



Wild Food Festival 2026

Ordinary Meeting of Council
to be held at
Council Administration Centre
180 Mort Street, Lithgow
on
Monday 23 March 2026
at 6:30 PM

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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.

Public Attendance

In accordance with the mandatory requirements of the NSW Local Government Code of Meeting Practice, clause 15.20, members of the public attending a meeting of Council

- (a) must remain silent during the meeting unless invited by the chairperson to speak,
- (b) must not bring flags, signs or protest symbols to the meeting, and
- (c) must not disrupt the meeting.

Council Meeting Emergency Procedures

Procedures to be outlined in the meeting.

Present

Apologies

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.

Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 23 February 2026.

1. Mayoral Minutes

1.1. Mayoral Minute - Our Landing Place Greater Lithgow

Report by Mayor – Councillor Cassandra Coleman

Commentary

The convict bridge was built in the 1800s, and the fact that we have been relying on the Mitchell causeway to transport 11,000 cars and trucks every day for decades is mind blowing.

While it is too early to quantify the full economic impact, this affects far more than convenience; it disrupts workers, freight and supply chains, visitors, and everyday travel.

Lithgow and the Central West rely on fragile east-west infrastructure at exactly the time our region needs stronger connectivity to support our economic diversification, new jobs, and attract investment and tourism.

Greater Lithgow cannot continue to be treated as an afterthought when it comes to major infrastructure.

Lithgow City Council is still waiting on \$7.2 million in disaster recovery funding from the NSW Government for road works already completed. The prospect of prolonged closure, which would further deteriorate our local roads, is something this Councillor group should not tolerate without meaningful support from the NSW Government.

Lithgow Council has been working with the NSW Government to identify immediate solutions to the disruption. I personally met with the Honourable Jenny Aitchison, Minister for Roads and Minister for Regional Transport, on Friday 13 March, so that she could see first-hand the difficulties businesses are facing. I had been in regular contact with the Minister earlier, when the incident occurred.

After speaking with Shannon from Erins Quality Outdoor Power Centre, the signage on the highway was immediately adjusted to ensure that residents and visitors alike are aware that Hartley is open for business.

On Saturday afternoon (14 March), a group of us met with Mr Howard Collins OBE, Coordinator-General, Transport for New South Wales, about the importance of a traffic plan for the CBD of Lithgow to support our residents to get from one side of the town and back again so that they are not enduring the chaos that is currently Mort and Main Street Lithgow.

We discussed several ideas and solutions; however, I focused on the pinch point at the Woolworths carpark and the increased traffic from the Darling Causeway onto Scenic Hill, then into Lithgow.

A total of eight suggestions were made to support our community in getting from A to B safely, to help with their daily lives.

We need to continually focus on what more can be done; I won't be resting on my laurels, and I daresay that the Councillor group won't be either.

The Lithgow region is positioned to benefit from around \$8 billion in State Significant Development activity. We need immediate clarity on traffic management and recovery timelines. We need an urgent delivery of the full four-lane divided highway upgrade between Katoomba and Lithgow, not another round of piecemeal works, delays, and half-measures.

I generally believe that it is in Greater Lithgow's best interests that the State Government declare this a disaster so that the Federal Government provides not only funding but also a coordinated approach that supports not only Greater Lithgow but also the Central West and the upper Blue Mountains.

Lithgow, through no fault of its own, is now a transport hub, and we deserve not only support and attention but also a whole-of-government approach.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Call on the NSW Government to commit to a whole-of-government approach to the Great Western Highway closure so that we have a collaborative framework across government agencies.
2. Request the NSW Government to declare the cracking of the Mitchell causeway a disaster so that funding assistance may be made available for Lithgow City Council and NSW Government agencies to speed up a solution.

2. Administration Reports

2.1. GM - 23/03/2026 - Labour Market and Energy Transition Plans - Next Steps

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: Bruce Mills – Emerging Economy Manager

Responsible Officer: Ross Gurney - General Manager

Executive Summary

This report discusses the *Planning for Labour Market Change in Lithgow* final report (September 2025), which provided the first integrated analysis of how the transition away from coal-fired power and coal mining will impact Lithgow's labour market across the next decade. It also outlines the next steps for the Council following its public launch.

The *Report* consisted of four integrated but standalone plans (hereinafter, the *Plans*):

1. *Regional Manufacturing Industry Skills & Training Audit* - a detailed audit examining local manufacturing capabilities, skills gaps, training provision, and alignment with emerging industries.
2. *Regional Workforce Adaptive Capacity Plan* - a plan focused on building the adaptability of the workforce, with emphasis on STEAM skills and future skill requirements.
3. *Long-Term Regional Workforce Plan & Long-Term Education and Training Pathways Plan* - this was developed through significant local stakeholder engagement and identifies:
 - a. Future skills requirements,
 - b. Pathway gaps,
 - c. Training and tertiary needs, and
 - d. Alignment with state and national transition initiatives.
4. *Rapid Response Plan for Sudden Industry Closure* - a contingency plan outlining how services should be deployed quickly in the event of sudden or unanticipated closure of a mine, power station, or other major employer.

Together, these *Plans* demonstrate that Lithgow faces a considerable structural adjustment over the next 'critical decade', that workforce displacement will occur unevenly and asymmetrically, and that impacts will fall not only on workers, but on the whole community through land use changes, reduced services demand, skills restructuring, and population decline in the absence of significant intervention.

The *Planning for Labour Market Change in Lithgow* report forms the Council's key evidence base and advocacy platform to argue that Lithgow should receive the same whole-of-community transition support provided to regions such as Collie (WA) or, at least, the Latrobe Valley (VIC).

The NSW State Government has prepared legislation to establish the Future Jobs and Investment Authority (FJIA) to support coal-producing communities across NSW. The Authority will have powers and responsibilities to attract investment to create new jobs and industries; facilitate post-mining land use; lead community engagement; coordinate workforce support, and report on mine closures to the government.

In comparison, Collie (WA) received approximately \$662M in transition funding (equivalent to nearly \$90,000 per resident), a level of investment recognised internationally as best practice by the Institute for Human Rights and Business, which describes Collie as “a blueprint for the world’s eight million coal workers.”

The report was publicly launched with strong media interest. This report to Council proposes endorsement to commence the immediate next steps and to utilise the Plans as a formal advocacy tool with the NSW Government.

The *Planning for Labour Market Change in Lithgow* final report is included as an attachment.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Endorse the *Planning for Labour Market Change in Lithgow* final report (September 2025) as Council’s central evidence base and advocacy platform in discussions with the NSW Government regarding the future role and scope of the Future Jobs & Investment Authority.
2. Advocate for a Collie-style, place-based transition package recognising Lithgow as a ‘deep-transition’ region requiring community-wide investment, not only worker-focused support.
3. Endorse the commencement of the next steps outlined in this report, including the development of a 10-year labour market roadmap (per the endorsed LEEP Action Plan), as well as strengthened industry, union, and government coordination.
4. Receive a further progress update through the Emerging Economy Committee in mid-2026.

Attachments

1. Planning for labour market change in Lithgow FINAL REPORT Sept 2025 [2.1.1 - 127 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Item 6.2 Planning for Market Change and Energy Transition in Lithgow Report – Emerging Economy Committee Meeting held on 5 November 2025 (report noted by the Committee).

Background and discussion

1. Purpose of the Labour Market and Energy Transition Plans

The *Plans* analyse:

- The timing of workforce change associated with coal mine and power station ‘contraction’,
- Implications for occupations, skills, and cross-sector redeployment,
- Impacts on adjacent sectors (construction, logistics, engineering, health, retail),
- The scale of risk to employment, population decline, and long-term economic stability, and
- Levers for government or industry intervention.

The *Plans* position Lithgow as a ‘deep-transition’ region, meaning that the scale of change is significant enough to affect the entire community, not only individual workers.

This classification is consistent with national frameworks including the *Net Zero 2050 Plan*, the *National Skills Agreement*, Jobs and Skills Australia’s *Net Zero Workforce and Skills Roadmap*, the

Australian Energy Market Operator's transition modelling, Infrastructure Australia's *Regional Strengths and Infrastructure Gaps Framework*, Regional Development Australia's national priorities, the Just Transition principles applied by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, the National Reconstruction Fund, and the Future Made in Australia agenda, and aligns with OECD frameworks such as the *Regions in Industrial Transition* (2019), *A Territorial Approach to the SDGs - Transition Regions* (2021), and the OECD's 2023/24 analyses of just transition and local labour markets.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Decline is structural, not cyclical

The *Plans* confirm that the decline in coal mining and coal-fired generation will accelerate between 2025 and 2035, with employment contraction occurring before full site closure.

2.2 Workforce impacts are uneven

Mining and power station roles with engineering, mechanical, technical, electrical, and operations backgrounds will experience the most disruption, and redeployment will not naturally occur without structured pathways and opportunities.

2.3 Community-level impacts are already emerging

The *Plans* reflect the patterns seen in regions such as Collie and Gladstone:

- Younger workers relocating,
- Reduced apprenticeships,
- Reduced demand in retail, and
- Smaller cohorts entering TAFE pathways.

2.4 Local employers have limited transition planning

Stakeholder engagement shows that transition planning varies between employers, and most plans are not publicly available or integrated with local government or regional strategies. The *Plans* identify a need for clearer timing, skills audits, and redeployment pathways.

3. Relationship to the Future Jobs & Investment Authority announcement

The NSW Government recently announced new measures to support workers affected by the energy transition. These measures are welcome, but do not address the needs of the broader Lithgow community.

The FJIA will be supported with \$27.3M over four years, plus a broader 'Future Jobs & Investment Fund' that will fund \$110M million of future projects.

The FJIA package, when divided equally among the 18 affected coal LGAs, provides approximately \$400 per Lithgow resident in transition funding.

3.1 Strengths of the FJIA announcement

- Protections for workers.
- Retraining support for workers.
- Commitments to redeploying workers where feasible.
- More advice for employers on how to plan for workforce impacts.

3.2 Critical gaps in the FJIA announcement

The announcement does not include:

- A place-based economic diversification package.
- Community transition funding.
- Funding support for local services (health, schools, housing, childcare).
- A transition authority presence in Lithgow.
- Long-term labour market strategy for the community.
- Planning for mine and power station site repurposing.

4. Lessons from Collie (Global Best Practice)

“Collie ... a blueprint for the world’s eight million coal workers.” - [Institute for Human Rights and Business](#)

As stated, Collie (WA) received approximately \$662M in transition funding (equivalent to nearly \$90,000 per resident). This disparity highlights the scale of underinvestment facing deep-transition communities in New South Wales and powerfully indicates that Lithgow cannot achieve a genuine ‘just transition’ without a comparable level of place-based, community-wide transition support to that provided in Collie.

While the proposed FJIA legislation offers important protections for workers, it provides no equivalent protections for communities, significantly underfunds place-based support for a genuine ‘just transition’, and provides no region-wide economic diversification plan.

International analysis of Collie’s just transition demonstrates that the opportunities for success are best enabled when the state government (in this instance, the WA State Government):

- Provides multi-year, place-based community transition funding.
- Establishes a locally embedded transition team.
- Diversifies the economy through targeted precinct and employment land investment.
- Plans worker redeployment pathways before closures.
- Engages unions, TAFE, councils, and employers collectively.
- Invests in community confidence and identity to prevent population decline.

These findings align with the Lithgow *Plans* and provide a benchmark for the level of transition support required.

5. Funding Comparison

A comparison of per-resident transition funding demonstrates the significant disparity between the support provided to Collie (WA) and the level of investment currently available to Lithgow under the NSW model:

Region / Program	Funding Amount	Population (ABS ERP)	Per-Resident Investment
Collie Just Transition (WA)	\$662 million	7,500 (2023)	\$88,000 per resident
NSW Future Jobs & Investment Authority (FJIA) - statewide for 18 coal LGAs	\$27.3M over four years + \$110M Investment Fund (\$137.3M total)	–	–

Lithgow's share if NSW FJIA funding is divided evenly across 18 councils	(Share of \$137.3M ÷ 18)	Approx. 20,740 (2024)	\$400 per resident
Lithgow if the <i>entire</i> NSW FJIA fund were applied only to Lithgow (hypothetical)	\$137.3M	Approx. 20,740 (2024)	\$6,600 per resident

The *Plans* provide Council with the evidence base to argue for missing support components and additional funding.

The *Plans* make it clear that Lithgow requires the same scale and style of intervention as Collie for a 'just transition' as worker-only protections cannot stabilise a regional economy when the transition will impact the entire community.

This distinction is critical as workers can be protected while a regional economy still declines if community-wide transition support is not provided.

6. Next Steps for Council

The following actions are the critical early steps to operationalise the *Plans* and strengthen the Council's advocacy position:

6.1 Develop a 10-Year Labour Market Roadmap (2025-2035)

This is already included in the refreshed LEEP Action Plan. This roadmap will:

- Identify the possible sequence of skills transitions and roll-out of recommendations outlined in the *Plans*,
- Align with closures or 'scale-down' timing,
- Provide Councillors with a clear timeline to communicate publicly, and
- Integrate with NSW agency and union timelines.

6.2 Enabling the *Plans'* recommendations (2026-2027)

While the sequencing of actions recommended by the *Plans* will be set in the *10-Year Labour Market Roadmap*, the proposed initial actions taken to enable the *Plans'* recommendations are outlined below.

Enabling the Regional Workforce Adaptive Capacity Plan

- Expand career pathways and raise educational aspirations through the partnership with the NSW Department of Education to establish an Academy of STEAM Excellence.
- Improve digital and physical connectivity through programs (e.g. Digital Literacy, Leadership, STEAM) and events (workshops, information sessions).
- Activate a smart specialisation cluster, and support remote work infrastructure and digital inclusion while building innovation with research partnerships, education and co-working opportunities.
- Work towards developing smart specialisation clusters or precincts in advanced manufacturing, health and tourism through the Net Zero Precinct (detailed in the RPPP grant application).
- Utilising the UTS research relationship (Michaëlle Zeibots), including a potential Mayor's Roundtable on Adaptive Re-Use of Mine Sites, "NextRail" options quick review, and railway timetabling options in alignment with the Central West Transport Plan.

Enabling the Long-term Regional Workforce Plan, and Long-Term Education and Training Pathways Plan

- Strengthen collaboration between employers, educators and training providers, support long-pathway retraining, and build skills in innovation, flexibility and STEAM through partnerships and programs delivered via flexible course delivery.
- Actively engage with local businesses through a business capability uplift program that enables local businesses to become 'ready, not reactive', by delivering objective insights on strategic business drivers, operating model effectiveness, workforce capability requirements and learning pathways and resources to upskill. **Would require 2026/27 Budget – approx. \$70K.**
- Develop and promote local learning and career pathways (including apprenticeships and traineeships), and increase workforce participation by working with local training providers and NSW Government to co-design workforce training opportunities that expand course offerings, hands-on learning experiences, and provision for training and tertiary needs – including future skills requirements and plugging pathway gaps – and building local workforce capability in alignment with state and national transition initiatives.
- Improve access to career pathways for young people, older workers, career changers and underrepresented groups by introducing targeted scholarships and workforce enablement, mentoring and peer support programs such as 'Licence to Learn', Digital Skills Building, and Leadership for those who may face barriers to employment or lack support to expand their skill sets. **Would require 2026/27 Budget – approx. \$20K.**
- Continue the Lithgow Workforce Forum to strengthen and coordinate efforts across sectors and progress the recommendations of the *Plans*. The establishment of this group is recommended in the *Long-Term Education and Training Pathways Plan*; responds to stakeholder feedback from the Future Workforce Roundtable that regular progress updates and opportunities for input are essential; and achieves Action Plan item 2: - Strengthen collaboration mechanisms with priority groups.
- Monitor progress through community-informed metrics.

Enabling the Rapid Response Plan

- As this Plan is enacted only in the event of a sudden or unexpected closure, the immediate actions are to ensure our metrics are ready and identify the potential stakeholders for the oversight group.

6.3 Formalise engagement with unions, major employers, and the NSW Government

To align labour market impacts with regional strategic planning and investment support.

6.4 Advocate for a Collie-style transition package using the Plans as the evidence base

Council will advocate for:

- A 'Lithgow Transition Package' comparable to Collie or, at least, the Latrobe Valley,
- A Lithgow office of the NSW Future Jobs & Investment Authority,
- Multi-year community transition funding,
- Early planning for site reuse, and
- Shared workforce planning between unions and employers.

Consultation and Communication

Development of the Planning for Labour Market Change in Lithgow report involved consultation across industry, unions, training providers, education partners and government agencies, led by the University of South Australia project team.

Council also convened the Future Workforce Roundtable, which produced strong stakeholder feedback and clear requests for regular progress updates, better visibility of transition timing, and continued collaboration between Council, industry and education providers.

The public launch of the report generated substantial media interest, increasing community awareness of the labour market transition and the importance of a coordinated response.

Six fact sheets on the report have been prepared and are included as attachments.

Policy

The *Planning for Labour Market Change in Lithgow* final report (June 2025) aligns with:

- The Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan.
- Future Jobs & Investment Committee functions (workforce impacts, diversification, transition planning).
- Council's CSP and Strategic Direction 3.2.

Legal

The matter relates to Council's economic development functions under the Local Government Act 1993.

Risk Management

The Planning for Labour Market Change in Lithgow report identifies that unmanaged transition will have cascading impacts across the workforce, local economy and broader community.

1. Workforce Displacement Risk

The contraction of coal mining and coal-fired generation is expected to accelerate from 2025-2035. Without structured pathways, displaced workers may leave the region, resulting in permanent loss of skills and experience.

2. Population and Demographic Risk

Population decline, particularly among working-age residents and young families, is a long-term risk to the viability of schools, local services, and community organisations.

3. Economic Diversification Risk

Insufficient or delayed investment in new industries may result in slowed economic diversification, business closures, decreased retail activity, and reduced investor confidence.

4. Service and Infrastructure Risk

Transition impacts may lead to fluctuating or declining demand for health, aged care, childcare, education and transport services, with flow-on implications for Council infrastructure planning and financial sustainability.

5. Coordination and Governance Risk

Transition planning across employers, unions and government may remain fragmented without a dedicated, place-based coordination mechanism. The absence of a local presence for the Future Jobs & Investment Authority increases this risk.

6. Reputational Risk

If Council is not seen to lead, communicate and advocate effectively for community-wide transition support, confidence in Council's ability to manage major structural change may be undermined.

7. Underinvestment Risk

The current NSW FJIA package provides significantly lower per-resident investment than comparable regions such as Collie (WA). Without significant additional funding, Lithgow risks falling into long-term economic decline.

Financial

- Budget - the Labour Market and Energy Transition Plans were funded from the National Priority Fund grant.
- Cost centre - LEEP / Adaptive Skills Hub.
- Expended to date - expenditure remains within forecast for the current financial year.
- Future potential impact - additional resources may be required in 2026/27 to progress labour market modelling, design new communications, and support engagement with unions, employers and the NSW Future Jobs & Investment Authority once established. These will be subject to Council's 2026/27 budget process.

2.2. F&G - 23/03/2026 - Investment Report February 2026**Strategic Context for this matter:**

Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership: To develop community confidence in the organisation by the way it is directed, controlled and managed.

Author: Jonathon Reid - Financial Services Manager

Responsible Officer: Vanessa Browning - Director Finance and Governance

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of investments held as at 28 February 2026 and to note the certification of the Responsible Accounting Officer that funds have been invested in accordance with legislation, regulations and Council's Investment Policy.

The report also provides commentary on the cash and investments balance compared with the funding required for internally and externally restricted reserves. A key aspect of the report is that while Council has total investments and cash of \$51.03M, most of this amount is restricted (internally or externally). Restricted funds are not available for any purpose beyond that for which they have been restricted. The balance of \$918K is unrestricted and available as the Council's working capital.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT:

1. Investments of \$46,250,000 and cash of \$4,778,487 (which is mostly restricted for specific purposes) for the period ending 28 February 2026 be noted.
2. The enclosed certificate of the Responsible Accounting Officer be noted.
3. The commentary on cashflow and funding requirements for restricted reserves be noted.

Attachments

1. Investment Report Attachment - February 2026 [**2.2.1** - 1 page]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min No 26-9 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 28 January 2026.

Background and discussion**Movements in the Cash and Investments Balance**

Council's total investment portfolio as at 28 February 2026, when compared to 31 January 2026, has increased from \$44,250,000 to \$46,250,000. Cash in Council's bank account increased from \$582,272 to \$4,778,487.

February is usually a cashflow positive month, with significant cash inflows. In February 2026, there were low cash outflows relating to supplier payments and the third instalment of rates being due, with grant income also being paid to the Council.

If the movement in the bank account is negative, this is shown as a net redemption. If the movement in the bank account is positive, this is shown as a net new investment.

The movements in Investments for the month of February 2026 were as follows:

Opening Balance of cash and investments as 1 February 2026	\$44,832,272
<u>Plus</u> New Investments – February 2026	\$18,196,215
<u>Less</u> Investments redeemed – February 2026	\$12,000,000
Closing Balance of cash and investments as at 28 February 2026	\$51,028,487

The attachment to this report provides an overview of the current market value of investments held with each financial institution. The difference between the value quoted in the attachment and within the report relates to the recognition of interest earned but not yet received by Council.

Responsible Accounting Officer comment on the cash and investments balance – there was a \$6.2M increase in cash and investments in February 2026. High cash inflows, combined with lower payments to suppliers (\$3.6M), have increased the cash balance. Cash outflows continue to be managed to ensure that the timing of grant funding milestones matches the pace of works undertaken.

High value supplier payments included:

- \$259K Wolgan Valley Access Road design and project management (DRFA funded),
- \$181K Growth Management Strategy consultancy (SRV funded),
- \$158K annual renewal for Smart Water Meter Reader Application (Water funded),
- \$137K engineering services for various natural disaster road repairs (SRV & DRFA funded),
- \$137K lease of skid steer for various natural disaster road repairs (DRFA funded),
- \$124K traffic management for various natural disaster road repairs (DRFA funded), and
- \$123K electricity for December and January (General funded).

Funding Requirements for Restricted Reserves

A large proportion of the Council's investments are held as restricted assets for specific purposes. Restricted assets may consist of externally restricted assets, which must be spent for the purpose for which they have been received (e.g. water, wastewater, domestic waste) or internally restricted assets, which have been set aside by Council resolution. Some internal restrictions are held to fund specific liabilities such as employee leave entitlements, bonds, and deposits.

Responsible Accounting Officer comment on restricted reserves – Council had sufficient cash and investments as at 28 February 2026 to fund \$41.9M of externally restricted reserves and \$8.2M of internally restricted reserves.

The Council's working capital position (used to fund outgoing payments) was \$918K as at 28 February 2026. The increase in working capital from internal borrowings of \$4.9M as at the end of January to \$918K at the end of February is due to outstanding rates being paid to Council. Council is still taking action to manage cashflow with works deferred until the unrestricted cash balance maintains a stable satisfactory level, to ensure that Council does not require the use of externally restricted reserves.

Cash and Investments Statement (\$'000)				
	30 June 2025 Position	30 September 2025 Position	31 December 2025 Position	28 February 2026 Position
Externally Restricted				
Developer Contributions	1,913	2,060	1,979	2,258
Special Purpose Grants	33,822	30,667	26,749	24,985
Water Supplies	3,864	4,922	4,298	4,381
Sewerage Services	294	410	(316)	158
Domestic Waste	8,531	9,857	9,547	9,609
Unexpended Loans	1,700	984	593	493
	50,124	48,901	42,849	41,884
Internally Restricted				
Land & Buildings	85	85	80	72
FAGs	3,359	-	-	-
Plant & Equipment	-	-	-	-
Bonds, Deposits & Retentions	400	352	261	327
Works in Progress	137	137	137	137
Carry Over Works	63	66	43	26
Commercial Waste	2,769	3,910	4,225	4,483
ELE	661	661	161	161
Election	77	77	77	77
Other	1,223	350	2,545	2,941
Internal Borrowing to General Fund	0	(2,196)	(3,264)	0
Total Internally Restricted	8,774	3,442	4,266	8,226
Unrestricted (working capital)	-	-	-	918
Total Cash and Investments	58,898	52,343	47,115	51,028

CERTIFICATION OF THE RESPONSIBLE ACCOUNTING OFFICER

I hereby certify that the investments listed in the report have been made in accordance with Section 625 of the Local Government Act 1993, clause 212 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and Council's Investments Policy.

Both internally and externally restricted reserves are managed in accordance with legislation, regulation, Council resolutions and Council's endorsed budget allocations to / from reserves.

Vanessa Browning
Director Finance and Governance - Responsible Accounting Officer

Consultation and Communication

N/A

Policy

Investments are held in accordance with the Council's Investment Policy at the date of investing funds. On 24 March 2025, the Council adopted a revised Investment Policy, which includes the Minister's Investment Order of 12 January 2011.

Legal

Council's Investment Policy complies with the Minister's Investment Order of 12 January 2011.

Risk Management

Risk is managed by taking a conservative approach to managing Council's investments and only investing in term deposits.

Financial

- Interest income budget approved \$2,053,000 (full year)
- Cost centre 800152-8130-41500
- YTD Income to date \$1,431,831
- Future potential impact Nil.

Council's original budgeted investment interest income for 2025/26 is \$2.8M, approximately \$653K less than 2024/25 actual interest received. The original forecast of \$2.8M has been reduced to \$2.1M due to lower cash balances than budgeted. During February, the average rate achieved was 4.70% on an investment balance of \$45M, 57% of which is due to the remaining balance of the \$33.8M advance payment for natural disaster restoration works.

Interest is paid on the maturity date of the investment. The budget for interest income is determined by the average level of funds held and the rate of return. Adjustments to the budget estimate are processed through the Council's Quarterly Budget Review process. Interest returns are determined by average funds invested and the rate of interest return.

2.3. F&G - 23/03/2026 - Review of Investment Policy

Strategic Context for this matter:

Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership: To develop community confidence in the organisation by the way it is directed, controlled and managed

Author: Vanessa Browning - Director Finance and Governance

Responsible Officer: Vanessa Browning - Director Finance and Governance

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with revised Policy 8.7 Investment Policy (Policy) for consideration.

The proposed revision of the Policy includes the addition of Section 16 Liquidity, to ensure that the Council maintains adequate cash and cash at call funds to cover expenditure and provide a buffer against unexpected events.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council adopt the revised Investment Policy for immediate implementation.

Attachments

1. Policy 8.7 - Investment Policy - V11 - DRAFT [2.3.1 - 9 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min.No.25-85 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 24 March 2025.

Background and discussion

Section 16. Liquidity

The review of the Policy also includes the addition of Section 16 Liquidity. Liquidity refers to the minimum level of liquid funds available to finance day to day requirements. Cash flow must be monitored daily, and Council will ensure that it has access to at least \$1 million or 2% of the value of its total investments, whichever is greater, within 7 days.

Other Changes

All other changes to the policy are minor, involving wording and formatting. There have been no significant changes to the objectives, purpose or principles of the Policy.

Consultation and Communication

The Policy supports Council's internal systems; therefore, public exhibition inviting community feedback is not required. The document will be included in the Council's Policy Register on the website for the community's information.

Policy

The revised Policy will improve Council's prudent management of investments, ensure appropriate liquidity, and maximise returns and portfolio diversity.

Legal

The subject matter of this report is a function of Council conferred by the Local Government Act, 1993 and Local Government Regulations (General), 2021.

The Policy limits investments to those allowed by the Ministerial Order (12/1/11).

Risk Management

The Policy includes risk management guidelines for investments.

Financial

As detailed in this report.

2.4. P&P - 23/03/2026 - Six Month Progress Report (July - December 2025)

Strategic Direction:

Caring for Our Community: To retain, respect and strengthen both our overall sense of community, and the unique linked communities of groups, rural areas, villages and towns that make up the Lithgow LGA.

Developing Our Built Environment: To provide a choice of effective public and private transport options, suitable entertainment and recreational facilities, and lifestyle choices while enhancing the existing rural areas, villages and towns that make up the Lithgow LGA.

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.

Enhancing Our Natural Environment: To balance, protect and enhance our diverse environmental elements, both natural and built, for the enjoyment and support of both current and future generations.

Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership: To develop community confidence in the organisation by the way it is directed, controlled and managed.

Author: Deborah McGrath – Organisation Performance and Communication Manager

Responsible Officer: Shaun Elwood - Director People and Place

Executive Summary

During the July – December 2025 reporting period, the Administration has balanced the delivery of projects and programs for 2025/26 whilst strategically positioning the Council and the Local Government Area (LGA) for the future and addressing emerging issues.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council note the 2025-2026 July – December Progress Report.

Attachments

1. July December - progress report [2.4.1 - 140 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min No. 25-163 Ordinary Meeting of Council 30 June 2025.

Background and discussion

The 2025/26 July to December 6-month report highlights the Council's progress towards completing our Delivery Program / Operational Plan priorities.

Key projects commenced, progressing, or completed include:

- The Council launched its new engagement platform <https://www.letstalksevenvalleys.com.au/>, an inclusive space for the community to share ideas, add comments, ask questions and provide valuable feedback that will inform planning and decision making, contributing to the future of the Lithgow LGA and our Seven Valleys. Three major engagement projects were launched in conjunction with the website:
 - [Towards 2050 Community Strategic Plan](#),
 - [Growth Management Strategy](#), and
 - [Lithgow Housekeeping Planning Proposal and Development Control Plan Amendments](#).
- Following extensive liaison with community and youth services, a Youth Interagency has been established to replace Planet Youth following the end of the funding period for this program. The newly established Interagency, administered by Head Space, has a broader remit (not explicitly focused on alcohol and drug use), which will better serve the needs of young people.
- In October 2025, Council had a substantial water outage throughout Lithgow City following burst water mains on Council trunk lines. Water delivery was halted for a period and was restored following work by the Council, community, and contractors to restore the service. The Administration has undertaken a full review of the event, with recommendations and actions to be implemented across Council to significantly reduce service risks and improve the systems Council has in place in various areas, including communication, asset management, emergency planning, and incident response.

This report acknowledges the commitment to the community by the Mayor and Councillors, as well as our teams for their dedication to delivering outcomes that matter. The highlights, stories and challenges provided in the 6-month report are only a small representation of the many services and projects delivered over July to December 2025.

Consultation and Communication

N/A

Policy

N/A

Legal

The subject matter of this report is a function of Council conferred by the Local Government Act 1993 s404(5).

Risk Management

Nil

Financial

N/A

2.5. I&PD - 23/03/2026 - Skidsteer Lease/purchase Contract

Strategic Context for this matter:

Developing Our Built Environment: To provide a choice of effective public and private transport options, suitable entertainment and recreational facilities, and lifestyle choices while enhancing the existing rural areas, villages and towns that make up the Lithgow LGA.

Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership: To develop community confidence in the organisation by the way it is directed, controlled and managed.

Author: Paul Creelman – Transport Manager

Responsible Officer: Jonathon Edgecombe - Director of Infrastructure and Project Delivery

Executive Summary

This report seeks the Council's endorsement of a 6-month hire agreement for an ASV skidsteer loader and attachments.

Council's Administration had entered into a 6-month hire agreement over the previous 6 months, from October 2025 through to the end of March 2026, for \$123,700 excl. GST. Due to Council's current cashflow challenges, rather than purchasing the machine, a new hire agreement for another 6 months has been drafted for \$125,800 excl. GST.

Cumulatively, these agreements are valued at \$249,500 excl. GST. This is close enough to the tender threshold of \$250,000 that a report to Council has been considered justified.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council approve the second period of lease from STM Trucks and Machinery, expiring 1st October 2026, for the ASV skidsteer and attachments for \$125,800 plus GST

Attachments

1. CONFIDENTIAL - STM Hire Agreement - Lithgow Council (Second Agreement) [2.5.1 - 11 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Nil

Background and discussion

As part of the Council's plant replacement program, the Administration is continually reviewing opportunities to replace plant with more effective and efficient options. Council is reviewing the feasibility of purchasing a skidsteer loader with a 1100mm-wide profile attachment, broom, and bucket to undertake road repairs and maintenance more efficiently and effectively. Over time, this will minimise the need to hire external profiling machines.

As a trial to confirm the effectiveness of the skid steer and attachments, Council entered into a lease agreement for 6 months with the intent of purchasing the machine and attachments should the skidsteer's use demonstrate cost effectiveness and operational efficiency.

At the time the purchase of the machine was being considered, Council began experiencing its current cashflow concerns, and the purchase could not proceed. To best manage impacts to Council's cash flow, the Administration has decided to extend the lease period for another 6 months prior to reconsidering the purchase of the machine. This will bring the total lease cost to \$249,500, with a further reduction in the purchase price of the skidsteer and attachments to \$226,500, which is within the Plant Replacement budget for 2025/26. The trial to date has been a great success. The machine has been used on sites right across the Lithgow LGA by both Urban and Rural teams.

Since the skidsteer unit was engaged under the original lease agreement, it has completed over 600 hours of work across rural and urban areas. Most of this work has been for natural disaster rectification, which is covered by external funding, and the cost of this machine has been allocated to that program accordingly. Councils' operators of the skidsteer have developed an understanding of the machine's capabilities and are exploring other tasks it can be used for to further enhance its versatility.

The funds for the lease and purchase were available in the approved plant budgets. The purchase cost will be journaled into next year's plant replacement budget (2026/27).

The purchase of this machine and attachments at the end of the lease for \$226,500 excl. GST is a saving of \$98,500 excl. GST on the purchase of a new machine and attachments. Lithgow Council has been the only operator of the attachments, and the skidsteer was nearly new when the first lease was taken up. There have been no issues with the skidsteer or its attachments since the Council's use, and it remains in excellent condition.

Consultation and Communication

Council has consulted with staff on the requirements to achieve a higher level of productivity and effectiveness from its plant and machinery. A recommendation to trial this machine was made by the staff, resulting in widespread acceptance of its ability to reduce manual labour in road maintenance and increase productivity.

Policy

In determining the size of the skid steer and profiler unit, it was found that Schibeci was the only 1100mm profiler able to be mounted to a skid steer. Also, an ASV RT135F skid steer is the only skid steer with the hydraulic pressure and size/weight to operate and move the profiler around. The added feature of this arrangement was that Council has 2 trucks capable of moving the skid steer and attachments around the LGA, without the need to use external trucks to float the skid steer.

With this arrangement, Council's Plant Manager tested the market and found that the only supplier capable of providing the required combination of plant and attachments is STM Trucks and Machinery. Other suppliers could supply smaller skid steers and profilers, but the profilers were only 300mm or 500mm, which increased the time to complete planned works and limited the skid steer's capacity for other works.

When an enquiry was made, STM agreed to purchase a new Schibeci profiler, a broom to go with the skid steer and bucket, provided it was on a minimum 6-month lease. Council agreed to the lease terms and asked for a price to purchase at the end of the lease. Whilst Council has had to enter into a second lease agreement, there will be a saving of \$98,500 on the price of a new machine should Council wish to purchase it after the second lease period.

In conclusion, STM Trucks and Machinery were the only supplier able to supply the Skid Steer and attachments as per the Council's requirements, were flexible in offering a 6 month lease period and

a reduced purchase price (should Council wish to purchase the skid steer and attachments at the end of the lease term). It was on this basis that the Council did not seek further quotations for the skid steer.

Council's standard procedure for purchases of a value between \$100,000 and \$250,000 requires that quotes for such projects are either obtained via VendorPanel or through a panel contract. In this circumstance, STM Trucks and Machinery P/L are listed as a valid supplier on the NSW Government panel contract 'buy NSW'. As the market was tested and STM Trucks and Machinery are listed under a valid panel contract, the engagement of this contractor is compliant with Standard Working Procedure 4.5 - Purchasing and Contracting but does not yet trigger Policy 1.4 - Tendering as it has not exceeded the \$250,000 threshold (excluding GST).

Legal

Not applicable.

Risk Management

The use of the skidsteer and attachments greatly reduces manual labour in roadworks and other tasks this machine can perform. Also, reducing time spent on the roads doing the work reduces the exposure of Council staff and plant to the associated risks of working on and around live roads.

Financial

- Budget approved – Yes, recurrent operating budgets.
- Cost centre – Various, 101000, 100897, 100911, 100025
- Expended to date - \$125,800 excl. GST
- Future potential impact - \$226,500 excl. GST, approved in the plant replacement budget for future purchase.

3. Council Committee Reports

3.1. F&G - 23/03/2026 - Finance Committee Meeting Minutes - 17 February 2026

Strategic Context for this matter:

Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership: To develop community confidence in the organisation by the way it is directed, controlled and managed.

Author: Vanessa Browning - Director Finance and Governance

Responsible Officer: Vanessa Browning - Director Finance and Governance

Executive Summary

This report is to provide a summary of matters discussed and considered at the Finance Committee Meeting held on 17 February 2026 and recommends that Council note the attached minutes and reinstate budget to proceed with drainage works for Great Western Highway.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 17 February 2026, and endorse the business paper recommendations recommended by the Committee, and
2. Reinstate the deferred 2025/26 Great Western Highway Stormwater Drainage Project to be funded from the Planning Agreements Reserve.

Attachments

1. DRAFT - Finance Committee - Minutes - 17 February 2026 [3.1.1 - 5 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min.No. 26-36 Ordinary Meeting held 23 February 2026.

Background and discussion

Finance Committee Meeting

At the 17 February 2026 Finance Committee Meeting, the following reports were discussed by the Committee:

- Fees & Charges for Development Fees – the Committee noted changes to 2025/26 development fees.
- January 2026 Investment Report – recommendation provided below.
- December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review – the Committee noted the budget review report.
- Unrestricted Cash Management Update – the Committee noted the report.

The following business paper recommendations were endorsed by the Committee.

5.2 January 2026 Investment Report

THAT:

1. Investments of \$44,250,000 and cash of \$582,272 (which is restricted for specific purposes) for the period ending 31 January 2026 be noted.
2. The enclosed certificate of the Responsible Accounting Officer be noted.
3. The commentary on cashflow and funding requirements for restricted reserves be noted.

Great Western Highway (GWH) Stormwater Drainage Project

As part of Item 5.3 December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review, the GWH Stormwater Drainage Project of \$171K was deferred to help address the unrestricted cash situation. This amount was the unspent portion from the \$200K budget allocated at the 22 September 2025 Council Meeting in relation to the consideration of subdivision of 14 Claret Ash Avenue, South Bowenfels. The project deferral was endorsed by the Finance Committee and then by Council at the 23 February Council Meeting.

It has since been identified that the \$150K Sports Lighting Infrastructure Project was funded from the Planning Agreements Reserve and this budget allocation was not required. This funding could be reallocated to substantially fund the \$210K required to complete the GWH Stormwater Drainage. There is a total of \$1.2M in the Planning Agreements Reserve as at the end of February 2026, indicating that the additional \$60K could also be funded from this Reserve to complete the project.

Financial

As detailed in the attached Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

3.2. I&PD - 23/03/2026 - Sports Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - 18 February 2026

Strategic Context for this matter:

Caring for Our Community To retain, respect and strengthen both our overall sense of community, and the unique linked communities of groups, rural areas, villages and towns that make up the Lithgow LGA.

Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership To develop community confidence in the organisation by the way it is directed, controlled and managed.

Author: Kaitlin Cibulka – Cemeteries & Administration Supervisor

Responsible Officer: Jonathon Edgecombe - Director of Infrastructure and Project Delivery

Executive Summary

This report provides details of the Minutes of the Sports Advisory Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2026.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT:

1. The 2026 LJ Hooker Reg Cowden Memorial Junior Sports Star of the Year Award for December 2025/January 2026 be awarded to Sienna Hemmy (Hockey);
2. The 2026 LJ Hooker Reg Cowden Memorial Senior Sports Star of the Year Award for December 2025/January 2026 be awarded to Nikera Hann (Cricket); and
3. The 2026 LJ Hooker Reg Cowden Memorial Junior Sports Star of the Year Award for February be awarded to Archie Morris (Rugby League); and
4. The 2026 LJ Hooker Reg Cowden Memorial Senior Sports Star of the Year Award for February be awarded to Amy Luck (Sport).
5. Council note the minutes of the Sports Advisory Committee Meeting held on 18th February 2026.
6. Council accept Greg Guest as the Sports Advisory Committee representative from the Lithgow Golf Club.

Attachments

1. Minutes Sports Advisory Committee Meeting 18 Feb 2026 [3.2.1 - 9 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Nil

Background and discussion

At the Sports Advisory Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026, the following items were discussed by the Committee including:

- 2026 LJ Hooker Reg Cowden Memorial Sports Star of the Year Awards.
- Booking Requests.

The following item was outside the Committees delegations and require Council to formally approve the recommendation:

- Item 9 – New Member
Recommendation that Council accept Greg Guest as a representative from the Lithgow Golf Club.

Financial

- Budget approved - Nil
- Cost centre – N/A
- Expended to date – Nil
- Future potential impact - Nil

3.3. **WWW - 23/03/2026 - Water, Wastewater & Waste - Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes - 9 March 2026**

Strategic Context for this matter:

Caring for Our Community To retain, respect and strengthen both our overall sense of community, and the unique linked communities of groups, rural areas, villages and towns that make up the Lithgow LGA.

Developing Our Built Environment To provide a choice of effective public and private transport options, suitable entertainment and recreational facilities, and lifestyle choices while enhancing the existing rural areas, villages and towns that make up the Lithgow LGA.

Author: Trinity Newton – Executive Assistant

Responsible Officer: Matthew Trapp - Director Water, Wastewater and Waste

Executive Summary

This report provides details of the minutes of the Water, Wastewater and Waste Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 9 March 2026.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note the minutes of the Water, Wastewater and Waste Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 9 March 2026.
2. Endorse the recommendations for Portland Waste Facility site supervision:
 - The Administration is to communicate to the community the 6-month feedback period.
 - A report be brought back to the next Finance Committee meeting on the cost of implementing waste and recycling operational changes.
 - Modified opening hours for the supervised Portland Waste Facility to be Wednesday to Saturday from 8:30 am to 4 pm.

Attachments

1. Draft Minutes WWW Infrastructure Committee 9 March 2026 [3.3.1 - 7 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min. No. 25-133 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 26 May 2025.

Background and discussion

The Committee discussed several standing agenda items relating to strategy and potential future impacts on Council and the community arising from water, sewerage, and waste management, and related strategies.

Several subjects were discussed, including the potential for a stormwater rebate scheme, changes to waste management and waste site operations, and the action items in the action plan following the water outage.

The following Committee recommendations were made at the meeting, with three items moved by exception and two items moved as per the business paper recommendations. The only change to the agenda recommendations was for Item 5.3 Waste and Recycling Management.

THAT the Committee receive the report on Waste management matters and Portland Waste Facility:

- Administration to communicate to the community the 6-month feedback period.
- A report be brought back to the next finance meeting on the cost of implementing waste and recycling operational changes.
- Opening hours change for Portland Waste Facility to Wednesday to Friday and Saturday, from 8:30 am to 4 pm.

Financial

- As per reports and minutes

3.4. F&G - 23/03/2026 - Audit Risk Improvement Committee (ARIC) Minutes - 10 March 2026

Strategic Context for this matter:

Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership: To develop community confidence in the organisation by the way it is directed, controlled and managed.

Author: Vanessa Browning - Director Finance and Governance

Responsible Officer: Vanessa Browning - Director Finance and Governance

Executive Summary

This report summarises the business discussed at the Audit Risk & Improvement Committee (ARIC) meeting held on 10 March 2026 and recommends that Council note the minutes.

This report also outlines that the term of the current independent member / Chair of ARIC is due to expire on 23 May 2026. Following an assessment of the Chair's performance, it is recommended that Council reappoint Ron Gillard as an independent voting member and Chair for a further four years in line with the ARIC Terms of Reference and the Office of Local Government's (OLG) Guidelines.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note the minutes of the 10 March 2026 ARIC Meeting, and
2. Approve the reappointment of Ron Gillard as an independent voting member and Chair of ARIC for a further four-year term ending 23 May 2030.

Attachments

1. DRAFT - ARIC - Minutes - 10 March 2026 [3.4.1 - 7 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Min. No. 22-105 Ordinary Meeting held on 23 May 2022

Min. No. 26-5 Ordinary Meeting held on 28 January 2026

Background and discussion

Minutes of Meeting held 10 March 2026

At the ARIC meeting held on 10 March 2026, the following items were presented and discussed:

- **Business Arising:** ARIC noted and discussed items within the Recommendations Tracking List.
- **External Audit:** the Committee discussed the 2025/2026 Annual Engagement Plan, an update on the Audit Readiness Plan, the 2024/2025 Final Management Letter, and the status of management actions identified as part of the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Management Letters.
- **Financial Management:** the Committee discussed the January 2026 Investment Report, received an update on Unrestricted Cash Management, was notified of an issue regarding duplicate payments and received the December Quarterly Budget Review.
- **Internal Audit:** the Committee discussed the progress on the Annual and Strategic Audit Plan, the progress of the Project Management Framework Internal Audit, and received an update on management actions from prior internal audits. Significant concerns were raised

regarding the slow progress on several items, including repeated delays in the development and finalisation of the Internal Audit Plans.

- **Management Reviews, Self-Assessments and Non-ARIC Audits:** the management actions identified from the Water Outage Review were discussed, and updates on the management actions arising from prior management reviews and self-assessments were also discussed.
- **Risk Management:** the Committee received a presentation from the Governance and Risk Manager on an update on the review of the Business Continuity Plan and Risk Framework. An overview of the results of the Statewide Mutual Continuous Improvement Pathway Report was provided. An increase in risk exposure was discussed in relation to the status of the Women's Shed site, which has now been transferred to Council.
- **Asset Management:** an overview was provided by Director Infrastructure and Project Delivery on the review of fees and charges relating to recreation facilities, and the results of the new preconstruction process that aligns with industry best practice.
- **Service Reviews:** an update on Service Reviews was received and noted.
- **Policies / Standard Work Procedures:** an update was presented and noted by ARIC, on reviewed and new policies and SWPs.
- **Strategic Planning – IP&R Framework Documents:** an update regarding the Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) Frameworks was provided and noted.
- **Major Projects Review:** an update regarding the Wolgan Road Project was received and noted, including residual risks arising from the proposed temporary reopening of the old Wolgan Road.
- **Standing Items:** the following matters are addressed at each ARIC Meeting:
 - Non-Compliance
 - Fraud and Corruption
 - Conflicts of Interest
 - Change in Risk Profile
 - OLG Circulars
- **General Business:** the following items were discussed:
 - The expiry of the initial term for the Chair was discussed, and in accordance with the OLG Guidelines, an evaluation and determination of continuance is required.
 - The Committee noted and briefly discussed the developing situations regarding the Great Western Highway closure and fuel cost pressures, including the current impacts on the Council.

Evaluation and Reappointment of ARIC Chair

The current ARIC Chair, Mr Ron Gillard, was appointed as an independent voting member of ARIC at the Ordinary Meeting held on 23 May 2022 for a four-year term, in accordance with the ARIC Terms of Reference.

An assessment of Mr Gillard's performance was undertaken by the General Manager, the Councillor non-voting member of ARIC (Deputy Mayor Steve Ring) and the Director Finance and Governance. The panel found that all tasks and functions that are the responsibility of the independent member / Chair were satisfactorily performed over the prior four-year term, as required by Section 5.6 of the ARIC's Terms of Reference and the OLG Guidelines.

A declaration has been received from Mr Gillard confirming that the OLG's Guidelines regarding independence and eligibility for the role of independent voting member and Chair continue to be met.

Therefore, it is recommended that Mr Gillard be reappointed for a further four-year term, which will conclude on 23 May 2030.

Financial

As detailed within the report and the attached Minutes.

4. Delegates Reports

4.1. Delegates Report - 23/03/26 - CNSWJO Board meeting 26 February 2026

Report by Ross Gurney - General Manager

Executive Summary

This report is provided to give advice from the recent meeting of the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board held in Grenfell on 26 February 2026. The minutes from the meeting are included as an attachment.

Attachments

1. CNSWJO Board Meeting Meeting Minutes - 26 February 2026 [4.1.1 - 9 pages]

Recommendation

THAT Council note the report from the General Manager on the Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) Board meeting on 26 February 2026 held in Grenfell.

Commentary

This report provides advice from the recent meeting of the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board held in Grenfell on 26 February 2026. A presentation was received by the Board from Ms Megan Winter, General Manager, Basin Plan Review, Murray Darling Basin Authority. More detail on reports to the meeting are below. The agenda can be found on the [CNSWJO website: www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/business-papers-agendas/](http://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/business-papers-agendas/)



Draft 2026/27 Budget and Statement of Revenue

The Board adopted the [draft 2026/27 Budget and Statement of Revenue](#), where it will be placed on exhibition for a period of 30 days.

JO Framework Review Report

Councils and Joint Organisations in NSW have recently received correspondence from the NSW Office of Local Government (OLG) regarding a refresh of the framework that governs Joint Organisations in NSW.

The Minister is seeking a response from JOs by 31 March 2026 detailing whether the JO intends to:

- continue under its current structure,
- refresh its membership and structure, or
- dissolve.

The report to the Board highlighted that, while some improvements and reduced burden around ARICs, audit and reporting requirements should be made, overall the functioning of the JO as a standalone entity is positive. The transition from a Section 355 Committee of a host Council to a JO has been a process over the past 8 years, including significant improvements including:

- ability to employ staff,
- a consistent salary structure, recognising the influence without authority element that JO staff have in their positions,
- ability to execute contracts,
- application, management and acquittal of grants, and
- separate finances to host Council.

The Board resolved to write to the Minister for Local Government:

1. insisting that the NSW Government refrain from undertaking major structural changes to the JO model and instead address the root causes of previous underperformance by implementing the ARTD review in full, which includes mandating state-agency engagement, strengthening OLG's support role, and ensuring that JO's operate within a consistent, state-supported framework, preventing a slide back into the fragmented mix of JOs, ROCs, alliances and ad-hoc arrangements that the JO model was designed to replace,
2. advising that the CNSWJO Board wishes to remain as a Joint Organisation and is open to exploring welcoming new members, and
3. requesting the following issues be further examined:
 - a. that ARIC, reporting, and audit requirements for Joint Organisations be reduced to reflect their lower risk profile,
 - b. that OLG advance the 2021 Joint Organisation Review recommendation to fund capacity building and provide ongoing investment in JOs, noting that state agencies benefit from JO collaboration and coordination yet do not contribute financially,
 - c. that General Managers be reinstated as voting members, and
 - d. that Mayors and General Managers be able to nominate an appropriate delegate to attend a meeting in their place, as needed.

Advocacy

Advocacy Policy Position Statements were adopted for 5 of the 7 strategic priorities of the Board.

- Priority 1: Leveraging our reputation and strength in collaboration.
- Priority 2: Regional prosperity through better connected infrastructure and services.
- Priority 5: Regional transport planning and infrastructure prioritisation.
- Priority 6: Regional water security and productive water.
- Priority 7: Climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Position Statements for Priority 3: Health and Ageing, and Priority 5: Telecommunications will be finalised for adoption following completion of work currently underway which aims to refine the advocacy messaging.

In the context of a changing political framework, the way in which advocacy is facilitated via the JO has been considered and a new advocacy framework which aims to streamline, clarify and improve regional advocacy through the JO was adopted.

The following submissions were endorsed:

1. [Submission to the Federal Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability](#)
2. [Submission to the draft Central West and Orana Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan](#)
3. [Submission on the Bells Line of Road Safety Improvements](#)

Procurement and Contracts

Delegates to the Board meeting noted the ongoing growth of the Regional Procurement and Contract Management Program with its associated cost savings to member councils. There are currently 20+ regional contracts available for use by members, with a further 10 under development. Details of the available contracts can be found here - www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/contracts-register.

Regional Prosperity

Planning Reforms

The CNSWJO has secured the services of Mr Paul Crennan, OAM a Bathurst based specialist in Local Government and Planning Laws to unpack the reforms at a half-day face-to-face session to be held at the Central Tablelands Collections Facility in Bathurst on 17 March. The target audience will be member councils' planners, Directors, GMs and Mayors and potentially Councillors.

Economic Development

The Board also encouraged attendance at the New Horizons Forum in Lithgow on 24 March aimed at progressing the development of the regional framework on renewable energy community benefit sharing.

Strategic Planning

The NSW Government's 'A New Approach to Strategic Planning Discussion Paper' has been released for public feedback until 27 February 2026. It proposes a simpler, three-tiered strategic planning framework which includes state, region and local plans, and introduces 7 statewide priorities to guide consistent land use planning across NSW.

Controversially, Regional NSW is being redefined as a single, interconnected region encompassing 84 Local Government Areas (LGAs). This new structure will replace the current planning regions—including the Central West, Far West, Riverina Murray, North Coast, New England North West, and parts of the South East and Tablelands and the Hunter—with one unified regional framework with existing region plans remaining in effect until a new plan for regional NSW is made by ministerial order.

The CNSWJO lodged a submission to the consultation process, strongly rejecting the redefinition of regional NSW as a single interconnected region encompassing 84 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Tourism

The Board was asked to consider options regarding the future delivery of the regional tourism program. Considering the pros and cons of the options, the Board endorsed Option 2 which focuses the efforts of the JO solely on the procurement of public relations (PR) and social media support, and the facilitation of collateral in the form of maps utilised by each Council's visitor information centres.

The regional PR program provides a consistently strong return on investment (ROI) for members, with the average across 2021-2025 being 17:1.

Health

CNSWJO is working with CSU representatives on the facilitation of the next Policy Lab, which focuses on the health workforce. The Policy Lab will be held in Orange on Thursday 5 March.

The focus of this Policy Lab is to move beyond problem-identification and instead work collaboratively toward practical and scalable solutions. The event targets Mayors, Councillors, GMs and relevant directors and staff to come together along with other key stakeholders - Western NSW Local Health District, Primary Health Network (PHN), Rural Doctors Network (RDN), Royal Flying Doctor's Service, Dr Joe McGirr MP, and the CSU Regional Health Research Institute.

Telecommunications

The Board resolved to endorse the development of a Regional Digital Plan including separate LGA plans in partnership with NBN Local, Regional Development Australia Central West (RDACW) and other providers including Telstra. The purpose of the Regional Digital Plan will be to provide baseline digital connectivity information for the region, determine priorities, and set a platform to support and advocate on behalf of the community, for digital connectivity improvements throughout the Central NSW Region.

A joint meeting of the region's Planners and Economic Development Managers with Telstra, NBN Local and RDACW will be held on 31 March in Bathurst. The focus of the session will be to build digital literacy around what is available and what is coming in the digital space over the next five- ten years and opportunities to ensure telecommunications are enabled in planning. Feedback will also be sought on the content of the Regional Digital Plan to ensure it meets councils' needs.

Water

With 76% of the region now drought affected and conditions intensifying, water efficiency work is more important than ever and demonstrates to the NSW and Australia Governments that councils continue to take all necessary steps to secure water resources for their communities. The Board resolved to advocate for the National Water Grid funding guidelines to be amended to allow councils to apply directly.

This year's University of Sydney Major Industry Project Placement Scheme (MIPPS) student Luka Cavdarovski commenced on 13 January. The project will explore the relationship between pump scheduling, water demand, and energy use across council water networks. The project will build an evidence base that can help councils better understand opportunities for cost savings, operational efficiency, and more sustainable water-energy management.

Climate Change Mitigation – Net Zero

Cassora

Through the Joint Organisation Net Zero Accelerator (JONZA) program, councils have access to an emissions reporting platform, Cassora. The platform is free for JO councils to use, with funding for the platform provided by the NSW Government.

Southern Lights and Networks

The Southern Lights and Networks Group is an expansion of the former Southern Lights Group which focused purely on the streetlight network charges, whereas Southern Lights and Networks will also include network charges generally under its advocacy remit. Essential Energy has informally advised that they intend to commence the consultation process for the 2029-2034 AER Pricing Determination in the coming weeks.

The Southern Lights and Networks Group is project managed by CNSWJO on behalf of Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO), Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC) and their member councils, along with Broken Hill City Council and Dubbo Regional Council. Interest from other regions is also being sought to expand the advocacy footprint, with every region in Essential Energy's benefitting from the work of the Southern Lights and Networks Group's advocacy.

The Board reconfirmed its commitment to Southern Lights and Networks, allocating \$15k per year towards the consulting work engaged through the project.

LGNSW Environment Symposium and Awards 2025

CNSWJO was recognised with significant achievements, receiving both the Division D Winner and Overall Winner in the Innovation in Planning, Policies and Decision-Making category in early December 2025. The award acknowledges CNSWJO's work on developing the business case on the nexus between emissions reduction and energy security in Central NSW, highlighting innovation and best practice in strategic planning for regional sustainability.

Climate Change Adaptation - Regional Resilience

Disaster Ready Fund Round 4

The Regional Resilience Group (RRG) is progressing delivery of the Integrated Preparedness Project while preparing a regional application for Disaster Ready Fund Round 4 (DRF R4). Priorities for DRF R4 include implementing Evacuation Centre Assessment recommendations, appointing Regional Disaster Readiness Officer(s), continuing the Regional Resilience Program Manager role, and supporting RA's Disaster Adaptation Plan development. The Board approved a regional application for Disaster Ready Fund Round 4.

Work by the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) on the development of a Central NSW Disaster Adaptation Plan is advancing, with governance structures, stakeholder engagement, and technical planning occurring. RA has advised that they seek to deliver additional activities by June 2026, including hazard data collection, community sentiment research, and infrastructure resilience assessments.

State Disaster Mitigation Plan

The NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) has informally indicated that the State Disaster Mitigation Plan (SDMP) will be reviewed in 2026, creating an opportunity to better align operational hazard recognition with the State's strategic planning and funding frameworks. The Board supported advocacy through the review for snow and drought to be recognised as primary hazards.

UN Youth Summit

Following the success of the UN Youth Summit in 2025, the CNSWJO has again been approached to support the 2-day initiative being held in Bathurst.

UN Youth NSW is a youth-led charity dedicated to peer-to-peer education for high school students. We run workshops, Model United Nations debates and other activities for nearly 2,000 students a year. UN Youth's mission is to empower young people in Australia as Global Citizens.

The UN Youth Regional Conference provides an opportunity for students to develop public speaking, debating and leadership skills they can use in their local communities. This is a unique opportunity for students to represent their schools and local councils and have their voice heard at the highest level.

Key Details:

- Date: Saturday the 28th - Sunday the 29th of March (9am - 4pm)
- Location: Charles Sturt University campus, Bathurst
- Student cost: \$50 per person

- Students: ~80 high school students (year 9 to year 12 students only)
- Theme: “The Age of Energy”
- Activities: Workshops, Model UN debates, interactive problem-solving activities, speaker panel, and a consultation by Australia’s Youth Representative to the UN.

Members are asked to support this event by promoting the event details to local schools. CNSWJO will circulate the details directly to Mayors, GMs and HR staff for promotion to careers advisors at local schools.

Quarterly Review of the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priorities

Value for members

The following table provides a snapshot of the highlight quantitative KPIs as identified in the SSRP.

Highlight KPIs	Q1 (Jul-Sept)	Q2 (Oct-Dec)	Total for FY
# new contracts	3	1	4
\$ income through contract management fees	\$136,859	\$76,082	\$212,941
\$ spent by member councils	\$5,866,394	\$9,358,527	\$15,224,921
\$ saved for member councils	\$312,389	\$525,897	\$838,286
# training courses delivered	1	0	1
# staff/Councillors trained	18	0	18
\$ grant funding applied for	\$6,293,687	\$0	\$6,293,687
\$ grant funding received	\$85,780	\$0	\$85,780
# submissions	3	4	7
# media releases	11	3	14
# contractors inducted through online WHS program	215	307	522
# regional team meetings	18	18	36
# PR activities through tourism program	48	9	57

Spend on aggregated contracts

The following table and graph show the spend by member councils under regional contracts facilitated by CNSWJO for the 2025/26 FYTD:

SPEND	Water Utilities Alliance Contracts	HR Contracts	WHS contracts	IT contracts	Supply contracts	Roads/ Transport contracts	Energy contracts	RDOCS contracts	Other contracts	Training	Total
Bathurst	\$369,275	\$38,961	\$0	\$0	\$781,191	\$0	\$1,791,035	\$15,183	\$0	\$0	\$2,995,645
Blayney	\$0	\$11,520	\$0	\$0	\$257,190	\$0	\$158,231	\$3,746	\$0	\$0	\$430,688
Cabonne	\$0	\$15,607	\$0	\$0	\$775,999	\$0	\$206,940	\$0	\$0	\$825	\$999,371
Central Tablelands Water	\$0	\$3,662	\$0	\$0	\$31,250	\$0	\$217,422	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$252,333
Cowra	\$31,324	\$16,398	\$5,579	\$0	\$518,296	\$0	\$535,889	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,107,485
Forbes	\$788,300	\$27,212	\$0	\$0	\$843,480	\$0	\$548,207	\$6,572	\$0	\$0	\$2,213,771
Lachlan	\$0	\$11,803	\$0	\$0	\$599,136	\$0	\$383,233	\$0	\$0	\$2,200	\$996,372
Lithgow	\$0	\$12,115	\$0	\$0	\$414,050	\$0	\$4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$426,169
Oberon	\$0	\$10,728	\$3,051	\$0	\$243,592	\$0	\$138,391	\$3,979	\$0	\$0	\$399,742
Orange	\$407,566	\$69,756	\$18,033	\$0	\$455,921	\$0	\$2,084,784	\$16,778	\$0	\$5,400	\$3,058,237
Parkes	\$76,430	\$3,565	\$0	\$0	\$548,947	\$0	\$1,164,163	\$14,124	\$0	\$4,200	\$1,811,430
Upper Macquarie County Council	\$0	\$198	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$198
Weddin	\$139,636	\$7,601	\$7,752	\$0	\$275,054	\$0	\$99,801	\$3,637	\$0	\$0	\$533,481
Total	\$1,812,531	\$229,125	\$34,415	\$0	\$5,744,105	\$0	\$7,328,100	\$64,019	\$0	\$12,625	\$15,224,921

Savings on aggregated contracts and other programming

The following table and graph show the savings by member councils under regional contracts and other regional programs that create efficiencies for the 2025/26 FYTD:

SAVINGS	Water Utilities Alliance Contracts	HR Contracts	WHS contracts	IT contracts	Supply contracts	Roads/Transport contracts	Energy contracts	Training	Legal advice re Procurement	Participation in regional procurement	Total
Bathurst	\$19,436	\$1,029	\$0	\$0	\$19,729	\$0	\$33,880	\$0	\$5,495	\$12,000	\$91,568
Blayney	\$0	\$1,618	\$0	\$0	\$5,783	\$0	\$8,374	\$0	\$5,495	\$11,000	\$32,269
Cabonne	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$67,909	\$0	\$26,010	\$0	\$5,495	\$8,000	\$107,413
Central Tablelands Water	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,472	\$0	\$5,136	\$0	\$1,760	\$10,000	\$20,368
Cowra	\$5,528	\$1,062	\$2,391	\$0	\$5,188	\$0	\$27,149	\$0	\$5,495	\$16,000	\$62,812
Forbes	\$41,489	\$645	\$0	\$0	\$56,178	\$0	\$29,538	\$0	\$5,495	\$20,000	\$153,345
Lachlan	\$0	\$873	\$0	\$0	\$12,766	\$0	\$35,471	\$0	\$5,495	\$20,000	\$74,605
Lithgow	\$0	\$1,212	\$0	\$0	\$5,022	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,495	\$11,000	\$22,729
Oberon	\$0	\$232	\$1,308	\$0	\$4,519	\$0	\$12,585	\$0	\$5,495	\$15,000	\$39,138
Orange	\$24,074	\$2,548	\$7,728	\$0	\$15,448	\$0	\$59,342	\$0	\$5,495	\$10,000	\$124,635
Parkes	\$4,023	\$357	\$0	\$0	\$16,346	\$0	\$26,490	\$0	\$5,495	\$12,000	\$64,710
Upper Macquarie County Council	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,760	\$0	\$1,760
Weddin	\$8,319	\$0	\$3,322	\$0	\$12,485	\$0	\$6,313	\$0	\$5,495	\$7,000	\$42,934
Sub Total	\$102,868	\$9,573	\$14,749	\$0	\$224,844	\$0	\$270,287	\$0	\$63,965	\$152,000	\$838,286
									Cost to members		\$210,500
										Total	\$627,786

Grant Funding

The following table shows the grant funding received for member councils for the 25/26 FY to date.

GRANT FUNDING - 25/26 FY	Water	Training/HR/WHS	Roads/Transport	Energy	Tourism	Disaster Resilience	Other	Total
Bathurst	\$9,593	\$20,430	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$33,188
Blayney	\$0	\$8,890	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,055
Cabonne	\$9,593	\$0	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,758
Central Tablelands Water	\$9,593	\$88,530	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$101,288
Cowra	\$9,593	\$2,600	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,358
Forbes	\$9,593	\$0	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,758
Lachlan	\$9,593	\$7,330	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,088
Lithgow	\$9,593	\$16,600	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$29,358
Oberon	\$9,593	\$7,850	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,608
Orange	\$9,593	\$73,210	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$85,968
Parkes	\$9,593	\$520	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,278
Upper Macquarie County Council	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Weddin	\$0	\$1,040	\$0	\$3,165	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,205
Total	\$95,930	\$227,000	\$0	\$37,980	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$398,890

5. Questions with Notice

5.1. QWN - 23/03/2026 - Cr M Ticehurst - Limestone Creek Road Portland

Report by Councillor Martin Ticehurst

Commentary

I request that the General Manager and Senior Council staff provide detailed answers to the following Question with Notice.

Q. Could the Council and Councillors be provided with a full and detailed report on the current conditions of Limestone Creek Road Portland, including a list of the previous works undertaken over the past two years and what future works in a timeline are currently being proposed for this road?

Attachments

Nil

Management Comment

Limestone Creek Road was rehabilitated and patched/resealed 18 months ago, with the road remaining in acceptable condition. The only current defect on the road between Portland Cullen Bullen Road and Creek Street is where our Water team has repaired/replaced a water service at the intersection of Creek Street. This will be repaired as maintenance schedules allow.

The section from Creek Street to the end was not rehabilitated, but as this length only services one resident, the road condition was deemed to be suitable. The drains were cleared in this section and the road patched as needed. The drainage lines have been cleared for the entire length of road.

Future works are programmed for 2027/28, should funding permit.

Jonathon Edgecombe
Director Infrastructure and Project Delivery

5.2. QWN - 23/03/2026 - Cr R Smith - Council's Responsibility in Fulfilling Work Proposal Commitments Post DA Approval

Report by Councillor Ray Smith

Commentary

A recently approved D/A for the Claret Ash Estate was approved by Council with the provision that water mitigation works would be undertaken to prevent stormwater and run off problems occurring on the lower end of the estate and adjacent areas.

The developer proponent complied and provided the upgraded drainage through the property below the estate and appears with support from neighbours has achieved a positive outcome.

Council committed to continuing the works to the G.W.H. but due to funding shortfalls this has been deferred. The Developer fulfilled his commitment, but the problem remains in Council's domain. Due to a recent downpour event a "pinch point" build up now occurs where Council's work is required.

Other D/A's - Martini Pde and a development adjacent to the Theatre Royal have presented similar problems. Proponents are not the guilty parties but us as Council are committing to proposals we are not fulfilling. A vote against a new development is to be perceived as a vote against our own council for not fulfilling our commitment.

Has Council inspected the site where the water build up is now occurring during down pour events, Considering the funding problems albeit can Council allow this problem to continue?

Can inspections be undertaken on reported seepage and drainage problems at other properties adjacent to G.W.H?

Will the proposed Traffic Plan be progressed?

Attachments

Nil

Management Comment

Independent of this Question with Notice, Council's Director Infrastructure and Project Delivery has worked with the Director Finance and Governance to find an alternative source of funding to support this project. This occurred because it was not considered fair to commit to such a project, only to withdraw the funding after the development commenced.

An alternative funding source has been identified in the Council's Developer Contributions reserve. These payments are made, and the reserve held, to fund infrastructure and services required to meet the demand generated by development across the local government area. It is considered that this stormwater improvement project entirely aligns with the purpose of the payments and the reserve.

The Administration will put a recommendation to Council to formally approve the reinstatement of the project to the 2025/26 Capital Works Program. Residents have been informed of this situation.

Jonathon Edgecombe
Director Infrastructure and Project Delivery

5.3. QWN - 23/03/2026 - Cr R Smith - Lodgement of EIS for Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project**Report by** Councillor Ray Smith**Commentary**

As it may be common knowledge the E.I.S. for the Lake Lyell Project has been lodged with the N.S.W. State Planning. Because of its complexity the document contains nearly 6,000 pages - NB a smaller summary document containing 320 pages will be available.

Areas of interest

Flora and threatened & endangered fauna

Indigenous Heritage

Impact on nearby residents

Economic impact on businesses and Tourism

Council, Councillors and general public wishing to make a submission must register with the NSW Planning Portal. Again, because of complexity a request made at a recent C.C.C. Meeting to extend the exhibition time be considered plus a separate C.C.C. Group be formed with E.D.F. participation

Has Council considered its preparedness to activate its submission of opposition considering what may be a limited time frame for submissions?

Whom will be requested to undertake such work?

Attachments

Nil

Management Comment

The Administration has considered its preparedness to review an EIS for the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro. Staff are currently undertaking the procurement of professional services to assist in an issues based evaluation of elements of the EIS. The Council will be advised of the outcome of the professional services engagement on completion of the procurement process.

The Council submission to the exhibited EIS will include details of Council resolutions in respect to the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro project. The draft Council submission will be brought to a Council meeting prior to formal lodgment with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

Council has been advised that the EIS is scheduled to be placed on public exhibition on 31 March 2026.

Shaun Elwood

Director People and Places

6. Notices of Motion

6.1. NOM - 23/03/2026 - Cr M Ticehurst - Lithgow City Council Property Lease with Lithgow Golf Club Ltd.

Report by Councillor Martin Ticehurst

References

Lithgow City Council Annual Report 2023/20224.
ASIC Lithgow Golf Club Ltd. Financial Statements for 2024/2025.

Commentary

It is noted that in the Lithgow City Council's Annual Report for 2023/2024, the Council confirmed that:

'As resolved at the Council meeting held 25 November 2024, financial information pertaining to the property lease with Lithgow Golf Club Limited is summarised below.

- Lithgow Golf Club Limited generated a profit of \$39,828 and recorded net assets of \$414,433, including \$268,460 in cash and cash equivalents for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.
- In accordance with the lease agreement, 20% of any profit is to be paid to Council and \$7,965.60 was received during 2024/2025.
- Council received \$9,795.50 in rental income from Lithgow Golf Club and received \$3,802.71 in fees and water and sewer charges.
- Council remains responsible for the maintenance of the grounds and retains ownership of the assets, incurring \$567,351.86 in maintenance costs, depreciation and rates and annual charges.

The Lithgow City Council resolved on Wednesday 28 January 2026 via Council Resolution 26-15:

THAT: Similar to previous Lithgow City Council Resolution 24-266;

1. Council endorse the attached draft 2024/25 Annual Report and that;
2. The General Manager includes in the final published 2024/25 Annual Report, all financial information with respect to Council Resolution 21-119, a Property Lease with Lithgow Golf Club Ltd (ACN001 037 823), as the Council did in in's previous 2023/24 Annual Report.

At the time of submitting this Notice of Motion, Council Resolution 26-15 remains outstanding.

However, from the publicly available ASIC Lithgow Golf Club Ltd. Financial Statements for 2024/2025, it is noted that the Golf Club entity reported a Profit for this Financial Year of \$72,138; up from \$39,828 from the previous 2023/2024 Financial Year.

In accordance with the Expired Lease Agreement, whereby 20% of any profit is to be paid to Council, it is anticipated that the Lithgow City Council's ratepayers will be expecting to see a return of some \$14,427.60 from the Lithgow Golf Club Ltd for the 2024/2025 Financial Year.

Attachments

1. ASIC Lithgow Golf Club Financial Statements 2024-25 [6.1.1 - 21 pages]

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Formally note this currently available financial information; and
2. Request that the General Manager and Finance and Governance Manager provide further financial information at this Council Meeting on what financial information pertaining to the property lease with Lithgow Golf Club Limited is to be published in the overdue Lithgow City Council 2024/2025 Annual Report.

Management Comment

The Annual Report was updated to include the financial information in line with the resolution made on 28 January 2026 and was published to Council's [website](#) on 13 March 2026.

The information included on page 42 is also provided below.

As resolved at the Council meeting held 28 January 2026, financial information pertaining to the property lease with Lithgow Golf Club Limited is summarised below.

- *Lithgow Golf Club Limited generated a profit of \$72,138 and recorded net assets of \$486,063, including \$387,597 in cash and cash equivalents for the financial year ended 30 June 2025.*
- *In accordance with the lease agreement, 20% of any profit is to be paid to Council and \$14,427.60 was received during 2025/2026, an increase of 81%.*
- *Council received \$15,568.19 in rental income from Lithgow Golf Club and received \$6,674.14 in fees and water and sewer charges.*
- *Council remains responsible for the maintenance of the grounds and retains ownership of the assets, incurring \$439,440.90 in maintenance costs, depreciation and rates and annual charges, a 23% reduction.*

Director Finance and Governance.

6.2. NOM - 23/03/2026 - Councillor E Fredericks - Indefinite Closure of the Great Western Hwy at Victoria Pass.

Report by Councillor Elizabeth Fredericks

Commentary

On Wednesday 11 March 2026, I issued the following social media statement following confirmation by the NSW State Government of the Indefinite Closure of the Great Western Hwy at Victoria Pass.

“So here we go again, people of the Central West. For generations we’ve seen the same thing: when it comes to infrastructure, New South Wales might as well stand for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The Central West relies on two main routes to connect us with Sydney — the Great Western Highway and the Bells Line of Road.

These two roads are the main veins moving people, freight, food and equipment between the Central West and the state’s largest city. Right now, with the Great Western Highway closed in both directions at Mount Victoria, one of the most reliable routes into Sydney is effectively cut off. That means freight, commuters and general traffic are being forced onto diversion routes — across Darling Causeway and onto Bells Line of Road, and through Lithgow.

The result is longer travel times, higher fuel costs, and serious pressure on local communities. Residents in Lithgow are already dealing with major congestion through Chifley Road and surrounding streets. Traffic is backed up through town, and locals are struggling just to leave their streets to do everyday things like getting to work, dropping kids at school, or going to the shops. And this needs to be said very clearly. Right now Lithgow cannot handle any more traffic.

Our roads and infrastructure were never designed to carry this level of volume. The pressure on the community is already extreme, and local residents are feeling the stress and anxiety that comes with it. So now is not the time to encourage additional tourism traffic through these routes.

Encouraging people from Bathurst or elsewhere to drive up the mountains or along diversion routes just for sightseeing is only going to make the situation worse. This is one of those situations where common sense needs to apply. If you do not need to travel through these areas, please don’t. Give residents, emergency services and essential freight the space they need to move safely.

The bigger issue is that this situation didn’t happen overnight, and it isn’t just one government’s fault. This has been decades in the making under governments of all stripes. Liberal or Labor, the pattern has been the same — major investment goes to metropolitan areas while regional road corridors are patched up with temporary fixes.

For years people in the Central West have been calling for long-term solutions. Projects like the Bells Line Expressway were talked about more than a decade ago. If a proper expressway corridor had been built years ago, much of the heavy freight and long-distance traffic could have been handled there instead of relying on ageing mountain roads. Instead, those plans were shelved because of cost.

Now we’re seeing the consequences when one incident can shut down a major highway and force thousands of vehicles onto smaller regional roads. Local businesses are also being hit. Businesses in places like Hartley Valley rely heavily on passing traffic. When those routes change or disappear overnight, the families who run those businesses feel the impact immediately. These are real livelihoods at risk.

At the same time, Lithgow residents are carrying the burden of traffic diversion, congestion and disruption. That needs to be recognised by neighbouring communities and leaders, because the pressure right now is falling heavily on the people who live here.

Looking forward, the conversation needs to be about long-term planning. The Central West cannot continue to rely on two ageing mountain routes that become vulnerable every time there is a landslip, weather event or major incident. Proper investment in the Great Western Highway and Bells Line of Road, along with serious planning for future freight corridors, has to be part of the state's infrastructure priorities.

Because the reality is simple. The Central West helps feed, supply and power this state. Agriculture, manufacturing and mining all rely on reliable transport corridors to move goods to Sydney and beyond. If those corridors fail, the whole state feels the impact.

Regional communities aren't asking for special treatment. We're asking for the same level of long-term planning and investment that metropolitan areas receive. And if councils across the Central West want to be taken seriously on this issue, then it's time for a united voice — not divided by party politics but focused on making sure regional communities are properly heard when it comes to infrastructure that affects our future.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council note this information.

Management Comment

Nil.

7. Business of Great Urgency

The General Manager / Acting General Manager publicly confirms, that before and during this Ordinary / Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Lithgow City Council, that they have provided all Councillors with full access to all relevant information necessary for the performance of their official functions and necessary to effectively discharge their official functions.

The General Manager / Acting General Manager is aware that Council Staff Members have provided full and timely relevant information to all Councillors, sufficient to enable them to exercise their official functions and in accordance with Council Procedures.

Ross Gurney
General Manager

In accordance with Clause 241 of the Local Government Act (General) Regulations 2005 business may be transacted at a meeting of Council even though due notice of the business has not been given to the Councillors. However, this can happen only if:

- a) A motion is passed to have the business transacted at the meeting; and
- b) The business proposed to be brought forward is ruled by the Chairperson to be of great urgency.