



# MINUTES

Seven Valleys Tourism Committee

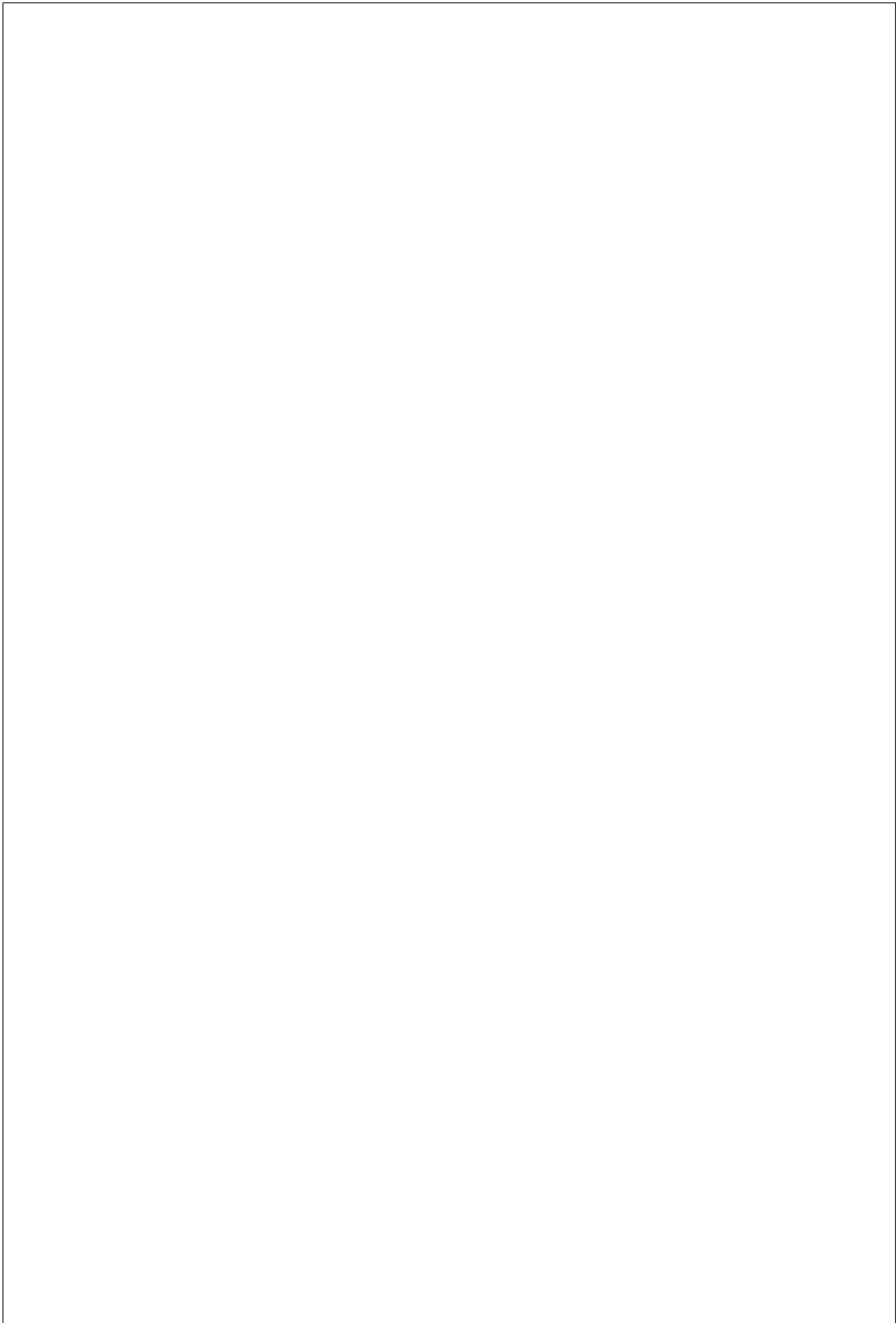
held at

Council Administration Centre  
Committee Room  
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Monday 31 July 2023

at 3:00 PM



# ORDER OF BUSINESS

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The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 3:05 pm.

## **1. Acknowledgement of Country**

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The Mayor acknowledged Wiradjuri Elders past and present of the Wiradjuri nation - the original custodians of the land on which the Lithgow's communities reside and extended respect to our neighbouring nations.

## **2. Present**

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Present: Mayor Maree Statham, Councillor Almy Bryce, Ann Thompson - MTA Travel, Daniel Zolfel - Zig Zag Railway, Louise Wallace - NPWL, Sharon Howard - Gang Gang Gallery, Wendy Stephens - Belle Bois Luxury B&B

Officers: Simon Francis - Tourism and Events, Jonathon Edgecombe - Director Instructure and Economy, Kylie Blakemore - Community Culture, John Malcom - LCC Projects Manager, Trinity Newton - Minutes

## **3. Apologies**

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Apologies: Emily Seliscar – Hometown Café, Kat Alexander – Blue Fox

Officers: Deborah McGrath - Corporate Communications, Craig Butler - General Manager

## **4. Declaration of Interest**

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The Mayor called for any declarations of interest. There were none received.

## **5. Confirmation of Minutes**

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The minutes of the meeting held 6 June 2023 were endorsed at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 26 June 2023, resolution number 23-117.

## **6. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

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The Chair called for any matters arising from previous minutes:

- Ann Thompson raised items of Main Street revitalisation program and lights in QE park. These matters will be addressed later in the meeting.
- John Malcom - LCC Projects Manager presented to the Committee in relation to the Main Street Revitalisation Project which he has taken ownership of in his role at Council.
  - Face to Face information forum
  - Dedicated council webpage for updates
  - Council media news letter
  - Letter box drop to the main street business
  - Media releases at milestones
  - Risk level for Project is low.
  - Extensive community consultation will occur for the second stage moving forward.
  - At the stage calling for tenders on this current stage.
  - There are a lot of matters with the projects are locked in however Council is seeking input and collaboration with softer elements such as outdoor eatery etc. Larger changes will postpone the entire project.

- Council will liaise with the businesses to address the parking issues that are raised by the business and will go with the best fit solution for all of the community.
  - Old infrastructure which is run down will be replaced at no cost to the businesses.
  - Information session / community engagement will be held at various times to fit in with as many people as possible.
- Flags and banners have been changed and will be replaced again tomorrow for Fathers Day. There will be recurrent funding to ensure they are fresh.
  - Lights in QE Park and trunk lighting have been discussed with the Director of Infrastructure and Economy.
  - Flower boxes in front of businesses will be part of the consultation with the business once the design is established.
  - Tourist attractions ie., TV on the side of the building in Cook Street Plaza has been looked at.
  - Opportunity of pop-up shops, to test ideas for a new business at a low rent rate etc.
  - Lobbying certain businesses to come to the area. Business to fill the empty vandalised buildings. A committee / role to promote investment attraction. This is a core role of the Council and LCC are in the process of filling this role presently but have had little interest. Department of Regional NSW and other Govt. Agencies also carry out this role in the business environment.
  - Consultation will be with individual shop owners, Business Chambers and the Main Street Group also.
  - Some social media chatter has indicated that there are community members who would like to be involved in the upgrade etc. on the Main Street.
  - Main objective at council is to get a design concept before going to community.
  - This stage of the revitalisation will be from Cook St to Bridge St. The other end of Main Street will be a third stage which will need to have further grant funding etc.
  - The pots for Main Street will be an extended time frame before they are being implemented however this is not the forum for the process. This is more an operation committees.

## **ACTION / RECOMMENDATION**

THAT The committee notes the update on matters arising from previous minutes.

**MOVED:** Ann Thompson

**SECONDED:** Councillor A Bryce

**CARRIED:**

## **7. Staff Reports**

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### **7.1. Gardens of Stone update - Louise Wallace**

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Louise from NPWL gave an update on the Gardens of Stone and Mountain Bike Event.

Glow Worm Tunnel precinct - a lot of work is happening at present. Glow Worm Tunnell Road has been closed over the school holidays due to the upgrade to walking track - pushed out to the end of the year due to the delays. Not opening for the September school holidays.

Glow Worm population within the tunnel claims in the local area have been brought to the attention of NPWL which are not true.

Planning stages of the Mountain Bike, walking track and camping areas are to be worked on next. Some of the first key works happening on the grounds.

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Final approvals of the stages are being addressed now. next year will be a solid construction year with works commencing in September.

Mountain Bike Event - was flagged as a high risk due to the cost and that the event goes across several types of land (Council, Crown, NPWL and private etc.)

Clarification from Lou Wallace states:

To confirm, the minutes reference a mountain bike 'event' within the Gardens of Stone SCA.

However, I should note there are no events slated within the SCA.

To clarify, there will be a 35km mountain bike 'network' within the Gardens of Stone SCA, in addition to a 15km shared use trail network for walking and riding.

The Lithgow Mountain Bike Transformation project is also progressing as part of a collaborative effort between the Central Tablelands MTB Club, NPWS, Lithgow City Council, Crown Lands and the Greater City of Lithgow Mining Museum – which will include a 25km network of downhill and adventure trails within State Mine Gully. This project is in the early planning stages as part of a Regional Tourism Activation Fund grant with the Department of Regional NSW.

Planning considerations - Delivery date for project is mid 2026 which will be taken up mostly by planning stages.

The State Mine Gully proposal is different to the Hassans Walls Plan. They are totally different terrains and jointly will ensure Lithgow is an international biking destination.

Commercial operations - working with the Ministers office to determine a scope of this.

## **ACTION / RECOMMENDATION**

THAT The committee note the presentation by Louise Wallace about the Gardens of Stone SCA.

**MOVED:** Councillor A Bryce

**SECONDED:** Sharon Howard

**CARRIED:**

## **7.2. Zig Zag Railway Update**

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Daniel gave an update on Zig Zag.

Railway is selling out a month in advance and note there is an increase in people staying in the area longer.

Two events coming up next year

Preliminary meetings with Scenic World and Sydney tour companies - Zig Zag is going to launch their own tours from Sydney to Zig Zag and seek the Committee to use ZZ to start the conversation to get the foot in the door and the tour become a regional tour. Daniel will speak to Simon more off line to work on a plan to bring this to fruition.

16 - 17 September will be an event at ZZ - bringing local businesses and attractions together.

Sydney Weekender – a story was aired last weekend, no data on viewing has been received.

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Booking out a month in advance and no further services can be allocated as a second steam locomotive is essential and funding is going to this. A second locomotive is essential to be able to run for extra weekends.

It is worth remembering that partnership with Gardens of Stone will be 18 months away but will be critical in that period. Seeking other partnerships to enhance the name of Lithgow.

The entire area needs to take advantage and use Zig Zag more to bring people to the area. Zig Zag has given Seven Valleys Tourism permission to erect a notice board at the ZZ station to promote the LGA.

Sydney motels are waiting to come to Lithgow and establish themselves.

Zig Zag Grand Re-Open and have partnered with ABC.

Bring this off line and have a meeting with key players at the table to discuss and scope. Discussion on funding and business case to move forward and commitment.

Starting point - identify what fits in with Destinations NSW funding and include local strategic intent.

#### **ACTION / RECOMMENDATION**

THAT The committee notes the presentation by Daniel Zolfel about the current and future opportunities at Zig Zag Railway.

**MOVED:** Councillor A Bryce

**SECONDED:** Ann Thompson

#### **CARRIED**

### **7.3. Tourism Managers Report - Simon Francis**

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Destination Action plan is almost complete and is at the situation analysis stage.

Calls for information to add to the Destination action plan to gain a bigger picture of the tourism situation as a whole.

Simon will use the committee to further disperse the information in the destination action plan.

Strategic direction on bringing the Seven Valleys branding to life. Separating ourselves from the surrounding areas and bringing the Seven Valleys into the tourism domain and all engaging areas linking to the seven valleys branding.

Strategic branding will ensure that those engaging with Seven Valleys will know how our visual branding can be used to promote them and the LCC Seven Valleys. Funding for this will be sought.

Lithgow Halloween - events coordinator is being sought and Simon will work up until a coordinator is found. Corporate partnership has been established. Budget for Halloween is set at \$20,000 but seeking further sponsorship from private sector.

Future direction for Halloween will be created and will be established with the events coordinator.

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Expertise is essential and local person is also preferred. Consumer confidence needs to be retained.

Lithgow is being established as an arts and culture event over a week/weekend to be called Seven Valleys Arts and Culture Festival.

The Visitor Guide - thank you for the feedback. The consultant has been requested to make some changes, front and back cover have been changed and the white space addressed.

The Cycling Tourism events - "Goodness Gravel Event" (gravel riding) incorporation of an event into the Seven Valleys that does not cut across any major roads and is at the scoping stage. The Board Meeting of Destinations Central West was held in the VIC recently and a detailed presentation was made and LCC expectations were tabled.

Agritourism program is the next form of tourism that is being addressed by Destinations NSW and Destination Network Central West. The Agritourism Audit is being undertaken at present and LCC will be working with them.

#### **ACTION / RECOMMENDATION**

THAT The committee note the update on tourism and event projects.

**MOVED:** Sharon Howard

**SECONDED:** Councillor A Bryce

**CARRIED:**

#### **7.4. Cultural Development Update - Kylie Blakemore**

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Seven Valleys Live and Local is coming to an end - there was a forum to workshop feedback. A report will come back to Council and to the music scene of outcomes. Engagement was from a diverse sections of the community.

Waste to Art Program came to an end with the competition at the Library Fashion Parade. Winners from the competition went to Blayney at the Art Hub.

Suggestions of holding some art hubs in the LGA in old buildings.

Opera Gala - Funding securement, poster design and ticket sales design and web design are under way. Business partnerships are encouraged. Lithgow Musical Society are helping with costumes etc. This will be a comedic opera. New seating will be placed prior to the event. This event is the first weekend in November.

Lithgow Art Collection at the Seven Valleys Visitors Centre - Visitors centre also can hold workshopping up to 30 people.

Arts Policy has been updated.

In conjunction with Tidy Towns and Antony Simmons has donated an artwork of Marjorie Jackson's life.

Greenspot has brought and donating a art work from a local artist with the suggestion of displaying it in the Wallerawang Library.

Stories of local artists and their artwork should be promoted and used as tourism point.

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Out in the community and working with events to bring them to or back to the area.

Kylie informed the Committee that she will not be attending the Committee again as she is moving out of the area. Simon thanked Kylie for all her efforts and help in promoting the area and wished her luck in the future.

#### **ACTION / RECOMMENDATION**

THAT The committee notes the update on cultural events.

**MOVED:** Sharon Howard

**SECONDED:** Ann Thompson

**CARRIED:**

### **8. General Business**

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The sign on the Seven Valleys Visitors Information Centre was raised once again. A business case for an upgraded digital sign will need to be created. Transport for NSW has strict regulations on signage on highways.

The I on the information Sign is being replaced and should be done in the next few weeks.

A mural under the Viaduct - permission from the owner of the property is required.

Beatlesfest was promoted on Seven News last week. A train for Beatlesfest was discussed however a Zig Zag train was not available that weekend but the car park area has been offered.

A brief update on Transport for NSW on the Highway entrance to Lithgow project was given by the Mayor.

Welcome to Lithgow sign on Chifley Road was asked about.

Energy Australia will be approached seeking clarity on who is able to attend the Event on the 16 August. Seeking if the committee is able to attend

#### **ACTION / RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Items of general business be received from committee members and those items noted by the committee.

**MOVED:** Ann Thompson

**SECONDED:** Councillor A Bryce

**CARRIED:**

## **9. Meeting Close**

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Next Meeting: September 2023 at 3pm.

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 5:02 pm.