



Emerging Economy Committee

to be held at

Meeting Room 176 Mort Street

on

Thursday 13 March 2025

at 5:00 PM

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1. Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country

Lithgow City Council acknowledges Wiradjuri Elders past and present of the Wiradjuri nation - the original custodians of the land on which the Lithgow's communities reside. The Council also extends our respects to our neighbouring nations.

Declaration of Webcasting

I inform all those in attendance at this meeting, that the meeting is being webcast and that those in attendance should refrain from making any defamatory statements concerning any person, Councillor or employee, and refrain from discussing those matters subject to Closed Council proceedings as indicated in clause 14.1 of the code of meeting practice.

2. Present

3. Apologies

4. Declaration of Interest

Ethical Decision Making and Conflicts of Interest

A guiding checklist for Councillors, officers and community committees

Oath or Affirmation of Office

Councillors are reminded of the Oath or Affirmation taken of office, made under section 233A of the *Local Government Act 1993* when elected.

Ethical decision making

- Is the decision or conduct legal?
- Is it consistent with Government policy, Council's objectives and Code of Conduct?
- What will the outcome be for you, your colleagues, the Council, anyone else?
- Does it raise a conflict of interest?
- Do you stand to gain personally at public expense?
- Can the decision be justified in terms of public interest?
- Would it withstand public scrutiny?

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a clash between private interest and public duty. The test for conflict of interest:

- Is it likely I could be influenced by personal interest in carrying out my public duty?
- Would a fair and reasonable person believe I could be so influenced?
- Conflict of interest is closely tied to the layperson's definition of 'corruption' – using public office for private gain.
- Important to consider public perceptions of whether you have a conflict of interest.

There are two types of conflict:

- **Pecuniary** – regulated by the *Local Government Act 1993* and Office of Local Government. A person with a pecuniary interest should at least disclose and not vote, but it would also in these cases be appropriate to leave the chamber.
 - **Non-pecuniary** – regulated by Codes of Conduct and policy. ICAC, Ombudsman, Office of Local Government (advice only). If declaring a Non-Pecuniary Conflict of Interest, a person with a non-pecuniary interest can choose to either disclose and vote, disclose and not vote or leave the Chamber.
 - Local Government Act 1993 and Model Code of Conduct
-

For more detailed definitions refer to the *Local Government Act 1993*, Chapter 14 Honesty and Disclosure of Interest and adopted Code of Conduct.

Identifying problems

1st Do I have private interests affected by a matter I am officially involved in? **2nd** Is my official role one of influence or perceived influence over the matter? **3rd** Do my private interests conflict with my official role?

Disclosure of pecuniary interests / non-pecuniary interests

Under the provisions of Section 440AAA(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (pecuniary interests) and the Model Code of Conduct it is necessary for you to disclose the nature of the interest when making a disclosure of a pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary conflict of interest at a meeting.

A Declaration form should be completed and handed to the General Manager as soon as practicable once the interest is identified. Declarations are made at Item 3 of the Agenda: Declarations - Pecuniary, Non-Pecuniary and Political Donation Disclosures, and prior to each Item being discussed: The Declaration Form can be downloaded at

5. Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held ### 2023.

6. Administration Reports

6.1. Committee Functions

Author: Senior Manager, Economy and Strategy

Responsible Officer: Director, Infrastructure & Economy

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Report is for the Committee to consider its Functions and to make any recommendations as to the amendment of the Committee's Functions as the Committee thinks fit.

Administration's Recommendation

1. THAT the Emerging Economy Committee recommend to Council the adoption of the Amended Functions of the Committee as set out in Attachment 6.1.1 to the Report.

Attachments

1. Emerging Economy Committee - Functions - Draft - March 2025 V 1 [6.1.1 - 4 pages]
2. Economic- Dev- TO R- Version-2- Revision-3- Adopted-by- Council-220719 [6.1.2 - 4 pages]

Background and discussion

At its Ordinary Council Meeting of 25 November 2024, Council resolved to include a renamed Emerging Economy Committee in its committee structure. The Committee had previously been named the Economic Development Committee. The purpose of the renaming was to align the remit of the Committee with the broader economic transition management policy framing of Council.

The draft Functions of the Emerging Economy Committee are consistent with the present statutory framing of the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund – but extended to coal-fired power generation. The draft Functions are considered appropriate for the anticipated merger of the LEEP governance with the NSW Government's proposed Central West Future Jobs and Investment Authority.

Policy

Council has adopted the Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan Report and the 2025 – 2026 LEEP Action Plan. The latter document specifies the Committee as being the primary deliberative interface between the LEEP and Council. Council's re-alignment of the work of the Committee to the broader issues of Lithgow's emerging economy and economic transitions management is assessed to be consistent with leading practice. It is also noted that the draft Functions are consistent with the LEEP Report's recommendations concerning governance.

Risk Management

The Governance structure of the LEEP initiative has been the subject of a thorough risk assessment and is consistent with leading practice.

Financial

The Committee has no expenditure related function.

6.2. LEEP Action Plan Update

Author: Senior Manager, Economy and Strategy
Responsible Officer: Director, Infrastructure & Economy

Executive Summary

The purpose of this Report is to provide the Committee with an update of the LEEP Action Plan 2025-2026.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT the Emerging Economy Committee note the Report.

Attachments

Nil

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min 24 – 257(1): Council Adopt the LEEP Action Plan 2025 – 2026.
 Min 24 – 257(4*): Council approve the associated final LEEP and Adaptive Skills Hub budgets for 2024/25

*It's noted that the second prayer of the Resolution appearing in the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 25 November 2024 was neither moved, seconded nor carried. It therefore appears in the Minutes in error. Prayer “four” is, consequently, the third prayer of the resolution.

Background and discussion

The Committee will recall that Council adopted an eighteen-month Action Plan to realign the Action Plan with Council’s Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. A Table of Actions together with a progress report is provided by way of update. Staff officers welcome the opportunity to answer the Committee’s questions in relation to the update.

Staff officers are of the view that, taken as a whole, Council is tracking to target with respect to the LEEP Action Plan 2025 – 2026 and see no reason, at this stage, as to why the Plan's actions will not be completed.

Part A: Governance

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action	Update March 2025
1	Following release of the NSW Government’s response to its Future Jobs and Investment Authority White Paper, review the governance vehicle for collaboratively managing the regional transitions management initiative including actions arising from this Action Plan.	7.6 (1)	(a) Collaborate with NSW Resources (FJIA) on its proposed Central West Jobs and Investment Authority Team to ensure the governance structure reflects leading practice.	Summary of Public Consultation released by NSW Government in December 24. It is understood NSW Government is now preparing its response and draft legislation. Staff officers are reconciling the various Council resolutions and awaiting the NSW Government response and draft legislation for its proposed Central West Future Jobs and Investment Committee. Once

				this is completed/provided, staff officers will commence consultation with key LEEP Actors with a view to furnishing Council with a review of the Governance Structure in approximately June 25.
			(b) Provide secretariat support to the interim governance vehicle in its functions.	On-going.
			(c) Finalise Annual Action Plan.	Finalised.
2	Continue to support the establishment of formal mechanisms for collaboration between the LEEP partners, key actors and others for the regional transitions management initiative.	7.6 (2)	(a) Continue to build the database of all transition management partners, key actors, and committed stakeholders.	On-going.
			(b) seek to enter memoranda of understanding with each of the LEEP partners and others.	On-going.
			(c) Continue to support the existing LEEP working and network groups.	On-going
			(d) Develop additional working and networking groups for Engagement and Communications Network (from January 2025), the 'Heart of Lithgow' Place Network (from July 2025), Health and Ageing Network (from July 2025).	Engagement and Communications Network established and is meeting monthly.
3	Public reporting and accountability framework (monitoring)	7.6 (1)(h)	(a) Develop metrics for assessing the effectiveness and progress of the transitions management initiatives and, where possible, establish a baseline for the metrics.	On-going. Staff officers anticipate having a draft list of metrics by June 2025.
			(b) Prepare a regular report on the key progress of the transitions management initiative to all LEEP partners and key actors. For Council, this should include reports to Council's Economic Development Committee.	Quarterly and on-going.
			(c) Prepare annual reports on the activities of the interim governance vehicle and the transitions management initiatives.	Not commenced.

Part B: Engagement

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action	Update March 2025
4	Develop an engagement plan for on-going consultation with individuals, community groups, peak organisations, employers, industry groups, unions, Traditional Owners, professional bodies, education and training providers and others. Ensure that the consultation provides for periodic refresh and continuous improvement of the vision statement.	N/A	(a) Finalise an engagement plan consistent with the IAP2 framework.	Completed, published on the LEEP website in February 2025 following endorsement by Council at the 28 January 2025 Ordinary Meeting.
			(b) Host regular collaboration network functions each year.	Regular speaker and engagement networking functions to commence shortly. Delayed by adoption of Engagement Strategy.
			(c) Provide regular e-Newsletters and share Working Group Meeting minutes on the LEEP website for transparency.	Minutes to date shared on the LEEP website, along with updates about LEEP activities such as the launch of the Central West Adaptive Skills Hub and Lithgow STEAM uplift.

			(d) Position Lithgow as a thought leader by hosting a Coal Communities in Transition Conference, inviting transitions management actors from the four future jobs and investment authority regions and others.	On-going.
5	Develop a protocol for engaging with First Peoples communities to recognise the task they have in overseeing the protection and healing of Country throughout the transition process; while ensuring the education, economic and lifestyle inclusion of the region's First Peoples.	N/A	(a) Prepare a survey of potential engagement options from, amongst other sources, teachings from the Latrobe Valley Authority experience.	On-going.
			(b) Collaborate with First Peoples communities in the LGA to create a shared engagement protocol authorised by the interim governance vehicle, Council, the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council, and local First Nations organisations.	Public EOIs for membership in the First Nations Network have now closed and preparation for the first meeting is underway.
6	Develop a community portal for sharing success stories achieved by transition actors across the region.	7.1 (1)	(a) Establish social media channels to share information locally (Facebook) and outside the LGA (LinkedIn, YouTube). These are to complement regular e-newsletters, events, annual reports, the website, and printed materials (posters, flyers) to share LEEP activities, stories and updates.	Social media channels established, promotion will commence as our engagement program is locked in and underway.
			(b) Create an explainer video about the LEEP program to broaden reach and simplify messaging. Follow up with videos from key actors sharing updates.	Creation of a LEEP explainer video is in progress.

Part C: Precincts, Strategic Planning and Investment Attraction Driving

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action	Update March 2025
7	Progress consultations with the NSW Government's Transport Working Group and Council on opportunities for green hydrogen and rail fleet electrification, rail fleet conversion and manufacturing, and logistics, including consideration of infrastructure and land-use needs.	7.4 (6) 7.2 (3)	(a) Collaborate with the coal mining, power generation, and gas network providers and other key stakeholders in the development of an options report for accelerating and scaling opportunities associated with green hydrogen, rail fleet electrification, rail and heavy transport intermodals, fleet conversion and manufacturing, and allied industries. in the LGA.	On-going. Staff officers have met with Transport for NSW and all the key actors. Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP.
			(b) Collaborate with the NSW Regional Economic Development Team, Transport Working Group and other key stakeholders to progress economically viable options.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP with all key stakeholders providing letters of support.
			(c) Collaborate with the NSW RNEW Program Team on the development of the 10-year investment pipeline and strategic plan for rail infrastructure in regional NSW and the Central West Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans.	Not commenced.
			(d) Progress precinct masterplans to support outcomes from (a), (b) and (c) of this Plan.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP with all key stakeholders providing letters of support. The rPPP grant is focused on investigation and some aspects of design.

			(e) Where applicable, progress site approvals and works necessary to bring identified precincts to market.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP with all key stakeholders providing letters of support. The rPPP grant is focused on investigation and some aspects of design.
			(f) Lodge grant applications under the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund (or successor program), the Commonwealth's Regional Precincts Partnerships Program (or successor program) to support the outcome in (e).	Stream I grant application submitted under rPPP.
8	Plan a precinct to consolidate advanced manufacturing for the Defence sector.	7.1 (5)	(a) Collaborate with the local defence manufacturing sector, government and other key stakeholders to accelerate and scale opportunities associated with defence manufacturing.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP with all key stakeholders providing letters of support.
			(b) Collaborate with the NSW Regional Economic Development Team and other key stakeholders to progress economically viable options.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP with all key stakeholders providing letters of support. The rPPP grant is focused on investigation and some aspects of design.
			(c) Progress precinct masterplans to support outcomes from (a) and (b) of this Plan.	The rPPP grant is focused on investigation and some aspects of design – although there is an existing subdivision lot layout.
			(d) Where applicable, progress site approvals and works necessary to bring identified precincts to market.	On-going.
			(e) Lodge grant applications under the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund (or successor program), the Commonwealth's Regional Precincts Partnerships Program (or successor program) to support the outcome in (d).	Stream I grant application submitted under rPPP.
9	Plan a precinct to accelerate investment opportunities related to adventure and eco-tourism.	7.2 (1)	(a) Collaborate with the local tourism sector, government and other key stakeholders to accelerate and scale opportunities associated with adventure and eco-tourism.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP. Staff officers will commence collaboration by co-design with industry if the Application is successful.
			(b) Collaborate with the NSW Regional Economic Development Team and other key stakeholders to progress economically viable options.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's rPPP. Staff officers will commence collaboration by co-design with industry if the Application is successful. The NSW Regional Economic Development Team, RDA Central West and the NSW Future Jobs and Investment Authority Team is aware of the application.
			(c) Progress precinct masterplans to support outcomes from (a) and (b) of this Plan.	Staff officers will commence collaboration by co-design (including master planning) with industry and

				other stakeholders if the application is successful.
			(d) Where applicable, progress site approvals and works necessary to bring identified precincts to market.	On-going.
			(e) Lodge grant applications under the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund (or successor program), the Commonwealth's Regional Precincts Partnerships Program (or successor program) to support the outcome in (d).	Stream I grant application submitted under rPPP.
10	Plan a precinct plan to catalyse and consolidate an industry around innovation in health and ageing in Lithgow	7.3 (1)	(a) Develop a Lithgow Health, Ageing and Innovation Precinct Masterplan to investigate, support and foster growth in the health and ageing sector and, particularly, delivery of expanded and ongoing services outlined in the NBMLHD Health Services Plan 2023-2028.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the NSW Government's RECIP Program with all key stakeholders providing letters of support.
			(b) Develop an infrastructure plan, including consideration of staff accommodation for VMOs and nursing staff, students and interns.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the NSW Government's RECIP Program with all key stakeholders providing letters of support. Staff Officers propose to strengthen the collaboration as a Health and Aged-care Alliance.
11	Review existing employment land zonings and potential candidate sites to ensure suitability of supply in consideration of likely demand, serviceability, infrastructure re-use, co-location and supply chain value capture, environmental and community factors and constraints.	7.1 (2)	(a) Collaborate with Council's People and Places Department to finalise an Employment Land Strategy which includes short-, medium and long-term strategies.	On-going. Staff officers propose, at this stage, to present a report to the April or May Council Ordinary Council Meeting.
12	Incorporate key actions of the City's Integrated Water Management Plan, focusing on projects to support water-intensive industries in Lithgow.	7.7 (4)	(a) Collaborate with Council's Water, Waste, and Wastewater Department to develop an expression of interest and prospectus around commercial opportunities arising from the proposed Clarence to Wallerawang water pipeline.	Finalised. Staff officers assisted with the narrative and contextual imperative for the proposed infrastructure as part of an application, by Council, for a Stream I rPPP Application.
			(b) Collaborate with Council's Water, Waste, and Wastewater Department on tasks advancing the Clarence to Wallerawang water pipeline, as requested.	On-going.
13	Engage the planning process to contribute economic development assessments for larger local planning applications.	N/A	(a) Provide written submissions assessing the economic impacts of significant planning applications.	Staff officers continue to provide advice, where requested, with respect to significant planning proposals in the Lithgow LGA including Greenspot Wallerawang, Portland Foundations, Shell and others.
14	Undertake precinct planning to repurpose the region's redundant mining and coal-based energy land and infrastructure to develop regional capabilities in renewable energy, circular economy processing, and clean manufacturing.	N/A	(a) Prepare and exhibit an expression of interest for a re-use strategic masterplan for a redundant mine or power station site.	Not yet commenced.
			(b) Prepare procurement scope and documentation for a strategic re-use masterplan for a successful EOI bidder.	Not yet commenced.
			(c) Collaborate with landowners to project manage the preparation of a re-use strategic masterplan.	Not yet commenced.

			(a) Prepare and exhibit an expression of interest for a re-use strategic masterplan for a redundant mine or power station site.	Not yet commenced.
15	Engage with Council’s technical working group on waste management strategy.	N/A	(a) Attend scheduled meetings and provide advice as required.	On-going.

Part D: An innovative, agile and skilled workforce

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action	Update March 2025
16	Establish pilot regional STEM Academy to foster STEAM and adaptive skills in the Lithgow LGA.	7.4 (8)	(a) Undertake Science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) teaching support directly to primary and secondary schools in the Lithgow LGA.	On-going. The Adaptive Skills Pilot is proposed to directly engage approximately 80% of all stage 3 students across the LGA and 35 stage 5 students from across all secondary schools across the LGA.
			(b) Support local teaching staff to upskill and capacity build through skills extension and mentoring	On-going as part of the Adaptive Skills Pilot.
			(c) Establish a pilot multi-purpose STEAM learning classroom at the Adaptive Skills Hub.	Finalised. Additionally, staff officers have lodged an application under the RECIPI to merge the pilot with the NSW Government’s SISP Program across the whole of the Central West Coal Mining Affected Region for an additional two years.
17	Develop shared protocols with each key industry business in the coal mining and coal-fired power sector with respect to managing significant workforce risks including notification, redundancy, redeployment, whole-of-family support and other leading practice initiatives.	N/A	(a) Explore entering an MOU with Centennial Coal, Energy.	On-going.
			(b) Explore entering an MOU with Energy Australia.	On-going.
			(c) Explore entering an MOU with the Mining and Energy Union.	On-going.
18	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to develop a regional workforce adaptive capacity plan.	7.4 (5)	(a) Develop a regional workforce adaptive capacity plan.	On-going. Delivery expected by June 2025.
19	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to develop a long-term regional education and training pathways plan.	7.4 (4)	(a) Develop a long-term regional education and training pathways plan.	On-going. Delivery expected by June 2025.
20	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to develop a workforce rapid response plan in the event of a unplanned closure of a major industry participant.	7.5 (1)	(a) Develop a regional workforce rapid response plan.	On-going. Delivery expected by June 2025.
21	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to conduct a regional manufacturing an industry, skills and training audit.	7.4 (2)	(a) Undertake a regional manufacturing an industry, skills and training audit.	On-going. Delivery expected by June 2025.
22	Develop a capacity building and transitions management training plan across Council and community to build transitions management	N/A	(a) Identify key participant cohorts and commensurate capacity building and transitions management training requirements.	On-going. Presentation of plan expected at the March Emerging Economy Committee Meeting.

	literacy and capacity to engage transitions management.		(b) Develop (or where applicable review and adjust existing content) and deliver short course and place-based training to meet the needs identified in (a).	On-going. Presentation of plan expected at the March Emerging Economy Committee Meeting.
23	Strengthen long-term professional capacity in the Council organisation by implementing a cadetship, internship and graduate program.	N/A	(a) Collaborate with Council's Human Resources Team to develop a cadetship, internship and graduate program which prioritises professional areas which have been difficult to adequately recruit to.	On-going. Presentation of plan expected at the March Emerging Economy Committee Meeting.
24	Support the location of a Regional University Study Hub in Lithgow to facilitate place-based higher education from a range of university providers.	N/A	(a) Collaborate with the university sector, local community actors and others to support the location of a Regional University Study Hub in Lithgow.	Staff officers have prepared an application under the Commonwealth Government's Study Hub Program with all key stakeholders providing letters of support.
25	Engage with the Commonwealth Government and NSW Government to support workforce adaptive capacity in the Lithgow LGA.	7.4	(a) Lodge grant applications under the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund (or successor program), or other grant opportunities to support actions and outcome set out in Part D of this Plan.	On-going.

Policy

Council has adopted a 2025 – 2026 LEEP Action Plan.

Risk Management

Not otherwise than as set out in this Report.

Financial

LEEP Budget and Adaptive Skills Hub Budget as at the Quarter 3 budget review.

- Total budget (24/25), \$1,805,282.32 (total combined program budget)
- Expenditure to date (24/25), \$819,581.83 (total combined program expenditure)

6.3. Adaptive Skills Hub Update

Author: Manager, Adaptive Skills
Responsible Officer: Director, Infrastructure & Economy

Executive Summary

The purpose of this Report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Adaptive Skills Hub and related projects in support of Lithgow's economic transition management program.

Administration's Recommendation

1. THAT the Emerging Economy Committee note the Report

Attachments

1. LEE P's Secondary education STEAM curriculum – 100 hr Drone program [6.3.1 - 1 page]
 2. LEE P's Primary education STEAM curriculum – Wild Robot outreach program [6.3.2 - 26 pages]
- 1) LEEP's Secondary education STEAM curriculum – 100hr Drone program
 - 2) LEEP's Primary education STEAM curriculum – Wild Robot outreach program

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min 24 – 257(1): Council Adopt the LEEP Action Plan 2025 – 2026.

Background and discussion

STEAM

The Adaptive Skills Hub launched 19 February 2025 and received significant media coverage. The room was constructed and prepared during January 2025, with high tech equipment to suit the STEAM curriculum developed for primary and secondary education delivery across the LGA.

To date regular STEAM primary school outreach is occurring for teachers to increase their capacity and confidence to teach STEAM content, and every Tuesday the LEEP delivers STEAM curriculum to Portland primary students in their class. This will expand to over 300 stage 3 students across ten (of eleven) primary schools in the LGA over the next few months. See attached secondary and primary curriculum content.

Regular STEAM high school classes are being held every Wednesday in the delivery of a 100-hour iSTEM Drone tech program, with all three secondary schools participating with a total of 35 students enrolled. Importantly, approximately 10% of the students are First Nations students and 13 (37%) young women.

Micro-credential short-courses will soon be offered for existing workers and the broader community, with an intended 50 individual course completions by June 2025 that are aimed to help participants adjust to the contemporary demands on workers, such as digital skills in construction, cloud computing, automation and robotics in construction, carbon accounting and green supply chain management.

A grant application for future growth to create the Central West STEAM Academy (Lithgow and Mid-Western LGAs) has been submitted to the NSW Government and is awaiting determination.

Workforce plans

Committee Members will recall that the grant also includes the completion of four workforce plans:

- Industry Skills and Training Audit
- Workforce Adaptive Capacity/Pathways Plan
- Long-Term Regional Workforce Plan
- Rapid Response Plan

These are being completed by the University of South Australia under the leadership of Professor Andrew Beer. Some of Professor Beer's recent publications include:

- Weller, S. Beer, A. and Porter, J. 2024 Place-based just transition: domains, components and costs. *Contemporary Social Science*.
- Beer, A. Weller, S. Dinmore, H. Ratcliffe, J. Onur, I. Bailey, D. Barnes, T. Irving, J. Horne, S. Atienza, J. and Sotarauta, M. 2024 Just transitions in the Australian automotive sector? *Contemporary Social Science*.
- Vij, A. Ardeshiri, A. Crommelin, L. Denham, T. Washington, L. and Beer, A. 2024 COVID-19, shifting urban growth dynamics and preferences for regional living in Australia, *Urban Policy and Research*.
- Dinmore, H. Beer, A. Irving, J. and Sotarauta, M. 2023 Agency and the structural determinants of regional growth: Towards a Retheorisation, *Regional Studies*.
- Beer, A. Sotarauta, M. and Bailey, D. 2023 Leading change in communities experiencing economic transition: place leadership, expectations, and industry closure, *Journal of Change Management*, 23:1, 32-52.
- Tierney, J. Weller, S. Barnes, T. and Beer, A. 2023 Left-behind neighbourhoods in old industrial regions, *Regional Studies*.
- Dinmore, H. and Beer, A. 2022 Career degradation in Australian cities: globalization, precarity and adversity, *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 9:1, 371-385.

Finalisation of the reports is on track for completion in June.

Financial

The LEEP Budget and Adaptive Skills Hub Budget as at the Quarter 3 Budget Review is set out below.

- Total budget (24/25) \$1,805,282.32 (total combined program budget)
- Expenditure (24/25) \$819,581.83 (total combined program expenditure)

LEEP Engagement Activities Report March 2025

Strategic Context for this matter:

Strengthening Our Economy To provide for sustainable and planned growth through the diversification of the economic base, the development of diverse job opportunities and the provision of a broad range of formal and non-formal educational services.

Author:

Manager, Emerging Economy

Responsible Officer:

Director, Infrastructure & Economy

Executive Summary

Following the endorsement of the Engagement Plan at the 18 January Council Ordinary Meeting, Council's LEEP team has commenced rolling out the Engagement Plan. Initial work has focused on the opening of the Central West Adaptive Skills Hub, and the stakeholder interviews for the Workforce planning and education pathways reports. Next steps for engagement to support the region's impending transition will be the launch of the micro-credentialling short courses, the roll-out of the speaker program, and planning and preparation for the Community Workshop, and Coal Communities in Transition Conference (working title).

Administration's Recommendation

THAT the Emerging Economy Committee note the enclosed LEEP engagement activities update.

Commentary

Central Adaptive Skills Hub Opening

The formal launch of the Central West Adaptive Skills Hub and the Lithgow STEAM uplift programs took place on the 19th of February, 2025. The opening event was well attended, with approximately 60 guests (including 35 students from all three local high schools), and speakers including Mayor of Lithgow - Cr Cassandra Coleman, Australian Government Senator Deborah O'Neil, Member for Calare, Andrew Gee MP, and high school principals from Lithgow High School, Portland Central School, La Salle Academy. The event garnered media coverage in print (Village Voice, Lithgow Mercury), radio, (ABC Central West) and TV (Win, Prime). With the Primary and Secondary STEAM uplift programs underway, the next stage of engagement for the Central West Adaptive Skills Hub will be the roll-out of the micro-credentialling short courses for existing workers and the broader community, with an intended 50 individual course completions by June 2025 that are aimed to help participants adjust to the contemporary demands on workers, such as digital skills in construction, cloud computing, automation and robotics in construction, carbon accounting and green supply chain management.

Workforce planning and education pathways stakeholder interviews

Essential to the success of the LEEP program is a detailed understanding of future workplace needs, and the education and training pathways required to staff the workplaces of the future. During the first months of 2025 the LEEP team has worked with leading Australian workforce and transitions

economist Professor Andrew Beer and his expert team to explore workforce planning and education pathways to strengthen the region's adaptive capacity as the nation transitions towards net zero. This has involved an extensive series of approximately 50 interviews or stakeholder interactions (many incorporating site visits) with LEEP stakeholders, in support of the creation of a series of reports which will provide a roadmap for accelerating the region's adaptive capacity with industry-aligned education and training pathways to prepare Lithgow workers for the local jobs of the future. The reports will be released at a 'Coal Communities in Transition Conference' (working title) to be held later this year, potentially in August though the exact date is yet to be confirmed. Planning for this event is in the early stages.

First Nations Network

Over the past few months Expressions of Interest have been sought for the establishment of a First Nations Network. The first meeting will take place in the coming months, with agenda items to include the Aboriginal Cultural Protocol, agreed wording for the Acknowledgement of Country, building an understanding of local Aboriginal considerations and concerns, and exploring the potential for skills mapping for the local Aboriginal community.

Upcoming engagement activities

- ***LEEP Speaker Series***

Preparations are currently underway for the commencement of the LEEP Speaker Program, initially proposed as a series of breakfast events but now potentially to be repurposed to a bi-monthly Friday afternoon event, to allow more time for speakers and post-event networking. The purpose of this event series is to highlight local innovation and excellence and leadership in the transitions management space, to cross-promote micro credentialling courses, and to build stakeholder relationships.

- ***LEEP Staff Lunch***

On March 4, staff were invited to attend a staff lunch where the LEEP team detailed the activities to date and projects underway, including a rundown of the extensive series of grant applications and an explanation of the importance of this work in enabling Lithgow's growth, and preparation for the future. Staff were invited to participate in the micro-credentialling courses currently being designed.

- ***LEEP Communications channels***

Since the endorsement of the LEEP Engagement Plan on January 28, we have started to activate our communications channels, including the social media – Facebook, LinkedIn, and updating our website to keep pace with LEEP's activities. Over the next few months we will start to activate these channels and build a following in order to promote LEEP messaging.

Attachments

1. Central West Adaptive Skills Hub Media [6.4.1 - 1 page]
Central West Adaptive Skills Hub Opening - media summary

6.5. Policy Framing - Bells Line - Great Western Hwy - Marangaroo Interchange

Strategic Context for this matter:

Strengthening Our Economy To provide for sustainable and planned growth through the diversification of the economic base, the development of diverse job opportunities and the provision of a broad range of formal and non-formal educational services.

Author: Manager, Emerging Economy
Responsible Officer: Director, Infrastructure & Economy

Executive Summary

This document outlines LEEP's proposed policy development for Bells Line, Great Western Highway, and Marangaroo Interchange to support the advocacy initiatives of Council.

Lithgow's economic transition plan identifies priority precincts to diversify and strengthen the local economy:

1. Former Commonwealth Defence Manufacturing site - defence and precision manufacturing hub to progress a defence and advanced manufacturing
2. Former State Railyards – rail fleet conversion, manufacturing and logistics hub leveraging the main Western Rail Line and declared road network,
3. Former State Mine deposits site (Hermitage site) - eco-tourism and adventure tourism and training hub capitalising on the existing recreation cluster
4. South Bowenfels - Lithgow Health and Aged Care hub
5. Lithgow CBD - Retail and Entertainment Precinct centred on Main Street

Upgrading transport infrastructure is essential to all these initiatives. Improved access will connect local businesses and industry to markets and supply chains, enabling the precincts to succeed. Enhanced access to Sydney and the Central West will make Lithgow more attractive for investment in tourism, education, and health services. Transport infrastructure upgrades also align with broader regional and state plans.

The **Great Western Highway** is the principal corridor between the Central West and Sydney, carrying heavy freight (approx. 18,000 tons daily) and growing traffic volumes of up to 20,000 vehicles per day in the Blue Mountains (heavy vehicles comprise 12% to 24% of total traffic). The Commonwealth and NSW governments have committed over \$4.5 billion to duplicate and upgrade the GWH from Katoomba to Lithgow demonstrating government support for enhancing connectivity to the Lithgow region.

However, complementary investment in the **Bells Line of Road** is also strategically important. It is the other of the two mountain crossings and serves as a *supplementary route* for regional access (approx. 3,000 - 8,000 vehicles per day in different segments). Strengthening the Bells Line corridor will improve network resilience and improve a strategic regional link between Lithgow/Central West and north-west Sydney.

The **Marrangaroo Intersection** is of long-standing concern and presents as an infrastructure impediment to unlocking the Marangaroo urban release area. The current partial interchange was built in the 1970s and no longer adequately handles current traffic volumes and heavy vehicles. Its design can cause merging conflicts and does not fully separate high-speed through traffic from entering/exiting traffic.

Resolve access issues along the Great Western Highway to service Lithgow's urban land release is critical to providing future employment and residential land growth needs. It is also important to address safety issues,

Administration's Recommendation

THAT the Emerging Economy Committee:

1. Note the report
2. Recommend to Council that the Administration prepare a draft a policy framing document to support Council's advocacy for improvements to the Bells Line of Road, the Great Western Highway, and Marangaroo Intersection.

Attachments

Nil

Reference to any relevant previous minute

- Min. No.: 25-44 – Ordinary Meeting of Council held 24 February 2025 (NOM - 24/02/2025 - Councillor M Ticehurst - Bells Line of Road)

Background and discussion

The *Lithgow Regional Economic Development Strategy* (REDS) identifies transport connectivity as a key enabler for economic diversification, noting that the region's "*proximity to major centres*" and "*access to major transport routes*" supports growth in emerging industries. Importantly, each dollar invested in connectivity has strong regional multiplier effects: facilitating emerging economy investment that might use former mining or industrial land, supporting adventure tourism ventures in the western Blue Mountains, and allowing health and education services to reach a larger population catchment.

Current Infrastructure Limitations

1. Great Western Highway (GWH)

- a. The remaining two-lane sections on the 34 km segment from Lithgow to Katoomba is a steep/winding alignment with limited passing opportunities. Slow-moving heavy trucks or tourist traffic can rapidly congest the single lanes and cause travel delays.
- b. The economic rationale is strong despite a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) below 1.0 (0.575 - high construction costs in difficult terrain, improving to 0.686 - with wider economic benefits) for the full upgrade. When wider economic benefits are accounted for the investment enables long-term productivity gains by integrating the Central West with Sydney, addressing a nationally significant constraint. Without the planned upgrades, traffic modelling indicates that within 15 years the highway's performance would degrade to "unacceptable levels" of congestion and intersection delays.
- c. Without the completion of the 'Central Section' tunnel, 37% of projected benefits may not eventuate.
- d. The GWH's vulnerability is highlighted by past accidents, bushfires or landslides which have at times closed the road, cutting Lithgow's primary link to Sydney.
- e. Great Western Highway (89 km) Travel Time:
 - 100 min (trucks) / 85 min (cars) westbound
 - 85 min eastbound (cars)

- 5 min travel time saving with upgrades, 12 minutes with tunnel.

2. Bells Line of Road (BLOR)

- a. The alternative route across the mountains and a shorter (and sometimes faster) route from Lithgow to Sydney, BLOR faces significant limitations. Much of it is a two-lane rural road with narrow width, sharp bends and steep grades that slow travel and pose safety risks. At least 35% of the 81 km between Richmond and Lithgow is under 100 km/h due to curvature. Fully loaded trucks regularly slow to <50 km/h on long climbs, and tight curves prohibit Bdouble access. Consequently, the BLOR cannot serve as a freight route in its present condition.
- b. BLOR also sees significant tourist traffic (weekend volumes are approx. 60% higher than weekdays), which, combined with sharp bends, contributes to a high accident rate - higher than the state average and higher than the GWH's rate.
- c. The economic rationale for highway conversion is not strong with a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) well below 1.0 (0.3 to 0.4 - project costs significantly outweigh benefits). Major highway upgrades would incur high costs with limited economic return, primarily because BLOR cannot match the GWH's freight capacity and primary corridor function.
- d. Bells Line of Road (81 km from Lithgow to M7) Travel Time:
 - 90 min (trucks) / 65 min (cars) westbound
 - 85 min (trucks) / 70 min (cars) eastbound
 - No anticipated travel time saving if upgraded.

3. Marrangaroo Intersection (MI)

- a. Is of long-standing concern and presents as an infrastructure impediment to unlocking the Marangaroo urban release area. The current partial interchange was built in the 1970s and no longer adequately handles current traffic volumes and heavy vehicles. Its design can cause merging conflicts and does not fully separate high-speed through traffic from entering/exiting traffic.
- b. Existing intersections are measured to provide a Level of Service E, one step away from an F (failure). These intersections also lack compliance with modern Austroads design standards, notably for sight distance (Girraween Drive) and queuing capacity (Oakey Forest Road).

Expected Economic and Connectivity Benefits

Upgrading these transport links would yield significant benefits for connectivity, safety, and the regional economy.

1. Great Western Highway (GWH) Four Lane Duplication

- a. Extending four lanes from Katoomba to Lithgow (including the proposed 11 km tunnel bypassing Blackheath) will improve reliability and travel - approx. 12 minutes per trip between Lithgow and Katoomba for both light and heavy vehicles, and those savings are expected to be maintained through 2036 despite traffic growth.
- b. Importantly, the upgrade will reduce congestion during peak periods - one of the current project's core objectives is to *"improve connectivity for residents and reduce peak period congestion"* between the Central West and Greater Sydney.

2. Bells Line of Road (BLOR) Targeted Upgrades

- a. Although large-scale duplication isn't economically justified, a focus on safety and capacity at critical sections (adding additional overtaking lanes, realigning certain dangerous curves, and improving intersections) would make the BLOR safer and more reliable as a secondary route, while preserving its role as a scenic tourist drive.
- b. Staged upgrading of the BLOR also strengthens regional transport network resilience - if the GWH is closed due to incidents or maintenance, BLOR can serve as a viable alternative, ensuring continuity of transport and essential services.

3. Marrangaroo Intersection (MI) Upgrade

- a. Modernising design or a full grade separation would reduce merging conflicts, deliver safer high-speed transitions, and protect freight flows to/from Lithgow's emerging industrial zones.
- b. This upgrade is also critical for supporting access to Lithgow's future employment land precincts and the broader Central West, helping to attract and retain new businesses in advanced manufacturing, logistics, and other transition related sectors.

Better transport connectivity will result in growth opportunities for Lithgow and the broader region. With a fully upgraded highway, freight from Western NSW can reach Sydney faster and more predictably, lowering logistics costs and encouraging businesses to base operations in Lithgow's prioritised precincts. The tourism sector will also benefit: a safer, quicker trip from Sydney encourages more weekend visitors to Lithgow's attractions (heritage sites, adventure tourism in Wollemi/Gardens of Stone, etc.), and supporting the Adventure Tourism and Training Precinct initiative. Similarly, health/aged care services will draw students, staff and patients if travel from major centres is more convenient.

Stakeholder feedback strongly backs these improvements. Local businesses and the Lithgow community have long advocated for better roads as enablers of economic resilience. Surrounding regions (Central West councils and industry groups) also support upgrades as this improves their connectivity to Sydney. State agencies and Infrastructure Australia have identified the GWH upgrade as nationally significant, noting that it addresses a key constraint on regional development. Community leaders recognise that the BLOR must be improved to serve north-west Sydney travel and to share the load of increasing traffic across the mountains. Overall, there is broad consensus that investing in these transport links is foundational for Lithgow's successful economic transition.

Policy

This report recommends the development of a Policy Framing document to support Council's advocacy on the Bells line of Road, the Great Western Highway and Marrangaroo Intersection. Such a policy framework would include:

1. Completion of the full Great Western Highway (GWH) Upgrade Program

- a. Advocate strongly for delivery of the full Katoomba to Lithgow duplication in upcoming NSW and Federal budgets, including the currently unfunded Central Section (tunnel) as *"this section will be critical to the delivery of benefits for the whole upgrade program"*.
- b. Council could make the case that the tunnel's completion is necessary to achieve the project's congestion and safety goals, aligning state and federal interests with Lithgow's needs.

- c. Additionally, Council could lobby for enhancements at the Lithgow end of the highway (such as improved connections into Lithgow and industrial areas) to ensure local access is improved once the highway is duplicated.
- d. At the same time, Council could adopt a role in ensuring that the committed \$4.5 billion state/federal investment (\$2.03B Federal and \$2.5 B NSW) for the East and West sections of the project is delivered on schedule by 2027. Council would work with the NSW Government and Transport for NSW to monitor progress and keep the community informed of the upgrade's benefits.

2. Advocate for a 'Bells Line of Road (BLOR) Improvement Plan'

- a. In partnership with councils along the length of the road and regional representatives, Council would advocate for a long-term upgrade strategy for the BLOR corridor. This would involve Transport for NSW conducting a new corridor study to identify priority works that would improve safety and capacity on the BLOR. This would also include staged delivery of additional passing lanes, shoulder widening, and curve realignments at high-risk segments.
- b. Council could emphasise that staged and targeted improvements to the BLOR are needed so that it could function as a safe supplementary route to the GWS, particularly with Western Sydney's growth increasing traffic on this road.
- c. Council could also highlight the BLOR's tourism value. As a full expressway-standard upgrade of BLOR was previously found economically unfeasible, Council's advocacy would frame BLOR improvements as incremental, cost-effective investments that deliver increasing benefits over time while preserving a future corridor for large-scale upgrades.

3. Upgrade the Marrangaroo Intersection and Supporting Links

- a. Council could advocate for a review of the 'Controlled Access Road' declarations over the GWH northwest of Lithgow to reduce the design requirements of the interchange.
- b. Alternatively, Council could advocate for the construction of a full grade separated interchange.
- c. Finding a solution to the interchange which doesn't impinge upon the economics of the Marrangaroo urban release area is critical to the medium-term growth and development of Lithgow together with existing capacity restraints.

4. Align with State and Federal Policy Frameworks

- a. Council would frame the above requests in language that aligns with NSW and Federal government priorities. For example, Council could position the GWH upgrades as supporting the *NSW Regional Economic Transition* strategy and the Australian Government's commitments to infrastructure in regional areas.
- b. Council's advocacy would reference the Infrastructure Australia assessment that the GWH upgrade addresses a "*national connectivity*" objective and emphasise Lithgow's role in the broader Central West economy.
- c. In addition, Council would link these projects to the NSW Government's goal of net zero (by supporting renewable energy projects) and to Federal initiatives like the *National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy*.

- d. Council would also seek inclusion of the BLOR and Lithgow connectivity improvements in programs such as the *Regional Roads Fund* or advocate for a dedicated funding package as part of any future '*Central West City Deal*' or similar.
- e. Engaging the *National Growth Areas Alliance* (NGAA) or similar bodies could also be of value given that improved inter-regional links align with their advocacy to rebalance infrastructure investment towards growing regions.

5. Coalition-Building and Community Engagement

- a. As a supporting action for advocacy, Council would build a group of supporters for these projects (e.g. a '*Central West Coalition for Connectivity and Growth*').
- b. This could include local businesses to showcase to the economic impact of better transport, as well as neighbouring councils (Mid-Western Regional, Blue Mountains, Bathurst) who will also benefit from improved connectivity.
- c. Along with this, proactive community engagement within Lithgow about the progress of advocacy and the expected benefits (reduced travel times, new jobs, safer roads) will demonstrate Council's leadership.

Risk Management

- Council would emphasise the risk of inaction - that if these upgrades do not proceed or are significantly delayed - Lithgow's economic transition efforts will be impaired. Council would highlight that the greater risk lies in **failing to invest**, framing the upgrades as necessary for the region's future transition and prosperity.
- The BLOR 'highway' upgrade was not justified in any previously modelled scenario. Past studies noted that a full expressway-standard upgrade of BLOR would be multi-billion dollar and not justified until traffic demand grows significantly. A targeted and staged advocacy position reduces the risk of dismissal of a highway upgrade proposal with no other commitment being made.

Financial

- The GWH upgrade is the more feasible and beneficial investment for improving connectivity to Lithgow. The GWH upgrade provides the most direct benefits for Lithgow - improving traffic flow, safety, and freight movement, but the 11-km tunnel between Blackheath and Little Hartley is essential for delivering the full benefits of the upgrade. Council would prioritise lobbying for the GWH upgrade and 'Central Section' tunnel to ensure maximum benefits for Lithgow and regional NSW.

6.6. Ordinary Council Meeting 24 February 2025 - Correction

Author: Senior Manager, Economics and Strategy
Responsible Officer: Director, Infrastructure & economy

Executive Summary

The purpose of this Report is to clarify statements made by Councillors at the Council Meeting of 24 February 2025 concerning the then proposed part occupation of 160 – 178 Mort Street Lithgow for the purpose of the Adaptive Skills Hub.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT the Emerging Economy Committee note the Report.

Attachments

Nil.

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Not otherwise than contained in the Report.

Background and discussion

24 February 2025 Ordinary Council Meeting

At its Ordinary Council Meeting of 24 February 2025, Cr Ticehurst noted:

At a recent meeting where we had the LEEP Program and organisations had already been – tradies had already been engaged for the LEEP Program next door; and we were debating the issue and then found out halfway through it that um hang on, they're moving in next door. Now I had to then change my recommendation and withdraw on the basis we had already signed up the tradies. I wasn't going not have the tradies not have the job that they had already been planned for where they were walking in on the Tuesday morning ...

Council's Director Infrastructure and Economy – having been invited to reply by the Mayor, noted:

Just one point of clarity I wouldn't mind asking for, at no stage did we appoint the contractors without a Council resolution. They were coming over to inspect the facility and provide us with a quote. So, I just thought that was relevant information to add.

Cr Ticehurst went on to state:

I stand, I stand on my words because that is exactly why I changed the motion. Not on what you just said but on the basis they were moving in the next morning. That was what I heard and I'm sure every other Councillor heard. That's the reason I changed it.

Ordinary Council Meeting of 25 November 2024

The Report accompanying the Administration's recommendation to endorse the part use of 160 – 178 Mort Street Lithgow, advised that in order:

to facilitate the Adaptive Skills Hub Commonwealth funding, a multi-purpose teaching space is required for use by the Catholic Schools Office for its schools and Portland Central School. Council staff officers have approached WSU, Notre Dame University, and NSW TAFE to explore options for the co-use of facilities, however, none of the sites have suitable facilities.

It was also noted that the technical working group for the Stage 5 (years 9/10) component of STEAM teaching did not believe that the WSU site (or others) would be suitable and that:

building fit out works need to commence immediately as the facility needs to be operational by mid-February 2025.

It was noted that while there was very likely to be other suitable sites in Lithgow, it was unlikely another site could be found and fitted out in the acquittal timeframe.

Councillors will recall that the award of the Commonwealth funding occurred five months after it was anticipated and that six months was excised from the requested program timeframe. For those reasons, the Administration was under some considerable time pressure to ensure that the Adaptive Skills Hub space was ready for the commencement of teaching at the commencement of the 2025 school term.

During debate with respect to the Report, the Director Infrastructure and Economy noted:

thank you, Mayor Coleman. Just to be perfectly clear, we do have a grant acquittal which is coming up in February or March where we have to be in there and providing this for all students at the start of next calendar year so as [the General Manager] mentioned it does need a decision as soon as possible”

And

we have meetings with carpenters to start potentially depending on the resolution of Council tomorrow. Because the meeting, the room, the whole room needs to be split up and these works take many many weeks particularly over the Christmas break where trades stop working and as I said we've got to acquit the next stage of this grant in February or March. So, I don't like pressuring the Council and that's not what I'm trying to do but we really do need a decision sooner rather than later.

Summary

There were, accordingly, several inaccuracies in the Councillor debate that occurred on the 24 February 2025, these included statements that:

- “tradies [had] already been engaged”
- “[LEEP] were moving in next door”, and
- “[Council had] already signed up the tradies”.

It is important that the record be corrected.

Policy

Council has an obligation to ensure that Councillors are furnished with accurate information at all times.

Risk Management

Nil.

Financial

Nil.

6.7. Proposed Cadetship, Apprenticeship, Traineeship Program

Author: Senior Manager, Economy and Strategy
Responsible Officer: Director, Infrastructure and Economy

Executive Summary

This Report provides advice with respect to several interconnected strategic initiatives, contemplated by Council (the Governing Body and Administration), which are the subject of several administrative recommendations and Resolutions of the Governing Body. It recommends a whole-of-Council policy approach to building capacity in the Council Organisation. The Administration welcomes the Leadership and direction of the Governing Body in that regard.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT the Emerging Economy Committee:

1. Recommend to Council, for endorsement and exhibition (for a period of 28 days), a Proposed Cadetship, Traineeship, and Apprenticeship Program (the **Program**).
2. Recommend to Council the submission of an Application under the NSW Government 'A Fresh Start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets Grants Program', for funding in respect of the key workforce positions set out in the Report.
3. For the purpose of 2 hereof, recommend to Council that 25% of the costs of each grant funded placement (being a contribution towards employment overheads, market allowance where required, training, mentoring and supervision), be funded from the adopted LEEP Budget for 2024 – 2025 and the endorsed LEEP Budget for 2025-2026,
4. That insofar as the LEEP Budget is only endorsed (and not adopted) for 2025-2026, recommend to Council that it incorporate such provisional expenditure in the draft Council Budget for 2025-2026.
5. Recommend to Council its endorsement of the proposed LEEP Micro-credentialling Program for 2024 – 2025.
6. Recommend to Council that a draft 2025 – 2026 Program be furnished to the Governing Body of Council following a review of the 2024-2025 Program.

Attachments

NIL

Reference to any relevant previous minute

MIN 24 – 254 [Sponsored On-the-Motion of Cr. M. Ticehurst, **RESOLVED**] THAT Council note the Management Comments on the State Government Grants for NSW Councils for Apprentices and Trainees included in the Business Paper.

MIN 24 –257 (3*) [Moved, the Deputy Mayor of Lithgow, Cr. S. Ring and seconded Cr. M. Statham, **RESOLVED**] THAT In relation to the proposed Cadetship, Internship & Graduate Program and the proposed Capacity Building and Transitions Management Training Program, a report be received by the Emerging Economy Committee detailing these programs prior to any expenditures being incurred in relation to them.

MIN 24 – 257(1, 4* & 5*) concerning the adoption of the LEEP Action Plan and Budgets.

*It's noted that prayer two of the Resolution that appears in the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 25 November 2024 was never moved upon, seconded nor was it carried. It therefore appears in the Minutes in error.

Background and discussion

The local government sector is impacted by a trend for outsourcing, which has caused a severe depletion of in-house and local capacity. The expected retirement of experienced professionals over the next five years in the sector is projected to have significant ramifications for local councils, particularly regional councils in New South Wales. Council has historically benefited from the training of locals for local government positions and has historically been a leader in the local government sector in terms of building capacity in the sector more generally. The LEEP Team assesses that several benefits arise:

- choosing the 'best and brightest' early in a very competitive market for professional and trade qualified local government positions, will ultimately build capacity, culture and passion for the challenges the community faces, and which challenges Council is called upon to meet,
- 'developing local talent' will contribute to job creation, attraction and retention in a challenging labour market,
- the advertising and recruitment process will contribute to Council being regarded as a 'employer of choice', and
- employing staff officers directly where the work schedule is sufficiently general and recurrent, may present with significant cost savings to the Council organisation.

There are risks in undertaking such a Program – noting, particularly, the inter-regional mobility of professionals and tradespersons within the Central West. That risk is heightened if not all local government authorities embrace the NSW Government scheme commensurately. Moreover, mentoring, training, supervision and other overheads are not without cost. Nonetheless, the Administration is of the view that the broad incentive to local government to adopt the scheme combined with Lithgow's relatively confined labour market, mean that Lithgow will disproportionately benefit from embracing the scheme. Further, the Council has several exciting initiatives in development/progress that will entice professionals into the organisation, including:

1. review of the Greenspot Planning Proposal,
2. construction of the Wolgan Road and Browns Gap Road,
3. recovery of Lithgow's transport asset network post-disaster,
4. redevelopment of Lithgow's Main Street precinct, and
5. continuation of Lithgow's economic transformation.

These are exciting opportunities that are critical in shaping Lithgow's future but also represent valuable opportunities for professionals and tradespeople to develop their skills in relevant fields.

The Administration recommends that priority be given to 'attract and retain' positions and, more particularly, those positions set out in the following table:

Position	Category	Work Program	Directorate Supervision
Cadet Planner	Cadet	Strategic and development assessment planning, as required. Major projects.	People and Places
Cadet. Engineer	Cadet	Works and Asset Management.	Infrastructure and Economy
Cadet Project Manag.	Cadet	Wolgan Road and LEEP	Infrastructure and Economy
Cadet. Accountant	Cadet	Finance as required. Business Unit Reviews	Finance

Cadet Placemaking and Architecture	Cadet	Precinct planning, place-making design and Main Street design.	Infrastructure and Economy
Plumber	Apprentice	Water and Wastewater	Water, Wastewater and Waste
Electrician	Apprentice	Building renewal and maintenance	Infrastructure and Economy

This draft proposal was discussed with managers across the whole of Council as part of a group session, inclusive of HR, on 4 March 2025.

LEEP Micro-credentialling

As part of its commitment to the Commonwealth Government Adaptive Skills Hub, Council is required to undertake a component of capacity building in specified areas across the community. The contribution to the funding of the capacity building involves a mix of Commonwealth Government, Council and third-party contributions. The Administration in consultation with the Commonwealth and third-party providers, recommends the following micro-credentials in satisfaction of the acquittal – noting the primary aim of the funding is to advance the community's readiness to net-zero:

No.	Micro-credential	Delivering Institution
1	Setting Your Path to Net Zero	Western Sydney University
2	Audit your Environmental Management System	Western Sydney University
3	Life Cycle Assessment	Western Sydney University
4	Green Supply Chain Management	Western Sydney University
5	Introduction to Women in Construction	NSW TAFE
6	The Role of Building Information Modelling (BIM) in Construction	NSW TAFE
7	Introduction to Digital Skills in Construction	NSW TAFE
8	Introduction to Contract Administration in Construction	NSW TAFE
9	Introduction to Sustainability in Construction	NSW TAFE
10	Automation and Robotics in Construction	NSW TAFE
11	Construction Cloud	NSW TAFE
12	Economic Transitions Management	University of South Australia
13	Carbon Accounting	University of South Australia

The Micro-credential courses would be delivered without fee.

Policy

Not otherwise than as set out in this Report. ^(OBJ)

Risk Management

Not otherwise than as set out in this Report.

Financial

\$101,000 (over the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years) has been committed to a Cadetship, Apprenticeship and Traineeship Program as part of the adoption of the LEEP Budget. It is anticipated this will leverage approximately \$400,000 of NSW Government funding over the two financial years. If the grant application is successful, the cadets, apprentices and trainees commence on the 1 July. Accordingly, a carry-over of the 2024/25 funds may be required.

\$40,000 has been set aside in the LEEP Budget for Capacity building and transitions management training in the 2024/2025 financial year. Additionally, \$25,000 is anticipated to be co-contributed by providers with the University of South Australia committing approximately \$15,000 to the delivery of its micro-credentials.

7. General Business

8. Meeting Close
