

A Year in Review 2014-2015



The
Bluett
AWARD 
LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL
2015 WINNER

A Message from The Mayor

I am extremely proud that Lithgow City Council is the winner of the Rural Council Category in the 2015 AR Bluett Award. The AR Bluett Award is the most prestigious award in NSW local government recognising the most progressive Council's in the State. Looking at all aspects of Council operations and services the award is testimonial to Council's long-term infrastructure renewal program and innovative use of design and technology to deliver services, facilities and community programs.

In 2012 Council commenced the redevelopment of the Lithgow Memorial Pool into a modern Aquatic Centre Complex. The 25m Indoor Pool has been designed to maximise natural ventilation alleviating the need for costly and high energy consuming dehumidification system. The Complex features a state of the art solar heated Hydro Play Area and fun giant inflatable jumping pillow for everyone. The upgrade to the 50m pool will be completed at the end of 2015 modernising the concourse and completing this \$8.2m project.

Also in 2012, Council completed the \$30m upgrade to the Lithgow and Wallerawang Sewerage Treatment Plants (STPs). Council is now working towards the \$15m upgrade of Portland STP. Allowing for population growth in Portland the new STP will have an increased capacity to service 3,500 "equivalent persons" and will treat 1,000kL of Sewerage/day.

Stages 1 & 2 of the Farmers Creek Flood Mitigation Project involved the construction of 700m of channel widening from entrance to Tony Luchetti Sportsground to the Albert Street Bridge. This has reduced the depth of flood water inundation on the adjoining residential area thereby protecting over 100 homes. This project also included the construction of an over channel walk bridge linking the Hermitage Flat area to the walkway/cycleway along the channel between the Sporting Precinct, Visitor Centre and Highway.

Council has completed a study and action plan which will see significant changes to the Lithgow CBD over a number of years. Infrastructure improvements to enhance the CBD will be a major component of this project commencing with installation of new toilets in Cook Street Plaza and Eskbank Street. Council is also working closely with CBD businesses and retailers to develop programs that promote our retail sector, bring tourists to our area and encourage everyone to shop local. These programs include Lithgow Creative's Laneway Gallery Project (a joint initiative with Tidy Towns), the Pop-up Gallery at A Reader's Heaven, Mother's Day Street of Flowers, Halloween 15 and Lithglo.

I hope that as you read through this document you are as inspired as I am by the diverse range of projects and programs that have been achieved. Many of these projects are undertaken in partnership with members of the community whose commitment to our area is commendable. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all of these community groups, it is through your help and support that our community continues to develop and grow.

Maree Statham
Mayor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Being able to deliver large scale infrastructure projects, having a long track record of operating under regional arrangements to share services and resourcing, and a 'sound' financial sustainability rating are all indicators that Lithgow City Council is 'Fit for the Future'.

In 2014/15 Lithgow City Council, like all NSW Council's, has had to take a long hard look at its current performance, issues facing the council and planned improvement strategies and outcomes to ascertain whether it will be 'Fit for the Future' and able to continue to operate as an entity or whether there is a need to amalgamate with a neighbouring Council.

A key indicator that Council is 'Fit for the Future' is its ability to deliver large capital projects. Council actively seeks to partner with State and Federal Government funding bodies to upgrade current infrastructure to a standard that is expected by the community.

In 2011, Council commenced the \$8m Aquatic Centre Project. The newly completed indoor swimming complex provides year round access to swimming facilities, which has long been a desire of the community. This new facility boasts innovative design and is providing a variety of new programs including Learn to Swim Classes and Aqua Aerobics which have been well received by the community.

The final stage of this project is the upgrade to the 50m Olympic Pool and concourse. Practical completion of this stage is expected for November 2015 in time for the summer swimming season.

Construction commenced on the replacement of Black Bridge at Wallerawang, a \$3.5m project under the State Government's Resources for Regions program. The new bridge will replace a bridge built in the 1920's which does not comply with today's safety standards.

An important project for Council has been the Farmers Creek Flood Mitigation Program. This project has included channel widening of the Creek to mitigate the severity of flood flows during significant storm events alleviating the potential for flooding of houses backing onto the creek.

Over the past 6 years, Council has delivered \$30m in sewerage infrastructure upgrades to the Lithgow and Wallerawang Sewerage Treatment Plants. The detailed design for the upgrade of the Portland Sewerage Treatment Plant has commenced with construction scheduled for 2016. This \$15m project has been made possible with \$10m being funded by the Resources for Regions program and \$5m by Council.

As we move forward into 2015/16, Council is planning to commence remediation, site safety and interpretation works to the Nationally Significant Blast Furnace Park. This project will not only ensure the longevity of this public asset but, also provide greater

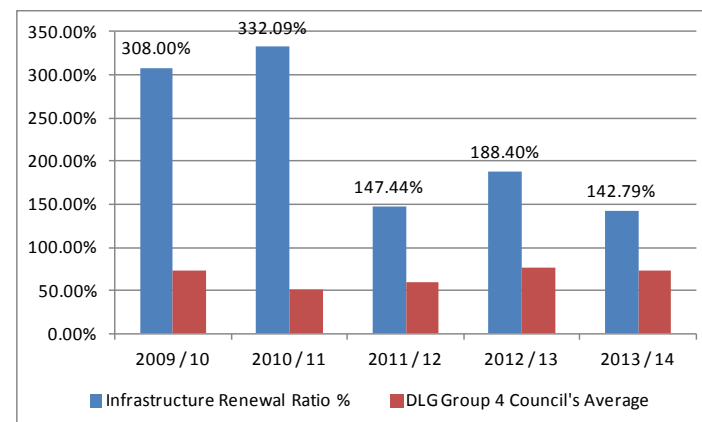
opportunity to maximise the tourism potential of the area.

Working with Centroc, Council has benefitted from significant costs savings and been able to take advantage of resource and information sharing through projects such as:

- Cost savings of \$15,499 for the development of Best Practice Plans for Water and Sewer.
- 163 staff attended 16 courses coordinated on a regional level provided \$9,201 in savings.
- Development of a joint tender for a unified communications system to increase purchasing power and system efficiencies across all member Council's.

An ongoing commitment to infrastructure renewal, planning for growth and seeking opportunities to partner at a federal, state and regional level will see Lithgow City Council continue to remain financially sound and 'Fit for the Future'.

- The Office of Local Government defines Lithgow City Council in Group 4: a medium, urban, regional town or city with a population density of less than six hundred persons per square kilometre, or a total population of up to 30,000.
- There are 31 Councils in Group 4 and include areas such as Orange, Bathurst Regional, Mid Western Regional, Dubbo, Ballina, Goulburn Mulwaree, Lismore, Tamworth Regional and Singleton.
- The Infrastructure Renewal Ratio reflects the percentage of Council's capital works expenditure on renewing Council's existing assets compared to the annual depreciation on those existing assets being roads, bridges, footpaths, buildings, stormwater, water and sewerage assets.







COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Community Strategic Plan identifies the following shared community vision statement that the Lithgow local government area is

“A Centre of Regional Excellence that:

- ***Encourages community growth and development***
- ***Contributes to the efficient and effective management of the environment, community and economy for present and future generations.”***

Lithgow City Council’s Community Strategic Plan consists of 5 key principle activity areas.

Caring for our Community

- To plan and provide quality community and recreational facilities and services for a healthy, vibrant and harmonious community.
- Working together to support, celebrate and expand the social and cultural diversity of our community, whilst promoting healthy, active lifestyles in a safe environment.

Strengthening our Economy

- Providing for sustainable and planned growth that supports a range of lifestyle choices and employment opportunities.
- Exploring and discovering the richness in our society through the pursuit of educational, creative and cultural opportunities to diversify our economy, skills base and employment opportunities.

Developing our Built Environment

- Planning for suitable infrastructure development to promote sustainable and planned growth, while enhancing the existing identity of the towns, villages and rural areas of the LGA.
- Ensuring sustainable and planned growth through the provision of effective public and private transport options and suitable entertainment and recreational facilities to enhance the lifestyle choices of the community.

Enhancing our Natural Environment

- To conserve and preserve the natural environment whilst balancing the impact of development to ensure a sustainable and healthy community.

Responsible Governance and Civic Leadership

- A Council that focuses on strong civic leadership, organisational development and effective governance with an engaged community actively participating in decision making processes affecting their future.



A teal abstract graphic consisting of several overlapping, curved, ribbon-like shapes that sweep across the top left corner of the page.

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

- To plan and provide quality community and recreational facilities and services for a healthy, vibrant and harmonious community.
- Working together to support, celebrate and expand the social and cultural diversity of our community, whilst promoting healthy, active lifestyles in a safe environment.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2014/15

- ◆ 580 completed Youth Surveys received for the development of the Draft Youth Strategy.
- ◆ 20 Scholarships awarded in the Youth Council PCYC Scholarship Program.
- ◆ 14 Images entered in the Inaugural Youth Week Photography Competition.
- ◆ Implemented a new e-Book Library service.
- ◆ 182 young people attended the Homework Zone at the Lithgow Library Learning Centre during 1st term an increase of 32 on the average of 150 per term.
- ◆ \$165,000 allocated to non-for-profit groups for community initiatives including local events, after school activities, sponsorships, environmental rehabilitation, facility upgrades, interpretive displays, garden projects and youth musical programs.

WORKING AND PLANNING WITH OUR YOUTH

The Lithgow Local Government Area has been identified as an 'ageing community', to address this issue Council is identifying ways to retain our local youth. The development of a Draft Youth Strategy, integrated with key strategies such as the Economic Development Strategy will provide a blueprint from which programs are developed to promote employment and educational opportunities, recreational and cultural activities for active and healthy lifestyles.

Draft Youth Strategy

As part of this commitment, Council has developed a Youth Issues Paper, Draft Youth Strategy and Action Plan. These documents provide greater insight into the current status of youth in Lithgow and highlight a number of priority issues, including:

- Employment and education
- Health and wellbeing
- Crime and safety
- Family and relationships
- Recreation and leisure
- Participation and engagement

The Youth Issues Paper and Draft Youth Strategy have been issued to organisations providing them with valuable baseline data from which to target funding for programs and services for young people in our LGA.

The Draft Youth Strategy promotes the need to ensure that young people are actively involved in decision making and community life, providing them with opportunity and choice, and a strong sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Lithgow Youth Council

Lithgow Youth Council meets monthly throughout the year to develop programs and initiatives for local young people.

PCYC Scholarship Program

One of the most successful initiatives of the Youth Council has been the development of the PCYC Scholarship Program in partnership with the Police Citizens Youth Club. Now in its second year, the Scholarship was developed to provide disadvantaged young people access to recreational and sporting programs.

The Program offers 20 scholarships per annum for young people who may not be able to participate in sport or recreational activities outside school due to a variety of barriers such as the high costs of membership fees, access issues and the cost of equipment.

The scholarships enable young people to attend the full range of programs on offer to members of the PCYC for 12 months including the gymnasium, boxing, kung fu, vocal coaching, table tennis, self defence, gymnastics and much more.

It is hoped that these scholarships might provide a number of young people with a sense of community, a strengthened sense of self esteem and more confidence while also providing a fun and

healthy way to spend time in a safe environment. The PCYC aims to get young people active and involved through a range of sporting, educational and recreational activities, with a focus on promoting values, respect and belonging.

Youth Week Events

To celebrate National Youth Week in April 2015 the Youth Council held two events. The first event was held at the Lithgow Skate Park and featured demonstrations and coaching by BMX and scooter professionals from Newtons Nation, with a free BBQ. This event is always popular with many young people and their families attending to learn new tricks from the experts.

The second event was a photography competition inviting young people aged between 11-24 years to send in photos that captured what Youth Week means to them living in the Lithgow LGA and what they did during Youth Week.

14 images were uploaded to the Youth Council Facebook page for online voting. This helped to create an awareness of the page among local youth. The three competition winners were awarded fantastic prizes including a GoPro, iPad Mini and a \$200 Harvey Norman Voucher at an afternoon tea with the Mayor and the Youth Council.

AN ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY SERVICE

The Lithgow Library Learning Centre provides a wide range of free programs which promote equitable access and increase community awareness of the resources, services and information available at the Library. Access to new technologies and an increased demand from isolated communities and housebound residents has created an opportunity for the Library to look a new ways to provide access to the Library collections and resources.

New e-Book Service

During 2014/15, the Lithgow Library Learning Centre commenced a major project to bring e-Books to the Community. The Axis 360 e-book collection will:

1. Provide library users with 24/7 access to a catalogue of popular adult fiction, non-fiction, junior and young adult titles.
2. Provide access to the Library for rural and remote members of the community.
3. Provide an accessible option for frail aged and elderly people, as well as people who are housebound for other reasons.
4. Provide commuters with access to eBooks and e-audiobooks which are easily accessed through laptops, tablets and smartphones, and downloaded over good wifi service.

The Library's Axis 360 eBook collection will be accessible from the Library website and from a designated app. The eBook collection will include downloadable audio books featuring professional readers for a quality listening experience. Axis 360 titles have been integrated into the library's existing print catalogue, as well as through the Axis 360 app. EBooks @ Lithgow Library will be launched early in the new financial year with staff offering welcoming sessions to the service, where they will

demonstrate usage and offer advice. The service will be promoted on our social media sites, such as facebook and twitter, as well as Lithgow City Council's website. Customer feedback will be an important aspect of this project, as we bring this exciting new service to our community

Home Library Service

The Home Library Service is provided to members of the community who are unable to attend the Lithgow LGA libraries in person, whether due to age, illness, incapacity, or carer responsibilities.

The Service was first trialed in Portland in 2013 for housebound individuals in their own homes and the residents of Tabulum Aged Care Facility. 2015 has seen the service extended to residents of Wallerawang and to the three nursing homes in Lithgow.

This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of people who are benefiting from the opportunity to have their library resources selected and delivered to their own homes. In recognising the importance and popularity of this service, Marketing and promotion are the focus for the next phase of this project, ensuring that all eligible community members are aware of the Home Library Service.

Homework Zone

The Homework Zone operates from 3.30pm to 5.30pm Monday to Thursday during school terms. It is a free after-school homework support service catering for students from Years 3 to 12. A qualified teacher hosts the sessions, assisting children with their homework, assignments, reading skills and computer research skills. An average of 150 children attend per term however, this year, figures are showing a good increase, with 182 children attending in the first term of 2015.

The Homework Zone directly benefits the community by providing a safe, accessible place for students.

Generally students seek help with specific assignments, however, the teacher has noted that several children have attended because they have missed school days through difficult circumstances and have needed extra help to catch up.

Parents of students with learning difficulties have advised that there has been improvement noted at their school.

Council's contribution to running the Homework Zone has been assisted by local sponsorship from Energy Australia.



Library Programs and Exhibitions

Law Week 2015

Law Week 2015 was celebrated at Lithgow Library Learning Centre with displays, a talk and Q&A session by a local lawyer on the theme of "Wills and Estates".

The Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) provides access to high quality information about the law for all members of the community via the Find Legal Answers website and Tool Kit. This Tool Kit ensures that Lithgow Library has current law and legal information books available to our local community.

Afternoon tea became an opportunity for socialising, networking and browsing the library's resources.

Techno Dinosaurs

Recognising the need of local community members for one-on-one assistance with their digital devices, the Library approached Lithgow High School for a partnership in providing a new service. Students were selected from the technology class as part of their work experience program to provide advice to community members on such things as computers, tablets, mobile phones and general computer advice.

First offered in October 2014, this program proved so popular it has been offered again in June 2015. Feedback has been very positive from both the school and local community participants. This inter-generational project has been very successful.

Exhibitions

The Library has been host to several quality exhibitions throughout the year. These have

included an art exhibit by Blue Mountains artist Paul Robinson, and '3 Points of View' by three well-known local artists. This included a display of stunning quilts depicting natural scenes and geometrical patterns, as well as artworks featuring the local built environment. These exhibitions are featured heavily in local media and are very popular, bringing new people in to the library.

Life Writing Workshop

In October 2014 the Library offered a Life Writing Workshop by published author Graeme Gibson. This session featured advice and techniques for writing memoirs and encouraged attendees to write for enjoyment. As well as people from the local community, members of the Library's Writers Group and Book Club also attended. Due to the success of the session, the Library will be looking to host further writing and author workshops.



Young People's Library Services

National Simultaneous Storytime

Lithgow Library participated in National Simultaneous Storytime in May 2015, with the Mayor reading this year's selected book. Local children enjoyed a special craft session, then gathered in the Children's Area of the Library to listen to the Mayor's storytelling. By using an Australian children's book that explores age appropriate themes this annual event aims to encourage young people to read and enjoy books.

Young Writers Group

This new group was established to engage with young adults and to support their writing aspirations. The group is led by a local author, who volunteers her time and skills. Structured themes give guidance to the writers as they explore their own creativity. A successful outreach program to young people, this is now a well-established group which meets monthly in the library.

Storytime at Portland Branch Library

Storytime for preschoolers has been newly introduced at Portland Branch Library. Supported with resources from the main library, these popular sessions are presented by a local volunteer. Each week stories are read and a craft activity is enjoyed, while parents enjoy the opportunity to network and socialise. Storytime provides key early literacy messages, while being fun and engaging. The

Portland community have been very supportive of this new initiative.

Baby Bounce & Rhyme Time

The Library introduced a new early literacy program in May 2015 to complement the existing Story Time sessions offered to preschoolers. Baby Bounce & Rhyme Time has been developed to support new parents in providing early literacy skills to their babies and toddlers. The sessions incorporate stories, rhymes, songs and music all aimed at developing early language, as well as sharing the joy of reading, in a fun interactive session led by the Children's Library Officer. Age appropriate musical instruments were purchased for this program, as well as a collection of board books. The library provides a safe and accessible venue for these weekly sessions that are provided free of charge to the local community.

Makerspace @Lithgow Library

Makerspace is a physical location where people gather to share resources and knowledge, work on projects, network, create and build. Often associated with fields such as engineering, computer science and graphic design, these spaces also support creative arts as well.

To support community engagement and collaboration, the library will be establishing a Makerspace thanks to a successful grant application through Fundability. The space, which will include a LEGO station, will enable children and young people from diverse backgrounds (those with disabilities, Indigenous backgrounds, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, different socioeconomic backgrounds) to work, play and create together.

Underpinning this project is the library's commitment to inclusivity in our future planning and implementation of programs. This project is expected to be available to the community in December 2015.



A CARING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

The Community Strategic Plan 2026 identifies the need to provide quality programs and activities which celebrate the diverse groups of people who make up Lithgow LGA from the very young to the elderly, our indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and the dedicated volunteers who provide countless hours of support to a wide variety of community and charitable organisations.

Draft Family Friendly Community Strategy

During the year Council completed a Draft Family Friendly Strategy which aims to identify how Council, in partnership with other agencies, can better address the needs of families for the benefit of the whole community.

Lithgow faces challenges from an ageing population and small population growth. Research provides strong evidence for the economic and social benefits to a community of policies and programs that aim to attract and retain families throughout all stages of the lifecycle.

In smaller regional communities like Lithgow, the policies and programs of local council in partnership with their communities, business and other levels of government will have a greater impact on the composition of the population. This is unlike communities in major urban areas where national immigration, taxation and economic policies are the major determinants of population composition, or in coastal communities where the sea change phenomenon is driving change.

Promoting Positive Ageing

Council's Ageing Strategy recommends that Council hold annual Ageing Expos in recognition that people are living longer and while this is a cause

for celebration, it is also a time of transition with people needing information and support as they age.

The theme Seniors Week 2015 was 'Be Inspired'. This theme encouraged involvement, enthusiasm, creativity and self expression of seniors in our community. During Seniors Week, Council provided a free program of events showcasing all the great social and recreational activities available for older people in the Lithgow LGA.

This fun and informative program included yoga, tai chi and zumba classes, photography workshops, water colour art classes, health talks, cultural walks, computer classes, iPhone and iPad sessions, and film screenings.

The week ended with a Gala Afternoon Tea at the library, which included a welcome by the Mayor and a performance by students from the Mitchell Conservatorium.

The Wizard of Oz Christmas Show

Just before Christmas 2014, Council held two free performances in Portland and Lithgow of The Wizard of Oz Gang Christmas Show.

Over 800 children and adults filled the Union Theatre Lithgow and Crystal Theatre Portland to enjoy the shows as part of this free school holiday fun.

Santa Claus joined the Snow Queen to bring children and families a rocking Christmas party filled with interactive fun, popular Christmas songs, dancing and falling snow. Excited children had fun as they met Santa's Helpers, Rudolph, a talking Christmas tree and Santa himself. They helped the Snow Queen and her friends sing songs like Frosty the Snowman and Silent Night as well as do her special magic to make Christmas even more exciting.

Celebrating and growing volunteering

Thank a Volunteer Day

Council held a Thank You Afternoon Tea at Eskbank House and Museum during National Volunteer Week on 15 May 2015.

Over fifty volunteers from different organisations attended the event. This networking opportunity allowed them to meet other volunteers, exchange thoughts and share their stories about volunteering. The diversity of the local voluntary sector was on show with volunteers from a variety of organisations, government agencies and not-for-profit community agencies. Among those represented were community members who make a difference on the many boards and committees that exist in our town.

Mayor Statham attended and spoke to the audience of the importance of volunteering to the

community and thanked everyone for their hard work.

Two volunteers spoke of their activities and groups that they were involved with and the experience they gained.

Students from the Mitchell Conservatorium entertained guests with classical pieces including piano, xylophone, flute and violin.

Volunteers mixed with each other and enjoyed afternoon tea and music in the grounds of the historic house.

Volunteer Hub

In order to celebrate and grow volunteering in our community, Council is working with various groups to create a Volunteer Hub. The Volunteer Hub will provide volunteer organisations with the opportunity to network and organise events to enhance and promote volunteering in the community. To support the Volunteer Hub Council will create an online platform that will act as an information portal, linking volunteers with organisations and providing relevant resources.

Celebrating our Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

NAIDOC Week Celebrations

Council in partnership with Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation provided an exciting program of day and evening events to celebrate NAIDOC Week on 10 October 2014.

The 2014 NAIDOC celebrations at Lake Wallace included Aboriginal dance and music, a local Aboriginal art exhibition, a reptile show and the Taronga Zoo Mobile, an Education Tent, spear throwing, boomerang throwing and arts and crafts activities for children. There were also information stalls, displays, food and drink.

This was followed by an evening event held at Black Gold Cabins Wallerawang featuring a smorgasbord of culinary delights, live music and traditional Aboriginal dancers.

Harmony Day

Harmony Day celebrates Lithgow's cultural diversity. It's about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

This year, Harmony Day was celebrated on 23 March 2015 at the Lithgow Library and Learning Centre.

The event opened with a Welcome to Country by Auntie Helen, followed by a didjeridoo performance, singing of Eastern European songs, Chinese fan dancing, cross-cultural workshops, storytime session, a talk by a local refugee and crafts for children.

Amnesty International and Lithgow Asylum Seekers and Refugees Group held information stalls to assist people with any questions.

To finish, guests enjoyed a multicultural cuisine in the library courtyard where they networked and forged new friendships.



*15,000 people
attended the
Halloween 2014
Block Party*





STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY

- Providing for sustainable and planned growth that supports a range of lifestyle choices and employment opportunities.
- Exploring and discovering the richness in our society through the pursuit of educational, creative and cultural opportunities to diversity our economy, skills base and employment opportunities.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2014/15

- ◆ Convened two taskforces to encourage industrial and business sustainability in the Lithgow LGA; the Lithgow Mining Taskforce and the Lithgow Business Taskforce.
- ◆ Received RV Friendly Accreditation Status for Lake Wallace, Wallerawang and Kremer Park, Portland.
- ◆ 15,000 people attended the Halloween 14 Block Party.
- ◆ Provided opportunities for local creative artists to showcase their art as part of major works, in outdoor gallery space and Pop Up Exhibitions.
- ◆ Collaborated with Lithgow High School to develop a student mentoring project for Visual Arts Students which will provide them with two units of competency from the Nationally Accredited Live Performance and Entertainment Package as part of the Halloween 2015 Event Program.

REVITALISING LITHGOW

Planning and managing growth in a sustainable manner with emphasis on creating a diversified economy underpinned by sound local environmental planning.

Two Taskforces to encourage industrial and business sustainability

During 2014/15 the Lithgow Local Government Area suffered two major blows to local industry with the closures of Wallerawang Power Station and Angus Place Colliery. This resulted in major job losses not only in the Power and Coal Industries but also flow on effects to businesses relying on these industries. In response, Council has established two Taskforces; The Lithgow Mining Taskforce and the Lithgow Business Taskforce.

The Lithgow Mining Taskforce consists of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, General Manager, Economic Development Officer and representatives from Centennial Coal, the Mining Unions and the NSW Minerals Council. The role of the Taskforce is to:

- promote coal mining in our region; and
- lobby State and Federal Government around issues confronting coal mining in the region including local coal supplies to Mt Piper Power Station and planning and environmental concerns restricting mining.

The Taskforce has met with the Minister for Planning, Minister for Resources and Energy and made representations to the Member for Bathurst in relation to the following matters which impact on the coal mining industry in our region:

- The proposed extension of the Gardens of Stone National Park.

- The closure of Baal Bone Colliery
- The proposed life of mine extension of Springvale Colliery.
- Streamlining the planning process
- Employment for mining in Lithgow
- Draft Minerals Industry Action Plan by the NSW Minerals industry
- Community sponsorship and support.

The Business Taskforce is made up of The Mayor and Councillors, the Member for Bathurst and representatives from agencies including NSW Trade & Investment, Central NSW Business Enterprise Centre and the Department of Employment. The Taskforce has identified a number of Key Actions to attract new investment to the Lithgow area including:

- Marketing Lithgow's economic strengths and lifestyle attractions.
- Continuing to revitalise the CBD,
- Growing existing businesses; and
- Development of a Master Plan/Development Control Plan for the Marrangaroo Urban Release area and Industrial Precinct.

Lithgow CBD Revitalisation

A holistic approach has been taken to the revitalisation of the Lithgow CBD. Council recognises that more than structural change is required to ensure the sustainability of the retailers and businesses within the Lithgow, Wallerawang and Portland CBD's.

In recent years, Council has been working closely with retailers and business owners, coordinating training in Business and Merchandising Displays and developing major promotions designed to encourage people to Shop Lithgow.

In addition, Council commenced planning the redevelopment of the CBD. Consultants, HillPDA were engaged to undertake market research into current trends for the property, retail and tourism markets and to develop plans and a strategy for the redevelopment of the CBD. The strategy divides the CBD into precincts or squares building on Lithgow's creative arts and industrial heritage.

An Action Plan has been identified and Council will commence a progressive program of redevelopment of the CBD in 2015/16.

STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Lithgow Tourism provides a wide range of programs which promote equitable access and increases community awareness of tourism promotions and attractions available in the Lithgow Local Government Area.

Marketing the Region

A number of Key marketing initiatives are employed to promote and encourage visitation to the Lithgow LGA including:

- Implementation of the Destination Management Plan – a Tourism Strategy for Lithgow.
- Attendance at the South Coast Caravan, Camping and 4WD Show, Canberra Home, Leisure and 4WD Show, Newcastle Caravan, Camping and 4WD Show and Country Week at Sydney Olympic Park.
- Continual promotion of the Lithgow Visitors Guide and Lithgow App.
- Advertising in regional publications and Sydney Newspapers as well as local media outlets.
- Promotion via Social Media including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Targeting the RV Friendly Market

A key action from the Destination Management Plan – A Tourism Strategy for Lithgow, identified the need for RV Friendly accreditation.

The RV Market was an untapped niche market that could attract additional investment into the region. The niche market of Recreational Vehicle (RV) camping areas is a growing and important market, encouraging prolonged stays and visitor satisfaction. Two sites were selected which met the criteria required by the Campervan and Motor Home Club of Australia they are Lake Wallace, Wallerawang and Kremer Park in Portland.

RV Friendly Accreditation was awarded to these locations in 2015. Lithgow is now able to advertise itself to the RV friendly market. The economic benefits of offering a viable short to medium term alternative place to camp for RV's are well documented. Examples of the flow on effect of encouraging RV's to camp and stay in the Lithgow LGA include increased spending on groceries, petrol, at restaurants, services and tourist attractions.

Billboards

The Destination Management Plan – A Tourism Strategy for Lithgow identified the need to update the two billboards welcoming people to the Lithgow LGA.

Council launched a photographic competition to encourage locals and visitors to submit images to be used on the new billboard signage.

107 images were received with the final 4 images being selected by the Tourism Advisory Committee for public vote. The community was encouraged to vote on their preferred image via social media, Council's website and ballot at key locations. Two images receiving the highest number of votes were selected for installation on the billboards.

A graphic designer was engaged to convey the marketing message to viewers of the sign and to get the perfect perspective of the photos. The Lithgow Tourism theme was carried through to the billboard advertisement with use of corporate branding and colours.

In 2015 the billboards were installed with many compliments for their vibrancy and freshness and the new message they send to passing motorists is that Lithgow is a destination that includes fun and adventure, natural beauty, industrial heritage and fascinating buildings.



oh!

ICONIC LOCAL EVENTS

In addition to providing a variety of small community events through the Libraries, at Eskbank House & Museum and in partnership with other community stakeholders, Lithgow City Council has two flagship events; Halloween and LithGlo. They were developed to encourage tourism to the area and promote the shop local initiative in the lead up to Christmas.

Halloween 14 Block Party

The second Lithgow Halloween shop local event was held on Friday 31 October 2014.

Coming on the heels of a major snowstorm in and around Lithgow, this spectacular evening event brought thousands of residents and visitors to Main St, Lithgow allowing the community to both reconnect and to support the local business community.

Gathering at the Top End of Main Street, Bridge St to Eskbank St was transformed into the 2014 Halloween Block Party. For many, the event created wonderful memories as people from all age groups and backgrounds dressed in costumes complete with amazing makeup. This is a party where the audience becomes part of the event.

Over 60 businesses along Main St partnered with Council and created Halloween themed shop window displays, special retail promotions and a "trick or treat" trail threaded throughout the town centre.


A special feature of the business participation included cafes, bistros and restaurants creating unique Halloween themed food and beverage menus describing scarily named and looking food experiences for the brave to sample. This was a huge success with businesses reporting full tables and standing room only until after midnight across the town centre. Some businesses reported "140%

increase in sales" and the "highest sales in 16 years of business.

A major component of the event was the incorporation of spectacular light shows and projections onto heritage buildings throughout the Top End. It created haunted houses that drew huge crowds and enabled endless photographic opportunities. In addition entertainment featuring local creatives included a zombie baby, zombies circulating along the streets, and live themed musical performances. Local artists created installation art works for the street including a witches coven and graveyard.

The lead up to Halloween involved Lithgow Creatives and school children including:

- Witch and wizard scarecrows created by local primary school children at workshops led by local artists and these made an impressive installation down the middle of Main Street
- Zombie special effects workshops engaged the local high school drama and film units and was part of the creation of a short zombie film called "The Gift".
- The zombie workshops also developed into a photography exhibition and a Zombie Fashion Parade at Eskbank House Museum the week before Halloween setting the scene for a costume block party of extraordinary proportions.



The Zombie Fashion Parade at Eskbank House Museum provided an opportunity for young people to dress up and have fun.

Over 60 businesses along Main St partnered with Council and created Halloween Themed shop window displays.





LithGlo

Lithglo is an annual three night celebration of Christmas spirit across the Lithgow community.

In December 2014 the event was held at Lithgow's Hoskins Memorial Uniting Church which provided a beautiful backdrop. The event provided feel good Christmas themed entertainment for all the family, market shopping and a professional and emotive art show.

Three key components of the event included:

- Night Markets in the church grounds showed off the vibrant market culture that has been fostered in Lithgow over recent years.
- Art Show in the Church Hall and Christmas Carols in the Church provided the public with plenty of Christmas themed cheer and an opportunity to showcase the talent of local artists. Organ recitals in the Church were also a popular item on the events program over the three nights.
- Targeted lighting of various features of the exterior of the beautiful old church made for an atmospheric experience for all patrons of the markets and art show and for people on their Christmas lights rounds. However, a highlight of this event is the lighting of the giant spruce in front of the Church as a Christmas Tree.

LithGlo was extremely popular with thousands of people visiting Lithgow over the three nights. The events unique mix of attractions, entertainment and markets were enjoyed by all.

Lithgow City Council was the sole sponsor of LithGlo 2014 and is looking forward to many more years for this highly successful event.

INTERPRETING OUR HERITAGE

Identifying, preserving, improving and promoting the LGA's built, Natural and cultural Heritage.

Eskbank House & Museum

This year Eskbank House and Museum has focussed on launching an events and performance program, translating their oral history research into a book and creating interpretive signage. During the year Council also proceeded with capital works to the property based on the Conservation Management Plan, whilst still carrying out tours, conservation and cataloguing necessary for the ongoing running of a museum.

Three events were developed during the year to attract different audiences to the Museum.

- A Roaring 20s Garden Party recreated all the fun and frivolity of the era while teaching the history of Eskbank House during the twenties through a living gallery concept in the museum rooms.
- Eskbank Steampunk created a "hands-on" experience for visitors with a difference. Visitors were given an opportunity to carefully handle objects usually behind glass and to have photos taken in the furniture collection usually behind barricades.
- The Zombie Fashion parade was the culmination of a special effects workshop, short film and exhibition. It was aimed at the high school aged sector of the community and was very successful in getting them to engage with the museum and its collections.

2014/15 saw the initiation of a performance program at Eskbank House. The Mitchell Conservatorium worked with the staff to bring classical concerts to the Courtyard Gallery. Work began with Blast Furnace Theatre to develop a program of "picnic theatre" in the picturesque grounds of the museum.

During 2014/15 there were eleven art exhibitions held in the Courtyard Gallery and four store room exhibitions held in the Foyer Gallery.

Four workshops were held in the Courtyard and grounds during the year: Scarecrow Workshops and Zombie Special Effects Workshops for Halloween celebrations and two Waste2Art workshops.

The oral history project collecting stories about Eskbank House was completed and the translation of this into a book was begun with an aim for completion for the House's 175th anniversary in 2017.

The capital works program involved replacing the rear wall and portico of the Courtyard Gallery to make it more useful as an event venue while maintaining its heritage value. The inside toilet and back entrance were also updated for disabled access compliance. In 2015/16 further work will be undertaken including repainting of the building, re-roofing where required and conservation work to stabilise the verandahs of the main building.

Interior signage was installed in the main house and research on best practice for exterior signage was undertaken with installation planned for 2015/16.



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Promoting, developing and utilising the creative talents of the Lithgow region.

Lithgow Creative's Project

A Lithgow Creative's Website has been created and is continually updated and improved. It provides practitioners with a free business profile and industry news and updates.

Gallery Lane, an outdoor gallery space held three exhibitions for Lithgow Creative's in 2014/15. Lithgow Tidy Towns worked with Council to hold the inaugural 3D Art Prize which included works by Lithgow Creative's and local school children. Wallerawang artist Robert Green held a recycled art exhibition in the Lane and over April and May a commemorative exhibition involving hundreds of hand made poppies was installed to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of ANZAC.

As part of the Main Street Revitalisation Program Council and the book shop, "A Reader's Heaven", host Pop Up exhibitions for creative industry practitioners in the book shop. Local practitioners can apply to have an exhibition in the shop which provides excellent display windows to the street. There were three exhibitions held in 2014/15. The space was also used to promote Council events such as Halloween.

Student Mentoring Project

Lithgow City Council's Tourism Department is responsible for delivering a range of community events throughout the year. Its signature event, Lithgow's Halloween Celebration has a program of live performances, music, art, creative workshops and lighting displays, culminating in a spectacular choreographed multimedia theatrical performance.

During 2014, Council's Tourism Department collaborated with Lithgow High School's Visual Arts students to develop their film making skills by providing a special effects makeup workshop and assisting in the production of their Zombie movie as part of the students major work for the year.

In 2015, the Halloween Project has seen the commencement of a mentoring program with a series hands on work experiences, multimedia production and event production workshops which will be delivered by industry professionals. The first of which was a work observation experience for students at the Sydney Vivid Festival with one of Australia's leading boutique production company's, Creative Lighting and Audio. During this visit, students were given an insight into the complexity and management of a very large public event. They met with lighting designers and observed the final preparation of lighting installations for Vivid Sydney 2015.

Council's Events Coordinator has over 35 years experience in the event production and entertainment industry and is a qualified trainer. In association with the High School's Head of Visual Arts he will be presenting two Event Production Workshops aimed at developing student's critical and creative thinking skills and giving them an insight into the event industry, further training and career options. These two units of competency from the Live Performance and Entertainment Training package are:

- BSBCRT301A - Develop and Extend Critical and Creative Thinking Skills.
- CUASTA301- Assist with production operations for live performances.

The project will culminate in the students developing part of the creative elements of the multimedia presentation for the main stage for the 2015 Lithgow Halloween Event as part of their Visual Arts Major Project for the year.





Creative Lighting and Audio has been the lighting and Audio supplier for Lithgow City Council's Halloween and LithGlo events since their inception. The Managing director Andre Kecskes (picture far right) is full supportive of the mentoring program and enabled students from Lithgow High School to have a behind the scenes look at what it takes to design and deliver a creative lighting solution for VIVID, the largest Light, Music & Arts festival in the world, .

Indoor Pool - Stages 2 & 3 of the Lithgow Aquatic Centre Development.
Opened on 16 June 2015 - \$3.6m





DEVELOPING OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Planning for suitable infrastructure development to promote sustainable and planned growth, while enhancing the existing identity of the towns, villages and rural areas of the LGA.
- Ensuring sustainable and planned growth through the provision of effective public and private transport options and suitable entertainment and recreational facilities to enhance the lifestyle choices of the community.



Roads and Ancillary Facilities

- ◆ Maintenance of 956km of urban, rural sealed, regional and rural unsealed roads, 31 concrete bridges and 10 timber bridges.
- ◆ Urban drainage improvements - \$10,000.
- ◆ Kerb & gutter construction in Lidsdale Street, Wallerawang and Hill Street Lane, Lithgow - \$87,000.
- ◆ Footpath construction along James O'Donnell Drive & the Great Western Highway, Lithgow - \$96,000.
- ◆ Gravel resheeting of Glen Alice Road, Capertee Valley and Mt Horrible Road, Dark Corner - \$120,000.
- ◆ Roads to Recovery Program - Rydal Hampton Road, Sunny Corner Road, Range Road and Glen Alice Road - \$560,000.
- ◆ Infrastructure Levy Program - Lithgow/Portland lanes and bitumen sealing of a section of Cox's River Road - \$463,296.
- ◆ Urban Roads Improvements Program - Hotmix reseal of a section of Methven Street, Lithgow - \$155,000.
- ◆ Improvements to timber bridges on Glen Davis Road, Capertee Valley - \$104,000.

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

Providing safe, efficient and effective networks to transport people and goods within and through the Lithgow Local Government Area.

Lithgow Rail Interchange Refurbishment

The Lithgow Interchange is located in the city centre of Lithgow and is bounded by Railway Parade to the north and Main Street to the south. A number of deficiencies were identified with regard to access, safety and the overall experience of the travelling community. Work on this project nears practical completion and the following improvements to the facility have been made:

- The traffic barriers and vegetation overgrowth on the footpath on the southern side of Railway Parade has been removed to provide safer access to the Interchange facilities. Wheel stops have replaced the traffic barriers.
- The disabled parking space located on the south-eastern side of Railway Parade has been made compliant by upgrading the existing facilities and providing a pram ramp.
- Drainage infrastructure has been installed in the south-eastern section of the park and ride facility in order to prevent storm water ponding.
- The road pavement, parking lot pavement and kerb and gutter along the coach set down area will be repaired along with sections of the footpath along Railway Parade.
- Cycle facilities and an additional bus shelter have been installed in the immediate vicinity of the Transport Interchange.

- A more noticeable entrance sign will be installed on Main Street to better inform commuters of the location of the interchange.

Black Bridge Replacement Program

Council has received \$3.5m under the State Government's Resources for Regions program to replace the Black Bridge at Wallerawang. The design of the bridge has been completed and all plans have been approved by John Holland Rail. The contract for the construction works has been awarded to Abergeldie Complex Infrastructure and works have commenced on-site.

The bridge components were pre-fabricated and transported to site for placement.

Due to the complexity of managing projects over rail lines, construction must work in with scheduled trains and as such, stringent security measures are in place at all times.

Traffic management is being carefully managed as the existing bridge is a main thoroughfare for traffic in the area, so disruption of traffic is consistently kept to a minimum with the existing bridge remaining operational at all times. Council expects construction to continue for the next 10 months and practical completion to be achieved by April 2016.



SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

South Bowenfels and Littleton Sewerage Infrastructure Upgrade

Lithgow City Council has completed an upgrade of the South Bowenfels sewage network, which is an area of major growth in the Lithgow LGA. The works involved the upgrade of two existing pump stations, being South Bowenfels and South Littleton, as well as the placement of several kilometres of new sewer main through the Lithgow urban area. The works were undertaken through a number of sensitive residential areas where careful rehabilitation was required.

The scheme included an increase in pumping and storage capacity to ensure that the system is able to cope with the demands of recent development, whilst also catering for expected future growth in the area. The upgrade also ensured that system overflow events during wet weather are minimised, which will improve stormwater quality and protect downstream catchments.

Portland Sewerage Treatment Plant Upgrade

Design is currently underway for the new Portland Sewerage Treatment Plant which Council was successful in obtaining funding for under the Resources for Regions Program. The new plant is based on an Intermittent Decanted Extended Aeration (IDEA) secondary treatment process. The detailed design for this project is due for completion in late 2015, with construction to commence in 2016.

Over recent years Council has been progressively upgrading the Lithgow and Wallerawang Sewerage Treatment Plants spending \$30m on bringing these plants up to modern standards.

The Sewerage Treatment Plant upgrade has a number of significant benefits, including:

- Better control and management of noise and odour to minimise impact on neighbouring properties.
- Higher quality effluent to reduce environmental impact.
- Capacity of 3000EP to allow for future development in Portland.

Making Flood Prone Areas Safer

Stage 2 of the Farmers Creek Flood Mitigation project was completed during the year at a cost of \$3.6 million. The project was undertaken by contract and was joint funded by Council and the NSW State Government. The project involved significant channel widening on a narrow section of Farmers Creek which flows adjacent to the residential area of the Hermitage on the Northern side of the Creek and recreational areas on the Southern side of the Creek.

The work included relocation of public utilities, major earthworks, installation of precast concrete retaining wall blocks, widening of the channel floor of the Creek and erection of safety fencing.

The goal of the works is to reduce the frequency and depth of flood water inundation on the adjoining residential area protecting over 100 homes. The work undertaken in Stage 2 is an extension of a previously completed section adjacent to the Tony Luchetti Sport Complex. Recent heavy storms indicate the work has been highly successful in dealing with flash floods.

Future works are proposed in Council's four year plan.



New Amenities for Lithgow CBD and Capertee Village

In 2014/15 following extensive public consultation Council resolved to construct two new toilet blocks in Lithgow CBD and replace an existing building with a new facility in Clarence Pirie Park in the Village of Capertee. The locations chosen for Lithgow were Cook Street Plaza in the centre of the CBD and the carpark adjacent to the taxi rank in Eskbank Street.

It was decided that automatic self cleansing toilets were the most appropriate for the Lithgow CBD locations. The Cook Street Plaza building has been completed and the building at the Eskbank Street site has been delivered and will be completed in July 2015.

The site at Capertee is more suited to an outdoor style structure as it is located in a park adjacent to the Castlereagh Highway. An amenities building similar to those located adjacent to public highways and in national parks was selected following consultation with the local progress association.

The buildings are fully compliant for accessibility for persons with disabilities, which continues Council's program of improvements identified in its recently completed Disability Action Plan.

The CBD buildings are fully funded by Council at a total project cost of \$308,000 while the Capertee project is jointly funded by Council and a Community Building Partnership Grant at a total cost of \$120,000.

LITHGOW AQUATIC CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Developing recreational facilities that will meet the needs of the community now and into the future.

Council completed the construction of the 25m indoor pool and facility at the Lithgow Aquatic Centre. Sustainable design has been incorporated into all stages of the aquatic centre upgrade.

Including innovations such as:

- The building envelope design and natural ventilation system has been developed to alleviate the requirement for a cost prohibitive and high energy consuming dehumidification system.
- Installation of two 30,000L rainwater tanks.
- The pool, showers and in-slab hydronic floor heating is primarily solar powered (with gas backup).
- Wall mounted thermal pool blankets were installed to minimise overnight heat loss.

The opening of the new facility has received a positive response from the community, with many residents benefiting from the state of the art

aquatic facilities and new recreational programs. Council is now able to provide year round Learn to Swim Programs and Aqua Aerobics classes which cater to all ages and abilities.

The 50m Olympic Pool at Lithgow Aquatic Centre has serviced the Lithgow Community for over 50 years. A recent condition assessment conducted by Facility Design Group Architects found that a large proportion of the pool plant, pipework, filtration and lining were at or near the end of their useful life. The redevelopment of the existing outdoor pool is being completed by Icon Building Group and incorporates a complete redevelopment of the 50m Olympic Pool, including a new pool liner, wet deck, concourse, shade sails, plant and pipework, as well as refurbished filtration.

The project, scheduled for practical completion in November 2015, will add an additional 30 years onto the life-span of the pool, as well as providing an exciting new facility for the community to enjoy.

The redevelopment of the 50 metre outdoor pool complex will create a facility that meets all Department of Health standards, provides improved and safer facilities for users and will be a significant enhancement to the recently completed 25 metre Indoor Heated Complex.

Access to both facilities during the summer season will give users a choice as to the type of recreational purpose they propose to undertake. The costs of the upgrade to the 50 metre pool is approximately \$2.5 million and coupled with the costs for stages I, II and III representing a significant commitment by Council to provide state of the art facilities for the community.





RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR A HEALTHY, VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Promoting healthy, active lifestyles in a safe environment through the provision of innovative play spaces, walkways and cycle paths, interactive outdoor learning environments and creative landscapes is part of Council's plan to enhance the lifestyle choices of the Lithgow Community.

Lake Pillans Walkway and Cycle Path

During 2014/15 Council upgraded a 220 metre section of the pathway linking Blast Furnace Park and Lake Pillans wetlands with funding assistance from the NSW Community Building Partnership matched by Council funds.

An accessible pathway was designed by an accessibility consultant and will enable visitors, especially the mobility impaired to move between the Blast Furnace carpark which is on the hill top and Lake Pillans Wetland below. This has created improved opportunities for the community to walk, cycle, enjoy and learn about the history of Lithgow.

Council plans, in 2015/16 to undertake further extensions of this pathway around the Blast Furnace site including installing a viewing platform overlooking both Blast Furnace and Lake Pillans.

Playgrounds for all ages

Council recognises the need to provide sun safe, fun, interactive environments for our kids to play and has developed a program of installing shade structures over children's playgrounds and replacing/installing covered picnic tables.

These large, bright shade areas help users enjoy their time in comfort acting as an excellent shield against the sun.

Improving playgrounds, sports grounds, parks and open space areas is a key priority for Council as it promotes a healthy, active community.

In 2015/16, Council will continue to develop innovative play areas with the installation of new shade structures at the Lithgow Skate Park and the Lithgow Aquatic Centre.

Internationally Accredited Playing Fields

During 2014/15, Council partnered with the Lithgow Hockey Association to replace the synthetic surface of Field No. 1 at Glanmire Oval with a Polygras Synthetic Surface.

At a cost of \$320,000 (\$200,000 provided by Council and \$120,000 contributed by the Lithgow Hockey Association), the new surface provides a superior playing surface for local, state, national and international hockey matches.

In 2010, Council completed the installation of a Federation International Hockey approved water hockey turf to Field No. 2. Combined with the newly completed synthetic turf, Lithgow is now one of a few non-metropolitan areas with two high standard synthetic turfs.

This has resulted in increasing the Lithgow Hockey Associations chances of being successful in bids for state and regional championships. However, as allocation of championships are awarded 12-18 months in advance, current bids, if successful, will not be realised until 2016/17.

Lithgow has a high standard of Junior players. In the past when picked for State or Regional representation, they were disadvantaged by their in-ability to play on Synthetic Surfaces. These two new playing surfaces now insure that they are confident in their abilities to play at a high standard on internationally accredited playing fields.



PRESERVING AND INTERPRETING OUR HERITAGE

Identifying, preserving, improving and promoting the LGA's built, natural and cultural heritage.

Glenroy Cairn

In 2014/15, with Council's assistance community groups in Hartley held commemorative events for the 200th anniversary of the First Divine Service held west of the Blue Mountains by Macquarie on his journey along Coxs Road to Bathurst. This service was held at the Glenroy Cairn which was erected in 1937 to commemorate the first Divine Service west of the Blue Mountains.

Prior to the service, Council had conservation work completed on the Glenroy Cairn and sponsored the Hartley Date Signing Project, the first installation of which was completed in 2015. This involved the creation of date signs to mark significant sites in the Hartley Valley.

In 2015/16 Council, plans to complete restoration of the Glenroy Cairn and further signage installations for the Hartley Date Signing Project.

Bowenfels Anti-Aircraft Gun Restoration

The Lithgow Anti Aircraft Gun Stations, an important part of Lithgow's wartime history, have been given a face lift thanks to partnership between Council, a dedicated group of young workers from a local employment agency and local community groups.

When Japan entered into World War II there were growing concerns about the vulnerability of inland areas brought about by improvements in aircraft technology. Hence, the Lithgow Anti Aircraft Gun

Stations at South Bowenfels were constructed to protect Lithgow's important mining, manufacturing and transport industries as well as the Lithgow Small Arms Factory. They are the only known inland heavy anti aircraft gun stations of their type in NSW.

The guns, which were never fired in anger during the war, have since suffered from exposure to the elements for many years. In 2008, Council hired one of the guns for the making of the 2008 Baz Luhrmann film "Australia". This enabled the restoration of the guns by Lithgow State Mine Railway Limited, Lithgow Railway Workshop and Verto employment agency to be undertaken.

For several weeks, the dedicated staff worked to remove rust, re-seal, repaint to the original colours and replace missing parts.

The restoration work has been of a very high quality and involved the use of specialist restoration skills.

Council has now installed interpretative signage and improved access to the site so that the community and visitors can fully enjoy and appreciate the site.

Blast Furnace Park Upgrade

Council finalised planning during the year for significant works to improve visitor safety, enjoyment and appreciation of the heritage listed Blast Furnace Park. It was Australia's first major iron works and a significant landmark reminder of the industrial past of Lithgow.

Significant numbers of people visit Blast Furnace to enjoy its striking industrial and natural landscape,

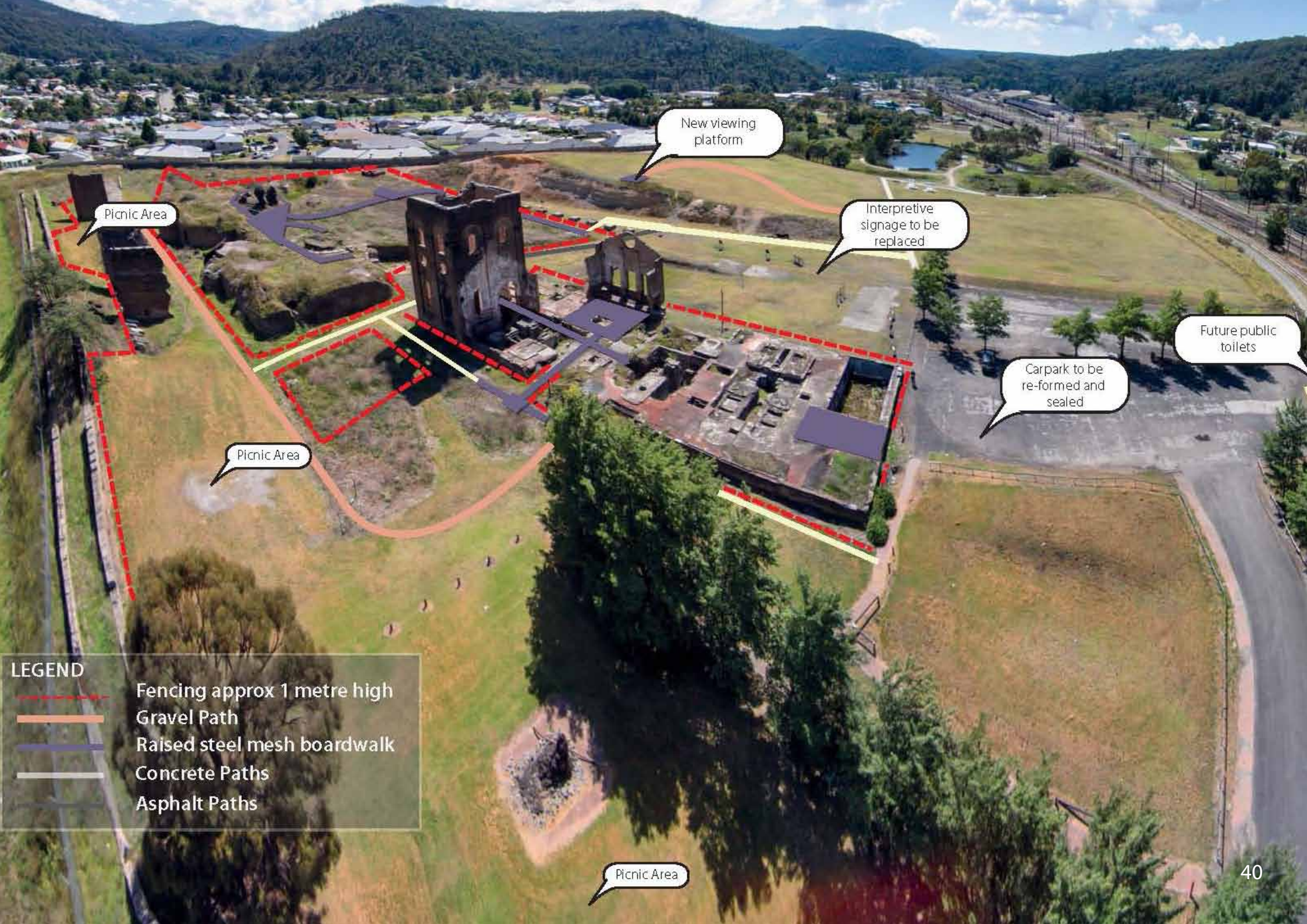
located right within an urban area. It is a popular location for photography and other recreational and cultural activities.

The Blast Furnace also sits within the Lithgow cultural and heritage precinct including Historic Eskbank Station, Eskbank House and Museum, Lithgow history Avenue Sculpture Trail, Lake Pillans Wetlands and State Mine Heritage Park and Railway. Council is seeking to harness the potential of Blast Furnace to promote cultural heritage tourism by incorporating the Blast Furnace Park site into a heritage trail linking these key heritage sites.

This project has been made possible by grant funding and Council funding and is anticipated to take two years to complete.

The construction of low impact fencing, walkways, viewing platforms and new interpretive signage will enable visitors to enjoy and interpret most parts of the site while restricting access to the highest risk areas. Visitors will be able to move around the site in an interesting manner, where paths are clearly defined.

Wherever practical, accessibility for people with varying levels of mobility has been incorporated into the plans through accessible ramps and pathways and signage for people with a visual impairment. These pathways will link to the recently completed walkway/cycleway leading from the Blast Furnace Park Carpark to Lake Pillans Wetlands below providing an interactive, educational and unique visitor experience.



Picnic Area

New viewing platform

Interpretive signage to be replaced

Future public toilets

Carpark to be re-formed and sealed

Picnic Area

Picnic Area

LEGEND

- Fencing approx 1 metre high
- Gravel Path
- Raised steel mesh boardwalk
- Concrete Paths
- Asphalt Paths

PLANNING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Developing integrated corporate plans that set the long term direction for the LGA and Council.

Local Environmental Plan

In 2014, a new era in planning began for the Lithgow LGA with the approval of the Lithgow LEP 2014. The plan took effect on 19 December 2014. The plan now aligns with the State Government's Standard LEP template and introduces legally referable mapping available online for the community to access for the first time. The LEP is an important milestone in the development of a comprehensive strategic land use planning framework that will allow council to deliver the goals and targets of the Community Strategic Plan 2026.

Lithgow Flood Study

The purpose of the Lithgow Flood Study is to provide further information relating to existing flooding problems in the Lithgow Local Government Area and to ensure that new development does not create additional flooding problems.

The main objective of the study is to provide the residents of Lithgow with an update on the hydrology of the Farmers Creek Catchment and to develop a two-dimensional hydraulic model to define both overland flow and main stream flooding patterns in Lithgow for flood frequencies between a 5 and 200 year Average Recurrence Interval. This information is being compared to previous study findings to provide a detailed assessment of flooding trends in the Lithgow region.

This study will form the first step in a floodplain risk management process for Lithgow and will assist in outlining the impacts of flooding on future and existing urban development as well as further potential flood mitigation measures.

Village Improvements Planning

The Lithgow local government area is made up of 12 rural villages/hamlets. In order to provide community facilities and ensure the needs of these rural and remote communities are met, Council has commenced a program of developing a range of Village Improvement Plans specific to the major villages and their surrounding communities.

The Village Improvements Program sits within Council's Community Strategic Plan 2026 with the following objectives:

1. Placemaking – by enhancing community facilities to increase community identity, spirit and sense of place;
2. Community Development – through encouraging opportunities for community interaction to enhance community well-being and village life;
3. Environmental Sustainability – by increasing the environmental sustainability of rural village communities;
4. Economic Development – by supporting rural village communities to identify and develop growth and employment opportunities;

5. Infrastructure Services – by providing sustainable infrastructure to support current and future needs of rural village communities, and
6. Partnerships – by strengthening relationships between rural village communities and council.

All of the plans include an Action Plan detailing initiatives to be implemented over the coming years in a joint partnership between Council, the community, business and government stakeholders.

During 2014/15 Council completed the Capertee plan, two major projects have also been completed for the Village. The new toilet facilities at Clarence Pirie Park and the upgrade to Pearsons Lookout overlooking the Capertee Valley (pictured right).

Council completed development of the Rydal Village Improvements Plan during the year which aims to strengthen Council's partnership with the rural village of Rydal and promote community cooperation and engagement by implementing a shared direction for the future, based on prioritised and practical solutions.

Consultation commenced with the Hartley community in October 2014 for the development of the Hartley Village Improvements Plan.



The \$60,000 upgrade of Pearsons Lookout at Capertee is an outcome of the Capertee Village Improvements Plan. Launched on 4 October 2014.





ENHANCING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- To conserve and preserve the natural environment whilst balancing the impact of development to ensure a sustainable and healthy community.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2014/15

- ◆ Commenced the installation of Flow and Pressure Monitors to measure water loss across Councils reticulation network.
- ◆ Responded to an unexpected snow storm event in October 2014 which resulted in over \$550,000 in restoration works.
- ◆ Undertook bush regeneration and noxious weed control projects in six public reserves under Council control.
- ◆ Diverted over 2,000 tonnes of recycling from landfill.
- ◆ Installed new waste infrastructure in four identified litter 'hot spots' as part of the EPA's 'Hey Tosser' Litter Prevention Campaign achieving an average of 80% reduction in littered items at the hot spot locations.
- ◆ Delivered a litter reduction education program to 665 primary school students in conjunction with NetWaste.
- ◆ Achieved a 41% increase in participation in Clean Up Australia Day.

WATER LOSS MANAGEMENT

Protecting our waters and providing safe drinking water where the measure of success is to reduce loss of potable water by 25%.

Lithgow City Council is looking to lower energy consumed during water pumping by reducing water loss in the water reticulation network.

Previous reports, have indicated a loss of up to 36% of the total system input.

In order to reduce water loss sustainably it is important to know where and when excess water is being consumed within the network.

This requires measurement of flows into smaller sectors of the network, often called district metered

areas. This allows the identification of poorly performing areas and much better knowledge of bursts and leaks as they occur. Instead of annual reporting, this type of system can allow timely notification of burst and leak levels, reducing run times and therefore annual volume of water lost.

The Water Loss Program involves dividing the Lithgow network into a number of District Metered Areas (DMA's). Each zone will have flow and pressure monitoring installed to not only track

Minimum Night Flow which is the best indicator of leakage levels, but also system pressure and other anomalous flow patterns. A system which analyses this data in the background and indicates any anomalies through a web based platform will be installed. This type of automated system will reduce human analysis time and improve indication of anomalous data.

All installation works will be completed by 30 June 2015, to be followed by a data collection period.



MAJOR STORM DAMAGE THROUGHOUT THE LGA

On the evening of 14 October, 2014 Lithgow and surrounds experienced an unexpected heavy snow storm. The snow that fell was extremely dense and blocked roads throughout the LGA causing major traffic disruptions and road closures. Lithgow was declared a natural disaster area as a result of this storm and work is still proceeding on the removal of dangerous trees. The community cohesion displayed by all emergency services was a major plus for local disaster planning and the response times to areas of concern was convincing.

Council emergency teams were involved the next day in commencing the cleanup and maintaining emergency services such as fuel to hospital generators as power was disrupted for up to 12 hours.

The heavy snow caused widespread damage to trees, felling many and splitting others making them extremely dangerous. With the assistance of Contractors, roads were cleared of blockages and dangerous trees were dealt with in a temporary fashion. Damage to trees was wide spread to such an extent that Council provided emergency clean up services to remove debris for private property and public property. Over \$550,000 has been expended in restoration works at the end of the June 2015.

Many significant trees were destroyed during this storm and restoration costs do not reflect the cost of replacing so many trees

Months after the storm dangerous trees were still being discovered and removed. Due to the extent of the damage specialist contractors have been used to assist in removing trees located on Council and public land. Whilst Council has no responsibility for trees on private property, it did assist residents by removing green waste stored on the footpath.

The storm event was totally unexpected and was not identified by the weather forecasting as a potential hazard for the Lithgow area.

This caused major disruption to Council's water and sewer services with no power to pump stations for an extended period of time.

There was also considerable damage to Council infrastructure including:

- Damage to fences at Watsford Oval
- Damage to the toilets at Zig Zag Oval
- Flooding to the main entry of the new Indoor Aquatic Centre.
- Damage to the roof of the Hartley Building; and
- Leaking of the roof at the Lithgow Library causing damage to the downstairs meeting room.



RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity through consultation with the community and the development of partnerships with the Central Tablelands Local Land Service (CTLLS) and Lithgow Oberon Landcare Association (LOLA) has achieved real environmental outcomes in a range of Council reserves and waterways.

Lithgow and Hartley Bushland Reserves Program

The project provided environmental benefits in a large number of reserves in the Local Government Area including;

- Farmers Creek (Saywell and Montague St sections)
- Hartley Reserve
- Hassan's Walls Reserve
- Hyde Park Reserve
- Lake Pillans Wetland Reserve
- Londonderry Reserve.

Overall, the project has been a great success evidenced by community participation in a number of planting days in Council reserves to enhance riparian habitat with native species following the removal of weeds.

Hassans Walls Environmental Works

Management of natural resources within Hassans Walls reserve through the control of environmental and noxious weeds continues through the implementation of a successful grant from the Public Reserve Management Fund Program.

This project enhanced biodiversity, reduced erosion, improved habitat value and controlled noxious weeds within the reserve. All of these works improve recreational opportunities, visual amenity of the area and increase public perception and awareness of the environmental asset.

The project has treated a number of the high value areas within the reserve while also identifying other locations of weeds within the reserve, which require additional works to contain and will be targeted in the future. This project compliments and builds on previous works currently being undertaken within the reserve by increasing community participation for lasting environmental outcomes.

Hillcrest Reserve Environmental Works

Hillcrest Reserve has potential to be a high quality bushland reserve although weeds are currently threatening these natural values. The Reserve contains important remnant native vegetation consistent with the Lithgow Abercrombie Grassy Woodland presenting some unique challenges. Past land use has isolated the reserve from the boarder landscape, while future challenges include threats from environmental weeds and the impacts of urban development.

Council will continue to manage threats to the reserve through projects such as this, which has achieved significant reduction in noxious weeds such as Blackberry and Hawthorn as well as other environmental weeds. We also aim to undertake work to increase the linkages and condition of native vegetation within the reserve.

Protection and enhancement of biodiversity through weed control and supplementary planting

will assist in enhancing biodiversity, reduce erosion and improve habitat value. It is hoped improved visual amenity of the area, together with increased public perception and awareness of this environmental asset will provide long-term environmental outcomes through community support and ownership.

Willow Removal Vale of Clwydd

This project will control woody weed infestations along at least 3km of Vale of Clwydd Creek. Vale of Clwydd Creek is a suburban creek running through the suburb of Vale of Clwydd, part of the urban area of Lithgow. The creek flows into Lake Pillans Wetlands and Farmers Creek. Farmers Creek is a significant stream, running through the urban area of Lithgow, and into the Coxs River, which flows, into Lake Burragorang.

This project will help to prevent the spread of Willows, a Weed of National Significance, and other noxious weeds into the surrounding Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, and further into the catchment. It will also help to combat the increased erosion and flow modification that can be associated with Willow encroachment along waterways. Fallen Willow debris, and the dense mat of their roots can sometimes trap silt, build up the level of the stream bed and divert water flow into the banks, thereby increasing erosion.



IMPROVED WASTE MANAGEMENT

To implement the waste management hierarchy of avoidance, reuse, recycle and dispose.

Kerbside Garbage and Recycling Service

The delivery of over 18,000 new garbage and recycling bins during November 2013 has provided the community with an excellent opportunity to recycle and reduce waste from going to landfill.

The Recycling and Waste Collection evolved from the need to reduce valuable resources going to landfill. This was achieved by improving resource recovery from the waste stream and in particular the replacement of crate collection with 240Lt bins for recycling.

Lithgow residents have embraced the new recycling service and in the 2014/15 over 2,000 tonnes of recyclable materials was diverted away from landfill, thereby increasing the life span of the landfill and increasing the reuse of materials.



The winning poster in the "Hey Tosser" Litter Prevention Campaign Schools Poster Competition by Adrienne Slattery from Meadow Flat Public School.

Lithgow Litter Prevention Program

Successful grant funding allowed the implementation of a litter prevention program under the NSW Council Litter Prevention Grants Program. This was delivered throughout the Local Government Area using the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) "Hey Tosser" slogan on advertisements and signage.

The Litter Prevention Program funding aimed to achieve the EPA target of, a 40% reduction in littered items across assessed sites within the LGA. The accumulation of cigarette butts and littering at roadside stops and the associated bushfire risk of cigarette butts were of particular concern. The delivery of the program involved education to raise community awareness, new infrastructure and increased enforcement at selected locations or "hot spots".

New infrastructure such as waste bins, recycling bins, butt bins and accompanying signage was installed at all 'hot spot' locations, making it easier for people to do the right thing and feel positive about the sites.

The following sites "hot spots" were identified for new infrastructure:

- Clarence Pirie Park, Capertee
- Scenic Hill, Lithgow
- Hassan's Walls, Lithgow
- Endeavour Park, Lithgow

The education program was delivered in partnership with NetWaste to all participating primary schools with 665 students attending. Many of these students also submitted works into the poster competition, which asked students to design a poster which encouraged people not to litter. All submissions were displayed at Lithgow Library with the winning poster from Meadow Flat Public School awarded a prize.

The broader community was also involved with over 75 local businesses pledging their support to prevent littering in the LGA. They displayed posters in shop windows and new signage on car park exit points increasing the profile of the project. The project also promoted participation in Clean Up Australia Day on 1st March 2015 aiming to build valuable relationships in the community that will continue to grow into the future. As a result of this partnership Lithgow LGA achieved a 41% increase in participation in Clean Up Australia Day in comparison to the previous year.

At the conclusion of the project, an average 80% reduction in littered items was achieved at hot spot locations. The most common littered item across all sites was cigarette butts. At commencement of the project they made up 18% of the litter and had increased to 44% at the completion of the project. The increase in cigarette butts as a proportion of total littered items across all sites highlights the prolific nature, longevity & difficulty in removing the butts from our natural environment.





GOVERNANCE & CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- A Council that focuses on strong civic leadership, organisational development and effective governance with an engaged community actively participating in decision making processes affecting their future.

A group of approximately ten people, including men and women in business suits, are standing in a modern building lobby with large glass windows and a polished floor. The group is posed for a formal photograph.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2014/15

- ◆ Saved \$15,499 on regional procurement for Best Practice Plans through Centroc.
- ◆ Saved \$9,201 through participation in regional training programs.
- ◆ Commenced the development of a Draft Regional IT Strategy.
- ◆ Prepared a request for tender for a Unified Communications system for Centroc Member Councils to increase purchasing power and efficiencies in communications across the group.
- ◆ Launched two new Apps for iPhone and Smartphones; the Lithgow App - a tourism app and the Waste App providing members of the community with a garbage and recycling calendar.
- ◆ Modernised Council's website with 'responsive design' features for viewing on smart phones and tablets.
- ◆ Implemented an e-Services Mobile Inspections Program for use on iPads by Council staff conducting swimming pool, development, trade waste and health inspections.
- ◆ Implemented Employee Self Serve, providing staff with electronic access to the payroll system to manage their personal details.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Working together to interweave and optimise the sharing and coordination of resources and information.

Lithgow City Council is an Executive Member of Centroc and a valued member of the Central West Pilot Joint Organisation (JO), a project of Centroc; one of only five regional pilot Joint Organisations to assist the NSW Government to strengthen and reform local government.

Council is also a member of the Centroc Water Utilities Alliance (CWUA) - The CWUA has attracted over \$3M of State and Federal funding to supplement programming since its inception in 2009 including NSW Health funding for Lithgow for a Drinking Water Quality Management Plan with an estimated value of \$60,000.

Centroc is working collaboratively to deliver Best Practice to all member Councils including the Best Practice program to deliver compliance with the NSW Office of Water and assure eligibility for funding through the State Government for its water and sewer business. Through this program Council has procured:

- an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan Evaluation Study;
- a Drought Management Plan; and
- a Strategic Business Plan.

Currently Council is participating in a regional program for the delivery of Developer Servicing Plans.

Aside from Best Practice Plans, savings have also been achieved through regional procurement of Asset Valuations services and membership of the Savewater Alliance. Total savings for Council for

Best Practice Plans, alone is \$15,499. Cost savings will continue as the program delivers the balance of Best Practice plans.

Council is currently achieving cost savings through participation in a range of asset management services delivered through regional procurement of shared service arrangements including smoke testing, CCTV assessment of gravity sewer mains and Dam Surveillance services. Negotiations are currently underway for Council to leverage one of three Centroc contracts for sewer pipe relining which will provide savings on tendering costs through securing a regionally negotiated rate for these services.

Council will also benefit from a Workforce Development Program for Water employees being piloted by CWUA member Councils.

As a member of the CWUA, Council received \$200,000 in grant funding through the Australian Government funded CEEP2 Nexus between Water and Energy Program to undertake water loss repair activities at the Lithgow Water Treatment Plant and Cook Street Pump Station.

Participation in the Centroc HR Group has resulted in significant savings for training with:

- 16 courses delivered by the service
- 163 staff trained via the service
- Total spend with the training service is \$36,168
- Cost of training using alternate training providers would have been \$40,302
- Savings on course costs is \$4,134

- Savings on travel and accommodation costs is \$3,807
- Savings on coordination and research time is \$1,260
- Total savings for Lithgow City Council is \$9,201

In addition, council is part of the regional online training program, which allows access to 6 online training modules to staff. The modules include:

- Bullying & Harassment
- Privacy
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Code of Conduct
- Workplace Health & Safety
- Alcohol & Other Drugs

Council has also benefitted from a number of Regional contracts including:

- Pre-employment Screening
- Load Shifting Training
- Online Training
- Road Sign contracts
- Bitumen Emulsion contracts
- Fuel contracts
- Internal Audit contracts
- Water & Sewer Strategic Business Plans
- CCTV/Smoke testing of sewer lines
- Dam Surveillance
- Pipe Relining
- Traffic Control Training

- Employee Assistance Program
- Developer Servicing Plans
- Linemarking Services (underway)

Lithgow City Council is estimated to have saved a total of \$100,000 by participating in the regional procurement processes for these regional contracts since 2011.

Beyond the Range – Lithgow City Council is participating in this project which is recognising health workforce shortages in the region, the Centroc Health Workforce Group has worked with key stakeholders to develop a matrix of what we do well in this region and what we can do better to attract health workforce to Central NSW. Cadia Valley Mines has generously agreed to donate \$15,000 per year for three years to support the project.

In 2014/15, Centroc made the following Submissions on behalf of its region:

- Inquiry into Local Government Fit For the Future reform.
- Future of Regional Capital Cities.
- Response on the revised proposals for 2015 – 19 regulatory control period .

- Australian Audit Standards Board Residual Value Outreach.
- Telecommunications infrastructure in new developments Policy update for comment.
- Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper Regional Economic Development.
- Centroc EOI to Pilot as a Joint Organisation Planning.
- Rebuilding NSW Discussion Paper.
- Public Lighting Proposal to the Australian Energy Regulator.
- NSW Utility Public Lighting Confidentiality Claims.
- Draft Regions for Growth Planning NSW Planning.
- IPART review of licence rationale and design.
- IPART Local Government compliance and enforcement regulation review draft report Planning.
- Regional Submission to NSW Government Restart NSW.
- Crown Lands Legislation White Paper Planning.
- Extension of the Waste Levy Options Paper Planning.
- Draft Newell Highway Corridor Strategy Transport & Roads.
- NSW Draft Rural Health Plan.

Six separate Regional Priority Infrastructure Plans are being developed;

1. Water - completed
2. Transport Infrastructure (freight, logistics and transport) – completed
3. Sporting & Cultural – underway
4. Health & Education – about to commence
5. Communication
6. Energy

Operational Support - Project Teams are an important component of Centroc's operation and vital to its success. Project Teams are formed to allow cross collaboration and the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources.

Project teams Lithgow participate in include:

- Directors of Corporate Services
- IT
- Supply
- HR and Training
- WHS and Risk Management
- Directors of Engineering
- The Centroc Water Utilities Alliance
- Planners workgroup

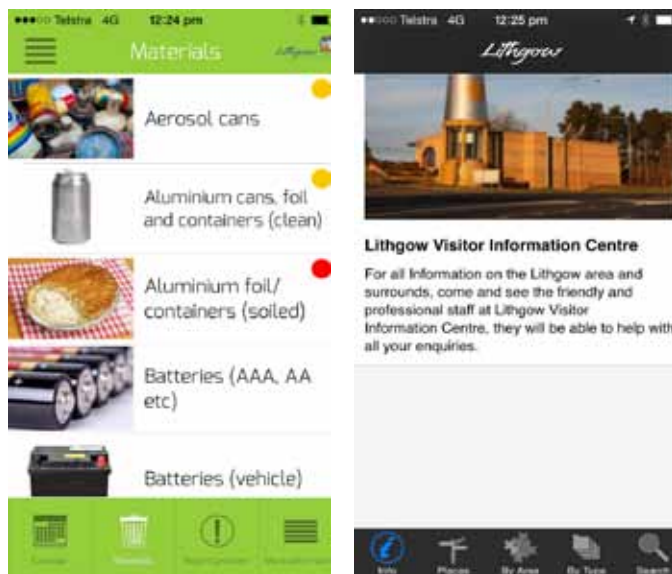
Savings on Regional Procurement from 14 December 2009 - 30 June 2015

Completed Programs (Telephony, Audit, Diesel Tax Rebate and Corporate Express	Training Service	WHS Contract (Traffic Control Training)	HR Contracts (Pre-Employment)	Centroc Water Utilities Alliance	Participation in Regional Tenders (Billable)	Participation in Regional Tenders (un-billable)	Total Savings
\$39,603	\$83,155	\$1,400	\$910	\$15,499	\$20,000	\$80,000	\$240,566

As a regional group the Centroc IT Group have been working on the development of a draft IT strategy.

The strategy details the drivers for change, the vision and actions to achieve this vision. The key areas of focus are the future development of e-services and IT governance.

Unified Communications is another issue common to a number of Councils within the central west region. Council's PABX telephone system is at end of life and Telstra will be discontinuing its Customnet services that will affect a number of Council's facilities. A joint project between was developed to prepare a request for tender as a group to gain increased purchasing power and efficiencies. This project has been part of the trial JO project that CENTROC is participating in. The new system will be deployed at the Council administration building, Lithgow Depot, Lithgow Library, the Visitor Information Centre and the Lithgow Aquatic Centre.



The Lithgow Waste App and Lithgow Tourism App are both available free to download for all from the Apple App Store and Google Play.

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

Ensuring effective communication between Lithgow City Council and the community.

Council recognises that the community no longer looks solely to traditional forms of media to receive information and that it is important to provide information through a variety of mechanisms including, but not limited to:

- Media releases distributed to local and regional media.
- Community noticeboards.
- Council Connections - Quarterly newsletter distributed via Australia Post to all householders and distributed electronically
- Event posters and flyers
- Lithgow Tourism App and Waste App
- Website and social media.

In November 2012, Council launched its first Facebook site as a new means of communicating with the community and reaching new target audiences. Council updates the site daily with media releases, events, information on council services and activities and items of general interest. The site is a positive means of communication with many of the community. Council is also responsive to customer requests made via the site ensuring that they are logged in the Customer Request System. Since the instigation of its first facebook Page, Council has started three other pages targeting different audiences for specific purposes.

The Lithgow Youth Council page has been developed to target local youth between the ages of 11 and 24 informing them of Youth Council activities, youth events, positions vacant within Council and matters of general interest to youth.

The Revitalising Lithgow Town Centre Facebook page has been embraced by the community as it provides them with an opportunity to provide input into the redevelopment of the CBD. The site poses questions with images to gauge community response to ideas for inclusion in the Revitalisation Action Plan. The community is kept informed on business news and opportunities, upcoming events, business training opportunities and new development.

In response to a recent downturn in industry in the area with job losses due to the closure of Wallerawang Power Station and Angus Place Colliery, Council has also launched the Lithgow; Our Place, Our Future Facebook Page. This page provides updates on progress made by the Lithgow Mining Taskforce and the Lithgow Business Taskforce; two taskforces set -up to lobby for and drive industrial and economic development in the Lithgow local government area.

Council's website receives on average over 6,000 sessions per months, with a third of these using smart phones and tablets to access the information. Council has updated its website with a new responsive design that allows for optimised use not only for PC users but, also using mobile devices. Following community consultation, the work was done entirely in-house and utilised freely available software for the content management system, resulting in a very cost effective solution.

A TECH SAVVY COUNCIL WITH MODERN CORPORATE SYSTEMS

Although Lithgow City Council is a small regional Council, we are consistently developing and implementing new systems which will streamline process for both staff and the community. Council has an innovative IT Team who are able to develop many new systems in house including the e-Services Mobile Inspections iPad Checklist App, Lithgow Tourism App and Lithgow Waste App. The IT and Corporate Team's expertise in Graphic Design ensure that Council's websites and in-house publications are produced to high standards.

Budgeting Software

To aid in the continual improvement in Council's budgeting processes, a budget module that integrates with Council's finance system was implemented. The new module streamlines the budget process and allows for improved reporting and analysis. The software was used to prepare the 2015/16 budget.

Corporate Software

Council further integrated its systems through the purchase of the Project Management and Fees & Charges Modules in the Pulse Software Program. As part of the annual budget bid process, all capital projects were entered into the Pulse and Finance Systems ensuring a balanced approach to the development of the 2015/16 Operational Plan.

The Pulse Software system enables users to view and update at their desktop delegations, capital projects assigned to their roles and update progress with actions in the Operational Plan. This has provided the following efficiencies:

- Time spent by officers on reporting is streamlined and reduced,

- Greater levels of accountability are achieved and
- Record keeping on projects is improved.

e-Services - Mobile Inspections

Continuing the development of the e-services program, Council has implemented a system that allows staff to conduct inspections using an iPad app that syncs with the property system. Inspection check lists have been developed for inspections of swimming pools, developments, trade waste and health.

The mobility program will allow for improved reporting and information gathering processes. The app also allows inspection staff to view previous inspections and related materials whilst on site.

Employee Self Service

Employee Self Service provides staff with access to the payroll system to manage their personal details including banking information and to apply for leave. The initial rollout provided access to staff via their work PC's, with the next stage enabling access via smart phones.

Work, Health & Safety Improvement Program

Lithgow City Council, in partnership with State Cover entered into a project to improve WHS performance at Council in July 2014. Initially, the completion of a comprehensive gap analysis to determine the status of Council's WHS system was undertaken. The gap analysis consisted of the following key components:

- A review of Council's existing WHS policies and procedures to assess their contents against legislative requirements, AS/NZ 4801 and industry best practices.
- A review of implementation records (e.g. training records, consultation meeting minutes, risk assessments, etc).
- Interviews with key personnel within different levels and departments within Council.
- Site visits of selected areas.

Following review of the gap analysis report, Council has launched the WHS Improvement Project, developing action plans to address the recommendations with the gap analysis report.



AWARDS AND CITATIONS

At the Annual Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Regional Tourism Awards for Excellence, Lithgow City Council Officers received the following award and commendation:

- Mayor Maree Statham - Recognition for her contribution to the Bicentenary of the Crossing of the Blue Mountains.
- Tourism Manager, Kellie Barrow - Regional Tourism Ambassador.
- Cultural Development Officer, Wendy Hawkes and local Historian Joan Kent were acknowledged for their contribution to the Bicentenary Celebrations of the Crossing of the Blue Mountains.



Pictured: Councillor Ross Higlett; Tourism Manager, Kellie Barrow, Mayor Maree Statham; and Cultural Development Officer, Wendy Hawkes

Our Place...Our Future



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www.facebook.com/LithgowLgaYouth

www.facebook.com/revitaliseLithgow

Lithgow Visitors Centre

Tel: 02 6350 3230

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www.facebook.com/lithgowtourism

Lithgow Library Learning Centre

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Eskbank House Museum

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Lithgow Aquatic Centre

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