



BUSINESS PAPER

Economic Development Committee

to be held at

Council Administration Centre
Council Chambers
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Monday 7 June 2021

at 4:00 PM

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1. Present

2. Apologies

3. Declaration of Interest

4. Staff Reports

4.1. Event Debrief - LithGlow 2021

Summary

The purpose of this report is to debrief LithGlow 2021 to the Economic Development Committee and advise on plans for the 2022 event.

Commentary

As a COVID-Safe event this year, with a maximum attendance of 3,100, the LithGlow 2021 was re-engineered to a tighter, less hours, and more entertainment centric event. Highlights included:

- All tickets sold within 4 weeks, with a wait list instigated.
- Event footprint centred in and around the Blast Furnace created dynamic and connected environment.
- Live music and roving entertainers.
- Significantly increased seating/tables welcomed (based on 2019 research findings).
- “Hot-Zones” (again based on 2019 research findings).
- Lighting of autumn trees and the Blast Furnace.
- Fireworks finale to close out the event.
- The shorter time of the event created great “stickability” - with attendees staying for the duration after arrival.
- Main Street buses were well used, both to the event and departing after the event (every 7 minutes).
- The “check-in” process went well with QR codes displayed and 5 COVID Marshalls on hand.

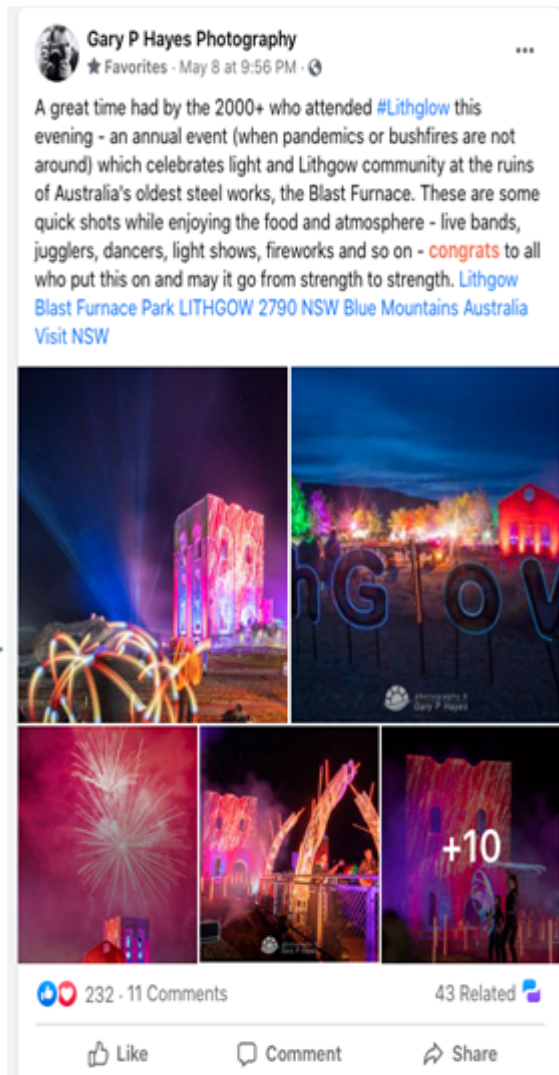
The event debrief identified the following development areas for 2022:

- Bands to be more “mainstream” catering to the masses.
- Additional seating/tables in the area where the “hot zones” were.
- Moving gazebos to the green space where the VIP cars were parked, allowing the ability to “light-up” the western side of the Blast Furnace.
- Specific entertainment for children as an option.
- Continuation of Fireworks as grand finale, also looking at a potential light drone show.

Feedback secured from attendees at the event was overwhelmingly positive and the same event ticketing and logistics/delivery plan will be continued for the 2022 event.

Some feedback from social media noted below:

-  **Chris Byrne**
Excellent event, **congrats** to the organisers ie Council I assume.
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Nathaniel Hanslow**
Tim Andrews, Gareth Andrews
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Billy Cambridge**
Amazing 🙌🙌🙌🙌
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Lynette Quinn**
Looks fantastic....
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Telli Cambridge**
Absolutely amazing ! A really well run event fantastic atmosphere 10/10
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Marcia Grew**
Loved it, very well organised. Maybe some more food vans.
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Kathy Rowe**
Yes! Great, well organised event enjoyed by young and old ❤️
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Jen Ward**
Fantastic night!! Well done... very family friendly 🌟
Like · Reply · 1w
-  **Nicki Francesca**
Was super friendly and chill, great night!!
Like · Reply · 1w



Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Economic Development Committee note the event debrief of LithGlow 2021.

4.2. Lithgow Destination Draft Marketing Strategy 2021-2024

Summary

Councillors were briefed on the Draft Lithgow Destination Marketing Strategy 2021-2024 at an Information Session on 15 February 2021. Since that time the document has been slightly revised and finalised by the Lithgow Regional Marketing Cooperative (LRMC) after consideration of feedback received from tourism members. The Draft Strategy is presented to the Economic Development Committee for review and endorsement.

Commentary

While Council has a Destination Management Plan, it does not have a current Council/Industry endorsed Destination Marketing Strategy to guide destination marketing campaigns and initiatives.

A 3-year Draft Lithgow Destination Marketing Strategy was developed with input from an external specialist in tourism strategies. The strategy identifies our strategic direction and brand messaging and will be the source document for the development and execution of clear and actionable marketing campaigns in the future.

The strategy's development aligns to an action in the 2020/2021 Council Operational Plan (SE2.2.72) - 'Enhance and create strong partnerships with local tourism businesses - Develop and implement joint Council and Industry tourism marketing campaigns'.

At the May LRMC committee meeting, after considering members' feedback, some slight wording changes were made in two areas of the draft Strategy 2021-2024: specifically, the positioning statement and target audience.

The **final core positioning statement** now reads as follows:

Built on a pioneering industrial heritage, Lithgow City is the heart of a region full of unexpected experiences. It is a region where you can explore amazing natural wonders of Australia, like the majestic Wolgan and Capertee Valleys, discover the entrepreneurial spirit that made Australia what it is today, and enjoy annual events like no other. Lithgow is much more than you expected.

The **target audience** definition is now:

Our target audience is not defined by age, occupation or other traditional demographics. They are 'experience seekers' and as such are defined by the type of experience they are after.

This may be 'Adventurous' (bushwalking, horse riding, water-skiing, etc)

They may want to learn more about Australia's history (Small Arms Factory, Blast Furnace, etc)

They may want family-friendly experiences (Lakes Lyell and Wallace, camping, etc)

They may want an artistic experience (The Foundations, Gang-Gang, Talisman, etc)

They might want an 'out there' experience (Lithgow Halloween, Ironfest)

They may just want to get away from it all and stay somewhere different/luxurious/secluded (accommodation alternatives).

And amongst the audience, there could be any mixture of these experiences that they are looking for and therefore want to visit somewhere which has multiple and varied experiences to offer.

All advertising/marketing should be geared towards these experiences and targeted accordingly.

The final Draft Marketing Strategy is attached for the review of councillors.

Attachments

1. Lithgow Marketing Strategy Final May 2021 ap 31.05.2021 [4.2.1 - 16 pages]

Recommendation

THAT the Economic Development Committee endorse the Lithgow Destination Draft Marketing Strategy 2021-2024.

4.3. Lithgow Tourism Update

Summary

The purpose of this report is to give an update on recent tourism activity and trends and future planned activity to the Economic Development Committee.

Commentary

1. **Tourism Membership** – membership continues to grow. As of May 2021, total membership stands at 142 businesses, which is 71% of all tourism businesses in the Lithgow LGA (noting we do have some out-of-LGA members too).
2. **2021 Visitor Guide** – The 83-page Destination Lithgow Visitor Guide was launched in March. The Guide is distributed across the State to 72 Tier 1 accredited VICS (open 364 days of the year). Industry feedback has been very positive, especially on the use of the many high-end “hero” pictures in the magazine.
3. **Lithgow Tourism Website** – The website was significantly updated and relaunched in May 2021. The update included the placement and updating of ads for all existing and new members. Industry feedback has been very positive, with average weekly unique visitors to the website being 2,500 (when campaigning numbers approach 7,000 unique visitors per week).
4. **Lithgow Visitor Information Centre (the VIC)** - Visitor numbers continued to hold at good levels, especially on weekends (216 and 225 people in the last fortnight for the respective weekends of 22/23 and 29/30 May). Numbers have been tracking between 10% and 15% above for the month to date and were averaging 20%-25% up post COVID restrictions easing earlier in the year.
5. **Lithgow Regional Marketing Cooperative (LRMC)** - The LRMC has met 3 times across March-May 2021. Meetings have been very positive and dynamic, and several initiatives have been completed, or are underway.
 - a. **Strategic Direction** - The first order of business was to get the Draft Marketing Strategy in front of members. That was accomplished with the Draft being updated.
 - b. **Industry Communications** -The LRMC alongside Lithgow Tourism has also developed and circulated two Tourism Member E-Newsletters for the months of April and May 2021.
 - c. **Destination Marketing** - A winter June-July Digital Marketing Campaign is currently being finalised by the LRMC. A 3-hour drive audience will be targeted. The campaign will be made up of a series of social media ads, Google Ads and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) key word targeting.
 - d. **Capability Building** – through securing a grant from the Australian Business Council’s BizRebuild program, all Lithgow tourism members have been offered the opportunity to attend this online webinar/workshop at no cost. The virtual workshop is geared towards tourism businesses enhancing their guest experiences. The date is to be finalised for the forum in the next month.
 - e. **DNSW Tourism Grant** – The LRMC, via Lithgow Tourism, has put in \$20,000 submission (\$ for \$ matching) to develop and execute a \$40,000 marketing campaign from August to October 2021. Announcements will be made at the end of June. This activity will be the prime future focus of the LRMC leading into summer 2021.
 - f. **Members Forum** – The LRMC has started early scoping of a potential members face-to-face forum prior to December 2021. This is only at an early stage at present and will be further developed in the next couple of months.

It is planned to inform the Economic Development Committee on tourism and LRMC matters going forward.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Economic Development Committee note the report on recent, and planned, tourism activity.

4.4. Lithgow Economy Scorecard

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present to the Economic Development Committee a scorecard highlighting some important local economy statistics sourced via recent updates to datasets from the Lithgow Economic Profile. A brief presentation will be given talking to the recent statistics noted in the high-level scorecard, along with a summary of longer-term industry and economic trends and issues.

Commentary

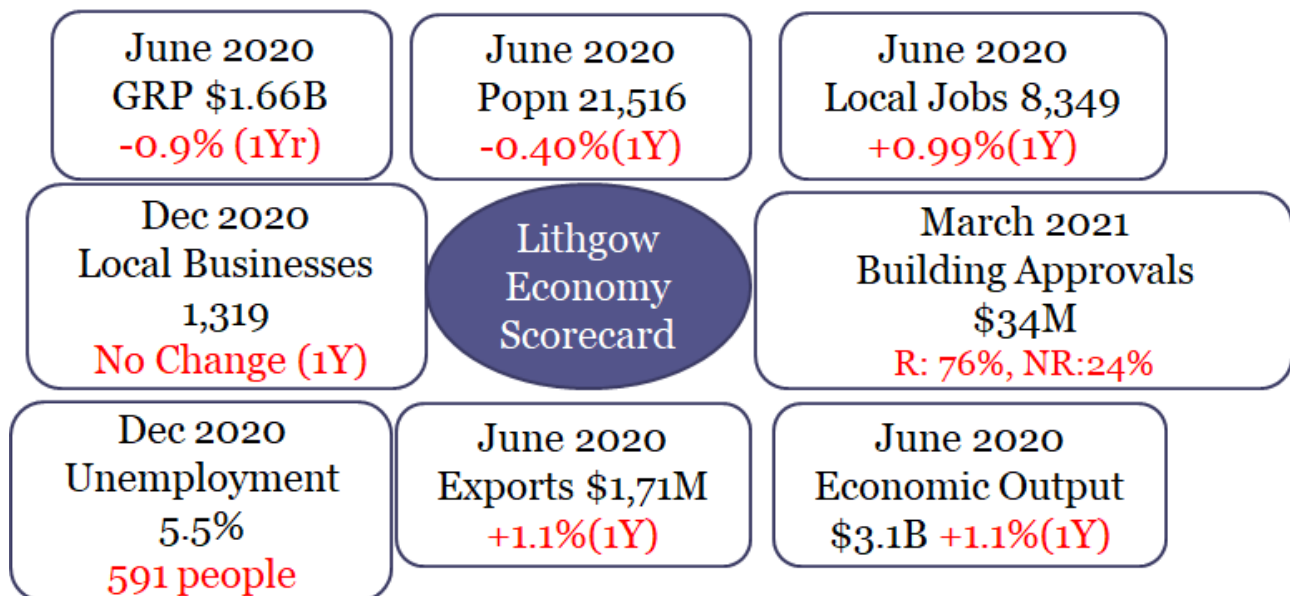
At Council we have an online resource, called the Lithgow Economic Profile - which provides economic data on our location. The datasets provide access to detailed demographic data for the 1991 to 2016 Census years, economic data and maps on industry sectors as well as population and employment forecasts. Updates occur between censuses when data becomes available, eg unemployment figures.

The economic data is important for us as it provides comprehensive information about workforce characteristics, industry contributions and the local supply chains.

There is a public website available that gives an economic overview of Lithgow's key indicators and trends: <https://economy.id.com.au/lithgow>.

A presentation will be provided to the Economic Development Committee providing an overview current economic statistics highlighted in the scorecard and longer-term trends.

AT A GLANCE - LITHGOW 12 MONTH ECONOMY SCORECARD



The 1-year economy scorecard shows:

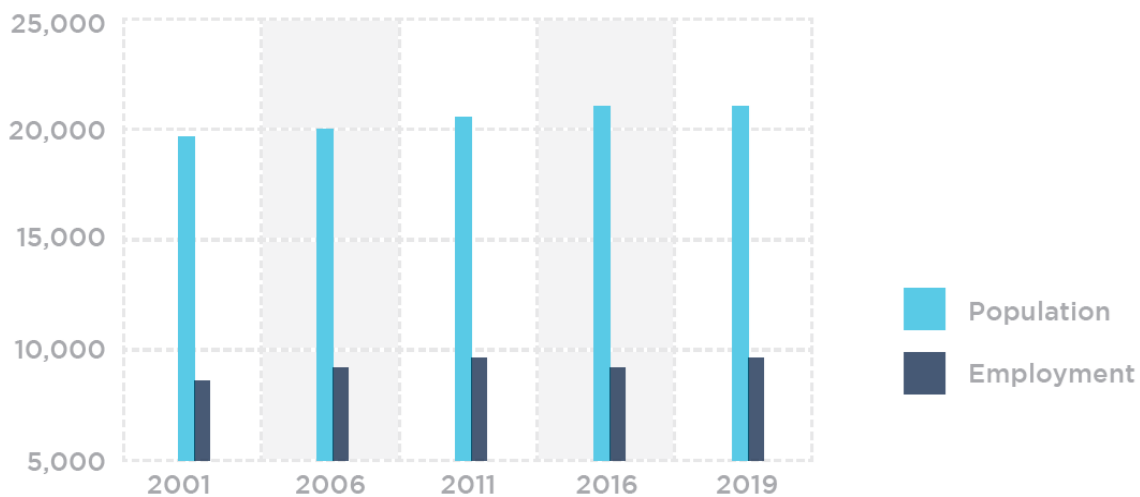
1. Slight population (ERP) decline year on year – current estimate: 21,516.
2. GRP of \$1.66B – Slightly down year-on-year (-0.9%) with economic output of \$3.1B, up 1.1%.
3. Unemployment of 591 people – 5.5%. This compares to 5.9% for Regional NSW, 5.5% for the State and 6.5% nationally.

4. Local businesses holding steady along with local jobs holding steady (1,319 businesses and 8,349 jobs),
5. Just over \$34M in building approvals in YTD March 2021 – 76% residential,
6. Exports \$1.7M, with a slight upwards movement.

The Transition Working Group report “A Case for Economic Change” delved into long term economic trends for the area with key points relating to Population and Employment; Population Age Grouping; Industry output; and employment by key sector. The details from the TWG report are reproduced below. The key points highlight some of the significant issues for consideration, particularly in the context of economic transition.

LITHGOW 20-YEAR ECONOMIC TRENDS

Population and employment 2001 to 2019 trend

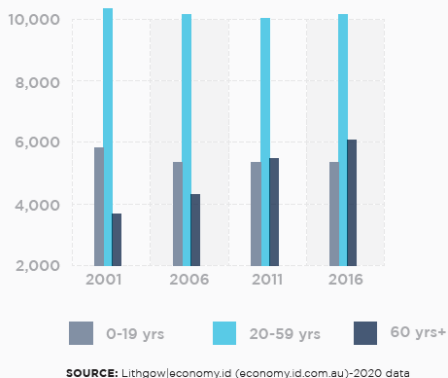


SOURCE: Lithgow|economy.id (economy.id.com.au)-2020 data

Key Points:

- Population growth since 2001 has been just over 2000 – an 11% increase
- Employment grew in the period to 2011 but has since declined.

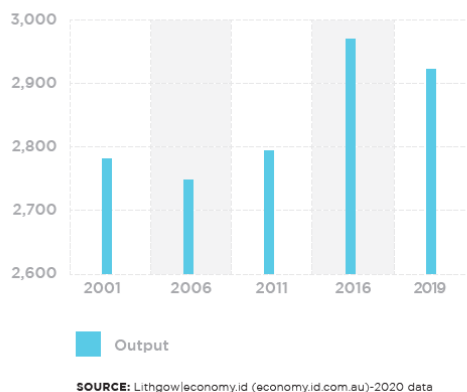
Population Age Grouping 2001 to 2016



Key Points:

- Declining trend in the number of children and youth in the Region
- Major growth in the over 60s population
- Static trend in the 'working population'

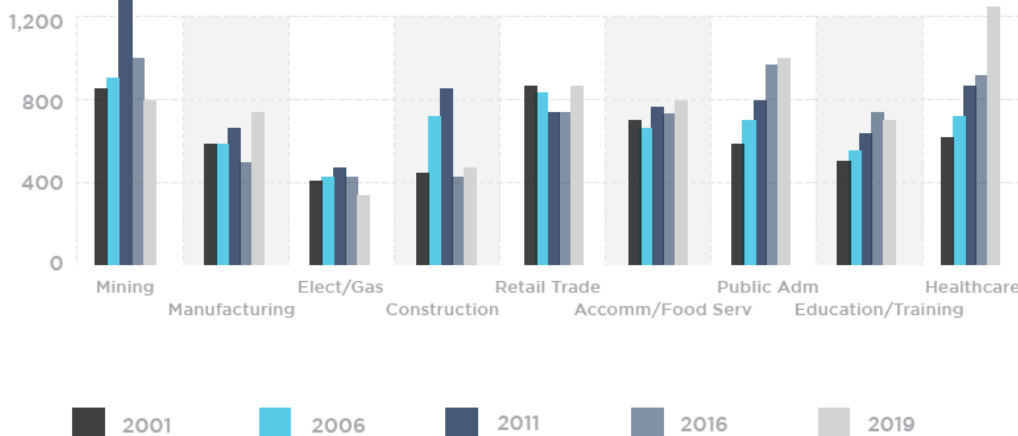
Industry Output - \$M 2001 to 2019 trend



Key Points:

- Solid increase in productive capacity in the years to 2016, after which there has been a decline - much of the decline has come from coal mining and electricity generation

Employment by key sector 2001 to 2019 trend



Key Points:

- Declining employment in mining, electricity/gas and construction
- Static or slow growth employment in manufacturing, retail trade, accommodation / food services and education / training
- Increased employment in public administration and healthcare

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Economic Development Committee note the report and brief presentation on the Lithgow Economy Scorecard and longer-term trends and issues.

4.5. Update on Lithgow Evolving Economy Project

Summary

This report provides an update on the Lithgow Evolving Economy Project (LEEP)

Commentary

It is timely to provide the Economic Development Committee with an update on activities have been occurring with the Lithgow Evolving Economy Project. Just some of these are touched on below. Others will be detailed in a presentation to this meeting.

Funding

Verbal advice has been received that Council has been successful in securing funding through the New South Wales Government for the project. It is understood that \$250,000 will be provided for the project with the expectation that Council provide \$100,000. Funding sources for council's component is currently being investigated. At the time of writing, the funding deed was being finalised and once received it will be reviewed. It is understood that a project steering group will need to be set up with representatives from various State government agencies.

Consultancy procurement

The prime purpose of the project funding will be to secure the services of a high-level specialist consultancy or group of specialists to essentially build on the work already carried out, for example by the Transition Working Group and create a roadmap to secure a sustainable economy for the future of the Lithgow Local Government Area. The brief for the work has been completed and a list of potential consultants has been prepared with a view to holding a pre-tender videoconference where information can be provided, and interest generated to bid for the work. This will allow the tender process to begin following execution of the funding agreement with the State government. A project plan has been prepared and a timeline of between five and six months to complete the project upon engagement of a consultant is likely.

Renewable Energy

It is becoming clear that renewable energy will form part of the future of Lithgow. The challenge of course is understanding and ensuring that there can be a resultant positive impact upon employment. With the assistance of the Lithgow Community Power Project the LEEP Strategic Reference Group consisting of a number of key local stakeholders (e.g. Greenspot, Thales, Energy Australia, Centennial Coal, Western Sydney University) received a presentation from Professor Andrew Blakers who is a leading expert on renewable energy. Professor Blakers is of the view that areas included in the Federal electorates of Hume and Calare (including the Lithgow local government area) have strong endowments making them ideal locations for renewable energy developments. It is interesting, despite Lithgow not being included in the State government's renewable energy zones, that big battery proposals are being developed and a feasibility study is to be commissioned by Delta Electricity for a pumped hydro development. There is interest from some of the participants in the strategic reference group in setting up a subgroup to specifically look at renewable energy as an opportunity.

Visits to Muswellbrook

Two visits have now been made to Muswellbrook Shire Council to examine some of the initiatives taken to prepare that area for the transition from coal mining and energy production. The second visit concentrated on the set up of the Upper Hunter Economic Development Board as well as funding and investments relating to their future fund. Contact has also been established at Singleton Council and some information has been received. A reciprocal visit will be hosted for Muswellbrook. Apart from sharing information, the potential for collaboration between councils with similar industry profiles

and transition issues is seen as a valuable way of advocating with State and Federal governments and the development of partnerships will be one of the important ongoing activities in this space.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the update on the Lithgow Evolving Economy Project be received.