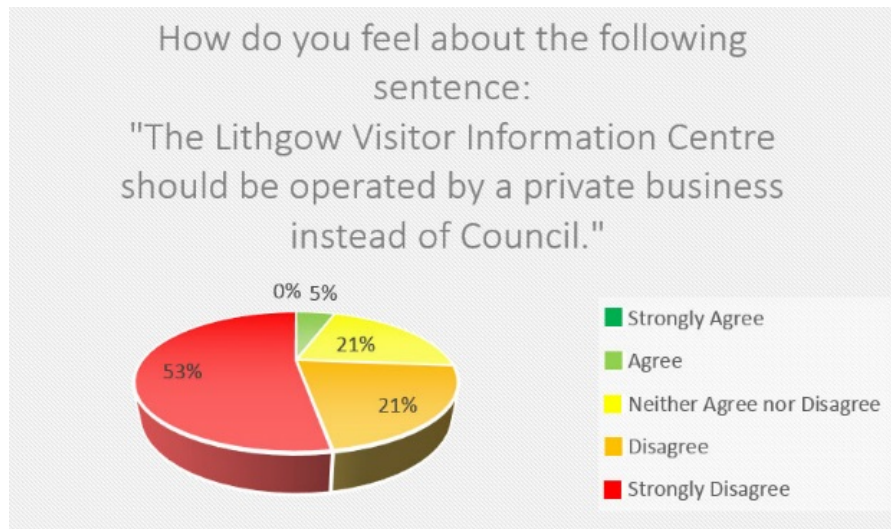


Lithgow Tourism Member Survey



In regards to privatisation of the Lithgow Visitor Centre do you have any comments?

"Could mean the level of service could drop due to increased fees and members not re-joining. There would be numerous issues to overcome to make sure the business was sustainable."

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"Privatisation could lead to only businesses able to afford a high fee for inclusion to be promoted. It could have a serious detrimental effect on smaller businesses who rely on this currently affordable way of promotion. Privatisation may also lead to the centre being operated by volunteers, as has happened in other areas, and when no one is available the centre is closed meaning potential business to the Lithgow area passes through unaware or worse word of mouth that there is nothing open/available to do in the Lithgow area."

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"It would need to be run professionally on every level. It is important to take pride in the work you do-first impressions make a difference. Financially well run businesses are very important. Do not think everything glossy is the way to go when behind the scenes things are falling apart. Communication with staff & retail product providers I believe is important."

Lithgow Tourism Member Survey

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"I do not see how the VIC could be run as a business as it is a service."

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"I believe privatisation would work to the detriment of the community-based not-for-profit groups that operate most of Lithgow's major tourist attractions. I fear a privatised centre would increase marketing costs and may refocus its business away from servicing the needs of the attractions sector. We could see the same kind of market distortion occurring as has happened in the Blue Mountains where the tail of the accommodation sector wags the dog of the attractions."

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"A privately operated visitor centre was in operation some years ago, before the council took tourism seriously. I did have problems with the quality of the information given out by that group and was happy to see council taking a direct interest in tourism."

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"It all depends who runs it. It doesn't matter whether they are private or Council. But I can't see how a private operator would make a living from providing information. This is a service Council should provide just like Council provides water and other services. A private operator will have to run a cafe/shop or similar to survive and he/she will need to concentrate on this rather than providing information."

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"The VIC should be a service of Council, but it needs to be properly run and much more proactive in its function to service all facets of the Lithgow tourism industry. If it is privatised there may be the concern of the operators becoming more interested in making money rather than focusing on improving tourism in our town."

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"I think that if the visitors centre were run properly by trained staff, it could make some money for the Lithgow Council and I would like to see this happen rather than have some outsider come in and make a profit which would then go outside Lithgow."

• • •

"Leave it as it is."

Lithgow Tourism Member Survey

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“Consider Not for Profit Incorporated Group run by elected people from the region, employ qualified staff with a CEO answerable to the Board of Directors (volunteers who have experience and interests in tourism and some business background). A portion of Funding can come from Lithgow rate payers however membership should be from Businesses in the Lithgow Region. Other Funding sources for which the CEO applies for based on a Boards decision. Similar to a 355 committee. I find asking Lithgow Tourism to provide their own reports on whether it should be outsourced is a conflict of interest and a terrible burden on existing staff. Surely there are easier ways to do this, speak to other LGA's etc for feedback. Lithgow Tourist Information Center should be aiming for a surplus (not a profit) as they run a service for the region. It is an economic driver and should stand alone in the way they operate. That way THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RUNNING THIS ARM OF SERVICE WILL BECOME PASSIONATE TO DELIVER AND WORK TO THAT END. No one today technically should run at a loss and that should also be the same for the tourism arm.”

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“I come in contact with many Visitor Centres and I am not impressed with the results of privatisation. The Lithgow Visitor Centre is well operated by knowledgeable and committed local staff with an excellent customer service ethic. Of course the idea of constantly striving to improve is always the way to go!”

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“The Rydal Village Association is a not for profit organization. Our major activity when we need help with publicity is Daffodils at Rydal. Funds raised from the garden entry support charities in the Lithgow District. The Lithgow Visitor Information Centre has given us enormous support over the years, listing us on their web site, placing our event on other websites and tourist type magazines, helping to distribute our brochures. I can't imagine that private enterprise would support us in this way as they would not make any profit from Daffodils at Rydal.”

• • •

“I do not believe that the Visitor Centre should be privatised and would strongly request that Council do not go down this path. The staff handle referrals impartially and without prejudice which would not necessarily be the case if the Centre was privatised. There are a lot of accommodation providers in the area and if the Visitors Centre was owned and operated by someone with an affiliation to one of these businesses it would be detrimental to these providers.”

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Lithgow Tourism Member Survey



“This is a key area for building business and community .If councilors read the modules on building the community to attract visitors to the area as a destination it is not rocket science. People working together make the best tourism Initiatives so isn't that the best reason for council to be involved in their visitors center? “



“To put a business of this sort on the private market is in my opinion not in the best interest of the Lithgow District Yes it is expected to be financial but we are a small area and without council backing it would not be profitable and a business person would be more inclined to look at the profit not the promotion of the area where there is little profit I think we should keep it in Council control and reinvent the centre with a new look and direction towards more local retail and marketing Hope I can be of help thanks again for the opportunity to have my say.”



If this does not provide a profit will the service be dropped all together? I feel it could be detrimental to leave this service to be motivated by profit rather than service to the community. If this service is not provided properly what redress is available to the tourist industry providers?

VICs	Managed By	Visitors P/A	Budget	Staff	Hours	Ancillary Ops	Additional Comments
Lithgow	Council	46,000	See additional info	1 x tourism mgr 1 x events 1 x VIC F/T 2 x VIC P/T 1 x Trainee	9am – 5 pm 7 days Closed Christmas day	Nil	
Bathurst	Council	64,925 walk ins 19,344 phone calls	income \$357,891 expenses \$1,071,917	5 FTE	9am – 5 pm 7 days Closed Christmas day, Boxing Day	Café leased out to private contractors	
Blue Mountains – Echo Point, Glenbrook	Council	468,023 Echo Point 118.788 Glenbrook	Echo Point: Employment 674,250 Operating 518,127 Income \$1.2 m Glenbrook Employment 274,902 Operating 162,800 Income 247,000	Echo Point 1 x F/T 7 x P/T Glenbrook 1 x F/T 2 x P/T	Echo Point 7 days 9am – 5pm Glenbrook Mon - Sat 8:30am – 4:30pm Sun 8:30am-3:30pm	Nil	DA submitted for coffee shop
Cowra	Contracted and governed by Board of Management		Council provides \$220,000 annually	2 x F/T 2 x P/T ? x casuals	9am – 5 pm 7 days Closed Christmas day	Nil	
Midwestern (Mudgee)	3 yr contract	33,000	\$349,000 contributed by Council plus provides premises and maintenance	1 x F/T 2 x P/T 7 x Casuals	Mudgee 9am – 5 pm 7 days Closed Christmas & Boxing Gulgong 10am – 3pm 5 days	Nil	Mudgee VIC Level 1 Gulgong VIC Level 3
Oberon	Council	18,000	TOURISM Income \$28k (inc grants) Expenditure \$68k VIC Income Sales \$15k Expenditure \$150k Other \$23k		High 9am – 5 pm 7 days Low 9am – 5 pm 6 days & 10.30 – 4 pm Sundays	Nil	Tourism services current GM function
Parkes	Council	23,000	Approx \$500,000 pa Wages 60% Operations 10% Merchandise 5% Marketing 25%	4 x F/T 1 x trainee 1 x casual	9am – 5pm weekdays 10am – 4pm weekends & PH	Manages a collection of museums	
Young	Council	TBA	TBA	1 x F/T 2 x P/T 1 x Trainee	9am – 5pm weekdays 9.30 am – 4pm weekends & PH	Nil	Young Society of Artists art gallery located in our building
Albury	Council	24,000 walk ins	Total for tourism approx \$700,000 but just VIC \$200,000	2.5 FTE	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Nil	Previously it was outsourced however due to the lake of control, poor results and limited direction, Albury City withdrew funding and regained management
Ballina	Council	60,000	\$600,000 (salaries over 50%) Revenue approx \$40,000		9am – 5 pm 7 days Closed Christmas day	Nil	
Batemans Bay	Council	40,000 Batemans Bay 35,000 Narooma	\$1.2m per annum to cover all marketing, staff and VIC operations. About half goes to VICs.	2-3 F/T depending on season. No volunteers	Trialing seasonal opening hours 14 weeks at 9-5/7 days over peak and 9-3/7 days over low season	Batemans Bay has a small gallery, Narooma had the Lighthouse Museum	
Bellingen (including Urunga & Dorrigo)	Council	27,160	TBA	0.5 x FTE	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Nil	Strong reliance on volunteers
Bland Shire	Council				Mon – Fri 9am -5 pm Sat 9 am – 12 pm Closed Sunday	Located at the library however are about to investigate alternatives	Non accredited
Brewarrina	Council	15,000	Promotions 20,895	2 x F/T	8.30am - 5pm 5 Mon-Fri	Function room, art gallery and	

VICs	Managed By	Visitors P/A	Budget	Staff	Hours	Ancillary Ops	Additional Comments
			Memberships 7,105 Employment 149,129 Maintenance 49,200 Operating 73,145		Easter weekend to October weekend Saturday 2pm to 5pm	lease space to hair dresser	
Broken Hill	Council	160,000	\$900 000 – about 40% of this is salaries and oncosts.	4 x FT 2 x P/T 3 x casuals	8.30am to 5pm 7 days (summer 8.30am -3pm)	Leased 4 retail areas, one to Gloria Jeans	Broken Hill is a Level 2 AVIC
Byron Shire	Self funded	220,000	Council provides premises at peppercorn rental	10 x P/T	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Nil	
Cessnock	Council		\$470,000		9am – 5 pm 7 days	Wine interpretive centre (VIC) is owned by Cessnock City Council at Cessnock Airport. It has other tenants including a café and Hunter Valley Wine Society who offer wine tastings.	
Cobar	Council	20,000	\$350,000 includes promotions, staff, operations	3.5 FTE	9am – 5 pm	Cobar	Council
Coffs Harbour	Council	70,000	VIC cost \$260k mitigate cost with approx \$130k income per annum through commissions	1 x F/T 3 x P/T	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Nil	
Cooma	Council	60,000	Approx \$300,000	1 x F/T 2 x P/T 5 x casuals	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Nil	
Coonamble	Council	Not provided	Not provided	1 x F/T	8.30 am-5.00 pm	Nil	VIC has been operating for less than a year and at this stage is not accredited as we do not meet the required number of hours
Dubbo	Council	70,000	\$4.85 per visitor	3 x F/T 10 volunteers	9 am – 5 pm 7 days	Sells souvenirs and artwork	Level 1 AVIC
Glen Innes	Council	55,000	VIC \$590,000	4 x FTE	9 am – 5 pm Mon – Fri 9 am – 3 pm Sat, Sun and PH	Nil	
Gloucester	Council		Council pays for salaries Marketing paid for by operator membership	2 x FTE 21 volunteers	8:30 am - 5pm Mon – Fri 9 am - 3pm Sat 10am - 2pm Sun Public holidays and school holidays 9am to 5pm.	VIC provides other services such as countrylink train bookings, booking of market stalls and tennis courts, sale of fishing licenses, souvenirs etc	
Holbrook (Greater Hume)	Council	30,000	\$150,000	1 x F/T 3 x P/T	10 am - 4.30 pm 7 DAYS	Submarine Museum	Level 2 AVIC
Kempsey	Council	41,500		1 x F/T 1 x P/T 40 x volunteers	9 am – 5 pm Mon – Fri 10 am – 5 pm Sat- Sun		Weekends the volunteers in the museum next door run the VIC and the museum is paid for this service. South West Rocks run by volunteers.
Liverpool							No longer has VIC – all visitors rely on website.
Manly	Council	250,000	VIC staffing costs \$168,000 Destination brochure \$28,500 Tourism funding/promotion \$15,000 Total expenses 2012/13 \$211,500 Total projected income 2012/13= \$60,000 NET -\$151,500	1 x F/T 5 x P/T & casuals	Mon-Fri 9-5pm, Weekends 10-4pm (Weekends during Summer months only 10-5pm)	Sell tours but no ancillary ops	

VICs	Managed By	Visitors P/A	Budget	Staff	Hours	Ancillary Ops	Additional Comments
Muswellbrook	Council	10,000	Approx \$80,000 to operate the VIC, does NOT include Promotion/Marketing expenses.	1 x F/T Volunteers	9am – 1 pm 2pm – 5 pm 7 days Closed Christmas	Nil	
Nambucca	Council		\$127,000 plus \$20,000 for guide from Council. Additional from industry partnerships	1 x P/T 40 volunteers	9am – 4 pm 7 days 360 days a year	Sell some merchandise. No ancillary ops	Level 2 AVIC
Narrandera	Council	24,000	Staff/Resources \$134,500 Visitor Centre \$87,000 Marketing \$50,000	1 x F/T 2 X P/T 2 x Casual	9 am – 5 pm Mon to Sat 10am – 2pm Sun Closed Christmas Day and NYD	Nil	
Port Stephens	Council	100,000-120,000		3 x F/T 1 x P/T Casuals	9 am – 5 pm Mon – Fri 9 am – 4 pm Sat- Sun		
Sapphire Coast Tourism (Bega, Eden, Merimbula)	Chamber of Commerce and Tourism in Eden and Bermagui Community tourism committee in Merimbula Bega Cheese operate the VIC in Bega with some small support from SCT. Strong reliance on volunteers especially for weekend openings	86,000 (Merimubula)	Council provide annual funds to SCT Ltd for promotions and marketing funded through a special variation (\$260k) separate special variation for tourism infrastructure (\$160k) Council also provide premises for VICs	1 x F/T (merimbula 1.5) Strong reliance on volunteers at all centres	VIC's endeavour to open 9-5, 7 days Closed xmas and good Friday. Some have shorter hours on Sundays (10-4). Dependant on the availability of a volunteer to open for the Sunday – but 90% of the time they will be open.	Some share buildings with other community groups – may also have paid internet access but in general the business model is bookings/souvenir's/member ship	
Shoalhaven (Nowra & Ulladulla)	Council	100,000 combined	Nowra Total Costs \$415,00 (Staff \$255,500) Income \$106,000 Ulladulla Total Costs \$170,00 (Staff \$146,000) Income \$18,000	Nowra 4.2 FTE Ulladulla 3.3 FTE	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Nil, though private operators in same premises as Nowra	
Singleton	Council	35,000	The Economic Dev Dept has a total operating budget of approx. \$800,000	7 x FTE for entire dept	9am – 5 pm 7 days Closed Christmas day and Good Friday	2 meeting/function rooms Provides office space for the Chamber of Commerce and a community kiosk space which is used by the Lions Club for the provision of Driver Reviver.	
Sydney	Council			4 x F/T 5 x casual 14 x volunteers	9am – 5 pm 7 days	No ancillary ops	
Tamworth (including Barrabra, Manilla and Nundle)	Council	100,000	Destination Dev \$400k Marketing \$317k Ticketing \$155k Product dev \$155k Visitor Services expenses \$110k but 49k after offsets from income e-marketing \$80k	3 x FTE	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Tamworth Walk a Country Mile Museum Barrabra – Shearing display Nundle – Gem display	Transitioned back over from Tourism Tamworth Inc (contract arrangement) in November 2011. Small VICs manned by volunteers with 140 volunteers across the 4 centres
Taree (Manning Valley)	Council	19,500	\$220,000 (excludes promotions and marketing)	2 x FT 8 x casual 3 x volunteer	9am – 4.30 pm 7 days 9am – 4.00 pm PH Closed Christmas day & Good Friday	100 seat theatre/conference centre and small craft centre located in complex	
Wagga Wagga	Council	50,000	Approx \$400,000	5 x FT Pool of casuals	9am – 5 pm 7 days	Nil	

VICs	Managed By	Visitors P/A	Budget	Staff	Hours	Ancillary Ops	Additional Comments
					Closed Christmas day		
Wentworth	Council	20,000	190,000 total Salaries 154,420	1 x F/T 3 x P/T	9am – 5pm weekdays 9am – 1pm weekends & PH	Nil	
Wollongong	Council	Bulli 49,000 W’Gng 18,600	73,000 excluding wages	3 x F/T 5 x casuals	Bulli - 9am – 5 pm 7 days Wollongong 7 days 9am – 5pm Mon – Sat 10am – 4 pm Sun & PH	Nil	