



BUSINESS PAPER

Economic Development Committee

to be held at

Council Administration Centre
Council Chambers
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Tuesday 17 May 2022

at 6:00 PM

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1. Present

2. Apologies

3. Staff Reports

3.1. ECDEV - 17/05/2022 - Lithgow Regional Marketing Cooperative Terms of Reference and new members

Reference

Nil

Summary

To recommend a name change to the Lithgow Regional Marketing co-operative; an adjustment to its Terms of Reference; and endorse new membership.

Commentary

The Lithgow Regional Marketing Co-operative is the tourism body set up by Council following the Economic Development Working Group Report into the appropriate Tourism model for Lithgow. The Co-operative's principal responsibilities are to:

1. Foster networking, collaboration and partnerships, between Council and the tourism industry to enable growth opportunities for the region.
2. Work with Lithgow Tourism to support and guide the implementation of destination marketing initiatives that will have practical and beneficial impacts on local tourism businesses.
3. Garner local tourism industry support, approval and involvement for destination marketing and industry capacity-building initiatives in the region.
4. Establish broader alliances (regional and state) that help to support local destination management decision making that leads to beneficial collaborative outcomes.

Following the operation of the LRMC for the last 2 years, a name change for the 'Lithgow Regional Marketing Cooperative' to the 'Seven Valleys Regional Marketing Cooperative', an updated Terms of Reference document for the Seven Valleys Regional Marketing Cooperative, and 5 new members of the LRMC/SVRMC for endorsement are now recommended.

Changing the name of the LRMC to the 'Seven Valleys Regional Marketing Cooperative' fits with the theme of inclusiveness across the entire area and is recommended to fit in with the direction that tourism marketing is taking.

The updated Terms of Reference for the LRMC/SVRMC include procedures for the mid-term appointment of new LRMC/SVRMC members and the selection of the Chairperson. As these were not incorporated into the existing Terms of Reference there have been delays in the past in replacing members and holding meetings.

In addition to the endorsement of the Terms of Reference of the LRMC/SVRMC there are 5 new members to be endorsed. They include:

- Kelley Crane – Naturally by Nature, representing the Retail sector
 - Wendy Stephens – Belle Bois Bed and Breakfast, representing the Accommodation sector
 - Emily Kirkwood – Hartley House, representing the Accommodation, Wedding and Conference sector
 - Emily Seliscar – Hometown Café, representing the Café and Restaurant sector
 - Louise Clifton – National Parks and Wildlife Service Visitor Experience Manager, representing National Parks.
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Policy Implications

N/A

Financial Implications

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

Legal and Risk Management Implications

N/A

Attachments

1. Terms of Reference Seven Valleys Regional Marketing Cooperative March 2022 Draft
[3.1.1 - 4 pages]

Recommendation

THAT Council approve;-

1. a name change of the Lithgow Regional Marketing Co-operative to the 'Seven Valleys Regional Marketing Cooperative',
2. the updated Terms of Reference outlined in this report,
3. the new members of the Co-Operative being
 - Kelley Crane – Naturally by Nature, representing the Retail sector
 - Wendy Stephens – Belle Bois Bed and Breakfast, representing the Accommodation sector
 - Emily Kirkwood – Hartley House, representing the Accommodation, Wedding and Conference sector
 - Emily Seliscar – Hometown Café, representing the Café and Restaurant sector
 - Louise Clifton – National Parks and Wildlife Service Visitor Experience Manager, representing National Parks.

3.2. ECDEV - Hassans Walls Trail Running Event

Reference

Nil

Summary

To advise Council of a proposed Trail Running Event to take place at Hassans Walls on 20 August 2022.

Commentary

Council's Events Co-ordinator has been in discussions with the organisers of the Glow Worm Tunnel Marathon who wish to conduct a trail running event on 20 August 2020 at Hassans Walls.

The organisers, Blue Mountains Fitness, has advised that trail running is a fast-growing sport ie., "the Glow Worm Tunnel Marathon will have 1000 run participants this year and probably double that in support crew and families over the three-day Trail Festival at Newnes. Lithgow area Hotels, Guest Houses, AirBnB accommodation and camping venues are used by participants and their friends and family during this weekend. As Hassans Walls is close to Lithgow town centre, accommodation and establishments would, we believe, bring considerable revenue to Lithgow and surrounding areas. We believe we can grow the Hassans Walls event to be as well attended or even bigger than the Glow Worm Tunnel Marathon as the National Parks cap the daily numbers in the Wolgan Valley to 650 per day. Glow Worm Tunnel trail run Saturday events have already sold out this year and we have sold 40% of Sunday registrations. We have a large Wait List already for the Saturday events."

The Bilpin Bush Run has been a regular Trail Running event for the last decade. The announcement by the organisers that the event will not run again has left a gap for a trail event in the Blue Mountains/Central West area. Blue Mountains Fitness would like to organise an event to be conducted on the date that Bilpin was due to be run this year - August 20th 2022.

With the assistance of local runners, Blue Mountains Fitness, have come up with race distances of 6km, 11km, 22km (Half Marathon), 30km, 42.2km (Marathon) and 45km (Ultramarathon) that use the ridges of Hassans Walls.

Blue Mountains Fitness have advised "the course we have designed is quite unique in Australia as the runs travel along ridges overlooking Lithgow, Hartley, Pottery Estate, Doctors Gap, Vale of Clwydd, Littleton, South Bowenfels and Bowenfels. We have picked 13 ridges for the Ultramarathon to travel on after starting at the Pony Club in Sheedy Gully. (Route Plans are attached) The shorter the distance - the less ridges are travelled. The name we have come up with for the trail running festival is the *Lithgow Ridgy-Didge*."

"We would approach a local venue to be the Friday evening Event Check In location. This would bring participants to the venue and local establishments. These participants and their family, friends would probably have dinner and drinks in the town on the Friday and possibly the Saturday nights if they stay the weekend. This would create a considerable revenue for Lithgow."

"We require the Hassans Walls road to be closed from 6am to 5pm on Saturday the 20th August 2020. We will provide a Traffic Guidance System (Traffic Management Plan) and approved traffic controllers to supervise this road closure. Emergency access will be available if needed to the road, towers, water reservoirs or any other areas if required. Traffic escorts would be used to provide safety to any runners on the road if emergency vehicle access was required."

The Pony Club would be used as an Event Hub for Check in, Registration, Start/Finish, retail stalls, toilets, catering, medical and safety personnel, timing and communication personnel.

Event Bump in/Check out activities would commence Thursday 18 August and be completed by the end of Sunday 21 August. Any course markings and signage will be removed by the end of August 21, 2020.

Whilst the event should have a “light footprint” with no construction required, the organisers are aware that the event must be respectful of the natural environment. In this regard, Council officers will work with the organisers to ensure this is respected and acknowledged in a licence agreement.

Policy Implications

Nil

Financial Implications

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

Legal and Risk Management Implications

Nil

Attachments

1. 6 km [3.2.1 - 1 page]
2. 11 km [3.2.2 - 1 page]
3. 30 km [3.2.3 - 1 page]
4. Half Marathon 22 km [3.2.4 - 1 page]
5. Marathon [3.2.5 - 1 page]
6. Ultramarathon [3.2.6 - 1 page]

Recommendation

THAT the information on the Hassans Walls Trail Running event be received.

3.3. ECDEV Future direction of the 'Seven Valleys' concept

Reference

Nil

Summary

Report into the future direction of the 'Seven Valleys' concept, the background, success so far and recommendations on how the concept can be turned into a successful brand.

Commentary

The 'Seven Valleys' concept was born out of a need to find a holistic approach to the marketing of the Lithgow LGA and address several issues seen as potentially holding back the true potential of the area from a tourism marketing perspective. The issues were seen as both "internal" and "external".

- Internal – A disconnect has been evident for some time between the 'Lithgow' brand and the varied areas of the LGA. Many tourism operators simply feel that brand 'Lithgow' doesn't represent them and therefore leverage off other areas, including the Blue Mountains, Mudgee, Oberon, and Bathurst.
- External – The perception of brand 'Lithgow' continues to grow in positive ways, and public opinion is now either one of ambivalence or positivity, with the natural and historical aspects of Lithgow having been heavily promoted, and the growing arts and festival scene helping to dispel any lingering opinions about the formerly heavily industrialised appearance of the city of Lithgow. However, there is still a clear disconnect amongst people surveyed that the term 'Lithgow' represents more than just the city itself, and is representative of Capertee Valley, Tarana Valley and even Hartley Valley.

The Lithgow Regional Marketing Co-operative observed a push by tourism industry members to develop a concept more representative of the entire LGA. Amongst local tourism operators there are examples of large operators who don't use brand Lithgow in any of their marketing. These include One and Only Emirates resort, Blue Mountains Sparadise, and Seclusions Blue Mountains. Furthermore, a meeting with the State Tourism body, Destination New South Wales, revealed apathy towards brand Lithgow.

Comparison of destination marketing campaigns using brand 'Lithgow' and the term 'Seven Valleys' has shown a vast increase in interest when labelled 'Seven Valleys'.

It is now timely to determine how to move the concept forward further. In this regard it is important to understand that the Seven Valleys has only ever been intended to be a brand for tourism marketing purposes. It is not intended to change the identity of the Lithgow Local Government Area nor bring together representatives for each of the valleys per se. It is though, intended to assist tourism operators in those valleys who may have felt disenfranchised and did not identify with brand Lithgow.

Resources for building either brand Lithgow or brand Seven Valleys are currently limited, so the best use of free or cost-effective tactics is essential. Sentiment towards the brand 'Seven Valleys' has been almost exclusively positive, with thoughts inspired by the name, including the aura of the number seven, the association with nature, beauty and health, and the similarity with 'Seven Wonders'. The opportunity exists to make the most of this positive sentiment. The following is proposed in terms of recommended actions.

Recommended Actions

- Adoption of 'Seven Valleys' as a brand that is the brand name for the tourism arm of Lithgow City Council.

Following endorsement and adoption of the 'Seven Valleys' as a brand, it is proposed that all tourism marketing and organisational naming be changed to 'Seven Valleys' inclusive of:

- Lithgow Tourism becomes Seven Valleys Tourism.
- Lithgow Visitor Information Centre becomes Seven Valleys Visitor Information Centre
- Lithgow Tourism and Events social media becomes Seven Valleys Tourism and Events
- Website and Email domain names change from tourism.lithgow.com and tourism@lithgow.com to tourism.sevenvalleys.com and tourism@sevenvalleys.com
- The already adopted and trademarked logo becomes the default logo for Seven Valleys Tourism alongside the Lithgow City Council logo.
- The current 'Lithgow Visitor Guide' becomes the Seven Valleys Visitor Guide.
- The 'Lithgow Regional Marketing Cooperative' become the 'Seven Valleys Regional Marketing Cooperative'.

Resources needed

Free/very low cost-

The list of recommendations listed can all be achieved with minimum of cost to council. Resources already developed include:

- The Lithgow Tourism website is already Seven Valleys themed
- A style guide has been developed
- A trademark has been registered for Seven Valleys
- A domain name already purchased.
- Billboards already in place at Mt Lambie and River Lett Hill themed 'Seven Valleys'.

The change of name gives maximum exposure to the Seven Valleys brand. Every phone call to the VIC will be greeted with 'Good Morning/Afternoon Seven Valleys Tourism', every email addressed to Seven Valleys Tourism, every website or social media interaction also through the Seven Valleys gateway which will create maximum exposure for the new brand, cementing and solidifying it in an ever-growing amount of people until the term becomes part of the vernacular when describing the LGA tourism area.

Future resources needed

- Brand strategy – Approximately \$20,000
- Destination Management Plan/Strategic Plan. Approximately \$50,000 (needed regardless of rebranding)
- Signage Strategy/Style Guide – Approximately \$20,000 to provide a comprehensive coverage of LGA and town entrance signage, directional and interpretive signage across the LGA with the same look/feel and branding (Lithgow LGA name predominant on LGA entrance signage)

It is envisaged that grant funding will be required to fund most of the projects listed above. Adoption of Seven Valleys will also provide a compelling argument for financial backing by the local industry, and state and federal agencies.

Launch

An adoption of the Seven Valleys as a brand also enables free and nationwide exposure to take place during a launch of the brand. Outlets for marketing of the launch include:

- Local and National Media (Print, Radio, TV)
- Social Media including influencers
- Native social media channels with name change
- Organised unveiling of the 'Seven Valleys' brand.

A small amount of budget may need to be allocated towards the launch of the brand, which is an ideal time to make maximum exposure for the new brand.

Summary

The adoption of the 'Seven Valleys' brand in a tourism marketing sense is seen as very positive. The brand still keeps the name Lithgow in the logo, and all areas will be given the ability to use the name Seven Valleys and incorporate their own area into it i.e. Lithgow Seven Valleys, Capertee Seven Valleys etc.

Festivals within the Seven Valleys will still be themed according to where they are held, but will have the option to incorporate Seven Valleys into their names, such as Lithgow Halloween will remain, but could be known as Lithgow Halloween Seven Valleys, or Portland Spring Fair Seven Valleys etc.

The Seven Valleys brand is not to be taken too literally though. The whole idea of the Seven Valleys concept is to holistically market the entire LGA under an umbrella brand and focus marketing on one brand, representative of the whole tourism area that will encourage operators leveraging off other areas to buy into a new brand concept.

The Seven Valleys Regional Marketing Cooperative (name change proposed) is made up of industry representatives from identified sectors of the local tourism industry and as such advocate for their sphere of influence based on sector, not location.

Inevitably there will be certain areas of the LGA with less tourism product to promote than others, and these areas may not have a resident representative on the SVRMC. In time these areas may grow their tourism product, in conjunction with council and input from the Tourism Manager on behalf of the SCRMC. This model will eliminate 'regionalism' at a committee level and focus on product across the entire LGA tourism area and how best to grow it, rather than on an individual area basis.

It is critical that in the coming years the Seven Valleys brand is backed with hard infrastructure such as LGA entrance, town, directional and interpretive signage. This current gap in infrastructure is needed regardless of adoption of the Seven Valleys as a brand and is critical to the identification of our boundaries and to tying in with a greater LGA look and feel that identifies visitor and resident as being within the Seven Valleys area, and identifies when they are entering and leaving, encouraging them to visit again.

Policy Implications

Nil

Financial Implications

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

Legal and Risk Management Implications

Nil envisaged

Attachments

1. Lithgow Seven Valleys Campaign update 2 May 22 [3.3.1 - 10 pages]

Recommendation

THAT the 'Seven Valleys' be endorsed as a tourism 'brand' and adopted by Lithgow Tourism for use in all administrative and marketing capacities as 'Seven Valleys Tourism and Events' as outlined in the recommended actions part of this report.

3.4. ECDEV - 17/05/2022 - Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) Report

Summary

To advise Council of the proposed updates of Regional Economic Development Strategies being carried out by the Department of Regional NSW.

Commentary

Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) are strategic documents with the objective of identifying priority areas for investment to drive growth and jobs in communities across regional NSW.

In 2018, the Government facilitated the development of REDS for regional economies across NSW.

Groupings called Functional Economic Regions (FERS) define each regional economy. Whilst FER's are normally clusters of one or more local government areas reflecting economic links, Lithgow was seen as its own FER and a standalone Strategy was prepared accordingly.

Each REDS sets out a vision for the future of its region, highlights key local endowments (strengths), key engine and emerging industries and the most significant strategies and actions needed to help drive economic growth and jobs.

The Department of Regional NSW in 2022 is facilitating a project to update Regional Economic Development Strategies. These updates will be released later in 2022. The update will seek to confirm whether the current REDS strategic direction and priorities remain valid given unfolding events and trends. A short update will be prepared for each existing REDS document. This document will:

- reflect current context and trends
- provide a high-level update of progress and achievements made since 2018, reflecting on the actions and strategies in each document
- outline changes in each regional economy to:
 - o Local endowments
 - o Specialisations (industries), and
 - o Enablers and key actions, and
- identify key strategic opportunities for each FER arising from global, state and regional trends, current policy settings and key investments.

An outline of the review process is attached in a presentation 'slide pack.' A workshop will be held in June seeking to capture detail of key achievements since 2018, identify challenges and opportunities, and discuss updates to priorities, strategies and actions for the region. Online written submissions will be received up until 10 June 2022 which will be used to help facilitate workshops.

Policy Implications

Nil

Financial Implications

- Budget approved - \$4,000 includes REDS related matters
- Cost centre - 700072
- Expended to date - \$1,365 (not specifically for REDS Update)
- Future potential impact – To be determined. Most costs will be absorbed, eg time spent by staff will be allocated to salaries

Legal and Risk Management Implications

Nil

Attachments

1. 2022 REDS Update Webinar Slide Pack - 12 13 April 2022 [3.4.1 - 21 pages]

Recommendation

THAT the information on the update of Regional Economic Development Strategies be received.

3.5. ECDEV - 17/05/2022 - Property Portfolio

Summary

This report and the related presentation provides Councillors with an overview of key assets in Council's property portfolio.

Commentary

A report to Council's Ordinary Meeting of 2 March 2022 gave an outline of Council's property portfolio and the adopted Council policy in terms of dealing with Council land and property.

To provide Councillors with further understanding of some of the key items in the property portfolio a short presentation will be provided to this meeting of the Economic Development Committee. As some of the content and discussion is commercially sensitive it will be necessary for the Committee to resolve to move into confidential or closed session to receive the presentation.

Policy Implications

Nil

Financial Implications

- Budget approved - Divided across assets
- Cost centre - various
- Expended to date - various
- Future potential impact – in line with individual budgets

Legal and Risk Management Implications

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the presentation on key aspects of Council's property portfolio be received.

4. General Business

4.1. General Business