

Our Place, Our Future

Operational Plan 2026/27

Community Engagement Report



The Draft 2026/27 Operational Plan, Draft 2026/27 Revenue Policy and Draft 2026/27 Fees and Charges were placed on public exhibition for a period of 32 days between 1 May and 1 June 2026. The documents were made available to members of the community online via the Let's Talk Seven Valleys Engagement Portal and for viewing at the Council Administration Centre and the Libraries.

Council utilised the following media and social media to publicly invite the community to provide feedback to the documents:

- Let's Talk Seven Valleys subscriber eNewsletter
- Link from the Council website via Have Your Say to Let's Talk Seven Valleys website
- Radio advertising on Radio 2LT and MOVE FM
- Council connections eNewsletter
- Inclusion in the fortnightly Council Column the Village Voice and the Lithgow Mercury.

[Let's Talk Seven Valleys Website](#) – Draft 2026/27 Operational Plan

- A total of 488 visits to the Draft Operational Plan webpage during the exhibition period which equates to 63 Visitors per day.
- 362 participants were “aware” visiting a project page or tool. With 181 participants “informed”.
- Of the Informed participants:
 - 90 downloaded a document.
 - 29 Visited the Key dates page
 - 157 visited multiple project pages and
 - 9 contributed to an engagement tool ((92) 2026/27 Major Projects Map, (13) Operational Plan Feedback Form, (4) Fees and Charges Feedback Form and (2) Revenue Policy Feedback Form).
- 131 Downloads of documents:
 - 74 downloaded Draft 2026/27 Operational Plan
 - 20 downloaded Draft 2026/27 Fees and Charges
 - 15 downloaded Proposed New Fees and Charges 2026/27
 - 15 downloaded Draft 2026/27 Revenue Policy
 - 7 downloaded Discontinue Fees and Charges 2026/27

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Community Submissions

16 submissions were received from members of the community and/or community organisations. The submissions have been considered, and officers' responses are provided in this report.

Animal Services

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 14	<p>Many fees have increased above CPI, including waste, animal services, and community facility hire. While some increases reflect genuine cost pressures, others risk excluding low-income residents from essential services. Examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic waste management charges rising to \$656.80 for a standard service. Microchipping fees increasing from \$20 to \$35. Significant increases in adoption fees for older animals being reversed but still lacking subsidised desexing programs. The fee schedule shows a strong punitive focus (e.g., impounding, dangerous dog fees) but lacks investment in prevention. <p>“Microchipping of animal... \$35.00” (Fees & Charges, p.10)</p> <p>Council should introduce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free microchipping days Subsidised desexing programs Partnerships with rescue groups to reduce euthanasia and increase rehoming. 	<p>Microchipping fees have been aligned with those charged by local veterinary clinics, including Hartley Valley Vets and Lithgow Veterinary Hospital.</p> <p>Adoption fees have been reduced, and medical expenses are now charged separately at rates set by local veterinary clinics. This means the total cost of adopting an animal will comprise the standard adoption fee plus any applicable veterinary costs.</p>

Buildings and Facilities

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 7	Cullen Bullen only provides one Public Toilet for the thousands of travellers who pass through the town daily. This is insufficient and more toilets are needed.	The toilet facilities are currently considered adequate and are therefore not included in the upcoming budget. Council will continue to monitor visitation levels and assess future opportunities for upgrades where justified.
Submission 9	Glen Davis Hall is now a fully set up art Gallery. We would like to name it Bill Norcorss Gallery in honour of our 95-year-old local artist who has a national reputation. Glen Davis Community Association seek a more formal art partnership for the hall, which already hosts many art events.	Glen Davis Progress Association be encouraged to submit a formal request under <u>Policy 10.3 – Naming of Council Facilities.</u>
Submission 9	For more than 5 years Glen Davis Community Association has been actively seeking upgrade/replacement of the campground amenities block plus installation of a food safe kitchen at the hall . The hall hosts over 25 community events/exhibitions/workshops a year and the kitchen is well below an acceptable standard. For the last 3 years a detailed kitchen scope and cost estimated have been lodged as part of Council budget processes. Many Coorangooba campers use the Glen Davis amenities, fill water containers and leave rubbish. This is aside from the Glen Davis campers and visitors. GDCA has been seeking for 2 years a joint briefing from Council and NPWS on the impact of the new Wollemi 100km walk on the Glen Davis precinct. There is no mention of this, yet Glen Davis will become a focal tourism point and requires appropriate infrastructure. This should be a headline issue in the Operational Plan	Consideration has been given to upgrading these amenities; however, the cost of upgrading or replacing the facilities is substantial and would require future capital works funding and/or the securing of external grant funding opportunities.

Capital Works Program

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 13	The capital works program is heavily weighted toward roads (\$14.3M), while community facilities, recreation, and cultural assets receive comparatively little. A progressive approach would rebalance investment toward: Footpaths, cycleways, and public transport access Playgrounds, youth spaces, and community halls Arts and cultural infrastructure Urban greening and shade structures.	There are more grant funding opportunities for the costs of the renewal and construction of other infrastructure assets such as footpath, cycleways, playgrounds and shade structures, whereas road renewal funding programs are very limited. Council applies for grant funding at every opportunity, and then completes these projects when successful

Climate change

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 13	The Operational Plan acknowledges environmental pressures but does not sufficiently prioritise climate adaptation or ecological restoration . The community expects stronger action, especially given that: “50.71% of Lithgow LGA is a National Park.” (Operational Plan, p.10) Key gaps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dedicated climate adaptation program Limited investment in biodiversity corridors Insufficient funding for active transport infrastructure • No clear plan for transitioning away from fossil-fuel-dependent industries beyond high-level advocacy • Council should embed climate action across all directorates, including measurable emissions-reduction targets. 	Submission noted.

Economic Development and Transition

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 1	<p>Existing Business Support in the Draft Operational Plan - I support Council's recognition of the need for economic transition and local investment. However, the Draft Operational Plan should more clearly recognise the existing business community as a core part of that transition. Existing businesses are already investing in the Lithgow LGA, employing local people, activating town centres, supporting tourism, and contributing to community life. The Plan should therefore include clearer practical support for businesses already operating here, not only future investment attraction.</p> <p>Economic Transition, Renewal and Development The Plan rightly focuses on post-coal transition, investment attraction, emerging industries and regional planning. However, economic transition should also include the businesses already operating in the Lithgow LGA. The references to business capability and local investment are welcome, but the Plan should make clear that this support includes existing small businesses, main street traders, tourism operators, hospitality venues and service providers. Practical examples could include grant navigation, digital marketing support, shopfront presentation advice, business networking, succession planning, disaster preparedness, and help adapting to changed traffic, visitor and spending patterns.</p>	<p>Submission noted. There is a renewed focus on economic development in the 2026/27 Operational Plan and budget.</p>
Submission 1	<p>Main Street and Town Centre Activation Council should identify town centre activation as a direct business-support measure, including signage, streetscape presentation, public amenities, events, and marketing that helps bring foot traffic to existing local traders. This is particularly important for retail, cafés, pubs, services, accommodation, tourism operators and other visitor-facing businesses. Practical examples could include “shop local” or “still open for business” campaigns during roadworks, detours, disasters or major disruptions; regular town-centre events that bring foot traffic into Lithgow, Portland, Wallerawang, Hartley and surrounding villages; and</p>	<p>Submission noted. Main Street and Town Centre Activation is currently under consideration.</p>

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>coordinated seasonal campaigns around winter, school holidays, Christmas, long weekends and heritage or tourism weekends. Town-centre activation should also include better wayfinding signage from highways, detours, car parks, visitor sites and train stations into business precincts, along with cleaner and more attractive streets through bins, seating, lighting, public toilets, garden beds, murals and empty shopfront treatments. Where appropriate, Council could also support night-time or weekend trading experiments, particularly when linked to events, tourism campaigns or seasonal visitation.</p>	
Submission 1	<p>Business Communication, Roadworks and Disruption</p> <p>The Plan should include a clearer communication pathway for the existing business community, especially during roadworks, detours, infrastructure projects, natural disasters or other disruptions that affect local trade. Council should have a simple business disruption protocol that includes early notification, clear information about timing and access changes, temporary wayfinding signage, coordination with Transport for NSW where relevant, and promotion reminding residents and visitors that affected businesses remain open. Practical examples could include a regular business e-newsletter, a central “Business in Lithgow LGA” webpage, targeted disruption updates, and a clear point of contact or referral pathway for business enquiries. Road and transport planning should consider not only vehicle movement and asset condition, but also access to business precincts, pedestrian movement, visitor wayfinding and the economic impact of disruption.</p>	<p>Council is currently working with Transport for NSW in advocating for stronger community support, whatever form that takes. Council is looking to make minor traffic adjustments to ease traffic flows.</p>
Submission 1	<p>I ask Council to strengthen the Draft Operational Plan by clearly identifying existing local businesses as a key part of Lithgow’s economic transition. This could be done by adding practical business support actions under Economic Transition, Main Street and Town Centre Activation, Tourism, Strategic Communications and Road/Transport, with a focus on helping businesses already operating in the Lithgow LGA to remain viable, visible and connected during a period of significant change.</p>	<p>Submission noted. There is a renewed focus on economic development in the 2026/27 Operational Plan and budget.</p>

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 2	<p>Immediate Business Support During Major Detours</p> <p>I am writing to ask Council to allocate funding in the upcoming budget for an immediate business support campaign focused on the impact of road detours, and access confusion. This is not a request for a long-term strategy or a major new program. It is a request for practical, visible support that can begin now. Local businesses are already operating in difficult times due to road detours, changed traffic patterns and confusion around access. For travellers, long lines of traffic make it less likely they will choose to leave the queue, navigate an unfamiliar route, find parking and stop in town. As a result, businesses can be affected not because they are closed or inaccessible, but because the current traffic conditions make stopping feel harder than simply continuing on. For residents, moving around town has become less direct and less convenient, which can discourage quick trips into business precincts. For many small businesses, even a small drop in foot traffic can have a serious impact. A customer who no longer turns into Main Street for coffee, lunch, shopping or services is not just one lost sale; it is part of a wider pattern that affects the whole business precinct. Council can help counter this by using its communication, tourism and community channels to send a clear and repeated message: local businesses are still open, still accessible and still worth supporting.</p>	<p>The Council is working collaboratively with Transport for NSW and the NSW Reconstruction Authority on mitigating the impacts of the Great Western Highway closure.</p>
Submission 2	<p>Proposed Campaign: “Still Open / Still Local”</p> <p>I ask Council to fund a short-term “Still Open / Still Local” campaign focused on bringing residents and visitors into Lithgow’s town centres during the current period of road disruption and household financial pressure. The campaign could be delivered in partnership with the Lithgow Chamber of Commerce, with Council providing communications support, design, promotion and wayfinding assistance, and the Chamber helping gather business information, trader feedback, photos, opening hours and local stories.</p>	<p>The Council is working with Transport for NSW on providing signage similar to a “Still Open / Still Local” campaign.</p>

	<p>Practical Actions</p> <p>The campaign could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple “Still Open / Still Local” social media tiles for Council, Seven Valleys, Chamber and business pages; • regular business spotlight posts featuring local cafés, shops, restaurants, services, galleries and accommodation; • a simple Main Street access and parking map showing how to reach business precincts during detours; • clear promotion of public toilets, parking and pedestrian routes; • temporary wayfinding signage such as “Main Street businesses open”, “Parking”, “Public toilets” and “Cafés, shops and services”; • a weekly “What’s Open This Weekend” post to encourage local spending; • short videos or posts reminding people that detours do not mean businesses are closed; • seasonal “shop local” messaging that recognises people are spending carefully but encourages them to keep small purchases local where they can. <p>These actions do not require a major event or expensive infrastructure. They require coordination, a modest budget and a clear decision to support existing businesses now.</p> <p>Why Council Support Matters</p> <p>Individual businesses can promote themselves, but the current issue is bigger than any one trader. Road detours changed traffic flows and access confusion affect whole precincts. Cost-of-living pressure affects the spending behaviour of the wider community. Council is well placed to provide trusted, area-wide messaging that reassures people that town centres remain open and accessible.</p> <p>Council and Seven Valleys channels can also reach residents and visitors who may not follow individual business pages. A coordinated campaign</p>	
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Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>would help convert general awareness of the area into actual visits to local businesses.</p> <p>Benefits</p> <p>This proposal would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help reduce the impact of road detours and access confusion; • encourage residents and visitors to keep using town centres; • support small businesses during cost-of-living pressure; • promote parking, toilets and pedestrian access; • connect tourism and Council messaging with local spending; • provide a practical partnership between Council and the Chamber of Commerce; create a model that can be reused during future roadworks, disasters or disruptions. <p>Closing Request</p> <p>I ask Council to allocate funding in the budget review for an immediate “Still Open / Still Local” campaign responding to the combined pressure of road detours and cost-of-living conditions. A small, targeted investment in access information, business promotion, wayfinding and local spending messages would provide practical support to businesses already operating in the Lithgow LGA. This support is needed now, while businesses are dealing with reduced discretionary spending and changed traffic patterns. It should not wait for a future strategy or long-term economic plan.</p>	
Submission 13	<p>The Emerging Economy Plan is a positive step, but the Operational Plan lacks detail on how workers will be supported through the transition away from coal and heavy industry.</p> <p>Council should commit to:</p> <p>Local job guarantees in renewable energy and circular-economy projects Training partnerships with TAFE and universities Incentives for cooperatives, social enterprises, and community-owned energy.</p>	<p>The LEEP program is evolving and the submission will be considered in future planning.</p>

Events and Cultural Partnerships

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 9	There isn't any mention of a potential Capertee Valley Bird Festival off the back of the 2025 Festival, yet we understand that it does have some level of Council support	Council was the major financial supporter of the Capertee Valley Bird Festival in 2025 and is working with the organising committee towards a future event.
Submission 9	Building a stronger arts/events/exhibitions partnership with Council focussed on the use of Glen Davis Hall.	Council is proactively working with a few local arts and cultural stakeholders to develop a proposal for future cultural planning. The Glen Davis Facility will be considered as part of this process and where appropriate included in engagement with the create industries sector.

Fees & Charges

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 14	<p>Many fees have increased above CPI, including waste, animal services, and community facility hire. While some increases reflect genuine cost pressures, others risk excluding low-income residents from essential services. Examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic waste management charges rising to \$656.80 for a standard service. • Microchipping fees increasing from \$20 to \$35. • Significant increases in adoption fees for older animals being reversed but still lacking subsidised desexing programs. 	<p>Council provides fee waivers under its Financial Assistance Program. The program was reviewed in 2026, and officers are developing a revised program to provide small grants and fee waivers to eligible community groups and organisations.</p> <p>The 'community access pass' is a great idea and will be considered as part of the development of the above-mentioned program.</p>

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>Council should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing a concession rate for all community-facing fees, not just statutory ones. • Expanding fee waivers for not-for-profits, mutual aid groups, and volunteer-run community events. • Creating a “Community Access Pass” for low-income households covering library, pool, and facility hire discounts. 	<p>Council’s libraries offer an extensive range of free services. Only a small number of services have a fee.</p>

Local History

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 9	<p>It would be good to have some comprehensive local history focus on Glen Davis. For the oil shale works we have a collection of over 1000 photos and original residents who can contribute to oral history.</p>	<p>Council retains the services of a Museums Advisor from Museums Australia who visits Lithgow monthly. A meeting will be scheduled between the Glen Davis Progress Association and the Museums Advisor to discuss its proposed project and provide advice.</p> <p>Seven Valleys VIC sells the Glen Davis history book that is a comprehensive history of Glen Davis including pictures. I would presume this is also available at the library. Tourism Officers are well versed in the history of Glen Davis also.</p>

Natural Resource Management

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 9	Council has now become an active partner with Landcare, GDCA, LLS, NEWCO and others on the further planning and work at Glen Davis Reserve yet there is no mention of the Reserve	Local reserves and council managed natural areas are not specifically identified in the operational plan. Management of Glen Davis Reserve will be included in General Plan of Management from Crown Land Reserves.
Submission 12	Suggest expanding at CC1.4 The citizens of Lithgow LGA feel valued and connected – where 3x joint projects are nominated to be undertaken including with Landcare, that consideration also be given to including partnerships with Local Aboriginal Land Councils, and the Lithgow Community Nursery.	The measure is for 3 joint projects undertaken with community groups. The projects will involve multiple stakeholders, which may include partnerships local Aboriginal Land Councils, and the Lithgow Community Nursery. LCC already have a strong relationship with these stakeholders through the Natural Areas Management Officer
Submission 12	Suggest adding at NE2.3: Natural area ecosystems and waterways are improved and protected: 1. Continued master-planning and implementation of the Vegetation Management Plan for Glen Davis Reserve, recognising its strategic location in the Capertee Valley as a habitat corridor and community asset. We generally note that Aboriginal culture and connection to Country should be recognised more broadly across the plan, including as part of supporting and promoting sustainability, healthy and active lifestyles and tourism.	

Nature-Based Tourism as Eco-tourism

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 5	<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>I am a resident of the Lithgow Local Government Area and write to make a submission on the Draft 2026/27 Operational Plan. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of Council's priorities and commend the Council's commitment to community participation in the planning process.</p> <p>This submission focuses on two interconnected matters that I believe represent one of the greatest long-term opportunities for the Lithgow LGA:</p>	<p>Management of council-controlled crown lands will be included in the General Plan of Management for Crown Land Reserves. This will include protecting the ecological values</p> <p>Landcare has assisted with plantings across council. Council hosts the Lithgow/Oberon</p>

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity conservation and ecological integrity — particularly in the Capertee and Wolgan Valleys; and Water catchment protection and watershed health — as a foundation for both ecological resilience and sustainable nature-based tourism. <p>These issues are not peripheral environmental concerns. They sit at the heart of the Council's own stated priorities: attracting tourism, creating jobs, and building a diversified economy as the region transitions away from coal.</p> <p>2. The Ecological Significance of Capertee and Wolgan Valleys</p> <p>2.1 Capertee Valley — a World-Class Natural Asset</p> <p>The Capertee Valley is one of the most ecologically significant landscapes in New South Wales, and indeed in Australia. It is internationally recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife International and is considered one of the top 50 birdwatching destinations in the world, supporting over 240 recorded bird species.</p> <p>The valley is the primary breeding habitat for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater — a species on the edge of extinction — and retains significant tracts of critically endangered White Box–Yellow Box–Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland. It contributes to approximately 10% of Australia's total biodiversity within a World Heritage-listed region.</p> <p>Community-led conservation efforts in the valley have been sustained for over three decades. The Capertee Valley Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program, run in partnership with BirdLife Australia, has planted over 100,000 trees on private land. This is a remarkable example of landholders, volunteers and conservation organisations working together — and it deserves active support and recognition from Council.</p> <p>In 2025, the inaugural Capertee Valley Bird Festival was held — a direct reflection of the valley's growing national and international profile as a nature tourism destination. Council's sponsorship of that event was welcome and should be built upon.</p>	<p>Landcare coordinator to assist with further collaboration.</p> <p>All areas of the Seven Valleys that provide the tranquil escape from city life that the 'Echo your freedom' campaign encapsulates are to be promoted where possible with available promotional assets. Acquisition of images for marketing is currently taking place.</p> <p>The Marrangaroo National Park is an important and recognised tourism asset and will be promoted accordingly.</p> <p>Conservation tourism ties into the theme of the Seven Valleys brand and is critical to the protection and credibility of the brand going forward. Eco-Tourism businesses are strongly encouraged and given maximum assistance to take advantage of the increase in visitor numbers that the Seven Valleys brand is encouraging, particularly with the fuel prices making the Seven Valleys a very attractive destination to undertake nature-based activities so close to Sydney. Work has already taken place to equip the Wolgan and Capertee Valleys with the necessary insight into opportunities for Eco-Tourism and nature-based tourism growth and will continue where possible to identify opportunities.</p>

2.2 Wolgan Valley — a Proof of Concept for Conservation Tourism

The Wolgan Valley offers a compelling model for what is possible when ecological values and tourism are aligned. Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley, situated between Wollemi and Gardens of Stone National Parks, is Australia's leading ultra-luxury conservation resort and the first resort in the world to achieve internationally accredited carbon-neutral status. It occupies just 1% of a 7,000-acre wildlife reserve and has planted over 200,000 native trees on its property since opening in 2009.

The resort is a proof of concept: world-class nature tourism and rigorous conservation are not in tension — they are mutually reinforcing. The Wolgan Valley's accessibility (approximately 2.5 hours from Sydney) and its position within World Heritage-listed landscapes make it an internationally competitive destination. However, its potential — and that of the surrounding LGA — is contingent on the ecological health of the broader landscape, including waterways, wildlife corridors and surrounding farmland.

3 The Cox's River Corridor South of Mount Walker

I wish to draw Council's particular attention to the stretch of the Cox's River and surrounding forest south of Mount Walker — an area of exceptional natural beauty and ecological value that sits largely within and adjacent to Marrangaroo National Park.

3.1 Ecological Values

Marrangaroo National Park, established in 2007, encompasses approximately 1,670 hectares of landscape between Lake Wallace and Lake Lyell, including this section of the Cox's River corridor. The area supports a remarkable range of native wildlife and vegetation communities. The Cox's River here features deep waterholes, shady riparian forest, and river reaches that are among the most intact in the upper catchment.

The park and surrounds are home to platypus — an increasingly rare and ecologically sensitive species — as well as eastern water rats, wombats, kangaroos, wallabies, and a rich diversity of woodland and aquatic birds.

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	<p>Research by the Lithgow Environment Group has highlighted that the Cox's River at Marrangaroo represents one of the healthiest reference points in the entire upper catchment for freshwater fauna, including platypus populations. Of particular historical note, it was on the Cox's River in 1836 that Charles Darwin first sighted and described the platypus — a connection to natural history that itself holds genuine tourism significance.</p> <p>The park is also one of the few known habitats of the Purple Copperwing Butterfly, a threatened species with extraordinarily specific ecological requirements — dependent on a particular native plant, a black ant species, and precise climatic conditions. Its presence is an indicator of ecological integrity that cannot easily be replicated once lost. At elevation, the peaks of the park reach nearly 1,200 metres, where snow gums appear and views from Mount Walker itself extend across the entire Lithgow area. This landscape diversity — from riverine forest to subalpine heath — compressed into a small and accessible area is genuinely rare.</p> <p>3.2 Threats and the Case for Council Advocacy</p> <p>While Marrangaroo National Park is managed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the lands immediately adjacent — including private farmland and state forests — significantly influence the ecological condition of the river corridor. Research has documented the sensitivity of freshwater fauna in the upper Cox's River catchment to degraded riparian condition, water quality impacts, and habitat fragmentation. The cumulative pressures of grazing to the riverbank, weed encroachment (particularly willows and blackberry), and legacy contamination from former industrial activity upstream all pose ongoing risks to this otherwise pristine section of river.</p> <p>Council has an important role to play here — not as the primary land manager, but as an advocate and facilitator. Specifically, I ask Council to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating to the NSW Government and NPWS for improved resourcing of Marrangaroo National Park, including enhanced visitor infrastructure, interpretive signage, and weed management; 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting community-based riparian restoration initiatives on private land adjacent to the Cox's River corridor south of Mount Walker, in partnership with Central Tablelands Local Land Services; • Identifying the Cox's River corridor as a priority landscape in any future biodiversity or open space strategy developed by Council; and • Ensuring that any proposed development or land use change in the catchment above this section of river is assessed for potential water quality and ecological impacts. <p>3.3 Eco-Tourism Potential</p> <p>The area already draws visitors for camping, swimming, fishing, mountain biking, kayaking and wildlife spotting — but it does so largely without the infrastructure or promotion that would allow it to reach its potential. The combination of the Cox's River, Mount Walker's panoramic summit, platypus habitat, and proximity to Lithgow (less than 20 minutes by road) makes this a compelling nature tourism node that is currently undervalued in Council's tourism strategy.</p> <p>With modest investment in signage, walking track maintenance, and targeted promotion through the Seven Valleys tourism framework, the Cox's River Mount Walker corridor could become a genuinely distinctive drawcard — particularly for visitors already attracted to the Capertee Valley or the Blue Mountains who are seeking a less-visited alternative.</p> <p>4. Water Catchment Protection as a Foundation</p> <p>The three landscapes discussed in this submission — the Capertee Valley, the Wolgan Valley, and the Cox's River corridor south of Mount Walker — are all ecologically anchored to healthy waterways. The Capertee River, the Wolgan River/Carne Creek, and the Cox's River itself support the riparian vegetation, aquatic habitat, and groundwater recharge that underpin the biodiversity these areas are known for. The Cox's River is also impounded at Lake Lyell, one of Lithgow city's primary water supply sources — making its catchment health a matter of direct public interest.</p>	

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>I note that the Council has invested significantly in water supply infrastructure, including the Clarence to Wallerawang Pipeline Project to support industrial growth. This is understood and supported. However, I submit that equivalent attention and investment is needed on the demand and protection side of water management — particularly in the rural valleys that are not serviced by reticulated supply.</p> <p>Specifically, I urge Council to consider the following in the 2026/27 Operational Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for streambank revegetation and riparian buffer restoration programs in the Capertee and Wolgan Valleys, in partnership with Central Tablelands Local Land Services and Landcare groups; • Weed and feral animal control programs along waterways in the Seven Valleys, as invasive species are among the most significant threats to native woodland and riparian communities; • Engagement with private landholders on voluntary conservation agreements (such as NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust stewardship agreements) that can deliver long-term habitat protection at no ongoing cost to Council; and • Ensuring that any future development or infrastructure proposals in or adjacent to these valleys is subject to rigorous ecological assessment that reflects the areas' IBA and World Heritage adjacency status. <p>5. The Opportunity: Nature-Based Tourism as Economic Diversification</p> <p>Council's 2026–2030 Delivery Program identifies attracting tourism and creating jobs as two of its seven key priorities. The Capertee and Wolgan Valleys represent an outstanding — and currently under-leveraged — opportunity to advance both priorities simultaneously.</p> <p>The global market for nature-based and ecotourism is growing rapidly. Travellers are increasingly seeking authentic, meaningful experiences in natural environments. The Capertee Valley already draws birdwatchers from across Australia and internationally. The Wolgan Valley demonstrates that ultra-premium</p>	

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>visitors will travel to — and pay significantly for — a truly exceptional wilderness experience.</p> <p>What is needed to realise this potential is a coherent, Council-supported strategy that links ecological investment with tourism infrastructure and promotion. I recommend the following actions for consideration in the 2026/27 Operational Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission or co-fund a Nature Tourism Opportunity Study for the Capertee and Wolgan Valleys, identifying infrastructure gaps (signage, walking tracks, camping facilities, road access), visitor capacity, and potential for new eco accommodation offerings; • Work with Destination NSW and the Seven Valleys Tourism Destination Action Plan to develop dedicated marketing for the Capertee Valley as a premier birdwatching and nature tourism destination; • Investigate the feasibility of a Capertee Valley Conservation and Visitor Hub — a low-footprint interpretive facility at an appropriate gateway location — that could host birding and nature tourism events, provide visitor information, and serve as a base for conservation education programs; • Support the Capertee Valley Bird Festival as an annual event with multi-year funding certainty, enabling organisers to plan and market effectively to national and international audiences; and • Explore grant opportunities through the NSW Government's Saving our Species program, the Commonwealth's Environment Restoration Fund, and Ecotourism Australia for co-investment in conservation and tourism infrastructure. <p>6. Alignment with Council's Own Strategic Priorities</p> <p>I want to be clear that this submission is not asking Council to prioritise the environment at the expense of other objectives. Rather, I am arguing that investment in the ecological integrity of the Capertee and Wolgan Valleys is one of</p>	

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>the most strategically aligned things Council can do across multiple objectives simultaneously:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism: The valleys are already internationally recognised. Conservation investment builds the very product that tourism depends on. • Economic diversification: Nature tourism is a growth sector that can create local jobs in guiding, hospitality, accommodation, and land management — jobs that are local, skilled, and not contingent on commodity prices. • Post-coal transition: The Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan rightly identifies renewable energy and advanced manufacturing as economic pillars. Nature based tourism offers a complementary third pillar that draws on the LGA's natural endowments rather than requiring greenfield industrial investment. • Youth retention: Young people are increasingly drawn to careers in conservation, land management, and sustainable tourism. Growing these industries locally gives young people a reason to stay. <p>7. Summary of Recommendations</p> <p>I respectfully ask that Council consider incorporating the following into the 2026/27 Operational Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate funding or in-kind support for streambank revegetation and weed control programs in the Capertee and Wolgan Valleys, and along the Cox's River corridor south of Mount Walker, in partnership with LLS and Landcare; • Commission a Nature Tourism Opportunity Study for the Capertee, Wolgan, and Cox's River corridors to inform future infrastructure and investment decisions; • Provide multi-year funding certainty for the Capertee Valley Bird Festival; • Engage proactively with private landholders on voluntary conservation agreements, including BCT stewardship options; 	

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to NPWS for improved resourcing and visitor infrastructure at Marrangaroo National Park; and • Develop a policy position on protecting ecological values in these landscapes to guide future development assessments. I thank the Council for its consideration of this submission and welcome the opportunity to discuss any of these matters further. 	
Submission 9	Planning for the impact of the Great Wollemi Walk on Glen Davis and the Capertee Valley	Planning for additional foot traffic and visitation to Glen Davis, and other areas in the Capertee Valley as a result of the Great Wollemi Walk is something the Tourism Department is well aware of and will be liaising with other departments of council to mitigate potential negative impacts, while identifying positive improvements, opportunities, and collaboration with residents and businesses.

Planning for the future

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 9	It was understood that Council was embarking on Precinct Planning for places such as Glen Davis, Capertee, Glen Alice but none of this is reflected in the Plan	Council is continuing to work towards the development of precinct plans for the villages across the Seven Valleys.
Submission 9	There is strong community and Associations support for Council/Exec meetings forums in the Capertee Valley once or twice a year, visibility and engagement on the spot are important	The Council conducts four “Coffee and Chat” Sessions across the LGA throughout the year. Each session is held in a different location to ensure equity, fairness and accessibility. The sessions are advertised and all members of the community are invited to attend.

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
		<p>Council’s Community Development team are working in partnership with a range of health and community services to pilot a program which would conduct outreach to the villages and townships outside of the central business districts across the LGA. The pilot program is planned to commence in early 2027.</p> <p>It is planned to host Seven Valleys Tourism Committee Meeting in the Capertee Valley as well as other areas around the Seven Valleys/Lithgow LGA. This is critically important to allow maximum attendance and input into the strategic direction of Tourism in the area.</p>
Submission 13	<p>Community services and social wellbeing The Plan recognises the need for a “strategic reset,” but this must not become a euphemism for cuts to essential community services. “We will be taking every opportunity to review our operations for efficiencies... and services that are reduced in demand.” (Operational Plan, p.3) Before reducing services, Council must: Conduct genuine community consultation: Assess social impact, not just financial cost Prioritise vulnerable groups, including young people, seniors, and people with disability Infrastructure priorities</p>	<p>Throughout the 2025-26 financial year Council conducted a range of community engagement activities which will support the development of a renewed Community Strategic Plan. In line with this, the departments responsible for delivering community services including library services and community programming will also be developing renewed strategies and plans which will support continued delivery of such services with improved social impact. Council is forming strategic partnerships to support health and wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable groups.</p>

Recreation

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 6	Gasworks Park Renew the old playground on Gasworks Lane, Lithgow the metal burns the children's legs.	Council will be undertaking a comprehensive review of public playgrounds and activity spaces across the LGA to strategically determine which activities are best suited to each location. The review will include a spatial needs analysis of all playgrounds within the local government area to assess current provision, accessibility, distribution, and future community needs. Council is also undertaking a review of the compliance and condition of existing playgrounds and skate parks to assess whether these assets require renewal or replacement, and to determine their ongoing suitability and need within the community.
Submission 7	The Skate Park at Cullen Bullen gets daily use, it provides social connection and physical activity for the younger generation, however it needs modernising. I feel we should have a similar design to the other Skate Parks in the Lithgow City Council Area.	
Submission 16	I often take my grandchildren to the Cullen Bullen Skatepark , I feel it needs upgrading to the standards of Wallerawang Skatepark. It needs Shade, Seating and a general upgrade. The area is large enough to utilised for other means for example picnic tables, BBQ or even outdoor exercise equipment for adults. I also feel public toilets could be put in this area.	
Submission 16	I would also like to see more shrubs, gardens in the town (Cullen Bullen) to give it more character.	

Revenue Policy


Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 15	Equity, fairness and capacity to pay Council's Revenue Policy acknowledges the tension between "benefit or user pays" and "capacity to pay," but the draft still	The adjustment to the base amounts reduces the reliance on land value, which assists in reducing the reliance on land values.

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>leans heavily on regressive structures that disproportionately impact low-income households.</p> <p>The policy states that Council aims to “minimise financial hardship,” yet the base amounts for residential rates continue to rise, and the ad valorem structure still ties essential service funding to volatile land valuations. “The balance of income for ordinary rates is derived by multiplying the land value of a property by a rate in the dollar...” (Revenue Policy, p.5) This approach penalises long-term residents, pensioners, and renters indirectly through increased housing costs.</p> <p>A more progressive structure would:</p> <p>Reduce reliance on land-value-based revenue and increase the proportion of revenue raised from high-impact commercial and extractive industries.</p> <p>Expand hardship provisions beyond payment deferrals to include partial waivers for vulnerable households.</p> <p>Introduce environmental incentives—reduced rates for properties with solar, water-saving systems, or biodiversity stewardship.</p> <p>Large-scale industry contributions</p> <p>The draft continues to under-capture revenue from mining, quarrying, and large-scale power generation. For example, the Business/Power Generation or Storage category shows a single property generating only \$436,881 despite its enormous land value and impact. “Business – Power Generation or Storage... Estimated Yield \$436,881.” (Revenue Policy, p.8) Given the environmental and infrastructure burden these industries impose, Council should:</p> <p>Review the ad valorem rate for mining and power generation to ensure they contribute proportionately to the true cost of their footprint.</p> <p>Advocate for legislative reform allowing councils to levy climate-impact charges on high-emission industries.</p> <p>Pensioner concessions</p> <p>The pensioner rebate structure is welcome, but the burden still falls heavily on Council, which funds 45% of mandatory rebates. “Council is reimbursed for 55% of the Mandatory Rebates only.” (Revenue Policy, p.9) Council should lobby the</p>	<p>Legislation only permits up to 50% of a categories income to be collected using base amounts.</p> <p>Council is planning to introduce industrial centres of activity for the 2027/28 financial year to allocate a higher proportion of the rates yield to larger corporations with greater capacity to pay. This will reduce the proportion of rating income collected from other rating categories.</p> <p>The ad valorem assigned to the Power Generation sub-category is over seven times that of the Urban Business sub-category. There is a number of significant valued developments that will increase the number of properties that will be within this sub-category over the next five to ten years, which will reapportion a significant amount from the other categories.</p> <p>Significant advocacy occurs across the local government industry in relation to the stagnated pensioner concession rebate amount (being \$250 since 1993) and the subsidisation from other levels of government and will continue. This issue has been regularly raised as part of various financial sustainability reviews and inquiries</p>

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	NSW Government to fully fund statutory concessions so local ratepayers are not subsidising state-mandated rebates.	undertaken by both State and Federal Governments and LGNSW.

Transport

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 3	<p>When the old Charles Street Bridge was replaced with an ugly new one with far too many signs for the road usage the contractors were supposed to revegetate the land where they bulldozed the productive old apple trees.</p> <p>No trees were planted, the verge only left to re-grass and weed itself. We would appreciate some trees being planted here to soften the ugliness, preferably giving blossom in spring (Daffodil time - in fact some daffodil bulbs would be lovely too, as we have 3 open gardens along this way) and autumn colour as would have been seen in the photo I can't attach being limited to one only.</p>	<p>This bridge was constructed while maintaining traffic access via a temporary side track built on the right-hand side of the road across Solitary Creek. To facilitate the safe and smooth movement of vehicles merging onto Charles Street, the side track was constructed with adequate width and appropriate turning radii.</p> <p>Prior to commencing the side track works, the site was inspected by a senior ecologist as part of the project's Review of Environmental Factors (REF). Vegetation clearing and construction activities were undertaken in accordance with the ecologist's recommendations and approval to proceed.</p> <p>Following completion of the bridge works and the reopening of traffic onto the new bridge, the temporary side track was removed. The disturbed area within the road reserve was then regraded, stabilised, and seeded to promote revegetation.</p>

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	 <p data-bbox="526 662 828 829">this is the "revegetation" the contractors did on Charles Street after removing old apple trees, thus losing the September (Daffodil time) blossom. as you see, they just allowed grass and weeds to take over.</p>	<p data-bbox="1444 311 2004 446">Tree planting can be considered as part of Council's annual street tree program (and dependent on not impacting roadside safety requirements such as sight lines etc)</p>
Submission 9	<p data-bbox="392 874 1400 1045">Glen Davis/Glen Davis Roads resealing listed but the heading suggests that timing and funding are subject to reviews. This seems like avoiding any real project management plan with defined dates, \$\$\$ and standards. There is a community expectation that at this level in an Operational Plan that there would be detail.</p>	<p data-bbox="1444 874 2027 1149">The roads program listed below will be prioritised over the 2026/27 – 2027/28 financial years. The program will be reviewed quarterly, and a revised program will be published on Council's website. The roads program will be prioritised based on asset conditions and funding availability, contingent upon:</p> <ul data-bbox="1489 1157 1960 1332" style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel pricing and supplies • Bitumen pricing and supplies • Contractor availability • Completion of 2025-2026 Roads Program

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of the Great Western Highway closure.
Submission 9	Glen Davis Bridge raising is no longer in the Operational Plan	This project is still listed on Council's targeted list for grant funding opportunities when they arise
Submission 9	Shared Council and NPWS initiatives/cost sharing/investment for grading and maintaining Goora Street (Council Road with 95% NPWS camp traffic) and for the amenities block at Glen Davis	Council will continue to have Goora Street on our grading program, the section from the end of Goora Street to the campground will be the NPWS to maintain.
Submission 9	A defined road maintenance plan for Glen Davis Township and across the valley, with particular emphasis on using dust suppressant road surface materials in the township	Council has changed the material used for the grading of the roads across the LGA to one that has less dust developed when driven on. Should this not be successful further actions will be sought to minimise the dust coming from the roads.
Submission 10	<p>Whilst it has been recorded (page 15) that Priority Areas and Major Projects included \$14.3M towards the renewal of roads, stormwater and bridges and that the 2026/27 Strategic Focus (page 50) includes "Continue road asset operational review to match service delivery expectations against available budget and asset needs" there is no actual cost (refer to page 53) associated with the effect and impact of the Great Western Highway closure at Victoria Pass.</p> <p>There is mention of advocacy on behalf of the residents by Lithgow City Council for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (page 16) "Disaster Recovery Funding - pushing for better disaster recovery funding to support the region in times of crisis, ensuring resilience in the face of unforeseen events and enable betterment to limit repeat expenditure rebuilding the same infrastructure after disasters"; (page 64) "continue to advocate and apply for road rehabilitation and construction grants within the NSW and Australia Governments". 	<p>Whilst Council understands the concern of the submitter in relation to the impact of the closure of the Great Western Highway at Victoria Pass on its road network, it is clearly stated on page 66 of the Operational Plan that: The roads program listed below will be prioritised over the 2026/27 -2027/28 financial years. The program will be reviewed quarterly, and a revised program will be published on Council's website. The roads program will be prioritised based on asset conditions and funding availability, contingent upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel pricing and supplies Bitumen pricing and supplies Contractor availability

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>but there is no actual breakdown of costs such as Local Area Traffic Management Plans for the management of road space within defined residential precincts that are directly affected by the detours; increased traffic counts especially on the detour routes. What about the effects of the increased traffic, especially heavy vehicles on the infrastructure e.g. stormwater pipes etc that are below the road surfaces? Whilst there may be advocacy by Lithgow City Council to both State and Federal Governments, the actual reality will be that ratepayers in the Lithgow LGA will be bearing the additional costs associated with the closure including rate increases, reduced services and will not be reimbursed. The recent miniscule "support packages" is a clear example of the lack of financial support for the Lithgow LGA.</p> <p>So, what are the contingency plans, by Lithgow City Council, regarding the extra costs that will be a flow-on effect as a result of the closure of the Great Western Highway at Victoria Pass?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the 2025/26 Roads Program • Impact of the Great Western Highway closure <p>Council's routine maintenance and inspection scheduling includes the local road network identified as having increased usages due to the Great Western Highway closure, including road and stormwater condition monitoring and assessment. These impacts are being discussed at the Transport for NSW working group discussions, including financial costs to Council for increased maintenance and monitoring</p> <p>Increased traffic counts and monitoring of the road conditions is underway to determine the impact of the highway detour as and give an evidence base for any claims for financial assistance.</p>

Waste

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 8	Asbestos Disposal Fee	Council appreciates that the minimum asbestos charge may

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>I recently discovered a small amount - around eight kilos - of bonded asbestos in a property I own. I disposed of it in the prescribed way and paid the mandated fee - \$126.45 for any amount less than 300kg. According to the draft proposal that fee will rise to \$130.50. For an amount approaching 300kg the fee is very reasonable, and likely to be only a small part of any renovation expenses. But although I was happy to pay the fee myself, I believe that for an individual doing small repairs on their house and seeking to dispose of five, ten or twenty kg, the fee is a strong disincentive. Individual homeowners are more likely to simply dump the material in their red bins and put it out of their minds without considering that they may be putting waste management workers at deadly risk. Asbestos waste is common in Lithgow - both solid and friable. I have found both types myself. I have also had the experience of watching a friend, the managing director of our publishing business, contract mesothelioma. I witnessed her decline over several months and, weeks before she died, I attended her wedding to her long-term partner, and although it was a beautiful experience it is also one I hope never to repeat. I urge the Council to consider the safety of their workers and waive the fee for disposing of less than 50kg of asbestos waste. The cost to Council will be little or, given the likelihood that residents are already disposing of small amounts illegally, nothing. Yet it could save others, workers for whom the Council has a duty of care, from going through what I witnessed some years ago - and would not wish upon another.</p>	<p>incentivise unlawful disposal, however asbestos waste requires immediate burial by law and the minimum charge reflects the cost of immediate burial.</p> <p>Council's experience on site is that most illegal asbestos dumping occurs in larger loads where the minimum charge does not apply. Council will continue to monitor incoming loads for asbestos and will consider reducing the minimum charge in future.</p>
Submission 9	<p>The Waste section lacks anything that says Council has any sort of plan for either general, recycled or bulky waste across Capertee Valley. A Waste Transfer Station at Glen Davis isn't mentioned</p>	<p>Council has converted Capertee landfill to a transfer station incorporating separate collection of scrap metal, green waste, paper/cardboard and co-mingled (yellow bin) recycling.</p> <p>Council continues to operate a temporary transfer station at Glen Davis whilst a review of rural waste facilities is being undertaken.</p>

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response																				
Submission 10	<p>In the 2026/27 Budget Summary (page 14), there were 2 statements that stood out to me and to which I address:</p> <p>"While significant steps were taken to reduce costs, further savings can only be achieved by reducing service levels and cutting services."</p> <p>"Net income (included) Increases in Annual Charges for Domestic Waste Management (8.9%), Wastewater (12.7%) and Water (13.2%) to cover the costs of delivering these services."</p> <p>Pages 70-71 of Waste Management Services (extract below) indicates that there has been an INCREASE in Green Waste collections from two (2) to four (4) to residents who receive kerbside pickup service per annum. For Matthew Trapp to write in March 2024 "Services are always being reviewed by staff and the administration with Councillors to ensure the services are appropriate and charges are fair and equitable" and then to read in the 2026/2027 Draft Operational Plan that significant steps were taken to reduce costs....further savings ...achieved by reducing service levels" - this seems to be rather hypocritical and definitely not cost effective nor does it display a fair and equitable process.</p> <p>Regarding the increase in annual charges, the quoted Domestic Waste Management increase is 8.9%. However, there is no mention of the increase in the Rural Waste Disposal Fee - it has increased by 20.77%!</p> <p>The table below illustrates the contributions by Residential (non-urban) and farmland to the Annual Yield (in rates) for 2026/2027:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="392 1023 1532 1377"> <thead> <tr> <th>CATEGORY</th> <th>Number of Properties</th> <th>Yield</th> <th>Total Yield in Rates (\$)</th> <th>% of TOTAL for all categories</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Residential/Urban</td> <td>7,299</td> <td></td> <td>9,020,029</td> <td>36.06696887%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Residential/Other</td> <td>3,272</td> <td>5,195,448</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Farmland</td> <td>511</td> <td>1,499,103</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	CATEGORY	Number of Properties	Yield	Total Yield in Rates (\$)	% of TOTAL for all categories	Residential/Urban	7,299		9,020,029	36.06696887%	Residential/Other	3,272	5,195,448			Farmland	511	1,499,103			<p>Bulk green waste collections are two (2) times per year. This has been updated in the Final Operational Plan.</p> <p>The 'Waste Disposal – Rural' charge specifically funds the provision of rural waste facilities. The cost of operating these facilities has increased due to increased regulation and the closure of landfills and conversion to transfer stations.</p> <p>Where development occurs on the fringe of the kerbside collection area, Council reviews and may extend the kerbside area. Such expansion occurred in May 2026 along Range Road.</p> <p>The bulky waste services occur as part of the kerbside collection contract and all properties on the kerbside residential charge are eligible for these bulky waste services.</p> <p>Provision of a bulky waste service to all residents would add significantly to the cost of providing the service.</p>
CATEGORY	Number of Properties	Yield	Total Yield in Rates (\$)	% of TOTAL for all categories																		
Residential/Urban	7,299		9,020,029	36.06696887%																		
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Submission No.	Submission					Officers Response																										
	TOTAL		6,694,551	6,694,551	26.76844637%																											
	SUBTOTAL (All Residential and Farmland)			15,714,580																												
	TOTAL (of all Categories)			25,009,113																												
<p>The Table below illustrates the fees for Wastes - Management / Disposal since 2024/2025 to the proposed 2026/2027:</p>																																
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="392 727 564 857">Category re Waste Collection</th> <th data-bbox="571 727 696 857">2024/25 Fee (\$)</th> <th data-bbox="703 727 828 857">2025/26 Fee (\$)</th> <th data-bbox="835 727 963 857">\$ Increase</th> <th data-bbox="969 727 1097 857">% Increase</th> <th data-bbox="1104 727 1232 857">2026/27 Fee (\$)</th> <th data-bbox="1238 727 1366 857">\$ Increase</th> <th data-bbox="1373 727 1500 857">% Increase</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="392 861 564 991">Residential (weekly kerbside)</td> <td data-bbox="571 861 696 991">557</td> <td data-bbox="703 861 828 991">602.60</td> <td data-bbox="835 861 963 991">45.6</td> <td data-bbox="969 861 1097 991">8.19%</td> <td data-bbox="1104 861 1232 991">656.80</td> <td data-bbox="1238 861 1366 991">54.21</td> <td data-bbox="1373 861 1500 991">8.996%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="392 995 564 1078">Rural / Farmland</td> <td data-bbox="571 995 696 1078">208.7</td> <td data-bbox="703 995 828 1078">290.30</td> <td data-bbox="835 995 963 1078">81.6</td> <td data-bbox="969 995 1097 1078">39.1%</td> <td data-bbox="1104 995 1232 1078">366.40</td> <td data-bbox="1238 995 1366 1078">76.1</td> <td data-bbox="1373 995 1500 1078">20.77%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>									Category re Waste Collection	2024/25 Fee (\$)	2025/26 Fee (\$)	\$ Increase	% Increase	2026/27 Fee (\$)	\$ Increase	% Increase	Residential (weekly kerbside)	557	602.60	45.6	8.19%	656.80	54.21	8.996%	Rural / Farmland	208.7	290.30	81.6	39.1%	366.40	76.1	20.77%
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<p>Considering that Residential Non-Urban and Farmland contribute an annual yield of 26.77% (cf. Residential Urban contributing 36%) of the Total Estimated Rates Yield (see page 8 of the 2026/27 Draft Revenue Policy) it is a further insult to plunder the purses by charging extra for waste disposal. From 2024/25 to the proposed 2026/27 there has been a combined 59.87% increase in fees for Rural /Farmland properties that do not receive the weekly kerbside collections. Compare this figure to that of Residential with Weekly Kerbside collections (17.186%). In addition, Rural / Farmland properties are paying more</p>																																

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
	<p>than half the fee (actually 55.79%) of the residential counterparts who will be receiving the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52 red bin collections / household • 52 green bin collections / household • 26 yellow bin collections / household • 2 bulky waste collections / household • 4 green waste collections / household <p>This is INSULTING!!!! The facts speak!!! The Rural / Farmland are being charged for services that they do not receive! There is a definite disparity in services especially when there has been an increase in waste services for residential urban (from 2 to 4 green waste collections) for an increase of \$54.21 when the Rural / Farmland will have an increase of \$76.10 for NOTHING!</p> <p>This is in stark contrast to the message recorded on page 83 of Financial Management: Community Strategic Plan Objective GL1: A proactive Council that sets the long-term direction for the LGA to ensure a sustainable future.</p> <p>Determine cost inputs to delivery services and based on pricing strategy set Fees and Charges to ensure appropriate cost recovery Identify services that are not financially sustainable, based on community and operational priorities, and determine if reductions are to be made.</p> <p>In addition, this is also in stark contrast to the message recorded on page 84: Community Strategic Plan Objective GL1:</p> <p>Review and make recommended changes to rating structure that is in line with legislation and supports a fair and equitable rating system.</p> <p>Finally, Lithgow City Council cannot state there will extra costs associated with transportation of bulky wastes, especially down Range Road (where I reside) as each day a waste truck / vehicle travels the length of Range Road from Pipers Flat Road to the Great Western Highway.</p> <p>In conclusion, this a request:</p> <p>I am advocating for inclusion of Bulky Waste collection for ALL residents.</p>	

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 14	<p>Waste and environmental charges</p> <p>The waste charges reflect rising operational costs, but the structure does not incentivise waste reduction.</p> <p>Council should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discounted rate for households that opt for smaller bins • A reward scheme for low-waste households • Free green waste drop-off days to reduce illegal dumping 	<p>The waste hierarchy forms part of Council's Waste Management and Resource Strategy (2022-2026). The waste hierarchy prioritises waste avoidance and reduction.</p> <p>A new Waste Strategy is being developed from 2027 that will include further actions to incentivise waste reduction. The new Waste Strategy will go to the public for consultation.</p>

Water

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 11	<p>Objection to Proposed Additional Water Access Charge</p> <p>We are writing regarding the proposed 2026/27 water access charges and the advice received from Council that an additional annual water access charge of \$515 will apply to our property due to the installation of a second water meter.</p> <p>The second water meter was installed solely because it was required by Council as a condition of development consent for our dual occupancy application. During the development approval process, we expressed our concerns regarding the requirement for a separate meter and advised that we did not believe it was necessary. However, we were informed that it was a mandatory condition of approval. As a result, we incurred approximately \$2,500 in costs to have the additional meter installed and connected.</p> <p>We are therefore concerned that, having already paid the full cost of installing infrastructure required by Council, we are now being subjected to an ongoing annual access charge for a meter that was not installed by choice but as a mandatory condition of development consent.</p>	<p>Council's water usage charges apply on a two-tier basis: a Tier 1 rate applies to the first 250 kilolitres (kL) of water consumed through a meter in each billing period, with a Tier 2 rate applying to consumption beyond this amount.</p> <p>Where a property is serviced by a single water meter, the 250kL Tier 1 allowance applies to the combined usage of all dwellings, units, or tenancies on that property. Where a property has more than one separately metered connection, most commonly where a property contains</p>

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	<p>The property remains a single parcel of land under one ownership and title. While we acknowledge that the development was approved as a dual occupancy, we seek clarification as to why a mandatory second meter on a single property automatically attracts a separate annual water access charge equivalent to that of a separate property connection.</p> <p>We also note that both meters are smart meters and are read remotely. Council does not incur the traditional labour costs associated with physically attending the property to read multiple meters. Furthermore, water consumption is already charged based on actual usage, meaning any increased demand on the water network is recovered through usage charges.</p> <p>In light of the above, we respectfully request clarification on the following matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The specific legislative provision within the Local Government Act 1993 or other applicable legislation that authorises Council to impose a separate annual water access charge based solely on the existence of an additional water meter. 2. The specific section of Council's adopted Revenue Policy, Fees and Charges Schedule, or Water Supply Policy that states water access charges are applied on a per-meter basis. 3. Whether the additional charge is imposed because the property contains a dual occupancy, or whether it is imposed solely because a second water meter exists. 4. Whether properties containing dual occupancies but serviced by a single water meter are also charged multiple water access fees. 5. The rationale for imposing multiple annual access charges on a single parcel of land that remains under one ownership and title. 6. What additional costs are incurred by Council that justify an additional annual water access charge of \$515 per year where the second meter was required by Council and installed at the property owner's expense. <p>We appreciate Council's responsibility to maintain and operate essential water infrastructure. However, we believe it is reasonable to question the fairness of imposing an ongoing annual charge arising from a mandatory infrastructure requirement, particularly</p>	<p>multiple dwellings, each with their own meter, each connection receives its own 250kL Tier 1 allowance. A property with two connections therefore has access to a combined 500kL Tier 1 allowance before Tier 2 rates apply, compared with 250kL for an equivalent property on a single connection.</p> <p>The Water Access Charge is levied per metered connection to Council's water network, in accordance with Section 501 of the Local Government Act 1993 and the metering requirements of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021. This charge reflects the cost to Council of providing, maintaining, reading and ultimately replacing each connection, and ensures that properties with multiple connections, and the additional Tier 1 usage allowance this provides, contribute to network costs on an equitable basis relative to single-connection properties.</p> <p>The number of access charges applied to a property is determined by the number of metered connections</p>

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	<p>where the installation costs have already been borne by the property owner and water usage charges are separately applied.</p> <p>We respectfully request that Council reconsider the proposed additional water access charge or, alternatively, provide a detailed explanation of the policy, cost basis and legislative authority supporting its application.</p>	<p>to Council's water network, regardless of the property's land use classification, the number of dwellings it contains, or whether it comprises a single title.</p>

Wayfinding Signage

Submission No.	Submission	Officers Response
Submission 4	<p>Improved directional signage near the corner of Mort Street & Eskbank Street and the approach to Main Street, particularly in light of the current Great Western Highway disruption and traffic detour.</p> <p>Main Street businesses are already dealing with changed traffic patterns, reduced passing trade and visitor confusion. During this period, Lithgow should be doing everything possible to make it easy for drivers, visitors and detoured traffic to find the town centre, park, use public amenities and support local businesses.</p> <p>The existing sign at this location is not adequate for that purpose. As the attached image shows, the current signage is small, easy to miss, and only points toward Eskbank Street, a car park and the Anglican Church. It does not clearly direct people toward the Lithgow CBD, Main Street businesses, public toilets, shops, cafés or visitor services.</p> <p>For residents, this may seem like a minor issue because we already know where Main Street is, where the parking is, and where the public amenities are.</p> <p>For visitors, detoured drivers, older people, families, and people simply looking for somewhere to stop, it is a real wayfinding problem. A driver unfamiliar with Lithgow could</p>	<p>This item is being discussed with Transport for NSW as part of the impacts of the Great Western Highway closure</p>

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	 <p data-bbox="792 269 1536 842"> pass this corner without any clear indication that they are beside a town centre with businesses, parking and public amenities close by. This corner is an important decision point. With detoured traffic moving through unfamiliar routes, clear signage matters. People who might otherwise stop in Lithgow need immediate, simple cues that the CBD, parking, shops, cafés and toilets are close by. Without those cues, they are more likely to keep driving. A clearer sign at this location should direct people toward: Lithgow CBD / Main Street Shops, cafés and services public parking, public toilets. This would not require a major project. It is a simple, practical improvement that would help visitors understand where they are, where they can park, and why they should stop. </p> <p data-bbox="383 847 1536 1018"> It would support Main Street activation, improve the visitor experience, and help local businesses at a time when every additional customer matters. The current sign points people to a car park, but it does not tell them that the car park serves the town centre. It also points people beyond Main Street without making it clear that Main Street is the destination. That missing link is important. </p> <p data-bbox="383 1023 1536 1091"> Better signage would help turn passing or detoured traffic into actual foot traffic for Main Street. </p> <p data-bbox="383 1096 1536 1300"> I ask Council to review the signage at this corner and consider installing clearer directional wayfinding that actively supports the CBD, public amenities and local businesses, especially while the Great Western Highway detour is placing additional pressure on local trade. In the current climate, every missed turn into Main Street is a missed opportunity for local business. Improved signage at this corner would be a simple, practical way to help more people find the town centre, use local facilities, and support Lithgow businesses. </p>	