



MINUTES

Seven Valleys Tourism Committee

held at

Council Administration Centre
176 - Training Room
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Wednesday 20 August 2025

at 4.00PM

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The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 4:00pm.

1. 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.

2. Present

Present: Mayor Cass Coleman, Cllr Tom Evangelides, Cllr Ray Smith, Cllr Eric Mahoney, Johanna Koleda, Cookie (Headjam), Leanne (Headjam) Ann Thompson, Wendy Stephens, Fiona Tucker

Officers: Shaun Elwood (Director People & Places), Deb McGrath (Organisation Performance & Communication Manager), Jonothan Edgecombe (Director Infrastructure & Project Delivery), Cassandra Turner (Executive Assistant People & Places)

3. Apologies

Rachael Kay

Officers: Simon Francis (Tourism Manager)

4. Declaration of Interest

Nil

5. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes were endorsed by the Committee.

ACTION

THAT the Minutes of the meeting of 18 June 2025 be taken as read and confirmed.

MOVED: Mayor Cass Coleman

SECONDED: Cllr Ray Smith

6. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

There was no matters arising from the previous minutes.

7. Staff Reports

7.1. Seven Valleys Tourism Website - stakeholder engagement - Headjam Pty Ltd

Headjam, the company engaged to develop the new Seven Valleys Tourism website presented the first base design structure for the website, and consulted with the Committee on ideas for the development of the website.

Headjam introduced themselves to the Committee and provided background on a previous meeting held with Council regarding the Seven Valleys tourism website.

A presentation was delivered, including responses to pre-submitted questions from the Committee members.

- Emphasised the importance of integrating Lithgow's unique history into the website.
- Key landmarks to highlight include the Blast Furnace and the Lost City.
- Stressed the need to show that Seven Valleys offers more than other regions.

The Committee complimented the website design and direction so far.

- Noted that while the website is progressing well, additional work remains to enhance the overall offering.

The Director People & Places confirmed that marketing activities are intended to be commenced and follow release of the new website, including cross-promotional opportunities.

General comments –

- The website must reflect the range and vibrancy of activities and experiences in the region to attract visitors.
- The 'Sleeping Giant' concept should be considered for inclusion.
- Varying views expressed for dark-themed designs and light backgrounds.
- Recommended that the Seven Valleys logo be repositioned for better impact.
- The photos included in the website currently are just mock ups. Photographers have been approached in relation to the work for the website. Clr Evangelides did express his dissatisfaction and concerns in relation to not being asked to undertake this aspect of the works.

A non-live version of the website will be presented to the Business Chamber for relevant feedback before going live.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the briefing and design planning engagement with Headjam in the development of the new Seven Valleys Tourism website.

MOVED: Mayor Cass Coleman

SECONDED: Ann Thompson

CARRIED

7.2. Tourism Roads - Jonathon Edgecombe

The Director of Infrastructure & Project Delivery presented the Tourism Roads report and the following was discussed:

- That a road validation exercise is currently underway, including activities such as weight deflection testing s on roads to assess conditions.
- A Roads Inspection Officer and a Project Engineer have been appointed to oversee the Road Networking Works Program.
- Members were advised that if any roads are not listed in the current works program, they should inform the Director Infrastructure following Committee feedback.
- Cllr Evangelides extended thanks to Council for their recognition and response to ongoing road issues in the region.
- Emphasis was placed on the need for ongoing maintenance of safety and advisory signage across the region.
- It was reported that there are currently an extensive listing of action items within the signage strategy specific to the Capertee Valley/Glen Davis areas.
- Implementation of these action items is set to begin.
- The Committee discussed the importance of a Community Portal to provide transparency and enable residents to access information on road prioritisation.
- It was noted that priority roads relating to tourism need to be clearly identified and discussed.
- The Director of Infrastructure & Project Delivery requests classification of roads into High, Medium, and Low priority, specifically from a Tourism perspective.
- Members are encouraged to email the Director Infrastructure & Project Delivery with their priority road suggestions or bring them forward at the next committee meeting for discussion.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee provide feedback on the Council's development of a road network renewal strategy, and development of its related road asset management plans.

MOVED: Mayor Cass Coleman

SECONDED: Johanna Koleda

CARRIED

7.3. Seven Valleys Branding and Marketing Update

Collaboration with Destination Marketing

The team is working closely with Destination Store to enhance the visibility and appeal of the Seven Valleys region.

Billboard Installations

- Two promotional billboards have been installed at Riverlett and Forty Bends showcasing Seven Valleys.
- Feedback has been positive from the public.
- These are first stage placements, campaign branding signage will be addressed in the future.

Tourism Sector Budget

- Discussions with Councillors suggest a positive outlook for the marketing budget, with a proposed two-year budget plan currently under review.
- Budget proposal to be presented at the next meeting.
- Budget approval processes are still to be completed.

Website and Marketing Activity

- Noted that in the past six months there has been a noticeable increase in Blue Mountains businesses promoting visitors to stay in the Blue Mountains while visiting Seven Valleys.
- Seven Valleys needs to actively compete with the Blue Mountains for tourism accommodation share for Seven Valleys experiences.

Strategic Tourism Focus

- Emphasis was placed on the need to stimulate a "Western Economic Boom", with focus on:
 - Improving accommodation offerings
 - Addressing road infrastructure

Industry Engagement – Social Media

- There is no current formal process for local industry participation in Seven Valleys social media channels.
- A need for greater engagement with local industry was identified to help broaden the region's marketing impact.

7V Membership Discussion

- A question was raised: What are the benefits of Seven Valleys membership?
- This requires a broader discussion at a future meeting to determine value, inclusions, and industry engagement strategy.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the committee note the progress of the marketing and branding strategy.

MOVED: Eric Mahony

SECONDED: Wendy Stephens

CARRIED

7.4. Events Program Update - Council Executive Officers

The Director of People and Places gave a quick update on Council's Event program.

Halloween

- Planning for the Halloween event is well underway.
- Tickets for the Halloween concert are now on sale.
- A marketing campaign is currently active to support promotion.

Christmas Concert

Planning has also commenced for the Christmas concert. Promotion will begin prior to Halloween, with a major advertising push following Halloween.

A number of events are scheduled as part of the broader program, including:

- Halloween Concert
- Christmas Concert
- Schnitzel/Culinary Festival
- Ridgy Didge Festival
- Guitar Concert

Mayor Cass Coleman formally congratulated the Events Team on their work and commitment to delivering a strong events program for the community.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the committee note the update given by the Council executive officers on the Events Program.

MOVED: Johanna Koleda

SECONDED: Ray Smith

CARRIED

8. General Business

Wolgan Valley and Emirates Update

- Andrew Chalk reported on a meeting with Emirates, who are expected to reopen early next year, which will provide a significant boost to regional tourism.
- Emphasis was placed on the importance of marketing and campaigning to ensure Emirates aligns with Seven Valleys branding, rather than being associated solely with the Blue Mountains.
- Opportunity to invite Emirates representatives to speak at a future Tourism Committee meeting was suggested.

Visitor Information Centre

- Visitor numbers to the Information Centre were discussed, with figures provided based on door counts and survey data.
- Concerns raised about the long-term viability of the VIC and whether current visitation levels justify its ongoing model.
- Committee to consider how best to diversify services to meet tourism market needs.
- Noted that a Service Review is underway as part of the Integrated Planning and reporting framework for all Councils.

National Parks advised the following upcoming trail openings

8 September:

- Broad Swamp to Bird Rock section will open.
- Bird Swamp Loop Walk (6 km, family-friendly) will be launched.

Lost City Carpark is expected to be opened in early September, including toilet facilities and improved visitor access.

Mountain Bike Park

- A Development Application (DA) for a Mountain Bike Park is being finalised by planning consultants.
- The DA is expected to be lodged in coming months.
- As the proposed site is on a small parcel of Council-owned land, the project may go to the Western Region Planning Panel for assessment.

Committee Structure

- It was noted that some committee members are now representing as community members rather than the Lithgow Business Chamber.
- It is recommended that council approve two new committee members. These members are both representing Secret Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, with one member also representing Six Foot Track Eco Lodge facility. Council is asked to endorse:
 - Trevor Evans, Secret Creek Wildlife Sanctuary
 - Lucie Novakova, Six Foot Track Eco Lodge.

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the items discussed in general business and endorse Trevor Evans and Lucie Novakova as new members of the Seven Valleys Tourism Committee.

MOVED:

SECONDED:

CARRIED

9. Meeting Close

Next Meeting: A date for the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 22nd October. It will be held at Secret Creek.

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 6.25pm