

Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 15 July 2026

Small Community Room, Berninneit

91-97 Thompson Avenue Cowes

Commencing at 1:00 pm

Community Vision 2045

From its flowing hills to its coastal woodlands and wild unspoiled coastlines, the Bass Coast is a source of celebration for all who live in and visit the region.

Our townships are vibrant, rich with culture and full of life, each with its own distinct character. Drawing on our creativity, innovation and resilience we've created a thriving and diverse economy that supports sustainable agriculture and industry.

We live proudly on Bunurong Country, and build on learnings from our First Peoples and their knowledge. We coexist in harmony with our environment, and are prepared for future challenges and changes.

We are the people of the Bass Coast. Experience our cultures and history, and contribute to our story.



The meeting commenced at 1.01pm.

Cr. Brett Tessari read the Mobile Telephone Reminder.

Cr. Brett Tessari read Statement of Acknowledgement.

Cr. Mat Morgan read the Councillor Statement

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1 Present and Apologies

Councillors: Cr Brett Tessari, Bunurong Ward(Mayor)
Cr Ron Bauer, Island Ward(Deputy Mayor)
Cr Meg Edwards, Bunurong Ward (Virtual)
Cr Mat Morgan, Bunurong Ward
Cr Tracey Bell, Island Ward
Cr Tim O'Brien, Island Ward
Cr Jan Thompson, Western Port Ward

Officers: Mr Greg Box, Chief Executive Officer
Ms Jodi Kennedy, General Manager Communities & Culture
Mr Patrick Dillon, General Manager Innovation & Engagement
Ms Donna Taylor, General Manager Future Places
Ms Jade Glen, Manager Governance & Communications

Apologies: Cr. Jon Temby
Cr. Rochelle Halstead

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

3.1 Council Meeting 17 June 2026

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 June 2026 be confirmed.

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Jan Thompson / Seconded: Cr. Ron Bauer

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 June 2026 be confirmed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4 Mayor and Councillor Reports

4.1 Cr Brett Tessari - Mayoral Report

This report covers the period from 17 June 2026 to 15 July 2026

Acknowledgements

- Nil

In brief the Mayoral activities have included the following:

Activities

- Opening Event - Wonthaggi to Inverloch Shared Pathway
- Official Opening - Wonthaggi Netball Pavilion
- One Gippsland Dinner, Canberra
- Opening of Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

Meetings

Attended Council Workshops and Briefings

Chaired Councillor Only Meetings

Weekly meetings with CEO, Council Support and Communications

Additional Meetings:

- Dogs in Public Place Guidelines
- Australian Council of Local Government, Canberra
- 2026 National General Assembly, Regional Forum, Canberra
- 2026 National General Assembly, Canberra
- SECCCA Networking - Climate Adaption & Resilience, Canberra
- 2026 Coastal Council Advocacy Roundtable Meeting, Canberra
- Pre assessment meeting - Bass Coast Community Awards
- Complete Assessments - Bass Coast Community Awards
- Post Assessment meeting - Bass Coast Community Awards
- Creative Industries Marketing Workshop
- Phillip Island Nature Parks Meeting
- Pre-Briefing - Public Art Commission Launch

Other

Media Enquiries/Interviews

- WIN News Interview – Advocacy for Swimming Pools
- WIN News Interview – Loss of Super Bikes, Phillip Island
- ABC Radio – Loss of Super Bikes, Phillip Island

Phone calls, emails and letters

4.2 Cr Tracey Bell - Councillor Report

The highlight of my past month had to be the launch of the Wonthaggi–Inverloch Shared Pathway, a project more than a decade in the making. The new 14-kilometre off-road pathway provides a safe connection for people walking, riding and rolling between Wonthaggi and Inverloch, while also linking into the broader Bass Coast shared pathway network. The $7.7 million project was delivered through strong partnerships between Council, the Victorian Government, community groups and local stakeholders. A particularly impressive aspect of the project was the environmental work undertaken alongside construction, including the establishment of almost 100,000 native plants to enhance biodiversity and create habitat for local wildlife. It was wonderful to see so many community members and students come together to celebrate this significant milestone for Bass Coast.

In addition to attending regular Council briefings and meetings throughout the month, the pathway opening provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on what can be achieved through long-term planning, advocacy and collaboration. Projects such as this improve active transport options, support healthier lifestyles and strengthen connections between our townships for both residents and visitors.

4.3 Cr Mat Morgan - Councillor Report

Whale watching season is upon us! Can I offer a huge congratulations to everyone involved in the Phillip Island Whale Festival, despite weather conditions forcing cruise cancellations- the exhibitors, artists and guest presenters made the festival just as special as ever!

Bass Coast welcomed 39 new citizens at a wonderful ceremony last week, it was a pleasure to attend and see so many proud, smiling faces.

Away from Bass Coast, I travelled to Canberra and attended the ALGA National General Assembly alongside the mayor, It was wonderful to see a clear majority of councils across Australia voting to support a ‘polluter pays’ climate motion, following the adoption of my motion in our chamber earlier this year.

5 Public Question Time

5.1 Public Questions

Question 1

Darren Callesen

Topic: Thompson Ave redevelopment

Q1. Has any money been allocated for public artworks, sculptures, murals, mosaics, etc. in stage 1 of the Cowes Streetscape Master Plan lower Thompson Ave redevelopment?

Q2. When will the funding for the toilet facilities at Olive Justice Place be made available?

Response:

Through the Mayor, whilst funding has not been allocated in Stage 1 of the Cowes Streetscapes redevelopment for artistic response, it is a consideration for stage 2. A creative design response is integrated into the landscape works. Council invested in the glass canoe project by artist Maree Clark called YAWA at Berninneit and continues to work with groups regarding Cultural heritage interpretation.

The Olive Justice Place toilet facilities form part of Stage 2 of the Cowes Streetscapes redevelopment and are currently not funded. This remains a priority of Council.

Question 2

Graham Jolly

Topic: Transfer Station

Years ago the Rhyll landfill waste disposal site closed. Council purchased Gap Road property stating a new transfer station would be built. The 17/6/2026 council meeting, Council stated "Council has no current development plan for the site". When will a transfer station be constructed on the site.

Response:

Through the Mayor, there is no current development plan or construction funding allocated for the Gap Road site in Council's Long Term Financial Plan. In 2026-27, funding has been allocated to undertake a feasibility study and options analysis to determine the most effective and value-for-money approach for delivering waste management and infrastructure maintenance services on Phillip Island.

Cr. Meg Edwards left the meeting at 1.12pm

Question 3

Bill Bunivious

Topic: Waste Bins

Under the Victorian Local Government Act or any Act is Councils three bin waste system (red, yellow, green bins) a compulsory service to property owners in the Bass Coast Shire or is the system only a service 'offered' to properties owners.

Response:

Through the Mayor, under the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*, Council is required to provide waste and recycling services (red, yellow and green) to land in its municipal district that is used primarily for residential purposes.

Question 4

Ernie Westergard

Topic: Scoping Works

Please provide the full details provided as the scoping works details to the design company to create a design for Stage 1, Phase 4 of The Esplanade section in Cowes on Phillip Island.

Response:

Through the Mayor, the Stage 1, Phase 4 plans of the Cowes Streetscapes redevelopment, including a traffic and pedestrian movement plan during works, can be found on Council's Engage Bass Coast Project Page.

Question 5

Bill Wilson.

Topic: MotoGP and Super Bike

Please provide at this early stage the Council's involvement plans towards the last MotoGP and Super Bike events at Phillip Island.

Response:

Through the Mayor, Council has a long-standing partnership with the Australian Grand Prix Corporation to support the MotoGP, including traffic and transport management, community planning and activation of the Cowes Entertainment Precinct. Council also supports the FIM Superbike World Championship through its annual Event Partnership Program.

We acknowledge this is the final year under the current arrangements and look forward to celebrating both events with our community and visitors, while continuing to advocate for a coordinated support package from the Victorian Government.

Question 6

Joe Waralow

Topic: Passivhaus

Please provide a report comprising the Passivhaus results currently for the Cowes Cultural and Community Centre for the issuing certification.

Response:

Through the Mayor, Berninneit has been certified by the Passive House Institute to the Passive House Classic standard. Large public buildings are assessed using detailed energy modelling and performance requirements specific to the building's size, function and climate. The results have been published on Council's website and represent the building's certified performance outcomes.

Question 7

Graham Jolly

Topic: Canberra

Recently a number of Council people traveled to Canberra to a National Conference. While in Canberra Council spoke to government officials seeking grant funds for projects.

How successful in funding terms to council was achieved.

Response:

Through the Mayor, Council representatives attended the National General Assembly in Canberra.

It is important to note that grant funding decisions are not made during these meetings. Rather, they provide an opportunity to advocate for projects before formal funding rounds or assessment processes.

Advocacy is an important part of Council's role, and ensuring our projects are known and understood by decision-makers gives our community the best possible opportunity to secure external funding.

For example, Council has received $8 million in federal funding for the Cowes Streetscape and has recently received over $632,000 to support the future of the Wonthaggi Secondary College Site.

Question 8

Mario Boffa

Topic: Grant Allocation

What is Councils contingency plans if the State Government grant funding is reduced to a very low grant allocation to council for 2026/27.

Response:

Through the Mayor, the major component of operational grants relied upon by Council is the Financial Assistance Grant program, administrated by the Australian Government under the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995*.

The Victorian Government does not provide significant operational grant funding. Capital grants are requested and received on an individual project basis. These are only included in the annual budget if confirmed.

Question 9

Sue Chadwick

Topic: Plaque

Many months ago the plaque honouring the Shire of Phillip Island Ambulance drivers previously mounted on the older Civic Centre garden, and later discarded in a paddock, Bass Coast Council committed to restore it in the garden of Berninneit. When is the Council going to fulfill this promise?

Response:

Through the Mayor, the plaque and rock are safely secured at the Cowes depot while we investigate the best option for placement.

The fountain garden the plaque refers to is no longer part of the landscape surrounding Berninneit.

Council will contact the local ambulance service and historical society to discuss the best way forward within the next month.

Question 10

John Cantone

Topic: Thompson Avenue upgrade

Q1. Where is the final detailed design for the Thompson Avenue upgrade? Why is the completed design not publicly displayed at the project site for community inspection?

Response:

As previously answered, the detailed designs are available on Council's Engage Bass Coast Project Page.

Council is managing signage on the project site in line with regulatory compliance and to promote businesses.

Q2. Which businesses requested removal of on-street car parks from Thompson Avenue? Please identify every business, business association, submission, consultation response, meeting record supporting this decision. Will Council publicly release this evidence?

Response:

There has been repeated consultation over the past decade.

The history of the project, including the engagement summary, is available on Council's Engage Bass Coast Page under the Cowes Streetscape Project.

6 Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

7 Petitions and Joint Letters

There were no Petitions and Joint Letters.

8 Reports Requiring Council Decision

8.1 The Esplanade (Sunderland Bay Road to Zephyr Court) - Notice of Declaration

Cr. Meg Edwards returned to the meeting at 1.20pm

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Ron Bauer / Seconded: Cr. Tracey Bell

That Council:

1. **Following consideration by Council of written submissions received under sections 163A and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (Act) and taking account of written objections received under section 163B of the Act (as those submissions and objections are respectively summarised in Attachment AT-6 to this report hereby declares (in accordance with the form of the declaration set out in Attachment AT-4) a special charge under section 163 of the Act in relation to the construction and improvement of roads and drainage of The Esplanade (Sunderland Bay Road to Zephyr Court), Sunderland Bay to be known as 'The Esplanade (Sunderland Bay Road to Zephyr Court) Road and Drainage Upgrade Project' (Special Charge Scheme).**
2. **Directs that notice be given to all property owners included in the Scheme and all persons who lodged a written submission and/or an objection to the decision of Council in relation to the Declaration of Special Charge.**
3. **Specifies that the reasons for Council's decision are as follows –**
   - **(a) It is considered that there is only relatively moderate objection to the Scheme and that there is otherwise a broad level of support for the Special Charge from the property owners;**
   - **(b) It is considered that Council is acting in accordance with the functions and powers conferred on Council under the Act (and the *Local Government Act 2020*) having regard to the role, purposes and objectives of Council, particularly in relation to the provision of proper, safe and suitable road and drainage infrastructure and property services in the Scheme area;**
   - **(c) It is considered that all persons who are liable to pay the Special Charge and the properties respectively owned by them will receive a special benefit in the form of an enhancement or maintenance in land values and/or a maintenance or enhancement in the use, occupation and enjoyment of the properties;**

(d) It is considered that the basis of the distribution of the Special Charge amongst the persons who are liable to pay the Special Charge is fair and reasonable;

(e) It is considered that the works proposed by the Scheme are consistent with policies and objectives set out in the Bass Coast Planning Scheme; and

(f) It is considered that the works proposed under the Scheme are necessary, reasonable, not excessive, sufficient, suitable and not costly having regard to the locality or environment and to the probable use of the roads and the drainage in the area.

4. Directs that the Special Charge be levied on those persons who are liable to pay the Special Charge.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8.2 Amendment C179basc - Phillip Island Sporting Precinct Rezoning

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Ron Bauer / Seconded: Cr. Tim O'Brien

That Council:

1. **Seeks authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare Planning Scheme Amendment C179basc to rezone land at Lot 1 PS 706350M and Res 1 PS 706350M from the Farming Zone to the Public Park and Recreation Zone, Delete the Public Acquisition Overlay in accordance with Section 8A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.**
2. **Subject to Ministerial authorisation, prepares and exhibits the planning scheme amendment to the Bass Coast Planning Scheme in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8.3 Closure of Park Parade Road Cape Paterson

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Mat Morgan / Seconded: Cr. Tracey Bell

That Council:

1. **Note that traffic changes requested in the petition are not supported within the Cape Paterson Local Area Traffic Management Study**
2. **Advise the head petitioner of the Council decision.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8.4 Dogs in Public Places Guidelines

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Mat Morgan / Seconded: Cr. Tracey Bell

That Council adopt the Dogs in Public Places Guidelines 2026-2029

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8.5 Western Port Down Under Partnership Agreement

Motion

That Council enters into an Environmental Partnership Agreement with Western Port Down Under and provides funding of $55,000 for one year.

Cr. Mat Morgan moved an Alternative

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Mat Morgan / Seconded: Cr. Jan Thompson

That Council enters into an Environmental Partnership Agreement with Western Port Down Under and provides funding of $55,000 for one year, conditional on the project receiving no funding or sponsorship from companies involved in fossil fuel extraction.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9 Statutory Reports

9.1 Informal Meeting of Councillors

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Mat Morgan / Seconded: Cr. Jan Thompson

That Council receive the attached Informal Meeting of Councillors records.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.2 Planning and Building Statistics - May 2026

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Ron Bauer / Seconded: Cr. Mat Morgan

That Council:

1. **Receives and notes the Planning Permits issued under delegation report for May 2026; and**
2. **Receives and notes the Planning and Building Activity Report for May 2026.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.3 Contracts Awarded and or Extended under CEO Delegation for June 2026

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Mat Morgan / Seconded: Cr. Tracey Bell

That Council notes the above contracts were awarded and or extended under the delegated authorities in accordance with the Procurement Policy during June 2026.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.4 Municipal Association of Victoria – Quarterly Delegate Report April to June 2026

Council Decision

Moved: Cr. Ron Bauer / Seconded: Cr. Tracey Bell

That Council notes the MAV Delegates Report for the period of April to June 2026

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10 Urgent Business

There was no Urgent Business.

11 Mayoral Announcement of Next Meeting of Council

The next Council Meeting will be held on 19 August 2026 in the Bass Coast Civic Centre Council Chamber, Baillieu Street East, Wonthaggi commencing at 1.00pm.

12 Meeting Closed

That the meeting be closed at 1.37pm