

Benalla Rural City Council

Additional Council Meeting

Minutes

Date: Wednesday 4 February 2026

Venue: Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room)
13 Mair Street, Benalla

Contents

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country	3
Apologies	3
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest.....	4
1 Officer Reports	5
1.1 <i>Planning Application To Use And Develop Land For A Warehouse, Creation Of Access To A Transport Zone 2, Removal Of Native Vegetation And Installation Of Business Identification Signage At 331 Sydney Road, Benalla.....</i>	<i>5</i>
2. Notices of Motion	6
3. Notices of Rescission Motion	6
4. Urgent Business.....	6
4.4. <i>Council Support for the 2025 Goomalibee Bushfire Event.....</i>	<i>6</i>
5. Confidential Business.....	7
5.1 <i>Tender Report for Contract CM26.036 Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Works</i>	<i>8</i>
3. Reopening of the meeting to the public	9
Closure of the meeting	9

Agenda

Chair	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	
Councillors	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	
	Councillor David Blore	
	Councillor Vince Branigan	
	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
	Councillor Jillian Merkel	
In attendance	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
	Nilesh Singh	Manager Development
	Joel Ingham	Planning Coordinator
	Jess Pendergast	Governance Coordinator

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair opened the meeting at 6pm and recited the following Acknowledgement of Country.

We, the Benalla Rural City Council, acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from other communities who may be here today.

Apologies

Cr Vince Branigan applied for a leave of absence from Monday 16 February 2026 to Friday 20 February 2026.

Cr Davis / Cr Gunaratne:

That a leave of absence be granted to Cr Vince Branigan from Monday 16 February 2026 to Friday 20 February 2026.

Carried



Governance Matters

The Council Meeting was conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Benalla Rural City Council Governance Rules 2020*.

Recording of Council Meetings

In accordance with Rule 6.4 of the *Governance Rules 2020* the Council Meeting was livestreamed via the Council's website and an audio recording was made of the proceedings.

Members of the public can watch the recorded broadcast of the meeting at **www.benalla.vic.gov.au**

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were disclosed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. B.', is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

1 Officer Reports

1.1 Planning Application To Use And Develop Land For A Warehouse, Creation Of Access To A Transport Zone 2, Removal Of Native Vegetation And Installation Of Business Identification Signage At 331 Sydney Road, Benalla

The report assessed a planning application received to use and develop land for a warehouse, creation of access to a Transport Zone 2, removal of native vegetation and installation of business identification signage at 331 Sydney Road, Benalla.

It is recorded that the following people made submissions on the item:

- Robert Rowland from Freedom of Design spoke in support of the planning application.
- David Joseph from David Joseph & Co Lawyers spoke against the planning application.
- Jennie Baldry from Oxley & Co spoke in support of the planning application.
- Emma Cavalot from Midland Freight spoke in support of the planning application.

Cr King / Cr Davis:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to Robert Rowland.

Carried

Cr Gunaratne / Cr Merkel:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to David Joseph.

Carried

Cr Branigan / Cr King:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to Jennie Baldry.

Carried

Cr King / Cr Davis:

That item 1.1 Planning Application To Use And Develop Land For A Warehouse, Creation Of Access To A Transport Zone 2, Removal Of Native Vegetation And Installation Of Business Identification Signage At 331 Sydney Road, Benalla be deferred until the Finance and Planning Committee meeting on 18 February 2026 to allow for further information to be provided to Councillors regarding the planning application.

Carried

A division of the vote was called

Votes recorded in favour of the motion:

Cr Bernie Hearn

Cr Justin King



Cr Vince Branigan
Cr Peter Davis
Cr Puna Hewa Gunaratne
Cr Jillian Merkel

Votes recorded against the motion:

Cr David Blore

The motion was **carried**.

2. Notices of Motion

No notices of motion were submitted to the meeting.

3. Notices of Rescission Motion

No notices of rescission motion were submitted to the meeting.

4. Urgent Business

The Mayor submitted an item for consideration.

4.4. Council Recovery Support for the 2025 Goomalibee Bushfire Event

Cr Hearn / Cr Davis:

That the Council provide funding support of up to \$100,000 in the 2025/26 Budget in support of ongoing recovery efforts and to help the Goomalibee community.

Carried



5. Confidential Business

It was proposed that the following item be considered in confidential business pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2020* as they contain personal information and private commercial information that would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about a person, their personal affairs and expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking if released:

5.1 *Tender Report for Contract CM26.036 Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Works*

Cr Blore / Cr Branigan:

That the meeting be closed to the public in accordance with Sections 3(1) and Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* for the following item:

5.1 Tender Report for Contract CM26.036 Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Works.

Item 5.1 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.

Carried

The meeting was closed to the public at 7.15pm.



5.1 Tender Report for Contract CM26.036 Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Works

The report presented an update on Contract CM26.036 *Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Works*.

Cr Davis / Cr Blore:

The motion for item 5.1 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.

Carried

A division of the vote was called

Votes recorded in favour of the motion:

Cr Bernie Hearn

Cr Justin King

Cr David Blore

Cr Vince Branigan

Cr Peter Davis

Cr Puna Hewa Gunaratne

Cr Jillian Merkel

Votes recorded against the motion:

Cr Puna Hewa Gunaratne

3. Reopening of the meeting to the public

Cr Davis / Cr Gunaratne:

That the meeting be reopened to the public.

Carried

The meeting was reopened to the public at 7.53pm.

Closure of the meeting

The meeting closed at 7.53pm.

The minutes were confirmed on the fourth day of March 2026.

Signed: _____



Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn