

Subsequent Business Paper



Ordinary Meeting of Council

to be held at

Council Administration Centre

180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Monday 29 June 2026

at 6:30 PM

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1. Mayoral Minutes

1.1. Mayoral Minute - 29/06/2026 - Mayors' response to NSW Budget 2026/27

Report by Mayor – Councillor Cassandra Coleman

Commentary

The NSW Government has handed down its final Budget before the 2027 State election. From a regional perspective, the central issue is clear: this Budget favours communities in Western Sydney more than those west of the Blue Mountains.

Measures such as toll relief and public transport fare caps may assist some households in Sydney, but they do little for communities such as Lithgow, which continue to face challenges, including deteriorating road infrastructure, limited transport options, housing affordability pressures, access to healthcare services, and the increasing cost of living.

Lithgow has helped power NSW for generations and possesses the assets required to succeed in a changing economy, including energy infrastructure, industrial land, a skilled workforce, strong road and rail connections, and strategic access to both Western Sydney and the Central West.

However, these opportunities will not automatically translate into local jobs and economic growth without targeted investment from all levels of government in housing, enabling infrastructure, skills development, healthcare, education, and transport resilience.

While renewable energy projects may form an important part of the State's economic strategy, regional communities such as Lithgow should also share in the benefits. If investment and economic returns are concentrated elsewhere, communities that host and support this transition risk carrying the burden without receiving a fair share of the opportunities and benefits it creates.

Lithgow is simply seeking a fair distribution of government funding that recognises our contribution to the State's past, our challenges in the present, and our potential for the future.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Endorses the Mayoral Minute.
2. Continue its advocacy to ensure Lithgow receives the investment required to support future growth, including improvements to road and rail infrastructure, energy infrastructure, industrial land development, skills and workforce initiatives, and stronger connections to Western Sydney and the Central West.

2. Administration Reports

2.1. I&PD - 29/06/2026 - Major Projects - Continuation of Project Management Services

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.

Author: Ross Gurney - General Manager

Responsible Officer: Ross Gurney - General Manager

Executive Summary

To date, Council has annually resolved to appoint Wassabi Group as Project Manager for the delivery of the Wolgan Road Reconstruction and Browns Gap Road Rehabilitation projects. The most recent resolutions are as follows:

- Min. No. 25-180 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 30 June 2025 – Council endorsed the continued engagement of Wassabi Group as project managers for the Wolgan Road Reconstruction project, at an upper limiting fee of \$2,091,541 excl. GST, funded in full by the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.
- Min. No. 25-38 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 28 January 2025 – Council varied Wassabi Group's engagement by \$304,408 excl GST, increasing the total contract value to \$2,002,137, for the purpose of providing expert project management services to the Browns Gap Rehabilitation project, funded entirely by the disaster recovery prepayment provided by the NSW and Australian Governments.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement to continue Wassabi Group's appointment for Project Management Services for both the Wolgan Road Reconstruction Project and Browns Gap Road Reconstruction Project for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2029.

A project of this scale is multi-disciplinary, requiring a broad project management team to oversee delivery. This team will need to evolve over time to reflect the project's changing needs. A CPI related increase would be applied each year to retain key specialist resources within a highly competitive infrastructure market.

For the Wolgan Road Reconstruction project, Wassabi Group's proposal covers the following phases to 30 June 2029:

- Phase 2. Selection of Preferred Solution and Environmental Approval Management.
- Phase 3. Procurement Strategy and Implementation.
- Phase 4. Delivery and Finalisation.

For the Browns Gap Road Rehabilitation project, Wassabi Group's proposal covers the following phases to 30 June 2027:

- EPAR Funding Approval and Agreed with LCC.
- Environmental & Planning Approval.
- Pre-Tender.
- Tender.
- Mobilisation & Design.
- Construction.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT Council

1. Endorse the continued engagement of Wassabi Group as project managers for the Wolgan Road Reconstruction project from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2029, at an upper limiting fee of \$7,268,446 excl. GST, funded in full by the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements;
2. Endorse the continued engagement of Wassabi Group as project managers for the Browns Gap Road Rehabilitation project from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2029 (or an earlier project completion date), at an upper limiting fee of \$491,723 excl. GST, funded in full by the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements;
3. Note that the continued engagements are in accordance with Section 55(3)(i) of the Local Government Act, for the following reasons:
 - a. the market was tested in 2024, and proposed annual increases are to account for the impacts of CPI,
 - b. the original tender and project brief allowed for extensions, and
 - c. changing project managers at this stage would create significant delivery risk, and prolong the impacts on the Wolgan Valley community; and
4. Allocate annual budgets for project management of Wolgan Road and Browns Gap Road, entirely funded by DRFA grants and Council's tripartite pre-payment.

Attachments

1. CONFIDENTIAL - 2026-2029 Wolgan Road & Browns Gap Proposal May 2026 [2.1.1 - 63 pages]

Reference to any relevant previous minute

- Min. No.: 23-72 – Ordinary Meeting of Council held 24 April 2023 (Wolgan Valley Alternate Alignment Study)
- Min. No.: 23-52 – Ordinary Meeting of Council held 27 March 2023 (Wolgan Road – Review of Slope Risk Assessment)
- Min. No.: 23-6 – Ordinary Meeting of Council held 23 January 2023 (Wolgan Road Recovery and Alternate Route Construction)
- Min. No.: 24-136 - Ordinary Meeting of Council held 24 June 2024 (I&E – 24/06/24 - Wolgan Road – Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Application)
- Min. No: 24-188 Ordinary Meeting of Council held 26 August 2024 (I&E – 26/08/24 - Continuation of the Wolgan Road Reconstruction – Interim budget allocation)
- Min. No: 25-36 Ordinary Meeting of Council held 28 January 2025 (I&E – 28/01/25 - Approval of Specialist Services for Wolgan Road Reconstruction Project)
- Min. No. 25-38 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 28 January 2025 – variation of Wassabi Group's engagement to provide expert project management services to the Browns Gap Rehabilitation project
- Min. No. 25-180 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 30 June 2025 – Council endorsed the continued engagement of Wassabi Group as project managers for the Wolgan Road Reconstruction project.

Background and discussion

1. Background - Wolgan Road Reconstruction

Over the course of 2023, the administration attempted to appoint a skilled project manager to the organisation solely to manage the Wolgan Road project. It quickly became clear that the resources within the local government sector were either unavailable or ill-equipped for the task. Hence, commencing 15 December 2023, the administration met with a local construction expert to map the most appropriate pathway for effective project management and delivery, determine the optimal solution, and implement it. This would involve managing the technical, commercial (e.g. how best to engage with industry, appropriate procurement processes, contractual negotiations, etc.), and financial (including funding) aspects, as well as environmental, community, and stakeholder issues.

The work required to design the right process that fits such an expensive and complex project into the available funding framework (administered by Transport for NSW) and risk tolerance is quite specialised. Council looked beyond local government to the private sector to find a suitable management consulting / advisory firm that specialises in complex road infrastructure.

2. Recruitment - Wolgan Road Reconstruction

A Project Manager Brief was drawn up and sent to four suitable providers. These providers were identified based on expert advice offered by the Council's local construction expert. These companies were:

- a. TSA Management;
- b. E3 Advisory;
- c. RP Infrastructure; and
- d. Wassabi Group.

Detailed responses were received from each company. An initial assessment of these proposals was based upon:

- Years of experience (minimum 15 years);
- Details of relevant experience;
- Daily rate;
- Availability (both remotely and on-site);
- Details of their support candidate; and
- Details of any ancillary services able to be provided.

Understanding the importance and complexity of the project, greatest priority was afforded to relevant experience and availability.

Interviews were conducted, and Wassabi Group was selected as the preferred contractor. The interview panel included Council staff and an independent third party with significant experience in managing Tier 1 construction firms.

3. Project Brief - Wolgan Road Reconstruction

Wassabi Group was initially engaged for three months to manage the project application process. They have performed to the highest standard, providing the necessary expertise to coordinate several consultants in the formation of the multi-disciplinary project.

The project brief included the following stages, assuring the contractor of the opportunity for extensions to their engagement based on performance. The following statement was made explicit in the brief and contract:

“The role can be considered in three key phases as described below. The phases are likely to overlap each other in time.

Ideally the same Project Manager would be engaged across all phases of the Project to provide continuity.”

The project phases included in the Project Brief were:

- Strategic Pathway and Funding Application (complete),
- Selection of Preferred Solution & Environmental Approval Management (in progress),
- Procurement: Strategy and Implementation (in progress), and
- Delivery (yet to be delivered).

4. Progress To Date - Wolgan Road Reconstruction

Council then turned its attention to the most appropriate project management method as it moved from project application through to project approvals, design, and delivery. In June 2024, it approved the further appointment of Wassabi Group for a period of 12 months, to the end of July 2025. Then, on 28 November 2024, the Council varied that contract to bring additional technical support to the project.

Wassabi Group submitted an upper limit fee schedule covering the 12 months from July 2024 to June 2025. Their rates had not increased since their initial engagement in January 2024. They then sought a modest adjustment to these rates to reflect rising costs and to retain their talent.

An upper limiting fee was requested for the 12 months to 30 June 2026 of \$2,091,541 excl. GST, including the allocation of up to five human resources to the project.

5. Browns Gap Road

Browns Gap Road was damaged by several disaster events; however, the most recent impact occurred during the AGRN 1119 event, commencing 01 April 2024. Browns Gap Road is similar to Wolgan Road in that both projects relate to slope stability, both up and downslope from the road surface. There is one key difference between the two projects, however. That is, the Wolgan Road project may require a holistic realignment and complete reconstruction. In contrast, Browns Gap Road will not require reconstruction; instead, it will involve rehabilitating the existing slopes to ensure the safety of motorists in the future.

While their similarities result in the requirement for the same fields of expertise to be applied to the project, their differences result in a completely different approach to slope assessment and project design, which will ultimately feed into the application to Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and the NSW Reconstruction Authority (NSW RA). Browns Gap Road required a detailed slope assessment process to be completed, including the installation of slope monitoring equipment, such as inclinometers and piezometers, as a critical input to the design of the remediation measures.

On 11 May 2026, the Council was notified by NSW RA that its Essential Public Asset Restoration application has been approved to the value of \$12,539,900. The project must be completed by 30 June 2027.

6. Importance of Long-Term Continuity

Since their appointment in 2024, Wassabi Group has worked closely with Council, TfNSW and NSW Reconstruction Authority to:

- Secure disaster recovery funding pathways,
- Lead EPAR and DRFA submissions,
- Establish governance and reporting frameworks,

- Coordinate technical, environmental and planning investigations,
- Manage stakeholder and community engagement, and
- Progress procurement and delivery planning activities.

The proposal reflects the original intent for continuity of project leadership and integrated delivery across the full lifecycle of the projects.

The proposed three-year term is critical to providing stability and certainty to retain the current project team through the most important procurement and delivery phases of both projects.

Maintaining continuity of leadership and technical capability will help minimise remobilisation risk, preserve momentum and support efficient and timely delivery outcomes for Council and the impacted communities.

Based on the experience and expertise of Wassabi Group, their industry contacts and exemplary performance to date, it is recommended that Council endorse their continued engagement for for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2029, in line with the upper limit fee schedule and related proposal included as an attachment. To do otherwise, would attract significant project delays and loss of momentum as a new firm would need to be onboarded to this highly complex project. Such a consultant would also need to build trust and rapport with the impacted communities.

Consultation and Communication

Since the closure of Wolgan Road, the Council has continued to meet with the Wolgan community. To ensure Council's engagement with the community responds to its needs, it usually occurs monthly, in person and online.

Council and its consultants have also met with the Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation on several occasions. An approach to reassessing the risks associated with the use of the Old Wolgan Road is underway to ensure that any options to minimise environmental and cultural impacts are thoroughly considered.

A Project Control Group (PCG), which comprises representatives of Council, Transport for NSW, Department of Regional NSW and NSW Reconstruction Authority, continues to meet regularly. This PCG meets fortnightly and has been kept abreast of all project developments. By all accounts, they advise that this project remains eligible for funding, even if the process is taking much longer than anticipated.

An Executive Oversight Group (EOC) was re-established in January 2026. The EOC comprises senior representatives of Council, Transport for NSW and NSW Reconstruction Authority. The EOC meets monthly to provide senior level governance, coordination and oversight. This ensures that the project progresses in a safe, transparent and accountable way, in line with disaster recovery funding and environmental requirements.

Lithgow City Council has developed a central hub for updates regarding the Browns Gap Road Rehabilitation project. As part of the engagement proposed by this report, regular progress updates will continue to be added to the website.

Policy

Lithgow's Community Strategic Plan is the primary policy which considers how the organisation might respond to challenges of this nature. In this sense, the CSP objectives indicate that Lithgow City Council aims to:

- work together with government departments, NGOs, and community to ensure the communities of the Lithgow region have access to services and feel supported, connected and united.
- facilitate and provide infrastructure and land to support residential, rural and economic growth.
- ensure our roads and other associated infrastructure will ensure connected and efficient movement throughout the Lithgow region.
- increase our resilience to natural hazards and climate change.
- ensure planning and development activities provide a balance between the built and natural environments.
- protect and preserve the regions biodiversity.
- focus on financial, economic, social and environmental sustainability which informs council decision making.

Legal

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

Under Section 55 (3) (i) of the Local Government Act (1993), tenders for works valued over \$250,000 are not required in cases where “because of extenuating circumstances, remoteness of locality or the unavailability of competitive or reliable tenderers, a council decides by resolution (which states the reasons for the decision) that a satisfactory result would not be achieved by inviting tenders.”

Council tested the market in early 2024 and found that Wassabi Group had the necessary expertise and submitted the most competitive cost estimate. With only a modest adjustment to account for CPI, it is considered that this tender still represents the most competitive option, as was the case when it was originally assessed.

Second, this is a highly complex project with a significant delivery timeframe. Choosing a different Project Management partner will inevitably negatively impact the critical path of the project, extending the closure of the Wolgan Road, thereby extending the impact to the Wolgan Valley community.

Third, options for extension of the project management contract were embedded in the original tender and project brief.

For these reasons, it is advised that the extension of Wassabi Group’s contract does not require a renewed tender process and can occur by resolution of Council.

Risk Management

Key identified risks for both projects include:

1. Capacity to deliver and develop the project (Risk rating of Very High).
2. Capability to procure and attract the right organisations (Risk rating of High).

The controls associated with these risks largely suggest engaging an expert Project Management consultant to assist the Council throughout the project. The residual risk after this control is applied is a medium rating for both risks.

Financial

The continuation of the project management services associated with this project are eligible within the requirements of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and will be covered by an associated prepayment.

2.2. I&PD - 29/06/2026 - Renaming of Bill Ashely Grandstand

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.

Author: David Anderson - Building & Recreation Facilities Manager

Responsible Officer: Paul Smith - Director Infrastructure and Project Delivery

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the feedback received from community consultation on the proposal to rename the Bill Ashley Grandstand to the Barry Rushworth Grandstand.

Administration's Recommendation

THAT:

1. Council note the summary of survey responses provided in the report;
2. Council consider community comments and determine whether to rename the Grandstand at Tony Luchetti Sports Ground to "Barry Rushworth Grandstand";
3. Should Council determine to rename the Grandstand, options to be developed for a commemorative plaque in honour of William "Bill" Ashley and for an appropriate site for the commemoration; and
4. Council note that the options for the type and location of a commemorative plaque in honour of William "Bill" Ashley would be taken to the Sports Advisory Committee for determination.

Attachments

Nil

Reference to any relevant previous minute

Minute 26-88 Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 29 April 2026

Background and discussion

At the 29 April Ordinary Meeting, Council resolved on the matter of a proposed renaming of the Ashley Grandstand (Min. No. 26 – 88):

THAT Council:

1. Proceed to rename the Bill Ashley Grandstand as the Barry Rushworth Grandstand, subject to community comment consistent with Policy 10.3 Naming of Council Facilities.
2. Place the proposal on public exhibition for a period of 28 days prior to the matter returning to Council to consider community comments at the next available Council meeting.
3. Undertake efforts to contact any living relatives of William "Bill" Ashley to inform them of the proposal and provide an opportunity for comment.
4. Upon approval of the renaming of the grandstand or any other appropriate place, install an appropriate plaque or information board at an agreed local on near the grandstand acknowledging the life and achievements of William "Bill" Ashley, including reference to the grandstand's original name and subject to available funds.

To ensure compliance with Council Policy 10.3 Naming of Council Facilities, which sets a consistent standard for the naming of Council facilities, the Administration placed the proposal on public exhibition, which closed on 24 June 2026.

Summary of Survey Responses

11 survey responses were received regarding the proposal to rename the Bill Ashley Grandstand to the Barry (Bowser) Rushworth Grandstand. Of these responses, 6 (54.5%) supported the proposal, and 5 (45.5%) opposed it.

Supporters of the proposal cited Barry Rushworth's significant contribution to rugby league and the Lithgow community, describing the renaming as a fitting and affordable way to recognise his achievements and legacy. Several respondents suggested that William "Bill" Ashley's contribution could continue to be recognised by naming another Council facility, such as the Civic Ballroom.

Those opposed to the proposal generally acknowledged Barry Rushworth's achievements but expressed concerns about removing an existing honour bestowed on Bill Ashley. Common themes included preserving local history, maintaining the integrity of previously approved naming decisions, adherence to the Council's naming policy, and a preference for recognising Barry Rushworth through alternative means, such as naming another facility, field, structure, monument, or public space. One respondent proposed naming the facility the "Seven Valleys Grandstand" to align with Council's regional branding.

Overall, the survey responses demonstrated a mixed range of views, with supporters focused on recognising Barry Rushworth's outstanding contribution to the community, while opponents generally favoured preserving the existing recognition of Bill Ashley and exploring alternative forms of commemoration.

Consultation and Communication

The proposal to rename the Bill Ashley Grandstand to the Barry Rushworth Grandstand was placed on public exhibition through Council's *Let's Talk Seven Valleys* engagement platform between 26 May 2026 and 23 June 2026. During the exhibition period, the project page received 385 visits, with 341 aware participants, 204 informed participants and 162 engaged participants.

Community feedback was sought through a survey and a quick poll. The formal survey received 11 responses, with 54.5% (6 respondents) supporting the proposed renaming and 45.5% (5 respondents) opposing the proposal.

The quick poll attracted significantly higher participation, receiving 152 responses. Of these, 79.6% (121 respondents) supported renaming the grandstand to the Barry Rushworth Grandstand, while 20.4% (31 respondents) opposed the proposal.

Overall, the community engagement process demonstrated strong public interest in the proposal, with feedback indicating majority support for renaming the grandstand in recognition of Barry Rushworth's contributions to local sport and the Lithgow community.

Much of the effort to identify any living relatives of William "Bill" Ashley was undertaken by Cr Mahony (point 3 of Min. No. 26-88).

Policy

Council Policy 10.3 -Naming of Council Facilities.

Legal

NA

Risk Management

NA

Financial

If Council resolves to proceed, the costs and any works or programs to be deferred to fund the renaming will be reported to the next Sports Advisory Committee meeting. The Committee's recommendation will then be reported to Council for a formal decision.