrive at work on time due to the altered service, and the potential impacts this may have on employment, commuter behaviour, and retention of skilled workers within the region;
4. requests that the Mayor write to the Minister for Public and Active Transport outlining Council's concerns and seeking:
 - (a) a review of the decision to alter the earliest service; and
 - (b) consideration of reinstating an earlier arrival time to support Gippsland commuters.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments

Nil

Procedural notes:

Cr Gibson resumed the Chair at 6.40pm.

Cr Pugsley returned to the meeting at 6:40pm.

STRATEGIC ITEMS FOR DECISION

9. STRATEGIC ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item Number 9.1 23 February 2026

Infrastructure and Sustainability

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION UPDATE - FUTURE OF 1 MITCHELLS ROAD (MOE GARDENS CARAVAN PARK) SITE

MOTION

Moved: Cr Pugsley

Seconded: Cr Howe

That Council:

1. in its capacity as Committee of Management for the land at 1 Mitchells Road, Moe, known as Moe Gardens Caravan Park (the Land) under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (the Act), approves a variation to the lease of the Land between Council and 161 Business Pty Ltd (the Lease) to extend the term of the Lease for a twelve (12) month period commencing on 1 June 2026 with an expiry date of 31 May 2027;
2. authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - (a) finalise the terms of the variation including rental and any minor amendments to terms and conditions of the Lease where deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer;
 - (b) seek the approval of the Minister to the variation pursuant to section 17D of the Act; and
 - (c) subject to receiving approval of the Minister, finalise and execute all documents required to give effect to the variation.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments

Nil

Procedural note: Cr Gibson adjourned the meeting to raise a question with the General Manager Infrastructure and Sustainability between 6:42pm and 6:43pm.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2026-31

MOTION

Moved: Cr Howe

Seconded: Cr Harriman

That Council:

1. **adopts the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2026-2031;**
2. **notes that after adoption, the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2026-31 will be published on the Council's website; and**
3. **notes that officers will present a report to the February 2027 Council meeting on the progress of the action plan.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. Economic Development Strategy 2026-2031
2. Economic Development Strategy - Gender Impact Assessment

LATROBE REGIONAL GALLERY (LRG) ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE AND EOI FOR NEW MEMBERS

MOTION

Moved: Cr Morgan

Seconded: Cr Potter

That Council:

- 1. endorses the revised Terms of Reference; and**
- 2. endorses officers to undertake an Expression of Interest process to seek new members of the Latrobe Regional Gallery Advisory Committee.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. LRG Advisory Committee ToR Draft 2026
2. LRG Advisory Committee ToR - 2023

PROPOSED CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOTION

Moved: Cr Morgan

Seconded: Cr Pugsley

That Council:

- 1. endorses the establishment of the Cultural Industries Advisory Committee under the attached Terms of Reference; and**
- 2. endorses officers undertaking an Expression of Interest process to seek members.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. Creative Industries Advisory Committee Draft Terms of Reference

SUBMISSION TO VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SECTOR

MOTION

Moved: Cr Morgan

Seconded: Cr Potter

That Council endorses the submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. July 25 Council Resolution to Advocate for Reforms to Early Childhood Education and Care sector
2. Terms of Reference, Victorian State Government Parliamentary Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care Sector
3. Council's Submission to: Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care Sector

STATUTORY PLANNING

10. STATUTORY PLANNING

Nil reports

CORPORATE ITEMS FOR DECISION

11. CORPORATE ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item Number 11.1 23 February 2026

Community Liveability

ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALTERNATE MOTION

Moved: Cr Morgan

Seconded: Cr Campbell

That Council:

- 1. endorses the dissolution of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee; and**
- 2. acknowledges the Committee members and the work achieved by the Committee; and**
- 3. notes Council's ongoing role in, and commitment to, animal welfare, particularly through the implementation of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. Animal Welfare Advisory Committee_Terms of Reference Briefing report

QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT - DECEMBER 2025

MOTION

Moved: Cr Howe

Seconded: Cr Pugsley

That Council receives and notes the Budget Report for the quarter ended 31 December 2025, prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. Quarterly Budget Report - December 2025

2025/26 MID YEAR BUDGET REVIEW

ALTERNATE MOTION

Moved: Cr Pugsley

Seconded: Cr Barnes

That Council:

- 1. receives and notes the mid-year budget review;**
- 2. approves the allocation of funding to the following projects:**
 - a) Forestree Data Collection at Matheson Park Churchill - \$12,000;**
 - b) Copyright Agency Agreement - \$11,000;**
 - c) Leisure & Aquatic Facilities Strategic Review - \$100,000; and**
- 3. allocates from the net 2025/26 Forecast Budget Surplus position of \$463,000 an amount of \$200,000 for Christmas decorations.**

AMENDMENT

Moved: Cr Potter

Seconded: Cr Morgan

That Council:

- 1. receives and notes the mid-year budget review;**
- 2. approves the allocation of funding to the following projects:**
 - a. Forestree Data Collection at Matheson Park Churchill - \$12,000;**
 - b. Copyright Agency Agreement - \$11,000;**
 - c. Leisure & Aquatic Facilities Strategic Review - \$100,000; and**
- 3. allocates from the net 2025/26 Forecast Budget Surplus position of \$463,000 an amount of \$100,000 for Christmas decorations.**

For Crs Potter and Morgan

Against: Crs Barnes, Campbell, Harriman, Pugsley, Gibson and Howe

LOST

The alternate motion as the **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION**

That Council:

1. receives and notes the mid-year budget review;
2. approves the allocation of funding to the following projects:
 - (a) Forestree Data Collection at Matheson Park Churchill - \$12,000;
 - (b) Copyright Agency Agreement - \$11,000;
 - (c) Leisure & Aquatic Facilities Strategic Review - \$100,000; and
3. allocates from the net 2025/26 Forecast Budget Surplus position of \$463,000 an amount of \$200,000 for Christmas decorations.

For Crs Barnes, Campbell, Harriman, Pugsley, Gibson and Howe

Against: Crs Potter and Morgan

CARRIED

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. Attachment 1 - Income Allocation Statement

S6A SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION

MOTION

Moved: Cr Morgan

Seconded: Cr Howe

That Council:

1. **in the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the S6A Instrument of Delegation to Members of Staff at Attachment 1, resolves that:**
 - (a) **there be delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached *S6A Instrument of Delegation to Members of Staff*, the powers, duties and functions set out in that Instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument;**
 - (b) **this Instrument comes into force immediately after the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument; and**
 - (c) **the duties and functions set out in the Instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. S6A Instrument of Delegation to Members of Council Staff

AUTHORISATION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS UNDER THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987

MOTION

Moved: Cr Pugsley

Seconded: Cr Morgan

That Council, in the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, resolves that:

- 1. Caitlyn Ewald be appointed and authorised as set out in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation attached to this report;**
- 2. the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation comes into force immediately after the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and**
- 3. the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation be sealed.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. S11A - Caitlyn Ewald

URGENT BUSINESS

12. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil reports

REPORTS FOR NOTING

13. REPORTS FOR NOTING

Item Number 13.1 23 February 2026

Organisational Performance

PRESENTATION OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES - 9 DECEMBER 2025

MOTION

Moved: Cr Campbell

Seconded: Cr Potter

That Council receives and notes the Audit and Risk Committee Minutes for the 9 December 2025 meeting at Attachment 1.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Attachments - Refer to Council Meeting Agenda

1. ARC Meeting Minutes - 9 December 2025

14. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Nil reports

ITEMS FOR TABLING

15. ITEMS FOR TABLING

Nil reports

**MEETING CLOSED TO
THE PUBLIC TO
CONSIDER
CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION**

16. MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC TO CONSIDER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020* enables Council to close the meeting to the public to consider *confidential information* as defined in that Act.

MOTION

Moved: Cr Pugsley

Seconded: Cr Harriman

That Council pursuant to section 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) close the Council Meeting to the public to consider the following items containing confidential information as defined in section 3(1) of the Act:

16.1 LCC-895 Management and Operation of GRAC

This item is confidential as it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released (section 3(1)(a)) and private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that—

- (i) relates to trade secrets; or**
- (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage (section 3(1)(g)).** These grounds apply because releasing this information publicly and/or prematurely may prejudice the undertaking of this process and would release private commercial information of the tenderers that may cause disadvantage.

16.2 LCC-904 Reconstruction of Butters Street, Morwell

This item is confidential as it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released (section 3(1)(a)) and private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that—

- (i) relates to trade secrets; or**
- (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage (section 3(1)(g)).** These grounds apply because releasing this information publicly and/or prematurely may prejudice the undertaking of this process and would release private information of the tenderers that may cause disadvantage.

16.3 Execution of Latrobe City Trust Deed of Appointment

This item is confidential as it contains confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a) (section 3(1)(h)).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Meeting closed to the public at 8:07pm.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 8:27pm.

I certify that these minutes have been confirmed.

Mayor: _____

Date: _____