



Emerging Economy Committee

to be held at

Council Administration Centre

176 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Tuesday 10 June 2025

at 5:00 PM

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The Chair declared the meeting open at 5:04pm

## 1. Acknowledgement of Country

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### Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Wiradjuri First Nation and their Elders past and present, who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work, learn and live. We are honoured to recognise our connection to the Wiradjuri lands, and its history, culture, and spirituality and we strive to ensure that we operate in a manner that respects their Elders and ancestors. We also acknowledge the other First Nations lands across Australia in our collaborations and networking.

We recognise the task First Nation Peoples have in the protection and healing of Country throughout the economic transition process and strive to ensure greater First Nation economic inclusion and empowerment as part of Lithgow's emerging economy.

## 2. Present

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Councillor S Ring	Deputy Mayor (Chair)
Councillor T Evangelidis	
Councillor E Fredericks	
Councillor D Goodwin	
Councillor E Mahony	

Also in attendance

Ross Gurney	General Manager
Jonathon Edgecombe	Director Infrastructure and Economy
Shaun Elwood	Director People & Places
Bruce Mills	Emerging Economy Manager
Penny Way	Minutes

## 3. Apologies

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An apology was received for Councillor C Coleman (Mayor)

## 4. Declaration of Interest

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The Chair called for any declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interest made.

## 5. Confirmation of Minutes

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The Minutes of the Emerging Economy Committee Meeting held on 16th April were presented to the Council on 28th April 2025.

### ACTION

THAT The Minutes of the Emerging Economy Committee Meeting held on 16th April be taken as confirmed.

**MOVED:** Cr T Evangelidis

**SECONDED:** Cr E Fredericks

**CARRIED**

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## 6. Presentations

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Nil

## 7. Administration Reports

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### 7.1. Hub Discussion Paper - Cr Ring

The Chair led a discussion pertaining to options for the use of the Charles Hoskins Memorial Building following the decision of Western Sydney University to vacate the building.

It was noted that the building has undergone substantial renovations that Council would not have been able to achieve independently. It is now a high-quality, multi-use facility capable of accommodating a wide range of community groups and user types.

The current users of the space; e.g. community groups, government agencies, and other clients are being considered in decision making and supported to find alternative spaces to utilise once the closure comes into effect.

Both the Hoskins Memorial Building and the 176 Mort Street building have potential to attract tenders, however at this stage there has been limited interest in the sites. Consequently, it was suggested that the buildings be utilised to accommodate Council officers while renovations to the Main Council administration buildings be undertaken. The current Main Administration building is impacting on the morale of the current staff and negatively impacting recruitment of new staff. Additionally, it was suggested that the lecture space could easily take on the role of the Chambers for meetings. In response the committee was informed that there is currently a plan being developed by Executive Manager - Water, Wastewater & Waste for the improvements of the Main Buildings and consultation would need to take place to determine the use of the building in that plan.

The decisions for the building won't happen without careful consideration and all options being weighed up. This discussion would include the potential upkeep and maintenance requirements, the restrictions placed by different types of users, the potential revenue and impact for the Council/community.

Ultimately a hybrid approach seems to be the most beneficial option at this time with a collaborative approach to decision making.

### **ACTION**

THAT

1. the Committee note this report and;
2. that this report be added as a standard item on the agenda for continued discussion on options for the Charles Hoskins Memorial Building and a pathway forward.

**MOVED:** Cr E Fredericks

**SECONDED:** Cr T Evangelidis

**CARRIED**

## 7.2. Committee Functions

The current functions of Lithgow Jobs and Investment Committee (LJIC) and the Emerging Economy Committee were discussed.

Regarding LJIC it was noted that a frequency of meetings be determined and adjusted to 4 monthly (three per year). Additionally, the nomination of members and their roles were discussed and it was suggested that the wording of the functions need to allow the provisions of advice from companies in the Local Government Area.

Regarding Emerging Economy Committee, the chair read from the amended terms of reference and functions. It was noted that some of the suggested items overlap with other committees. For continuity it was suggested to include the items that were previously in the term of reference so it aligns with the LJIC committee as it was the original intent and to allow the committee to be broader with some of the issues that this committee will likely need to discuss, while also being able to incorporate ideas from the staff.

It was acknowledged that further deliberation is needed. Therefore, the Emerging Economy Committee Terms of Reference and Functions will be reviewed by officers who are to come up with an amalgamated set of terms of reference and functions for consideration by the Committee.

### ACTION/RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the Lithgow Jobs and Investment Committee terms of reference be adopted;
2. THAT the Emerging Economy Committee terms of reference be deferred till the next Emerging Economy Committee meeting to allow time for further discussion;

**MOVED:** Cr D Goodwin

**SECONDED:** Cr E Mahony

**CARRIED**

## 57.3. LEEP Action Plan Update

The Emerging Economy Manager presented a spreadsheet outlining the list of actions adapted from the original Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan. It was recommended that future updates and reports be formatted in the same spreadsheet style as the original LEEP strategy, with the addition of a "Priorities" column. This adjustment will help link all reports and action items, supporting the Committee's understanding of processes and priority areas.

Further discussion focussed on how to better demonstrate the connection between the parent strategy document and ongoing actions. It was suggested that the plan should evolve into a live, easy-to-understand document that clearly shows progress and alignment with strategic goals.

Key points discussed:

- The unique potential and advantages of the Lithgow location were acknowledged.
- There was a detailed discussion on the mismatch between housing needs and current development types. The Director People and Places is to prepare a land report

outlining the key development challenges.

- Council officers have been actively engaging with businesses—lobbying them and initiating conversations to attract investment to the area.
- Considerable discussion focused on the current and future workforce needs, including strategies to support workforce transitions and attract a diverse and adaptable workforce.

Lastly, it was advised that any questions regarding the action plan should be directed to the Director Infrastructure & Economy.

## **ACTION**

THAT the Emerging Economy Committee note the Report.

**MOVED:** Cr D Goodwin

**SECONDED:** Cr E Mahony

CARRIED

### **7.4. Adaptive Skills Hub Update**

It was noted that the initiative discussed is primarily funded through federal government grants. While separate from other funding streams, it is still aligned with broader council objectives.

A robotics outreach program has been implemented in all three local high schools and 10 local primary schools. The program is highly successful, exceeding expectations, and is being supported by dedicated teaching staff (e.g., Ingrid Moores, Emma Francis from Portland Central). One day per week of staff time has been allocated to support the robotics project. Social media showcases examples of the program's success.

Four key reports are being prepared by Professor Beer and the team from the University of South Australia. These reports are expected by the end of the month and will define the scope and evidence base for Council lobbying. The Council intends to use these reports to define needs, support lobbying efforts, and align requests with real economic and social needs.

## **ACTION**

1. THAT the Emerging Economy Committee note the Report

**MOVED:** Cr D Goodwin

**SECONDED:** Cr E Mahony

CARRIED

### **7.5. LEEP Engagement Activities Report March 2025**

Concerns Regarding First Nations Network Formation were raised about the establishment of a First Nations Network that proceeded without formal Council endorsement. There is concern that the group could overlap or duplicate existing efforts from Council officers.

The committee emphasised the importance of defining who leads and participates in the network, the purpose and scope of the group, how it will interact with Council and the broader community, including First Nation residents with diverse backgrounds and affiliations.

It was agreed that all First Nations engagement activities, especially those linked to LEEP or funded through grants, must work with the Council's Community team so we don't double up or

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cause confusion.

It was reiterated that engagement with First Nations communities is a mandatory component of the grant processes, while acknowledging the need to balance formal compliance with genuine engagement and partnership.

A report outlining the structure and purpose of any proposed First Nations network, Governance and leadership model and Community consultation process is to be developed and reported back to next meeting about the parameters of how it will work and the interactions between groups and Council.

The LEEP team is to confirm whether contact has been made with the Indigenous Business Channel and follow up as necessary.

## **ACTION**

1. THAT the engagement of First Nations communities be undertaken in collaboration across Council staff to ensure coordination and alignment;
2. THAT the Emerging Economy Committee note the enclosed LEEP engagement activities update.

**MOVED:** Cr D Goodwin

**SECONDED:** Cr E Mahony

## **CARRIED**

### **7.6. Policy Framing - Bells Line - Great Western Hwy - Marangaroo Interchange**

The Emerging Economy Manager facilitated a discussion regarding creating a clear, Council-endorsed advocacy position for improved accessibility to Lithgow with key focus on the Great Western Highway. Additionally, Bells Line of Road and Marrangaroo intersections were also highlighted, though concerns were raised about the removal of the special zone to enable re-development. The Committee were informed that Council are not able to make changes that would negatively impact the efficiency of the Great Western Highway.

It was noted that without a unified position, Council risks diluting the impact of lobbying efforts and subsequently miss funding opportunities. Councillors expressed the need for data-driven decision-making and further detail on the risks, benefits, and funding potential of various road projects before committing.

Some potential for grants was discussed, though most federal/state grants cannot be used on private land. Council is seeking to create the possibility of land development, by removing the Controlled Access designation and provide the opportunity for land holders to come to their own conclusions regarding the future use of their lands. However without removing the special zone, they don't even have the opportunity.

Council officers were asked to bring additional information to the next meeting regarding: Highway planning and economic benefit alignment, specifics on Marrangaroo intersection upgrades, positioning Bells Line of Road as a viable scenic and emergency route to Sydney.

The committee agreed not to make a decision yet and to defer finalising the decision until the next meeting, after more detailed analysis is provided.

Council officers to provide a detailed report on to Infrastructure Committee Meeting detailing the Marangaroo traffic study.

## **ACTION**

THAT the Emerging Economy Committee defer this item to next meeting so additional information regarding other key roads can be presented.

**MOVED:** Cr E Fredericks

**SECONDED:** Cr T Evangelidis

CARRIED

### **7.7. Outstanding Grant Applications**

Deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints.

### **7.8. Former Commonwealth Defence Manufacturing Site Update**

Deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints.

## **8. General Business**

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A Councillor raised an item for discussion in general business.

Concerns were raised about the restructuring of rail maintenance operations and its impact on heritage tourism and future economic diversification in Lithgow.

Pacific National has been conducting disruptive freight maintenance at the Eskbank rail yards, prompting community complaints. As a result, the EPA and Transport authorities are removing their license, and SSR is taking over the site.

There are concerns that key rail infrastructure is being miss-allocated or lost, particularly contemporary rail operations placed in a heritage tourism precinct. Heritage rail groups like State Mine are disconnected from rail lines or located on non-operational infrastructure. Council had previously declined to purchase connecting rail to support heritage operations. Without proper planning and preservation of infrastructure, Lithgow may lose the foundational assets needed to support heritage rail tourism and related jobs.

It was noted heritage groups have been underfunded and slow to deliver, raising questions about the realistic viability of their plans.

A meeting later this week will include question about why this decision was mad and what the practical elements are. This information will be passed onto Councillors.

## **9. Meeting Close**

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Next Meeting will be Wednesday 9th July 5pm at 176 Mort Street.

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 7:14pm.

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