

Benalla Rural City Council

# Council Meeting

## Minutes

Date: Wednesday 15 October 2025

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

## Contents

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country .....	3
Apologies .....	3
Statement of Commitment .....	3
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest.....	4
Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting .....	4
1. Public Question Time.....	5
2. Petitions .....	5
Record of Committees.....	5
3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee .....	5
3.2 Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees .....	5
Officer Reports.....	6
4.1 2025/26 Major Event Funding Program .....	6
4.2 Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee – Consideration of Chair.....	6
4.3 Chief Executive Officer Credit Card Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025 .....	6
4.4 Councillors' Expenses For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025.....	7
4.5 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance At Conferences and Events .....	7
4.6 Council Actions Pending .....	7
5. Reports by Councillors .....	8
6. Notices of Motion .....	9
7. Notices of Rescission Motion .....	9
8. Urgent Business.....	9
Confidential Business .....	9
9.1 Tender Report For CM25.074 Provision of Powerline Clearance, Property Service Wire Clearance and Auditing 2025-2028 .....	10
9.2 Tender Report For CM26.014 Gravel Road Re-Sheeting Works on Various Council Roads 2025-2026.....	10
9.3 Confidential Reports by Councillors .....	11
9.4 Confidential Council Actions Pending .....	11
10. Reopening of the meeting to the public .....	12
Closure of the meeting .....	12



# Minutes

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	
	Councillor David Blore	
	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
	Councillor Jillian Merkel	
	Councillor Nathan Tolliday	
<b>In attendance</b>	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Joel Ingham	Acting Manager Assets and Infrastructure
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Stephen Dowe	Senior Projects and Technical Services Engineer
	Jess Pendergast	Governance Coordinator

## Opening and Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.19pm 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

No apologies were submitted to the meeting.

## Statement of Commitment

The Councillors recited the following Statement of Commitment:

*I declare,*

*that as a Councillor of Benalla Rural City*

*I will undertake on every occasion*

*to carry out my duties in the best interests of the community*

*and that my conduct shall maintain the standards of our Model Councillor Code of Conduct*

*so that I may faithfully represent*

*and uphold the trust placed in the Council*

*by the people of Benalla and District.*



## 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](http://www.benalla.vic.gov.au)**

## Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

See item 4.1.

## Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes have been circulated to Councillors and posted on the Council website **[www.benalla.vic.gov.au](http://www.benalla.vic.gov.au)** pending confirmation at this meeting.

**Cr Davis / Cr Blore:**

**That the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on Wednesday 10 September 2025 and Wednesday 1 October 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate records of the meetings.**

**Carried**



## 1. Public Question Time

No questions were submitted to the meeting.

## 2. Petitions

No petitions were submitted to the meeting.

## Record of Committees

### 3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee

The recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 October 2025 were presented.

**Cr Tolliday / Cr Merkel:**

**That the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 October 2025 be adopted.**

**Carried**

### 3.2 Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

Under Council's *Governance Rules 2020* the Chief Executive Officer is required to provide a written record of the Assemblies of Councillors at a scheduled Council Meeting.

The record of Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees for September 2025 were presented.

#### September 2025

<b>2 September</b>	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Committee
<b>3 September</b>	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review
<b>9 September</b>	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee
<b>16 September</b>	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
<b>24 September</b>	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review

**Cr Davis / Cr Gunaratne:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**



## Officer Reports

### 4.1 2025/26 Major Event Funding Program

It is noted that Cr Puna Hewa Gunaratne declared a material conflict of interest. Cr Gunaratne is the president of the Benalla Migrants Association. Cr Gunaratne left the meeting at 7.22pm.

The report presented funding applications for the 2025/26 Major Event Funding Program.

**Cr Davis / Cr Tolliday:**

1. That \$2,000 grant from the 2025/26 Major Event Funding program be allocated to the Benalla Lions Club.
2. That the debate on the matter be deferred until the additional Council Meeting on Wednesday 29 October 2025 to allow for further information to be provided on the application from Benalla Migrants Association.

**Carried**

Cr Gunaratne returned to the meeting at 7.36pm.

### 4.2 Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee – Consideration of Chair

The report presented the nomination for the position of Chair for the *Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee* for the 2025/26 year.

**Cr King / Cr Tolliday:**

That Ian Gonzaga be appointed as the Chair of the *Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee* for the 2025/26 Council Year.

**Carried**

### 4.3 Chief Executive Officer Credit Card Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

The report detailed expenditure associated with the corporate credit card issued to the Chief Executive Officer for the quarter ended 30 September 2025.

**Cr Davis / Cr Merkel:**

That the report be noted.

**Carried**



#### 4.4 Councillors' Expenses For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

The report detailed expenditure associated with Councillors' mobile phone usage, attendance at professional development courses, conferences and seminars, and reimbursement of expenses incurred.

**Cr King / Cr Davis:**

**That standing orders be suspended to allow for discussion on the item.**

**Carried**

Standing orders were suspended at 7.42pm.

**Cr King / Cr Davis:**

**That Standing orders resume.**

**Carried**

Standing orders resumed at 7.44pm.

**Cr King / Cr Tolliday:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

#### 4.5 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance At Conferences and Events

The Mayor and Councillors attendance at meetings and events during the period 1 September 2025 to 5 October 2025 were presented.

**Cr Merkel / Cr Blore:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

#### 4.6 Council Actions Pending

Council Actions Pending were presented.

**Cr King / Cr Davis:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**



## 5. Reports by Councillors

Cr Bernie Hearn (Mayor) reported on her attendance at:

- MAV Councillor Services Awards Dinner on Thursday 9 October 2025 with the Chief Executive Officer and former Mayor Danny Claridge. Mr Claridge received an award for his three years' service as mayor.
- MAV State Council Meeting on Friday 10 October 2025.

Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor) reported on his attendance at:

- Benalla Racing Club's Benalla Gold Cup held on Friday 26 September 2025.
- Official Opening of the new Salvation Army facility in Benalla on Tuesday 4 October 2025.

Cr Puna Hewa Gunaratne on his attendance at:

- Warrenbayne Community Event held on Friday 19 September 2025.

Cr Jillian Merkel reported on her attendance at:

- Official Opening of the new Salvation Army facility in Benalla on Tuesday 4 October 2025.

**Cr Blore / Cr King:**

**That the reports be noted.**

**Carried**





## 6. Notices of Motion

No notices of motion were submitted to the meeting.

## 7. Notices of Rescission Motion

No notices of rescission motion were submitted to the meeting.

## 8. Urgent Business

No urgent business was submitted to the meeting.

## Confidential Business

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

- 9.1 Tender Report For CM25.074 Provision of Powerline Clearance, Property Service Wire Clearance and Auditing 2025-2028
- 9.2 Tender Report For CM26.014 Gravel Road Re-Sheeting Works on Various Council Roads 2025-2026
- 9.3 Confidential Reports by Councillors
- 9.4 Confidential Council Actions Pending

### Cr Davis / Cr Blore:

**That the meeting be closed to the public for the consideration of the confidential business item noted above pursuant to Sections 3(1) and Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.**

**Carried**

The meeting was closed to the public at 7.51pm.



## **10. Reopening of the meeting to the public**

**Cr King / Cr Merkel:**

**That the meeting be reopened to the public.**

**Carried**

The meeting was reopened to the public at 8.25pm.

## **Closure of the meeting**

The Council Meeting closed at 8.25pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, located in the bottom right corner of the page. The signature is stylized and appears to be a cursive or semi-cursive script.