



BUSINESS PAPER

Economic Development Committee

to be held at

Council Administration Centre
Council Chambers
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Tuesday 7 September 2021

at 5:00 PM

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2. Present

3. Apologies

4. Declaration of Interest

5. Staff Reports

5.1. ECDEV - 07/09/2021 - 'The Seven Valley's' Discussion Paper

Prepared by	Simon Francis – Tourism Manager
Department	Economic Development
Authorised by	Director Economic Development and Environment

Summary

This report presents a discussion paper on the merits of the brand 'concept' of 'The Seven Valleys' as an overarching brand sitting above localities in the tourism area, including Lithgow.

Commentary

At the 26th July 2021 meeting of LCC the Draft Tourism Marketing Strategy 2021-24 was presented to council for adoption, having first been considered at the 7th June Economic Development Committee meeting. At the latter meeting the Council resolved to request "the Administration prepare a discussion paper assessing the alternate option of branding Lithgow as the Seven Valleys."

A discussion paper is attached to this agenda. It canvases the incorporation the 7 Valleys brand into a newly devised marketing strategy.

The discussion paper outlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the 7 valleys concept. The discussion paper sees merit in incorporating the concept and indeed a campaign had already been planned as the next marketing push for the Lithgow local government area. This had to be postponed with the advent of COVID but as is explained in a separate item on this business paper it is proposed to launch a revised digital campaign to take advantage of the inevitable post COVID opportunities.

Attachments

1. Wolgan [5.1.1 - 1 page]
2. Foundations [5.1.2 - 1 page]
3. Glow Worm [5.1.3 - 1 page]
4. Half Page Foundations [5.1.4 - 1 page]
5. Half Page Glow Worm [5.1.5 - 1 page]
6. Half Page Wolgan [5.1.6 - 1 page]

Recommendation

THAT The Economic Development Committee endorse the concept of 'The Seven Valley's' "in principle" with an implementation strategy to be developed and brought back to Council.

5.2. ECDEV - 07/09/2021 - Post COVID - Tourism Opportunities

Prepared by	Andrew Muir - Director Economic Development and Environment
Department	Economic Development
Authorised by	Director Economic Development and Environment

Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline to the Economic Development Committee preparatory work being carried out on opportunities for tourism visitation when COVID lockdowns ease.

Commentary

Whilst the impacts of lockdowns have had a significant impact on local tourism, it is time to now turn the attention to the opportunities that are likely to arise when the situation eventually eases.

Prior to the advent of the current wave of COVID-19 a digital marketing campaign had been developed as the next tourism push for the Lithgow local government area. The program, topically titled 'Seven Valleys', was developed to take the form of Google ads, banner ads, remarketing (from the banner ads), social media paid advertising. This was to be directly linked to click throughs to the new tourism website which already has the Seven Valleys theme incorporated into it.

The initial plan was to follow the 'Seven Valleys' campaign up with another campaign over late spring and summer, coinciding with Halloween, Christmas and the school holidays. Whilst it was necessary to postpone the campaign, Lithgow Tourism and the LRMC are keen to keep the momentum of previous campaigns and the position of Lithgow as being a natural destination close to Sydney.

The current thinking to prepare for post lockdown opportunities is to launch a revised campaign to get into the homes of those in lockdown. The campaign would need to be targeted as aspirational for the end of lockdown, and not seen to be encouraging people now. The way forward is being prepared by Council's Tourism Manager in conjunction with the LRMC. The overarching intention is to get a campaign into the digital marketplace to take advantage of the opportunities that will inevitably arise.

Other current opportunities being worked on in the tourism space include reaching out to Channel 7 to take advantage of the promotional opportunities afforded by the filming of the television program SAS Australia which is soon to go to air. The program was filmed at several locations in the Lithgow local government area. The Tourism Manager has been liaising with the National Promotions Manager for Channel 7 to maximise the exposure for the Lithgow tourism area and to encourage bloggers, vloggers, travel writers and travel shows.

There will also be boosted social media posts, the most cost-effective form of advertising, changing over time in context based on lockdown status, and specifically designed to reach our target markets.

Hits to the Lithgow Tourism website will be encouraged to sign up for newsletters through 'Campaign Monitor', where they will receive monthly emails motivating them to visit the Lithgow tourism area. There is a growing database of subscribers who can be directly marketed to about the reopening of travel and tempted with industry offers.

The Lithgow Tourism and the Lithgow Regional Marketing Cooperative will actively seek offers from the industry to promote via all digital marketing channels to best take advantage of the interest in the area following an end to lockdowns.

The suite of destination movies will also have their end-frames updated to coincide with a concerted campaign to encourage people back to the tourism area and to tie in with the current marketing campaign of 'Seven Valleys'.

Communication has taken place with the Zig Zag Railway that indicates its reopening schedule could be as little as 2 months after lockdowns are lifted. This is a huge opportunity to capitalise on the potentially huge interest that a Zig Zag Railway reopening will create, that Lithgow Tourism will work with the Zig Zag Railway to maximise.

Finally, international travel will open-up again at some point. Therefore, it is critical that we make the most of having a captured audience where possible and take the opportunity to build on the area's reputation as a desirable destination and to maximise return visits.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the report on tourism initiatives planned in preparation for the easing of COVID restrictions be noted.

5.3. ECDEV - 07/09/2021 - LEEP Update

Prepared by	Andrew Muir – Director Economic Development and Environment
Department	Economic Development
Authorised by	Director Economic Development and Environment

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the Economic Development Committee with an update on the Lithgow Emerging Economy Project (LEEP)

Commentary

As a requirement of the funding deed with the New South Wales Government a project control group has been established consisting of members from a number of State government departments as well as the General Manager and Director of Economic Development and Environment. The group is chaired by the Regional Director of the Department of Regional New South Wales.

The PCG is responsible for approval of the brief for the economic research work that will soon be put out to the market for tenders. The brief is likely to be finalised at a meeting of the PCG on 3 September 2021. There has been delays in approval to include a detailed section in the brief for the study of renewable energy job and investment opportunities. Council requested this component on renewable energy, given the obvious endowments enjoyed by Lithgow, which has been highlighted by the interest in big battery projects and feasibility of the Energy Australia pump hydro project. It is not these projects that are in need of further study, but the broader jobs market that is developing as a consequence of a national shift to renewables. This sector is a part of the future economy and many of our city peers are already exploiting the opportunities.

Subject to PCG approval, it is intended to go to market on the project in the week commencing 13 September 2021 with a tender period of 28 days. The project delivery is anticipated to be six months from the date of engagement.

A presentation to this Information Session will overview the brief and elaborate on other aspects of the project.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Economic Development Committee note the report on progress with the Lithgow Emerging Economy project.