



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL

Resolutions in Brief Ordinary Council Meeting

Tuesday 7 April 2026, commencing at 5:00 PM

Cr Cindy Madeley (Mayor)	Arthur Skipitaris, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Cr Liz Foat (Deputy Mayor)	Chris Hastie, General Manager Built and Natural Environment
Cr Catherine Bannerman	Renae Littlejohn, General Manager Development
Cr Scott Rossetti	Billie-Jo Thorburn, Acting Manager Customer & Communications
Cr Edward Lowe	Catherine Hicks, Communications Advisor
Cr Garry Stephens (Online)	Courtney Smart, Corporate Governance Officer
Cr Carmel Ripper	
Cr Geoff Wells	

APOLOGIES

Cr John Tatterson (Leave of Absence)

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
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COUNCIL MEETING INFORMATION

Members of the public gallery should note that the Council records and publishes Council meetings via YouTube to enhance the accessibility of Council meetings to the broader Wellington community. These recordings are also published and archived on Council's Website for viewing by the public. Recordings may be used for publicity or information purposes.

Members of the public in attendance at the Council meeting who wish to communicate with the Council regarding an agenda item or any other matter should advise the Mayor, ideally prior to the meeting starting, to ensure that their submission is called at the appropriate time during the meeting.

Would gallery visitors, Councillors and invited online attendees please ensure that mobile phones and other electronic devices are turned off or in silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

MISSION STATEMENT

Working together to make a difference. We listen and lead to provide quality services that improve life for all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

“Wellington Shire Council acknowledges our offices are located on the traditional lands of the Gunaikurnai nation. We pay our deep respects to their Elders past, present and future and acknowledge their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to their land and waters.”

1. APOLOGIES

COUNCILLOR TATTERSON (Leave of Absence)

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT/S OF INTEREST

NIL

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING/S

3.1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

ACTION OFFICER: MANAGER GOVERNANCE

RECOMMENDATION
<i>That Council adopt the minutes and resolutions of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 17 March 2026.</i>
COUNCILLOR WELLS / COUNCILLOR LOWE
<i>That Council adopt the minutes and resolutions of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 17 March 2026.</i>
CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

ACTION OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ITEM	FROM MEETING	COMMENTS	ACTION BY
NIL			

5. ACCEPTANCE OF LATE AND URGENT ITEMS

NIL

6. NOTICE/S OF MOTION

NIL

7. RECEIVING OF PETITION OR JOINT LETTERS

7.1. PETITIONS

ACTION OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ITEM	FROM MEETING	COMMENTS	ACTION BY
Request for Review of Planning Limitations Affecting the Township of Alberton	3 March 2026	Letter of Response for the petition provided by the General Manager Development and sent to the Head Petitioner on 12 March 2026.	7 April 2026

8. INVITED ADDRESSES, PRESENTATIONS OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COUNCILLOR MADELEY acknowledged Alan Lewis and the remarkable contribution to Sale's heritage tourism story through the restoration and operation of the historic vessel *Rubeena*. Since relocating the vessel to the Port of Sale in 2013, Alan brought new life to a boat that had been operating since 1912 and transformed her into a 'living, breathing' part of the community, establishing the Port of Sale Heritage Cruises. By sharing the *Rubeena* with thousands of people each year, Alan created a genuine connection between visitors, our waterways and the stories that shaped this region. The cruise route which included the historic Sale swing bridge successfully linked European settlement history with the enduring and important stories of the Gunaikurnai People. Alan has always believed that experiences drive visitation and, in a region, where tourism experiences have been limited, Alan's contribution to this space has been especially significant. Alan has helped put the Port of Sale "on the tourism map", bringing pride, enjoyment and connection to both residents and visitors. After 13 years, Alan has made the decision to retire from his much-loved Port of Sale Heritage Cruises. Mayor Madeley expressed a sincere appreciation and congratulations to Alan for his outstanding service to the community.

On behalf of Wellington Shire Council, Mayor Madeley presented Alan with a framed picture of the *Rubeena*.

ALAN LEWIS presented to Council, advising on his long-standing connection to Sale, having commenced employment with the Shire as City Engineer in 1968 and serving in that role for 19 years during a period of significant growth associated with oil and gas industry development. It was a fascinating time for Sale which was given the opportunity to do things that were the "envy of nearly every Country town in Victoria". Not only was there significant growth in revenue, but it enabled for identification on "what really makes a town click". It was a great period with substantial infrastructure investment undertaken such as safer urban areas, streetscapes, landscaping, and creation of the Courts.

Alan reflected on the real need for tourist attractions that drives visitation to the region and expressed sadness at giving up the *Rubeena*. When Alan had been the founding chairperson of Destination Gippsland, he had spoken of the importance of the need to have tourist attractions that bring people to the area.

The acquisition and operation of the historic vessel *Rubeena* was undertaken by Alan to demonstrate the value of heritage tourism and experiential offerings in Sale.

Looking forward, Alan hopes that someone may succeed him in carrying on the concept of tourism and helping show people what Sale has to offer.

Mayor Madeley re-iterated a deep thank you and appreciation for the incredible legacy that Alan has left through his work at Council and with the Heritage Cruises of the *Rubeena*.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENS acknowledged the successful delivery of the Tarra Festival held over the 2026 Easter long weekend at various locations across Tarraville and Yarram. There were a number of events which Councillor Stephens attended, including Friday night at the Yarram Memorial Garden; Good Friday service at the Anglican Church in Tarraville; Saturday Parade and Market; the Rotary Art show; the Sunday Red Cross Pancakes in the Park, and the Sunday Yarram Aerodrome terminal opening. There was excellent attendance at all Festival events. Congratulations were given to Sarah Janssen, the President, Holly Kilgower, the Secretary, and all other members of the organising committee for the work they did in organising the very successful festival for 2026. Councillor Stephens also thanked Mayor Madeley for attending on Easter Saturday.

In conjunction with the Yarram Aero Club, Councillor Stephens acknowledged the opening of the new terminal building at the Yarram Aerodrome on Sunday 5 April 2026 on behalf of the Mayor and Council. The project was jointly funded by the Shire and the Yarram Aero Club. The former portable clubrooms have been removed, and the new terminal is now fully operational. Councillor Stephens thanked Brian Lucas, the President of the Yarram Aero Club and members for their contribution and continued enthusiastic support for the Yarram Aero Club.

COUNCILLOR Madeley also extended a thanks to the Tarra Festival Committee. This is the second year that Councillor Madeley has attended the Parade. Councillor Madeley exclaimed it was fantastic to have her husband and children also in attendance - a great example of community spirit.

COUNCILLOR RIPPER acknowledged and attended the unveiling of a Gippsland Plains Rail Trail sculpture at Glengarry on 22 March 2026. The project developed in collaboration by historian Linda Barraclough, sculptor Jo Caminiti, and Helen Hoppner, Chair of the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Committee. Reference was made to the historical significance of the former rail line and its transformation into a rail trail.

Acknowledgement was made of John Cahill, Anthony and Christine Richards as original volunteers involved in the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail's development. Council was informed that three sculptures of dogs have been crafted by Jo Caminiti, with further installations planned at Toongabbie, and Cowwarr. Councillor Ripper highlighted strong community attendance at the unveiling reflecting on the historical and community value of the Gippsland Plain Rail Trail project.

Councillor Ripper acknowledged the celebration marking 100 years of service at Heyfield Hospital and the 30th anniversary of Laurina Lodge aged care facility. The event acknowledged the history and continued operation of the hospital and aged care facility, extensions to Laurina Lodge and the co-location of the medical centre.

Councillor Ripper was informed that attendees included Michele Gardner, Chief Executive Officer, Central Gippsland Health, Raelene Hanratty, Chair of Heyfield Hospital and Lodge Board, and local General Practitioner (GP) Dr Peter Stevens, who provided a historical overview of the hospital.

Councillor Ripper acknowledged attendance with Mayor Madeley and Councillor Rossetti on Sunday 31 March 2026 at the 105th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) (RAAF), originally established on 31 March 1921 at Point Cook by Sir Richard Williams. Councillor Ripper referred to previous service at Point Cook, connections to RAAF Base East Sale and informed that Lieutenant Bruce Peterson, father of Mayor Madeley, was in attendance and acknowledged his service as a navigator.

COUNCILLOR WELLS acknowledged the Victorian Men's Shed Association Roadshow which he was invited to attend on Thursday 20 March 2026, focussed on men's mental health and prevention of male suicide. There were presentations from Sallie Jones, Founder of Gippsland Jersey, and Paul Withall, Founder of Zero Suicide Community Awareness

Program. Councillor Wells reported on some key statistics, such as the increase in male suicide rates in Australia by 13% from 2011 to 2021, and the rise from 1,658 deaths in 2005 to 2,529 deaths in 2024, representing an increase of more than 50%. Suicide deaths in Australia now average nine per day, comprising approximately two females per day and one male every three hours, based on the most recent data release in 2025.

Councillor Wells made mention of the powerful impact of a visual display of boots which were used to represent men and boys lost to suicide and intended to highlight the scale of the issue.

Finally, Councillor Wells spoke of the presentation by Cal Coleman on the *Walk and Talk for Mental Health* initiative, a 20 kilometre walk from Pine Lodge in Stratford to Briagolong which will take place on 2 May 2026. Proceeds from the registrations for the event will go to supporting men’s health - the Black Dog Institute.

9. QUESTION/S ON NOTICE

9.1. OUTSTANDING QUESTION/S ON NOTICE

ACTION OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ITEM	FROM MEETING	COMMENTS	ACTION BY
NIL			

10. DELEGATES REPORT

COUNCILLOR BANNERMAN provided an update on the Rural Councils Victoria Committee meeting held on 26 March 2026. Rural Councils Victoria has increased the frequency of its meetings in 2026 to strengthen advocacy efforts in the lead-up to the Victorian State election.

There was a lot of time spent focussing on advocacy relating to the current fuel crisis and its impact on rural councils and communities, including fuel security, supply access, council operations, essential services, freight, agriculture and local economies.

An advocacy statement has been put together by Rural Councils Victoria which emphasises the unique access and distribution issues relating to rural councils. The concern for Rural Councils Victoria is that without intervention at the State and Federal Government levels, Councils will be forced to reduce services and recovery will take longer.

Rural Councils Victoria are asking for fuel security and priority access for rural areas to guarantee fuel supply for Agriculture and Councils, in particular essential services and freight; to consider quashing the Emergency Services and Volunteer Levy to free up funding locally and, more specifically, emergency funding and targeted financial relief to support councils and tourism businesses as well as flexibility around funding grants.

COUNCILLOR MADELEY provided an update on the One Gippsland State delegation where discussions were held at State Parliament on Thursday 2 April where meetings took place with the Office of the Premier, the Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP – Treasurer of Victoria, the Hon. Nick Staikos MP - Minister for Local Government and Minister for Consumer Affairs and an Opposition roundtable with Danny O’Brien MP, Tim Bull MP and Renee Heath MLC as local members as well as Tom McIntosh MLC and of the Office of the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP. Matters raised included Gippsland’s role in the renewable energy transition, payment in lieu of rates, and the need for workforce and skills investment. Advocacy also focused on reinvestment in tourism and major events following the loss of the MotoGP, the development of a replacement proposition and a coordinated 12 month events pipeline supported by

projects such as Nanjet. The importance of freight, road and enabling infrastructure was emphasised as critical to regional safety, resilience, liveability and housing growth.

One Gippsland will continue to advocate for these priorities on behalf of the region.

11. GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES

11.1. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS

ACTION OFFICER: MANAGER GOVERNANCE

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note and receive the attached Assembly of Councillor records for the period 9 March 2026 to 29 March 2026.

COUNCILLOR FOAT / COUNCILLOR BANNERMAN

That Council note and receive the attached Assembly of Councillor records for the period 9 March 2026 to 29 March 2026.

CARRIED

12. GENERAL MANAGER DEVELOPMENT

12.1. QUARTERLY BUILDING REPORT - OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2025

ACTION OFFICER: MANAGER PLANNING AND BUILDING

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the report of building permits issued from 1 October to 31 December 2025.

COUNCILLOR FOAT / COUNCILLOR LOWE

That Council note the report of building permits issued from 1 October to 31 December 2025.

CARRIED

13. GENERAL MANAGER BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

13.1. WONNANGATTA ROAD RIVERBANK RETAINING WALL

ACTION OFFICER: MANAGER ASSETS AND PROJECTS

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the recommendations contained in the confidential attachment 2026-141 Contract Tender Evaluation Report Wonnangatta Road Riverbank Retaining Wall; and*

- 2. Note that the information contained in the confidential attachment 2026-141 Contract Tender Evaluation Report for Wonnangatta Road Riverbank Retaining Wall, was designated confidential by the General Manager Built and Natural Environment on 19 March 2026 because it contains confidential information as defined in section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 (g)(ii) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage. except that once this recommendation has been adopted the name of the successful tenderer can be made public.**

COUNCILLOR RIPPER / COUNCILLOR WELLS

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the recommendations contained in the confidential attachment 2026-141 Contract Tender Evaluation Report Wonnangatta Road Riverbank Retaining Wall; and**
- 2. Note that the information contained in the confidential attachment 2026-141 Contract Tender Evaluation Report for Wonnangatta Road Riverbank Retaining Wall, was designated confidential by the General Manager Built and Natural Environment on 19 March 2026 because it contains confidential information as defined in section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 (g)(ii) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage. except that once this recommendation has been adopted the name of the successful tenderer can be made public.**

CARRIED

The Mayor announced the successful tenderer as The Trustee for the West Pacific Group for the Wonnangatta Road Riverbank Retaining Wall.

14. FURTHER GALLERY AND ONLINE COMMENTS

Gallery comments are an opportunity for members of the public to raise any particular matter they wish. This allows those in the gallery to speak directly to Councillors but is not a forum designed for open discussion or debate. We will listen respectfully to what you have to say and make the commitment that if your query requires a written response, we will advise you that a response will be forthcoming, and a copy of that response will be circulated to all Councillors.

This is not a forum for members of the public to lodge complaints against individuals, including Councillors and staff, particularly as that individual gets no public right of reply to any matter raised. We take complaints seriously, and in line with the guidance from the Victorian Ombudsman and the local Government Inspectorate, we request that any specific complaint against an individual be put in writing. This way, your concern can be properly dealt with while ensuring fairness to all parties concerned.

If you wish to speak, we remind you that this part of the meeting is being recorded and broadcast on our website. Council's official Minutes will record that you have spoken to Council and the subject you spoke to Council about but will not record specific comments. We ask you to state your name in full, where you are from, and you have three minutes.

ONLINE COMMENTS

NIL

FURTHER GALLERY COMMENTS

NIL

Meeting declared closed at: 5:45pm

The live streaming of this Council meeting came to a close.

15. IN CLOSED SESSION

That the meeting be closed to the public pursuant to section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential matters under section 66(5)(b) as defined by section 3(1) being:

- a) Council business information***
- b) Security information***
- c) Land use planning information***
- d) Law enforcement information***
- e) Legal privileged information***
- f) Personal information***
- g) Private commercial information***
- h) Confidential meeting information***
- i) Internal arbitration information***
- j) Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information***
- k) Information prescribed by the regulations to be confidential information***
- l) Information that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the Local Government Act 1989***

IN CLOSED SESSION

NIL