



LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF COUNCIL

HELD ON

06 FEBRUARY 2006

AT 6.00pm

**MINUTES OF THE LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD AT THE CIVIC CENTRE, LITHGOW ON 6 FEBRUARY 2006**

Meeting Commenced 6.006pm

Public Gallery: 25

PRESENT

His Worship the Mayor
Councillor Neville Castle
Councillor B P Morrissey
Councillor M F Ticehurst
Councillor W McAndrew
Councillor H K Fisher
Councillor B S Moran
Councillor M M Collins
Councillor A E Thompson
Councillor M J Wilson

APOLOGIES

NIL

Also in attendance

General Manager, Mr Paul Anderson
Manager Engineering Services, Mr Clive Cawthorne
Manager Environmental and Planning Services, Mr Andrew Muir
Finance Manager, Mrs Carol Farnsworth
Minutes Secretary, Miss Casey Clarke

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

NIL

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

His Worship the Mayor called for Declarations of Interest on any matter before the Meeting.

NIL

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC GALLERY

At 6.06pm members of public gallery were invited to address questions through the Mayor to Councillors and Staff: -

SOUTH BOWENFELS DCP

1. Mr Mayor would Council advise what effect the proposed South Bowenfels DCP will have (if any) on the following:
 - a) Existing approved developments which have been acted on but not completed?
 - b) Existing approved developments which have **not** been acted on but are still current?
 - c) Developments which have been submitted for approval under Councils current existing requirements but not approved?
 - d) If the answer to point c) above requires the developments to be reassessed under the new DCP, will Council refund the DA Fees for developments submitted under Councils current existing requirements but will not meet the new DCP requirements?
2. Mr Mayor when is this DCP proposed to take effect from?
3. Mr Mayor what is the standing regarding all existing Development Applications before Council awaiting determination? Especially those DA's that have been of long standing.

RESOLVED

THAT the questions posed be noted, that the responses given by the Mayor and the Senior Officers be noted, and the appropriate necessary actions be taken including the further reporting of any unresolved matters to Council.

MOVED: Councillor M M Collins

SECONDED: Councillor M J Wilson.

CARRIED

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GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

ITEM:1 EXEC - 06/02/06 - ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND DEPUTY CHAIR PERSON FOR THE POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE.

REPORT

Purpose of this report is to elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the principle committee of Council being the Policy and Strategy Committee.

Council will begin a committee structure of two (2) committees being the Finance and Services and Policy and Strategy Committees. The purpose and delegated functions are included in this report for the information of Councillors.

Policy and Strategy Committee

Monday 6 March 2006
Monday 3 April 2006
Monday 1 May 2006
Monday 5 June 2006
Monday 3 July 2006
Monday 7 August 2006
Monday 4 September 2006
Tuesday 3 October 2006
Monday 6 November 2006
Monday 4 December 2006

Purpose

Policy and Strategy Committee

To determine and / or recommend to Council in relating to the strategic direction of the organisation, business activities, performance and audit in accordance with the authority delegated by the Council under Section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Delegated Functions

Policy and Strategy Committee

Delegated Functions:

- Management Plan Review (excluding new budget)
- Corporate Plan
- Strategic Planning
- Land use Planning (LEP's, DCP's, Contribution / Developer Servicing Plans)
- Capital projects
- Natural resource management

- Business activity
- Economic development
- Policy Development and Review
- Organisational performance and audit
- Community development and partnering
- Recreation Planning
- Tourism and Marketing

Membership

Full Council - 9 Councillors

Quorum

Five members

Chairperson

Elected by the Committee at its first meeting for the 12 month period, including with the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral elections in September 2006, and each year following that.

Deputy Chairperson

Elected by the Committee at its first meeting for the 12 month period, including with the Mayoral and Deputy mayoral elections in September 2006, and each year following that.

Provisions of the Local Government Act do not specify the term of Councils principle committees or the Chair or Deputy Chair of such, however it would be prudent for Council to align the term of these roles with the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral's, it further enables these terms to coincide with the four (4) year cycle for election to Council.

RESOLVED

THAT:

1. The Council formally endorse the Mayor as the Chairperson of the Policy and Strategy Committee, however should the Mayor not wish to be the Chairperson of this Committee, an election be held by the Council for the position of Chairperson for the Policy and Strategy Committee.
2. The Council elect The Deputy Mayor to the role of Deputy Chairperson of the Policy and Strategy Committee.

MOVED: Councillor B P Morrissey

SECONDED: Councillor W McAndrew.

CARRIED

ITEM:2 EXEC - 06/02/06 - UNION PICNIC DAY CLOSURE

REFERENCE

Section 18B of the Local Government (State) Award 2004 (the Award) provides for a Union Picnic Day per year for employees who are financial members of the union(s). The Union Picnic Day is regarded as a holiday and shall be on such day as is agreed between the council and the union(s). The Award outlines that employees who are not financial members of the union(s) and who are required to work on Union Picnic Day shall be paid ordinary pay for their normal work day. The Award also outlines those employees who are not financial members of the union(s) and who are not required to work on Union Picnic Day, may apply to Council to take leave or may be required by Council to make up time.

SUMMARY

Council's Picnic Day for 2006 is being held on Friday 17 February 2006 and it is proposed following discussion with the Mayor to close Council for operation on this day, except emergency and essential services.

COMMENTARY

In the past, Lithgow City Council has remained open for business on the Union Picnic Day and has operated with a minimum number of staff to ensure Council's basic level of service is met. This process has raised concern on a number of occasions in relation to the safety of the 'skeleton' staff and the viability of the Council remaining open is questionable.

The proposal to close the Council for Union Picnic Day would take on a similar process to the recent closure over the Christmas period, which proved to be effective. The proposed closure will enable the maximum number of staff to attend the proposed picnic celebration and help with staff moral and team building.

A number of staff will be required to be on-call for emergency situations and a limited number of staff will be required to carry out duties for essential services. Listed below is an outline of the staff required to work or be on-call. These staff will be granted the applicable entitlements under the Award.

- Water/Wastewater staff who are rostered to be 'on-call' will need to be available. The Manager of Engineering Services will ensure that adequate staff members are on call on this day.
- Wastewater Staff responsible for regular pump station maintenance will be required to work 4 hrs.
- Overseers/Supervisors are required to be 'on-call' for emergency situations on this day.
- Rangers – 1 ranger will be required to be 'on-call'
- Rural Tip Controller – will be required to open and close tips
- Cleaner Driver – will be required to work 4 hrs
- Cleansing Unit Staff - will be required to work 4 hrs
- Streetsweeper – will be required to work 2 hours.
- Swimming Pool Staff will be required to work normal hours, as per the agreement.

Those staff who are not financial members of the union(s) will be required to make an application to their Divisional Manager for annual leave or time in lieu.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Council's current policy for the Union Picnic Day requires updating in line with the Award Requirements. The new Policy will also be modified to include Council's new process of ceasing operations on Union Picnic Day.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Award outlines that employees required to work ordinary hours on Union Picnic Day are entitled to be paid double time and a half for hours worked, or be paid time and a half for the hours worked and in addition, be granted a day off in lieu to be paid at ordinary time. The closure will result in a savings in staff wages as there will be less staff required to work on this day, and thus limited payment of penalty rates and time in lieu accruals, this process will also ensure adequate supervision is also available.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified legal implications.

RESOLVED

THAT:

1. Council note the close for business on the Union Picnic Day each year commencing in 2006, and the current policy be altered to reflect this change.
2. The General Manager ensures adequate notice is provided for the Community and Council's clients on this day.

MOVED: Councillor W McAndrew

SECONDED: Councillor B S Moran.

CARRIED

ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING SERVICES REPORTS

ITEM:3 EPS - 6/2/06 - SOUTH BOWENFELS DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN - REVIEW AND ADOPTION

REFERENCE

Item 29, Ord Ccl 24/1/2005
Item 1, PP&D 22/8/2005
Item 3, PP&D 17/10/2005
Item 12, Ord Ccl 19/12/2005

SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to consider: submissions received throughout the public exhibition of the Draft Development Control Plan and Development Application Guide and the results of the Councillor forum held on 24th January, 2006. The report will outline the alterations deemed necessary following consultation and seeks a Council resolution to adopt the final plan and guide as submitted.

COMMENTARY

BACKGROUND

Council prepared a Draft Development Control Plan (DCP) and accompanying Development Application Guide in January of 2005. The documents have been widely exhibited and the public, development industry, Council staff and Councillors have been extensively engaged throughout the preparation of the final plan and guide. This consultation was carried out in various forms including public exhibition, discussion forums and workshops.

An extensive report detailing the key common issues of all submissions including those from public authorities and proposed alterations to the draft document were submitted to Council at its meeting of 19th December, 2005. Council resolved to defer the adoption of the final plan as submitted pending a further discussion forum for all Councillors to review the provisions of the plan and their implications for future development and Council's governance. This forum was held on 24th January, 2006 and the key issues discussed are summarised in this report where they have led to an alteration of the plan that was submitted in December, 2005.

LOT SIZE

This provision of the development control plan has been a key area of dispute from its inception. The initial draft exhibited plan required a minimum lot size of 800m² (standard lot) and 900m² (corner lot). Following consideration of the submissions made by the public, the December report recommended that these minimum lot sizes be reduced to 700m² and 800m² respectively. It was considered that these alterations had merit and enabled the plan to provide for a greater level of housing choice as required by consumer demands and a more efficient use of a valuable land resource, given that the overall density of development would be still governed by the provision of a floor space ratio of 0.5:1.

This issue was further explored in the discussion forum attended by the Councillors. The concerns raised regarding minimum lot size are summarised below:

- There is a perception that lot size has a direct relationship to the quality and standard of development (i.e. the smaller the lot the less attractive housing design and materials); and
- Lots should be of sufficient size to accommodate the housing needs of the community and not be overdeveloped; and
- The number of lots able to be developed should be consistent with the infrastructure capacities of the area; and
- Planning policy should allow for a diverse range of housing to meet consumer needs.

After considerable discussion it was agreed that all of the above concerns were able to be better addressed through other provisions in the DCP instead of overly prescriptive lot sizes. These provisions when considered together will provide adequate planning controls to meet the objectives of the DCP and provide better development outcomes. Such provisions are as follows; (alterations to the December plan are shown in bold type).

- **Minimum Average Lot Size - A minimum average lot size provision of 700m² within each development and/or stage of development** will provide for the possibility of smaller lots to be created whilst maintaining a reasonable overall density of development and residential amenity. For example to create a lot of 550m², the development must also include a lot of at least 850m² within the same development or stage of development.

Corner allotments will still be required to be generally larger lots as required to meet the minimum lot frontage and depth provisions of the DCP.

The provision is considered to be less prescriptive and will facilitate innovative design and provide for a greater level of housing choice within the South Bowenfels Area.

- Floor Space Ratio of 0.5:1 – This ensures that development structures have a direct relationship to the size of the land. (for example if you have a lot of 600m², by applying the floor space ratio the total gross floor area able to be developed is a maximum of 300m² (including all storeys of the house and any associated buildings (such as sheds, bird cages etc). The gross floor area for this calculation will exclude the area of the first two covered or enclosed car parking spaces – for the purposes of this calculation a car parking space is deemed to have a floor area of 18m²).
- Impervious Site Coverage - The floor space ratio will also be supported by a provision for a maximum of 60% impervious site coverage in any development site.
- **Building Design and Materials - The inclusion of further provisions in relation to building design and materials will ensure that development within the area maintains a reasonable standard of residential amenity and design. The DCP now contains provisions to restrict the following;**
 - use of light weight construction materials such as fibro cladding;
 - use of corrugated iron or zincalume roofing materials;
 - use of open subfloor areas;
 - provision of carports forward of the building line;
 - undesirable roof pitches; and
 - large unarticulated building facades.

- Lot frontage and depth provisions - The DCP specifies minimum frontage and depth requirements for standard lots, corner lots and lots for dual occupancy and medium density developments. These provisions will provide for reasonable residential amenity and development design.

BENCHING CUT AND FILL

The provisions pertaining to maximum cut and fill were also further explored. The December DCP required that all development be restricted to 1m cut and 600mm fill.

As the South Bowenfels area consists of undulating to, in some parts, steep topography the numerical prescription of cut and fill was argued to be too restrictive and prevented the use of alternative design solutions to address the issues associated with site modification. These issues are drainage, retention of cut and/or fill and impact on residential amenity and streetscape.

It was agreed that the prescriptive provisions in the DCP could be replaced with more performance based measures such as use of alternative construction or acceptable retaining methods. Such alterations have been made.

MINOR ALTERATIONS

Minor alterations have also been made to other areas of the DCP to ensure ease of understanding and further clarification.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To adopt and implement this DCP Council will be required to resolve to:

- Repeal the adopted Policy and Guideline for Residential Unit Development as it relates to the subject area of the DCP;
- Repeal the operation of Sections 8, 9 & 14.1 of Council's Subdivision and Development Code as it applies to the subject area of the DCP; and
- Repeal the application of all other Development Control Plans as they apply to the subject area of the DCP.

The Development Application Guide will also be required to be adopted as Council policy in relation to the submission of development applications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no budgetary implications for Council's Management Plan as a result of this report. Minimal costs of reproducing hard copies of the DCP and Development Application Guide will be required to be absorbed. These costs can be reduced by providing an electronic version on Council's web-site.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The documents submitted are consistent with current legal requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 under which they are made.

CONCLUSIONS

The draft DCP has been the subject to extensive consultation and review over the past 12 months. The submitted document has been amended as a response to community needs and rigorous review.

The submitted plan and guide provides the development community, landowners and Council's assessment staff with a one stop document to ascertain the requirements for development within the area.

It should be noted that each development application must satisfy not only the prescriptive measures of the DCP but also the objectives of the DCP and its individual design elements. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate how the development achieves this.

The consistent application of the DCP will ensure better development outcomes and variations to the DCP should only be considered in cases where sound planning reasons for the variation are provided and it can be shown that the variation is in the interests of excellence in design.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. Council adopt the submitted document as South Bowenfels Development Control Plan with the effective date of 6/2/2006. In so doing, Council will be resolving to repeal the application of the following DCP's as they apply to the land within the subject area of the plan;
Outdoor Advertising DCP
Offstreet Carparking DCP
Industrial Development DCP
Lithgow Escarpment Protection DCP
Bed & Breakfast DCP
Poultry DCP
Animal Boarding and Training Establishment DCP.
2. Council resolve to repeal the adopted Policy and Guideline for Residential Unit Development as it relates to the subject area of the plan.
3. Council resolve to repeal the provisions of Clause 8. 9. & 14.1 of Council's Subdivision and Development Code dated 28/9/1992 as it relates to the subject area of the plan.
4. Council resolve to adopt the Development Application Guide as Council policy governing the submission of development applications.

RESOLVED

THAT:

1. Council adopt the submitted document as South Bowenfels Development Control Plan with the effective date of 6/2/2006. In so doing, Council will be resolving to

repeal the application of the following DCP's as they apply to the land within the subject area of the plan;
 Outdoor Advertising DCP
 Offstreet Carparking DCP
 Industrial Development DCP
 Lithgow Escarpment Protection DCP
 Bed & Breakfast DCP
 Poultry DCP
 Animal Boarding and Training Establishment DCP.

2. Council resolve to repeal the adopted Policy and Guideline for Residential Unit Development as it relates to the subject area of the plan.
3. Council resolve to repeal the provisions of Clause 8. 9. & 14.1 of Council's Subdivision and Development Code dated 28/9/1992 as it relates to the subject area of the plan.
4. Council resolve to adopt the Development Application Guide as Council policy governing the submission of development applications.
5. The General Manager be granted delegated authority to negotiate reasonable solutions in circumstances where provisions in the adopted DCP are more onerous than those in the exhibited draft DCP. Such circumstances only apply to those applications lodged prior to 6 February 2006.

MOVED: Councillor H K Fisher

SECONDED: Councillor M J Wilson.

CARRIED

ITEM:4 EPS - 06/02/2006 - UPDATE OF STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECT

REFERENCE

Item 2, PP&D 22/8/2005
 Item 8, PP&D 17/10/2005
 Item 21, Ord Ccl 28/11/2005
 Item 5, PP&D 12/12/2005

SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to provide an update of the Strategic Plan Project and the matters submitted to the Strategic Working Party held on 30th January, 2006.

COMMENTARY

The consultant firm Geolyse were engaged in early December, 2005 to prepare the Strategic Plan. An initial project inception meeting was held on 8th December, 2006 to further refine the requirements of Council's project brief. Agreement was reached on project objectives, deliverables, milestones, timeframes, budgets, performance indicators and monitoring. A further meeting was held with the sub-consultant carrying out the economic analysis on 22nd December, 2005, Mr Robert Baker of UNE to further refine the requirements of this facet of the project.

STRATEGIC WORKING PARTY MEETING

A meeting of the Strategic Working Party was held on 30th January, 2006. This meeting was attended by members of the working party and was addressed by the Geolyse project manager Ms Colette Goodwin and sub-consultancy Twyford Consulting represented by Mr John Dengate.

The purpose of the meeting was to gain an understanding of the overall project and its current status and to receive and discuss the final work plan/ timeline for the project, and the draft community consultation program.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- Sub-consultants have been briefed and have commenced their tasks
- Data and information requirements have been clarified
- Council's GIS base has been examined and data gaps have been identified for sourcing from external parties
- State Agency contacts have been established and letters prepared to be sent
- Draft engagement plan has been formulated
- Final Work plan/timeline submitted
- Logo selected to be used to market the project and gain a place in the communities mind. It will be reproduced across all publicity material relating to the Strategic Plan. The logo selected is shown below;



The statement provides the community with a sense of ownership of the plan and represents the level of involvement that we wish them to have in the process. The three rings, in simple terms, represent the sustainability principle and the integration of a diverse range of matters culminating in a central shared vision. These diverse matters will be fleshed out during the course of the project and will be dynamic rather than static in their meaning.

WORK PLAN/TIMELINE

The work plan/timeline submitted for endorsement is attached.
The key dates are summarised below;

Resident Feedback Register established and in use **2006**.
Consultation Stage 1 – Vision workshops **March 6-17**
Draft Local Profile and Strategic Working Party Meeting **March 20-31**
Draft Issues Paper and Strategic Working Party Meeting **June 13 -23**
Consultation Stage 2 – Issues paper and local profile to develop strategic plan **July 10-Aug 18**
Draft Strategic Plan presented to Strategic Working Party and Council **Sept 18**
Consultation Stage 3 – Exhibition (and Open House) of Draft Strategic Plan **Sept 20 –Oct 13**
Final Strategic Plan presented to Strategic Working Party **Nov 20**
Final Strategic Plan and report to Council **Nov 27**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Twyford Consulting submitted a draft engagement plan for discussion. The key points of this plan are as follows;

The parameters that will be used to engage the community

- To determine the entire Lithgow regions desired future in the form of a Strategic Plan, that
- Reflects the aspirations of the divers community across the LGA
- Tackles the issues, tensions and challenges facing Lithgow LGA
- Will inform the development of Council's strategic planning documents

Approach to Community Engagement

- Define the scope
- Be transparent
- Be inclusive
- Have a commitment by decision makers
- Be educative
- Be deliberative
- Be enjoyable
- Be easy to take part in
- Be driven by objectives, not techniques

Stages of the Engagement Program

Stage 1 Local Profile and Visioning – Key Engagement Objective – To identify and understand the diverse values and aspirations of the community

Stage 2 Issues Paper Considering Directions – Key Engagement Objective - To discuss and evaluate various scenarios

Stage 3 Strategic Plan – Key Engagement Objective – To gauge community confidence that the draft plan aligns to the vision and addresses issues.

Levels of Engagement

Local Profile and Visioning - Collaborate

Issues Paper and Considering Directions - Consult/Involve

Draft Strategic Plan – Consult

Various methods of community engagement will be used throughout the project including the Resident Feedback Register, interviews, open houses and workshops, newsletters, media coverage, web site and display boards.

A more detailed set of dates and venues will be provided in the coming weeks along with a final community engagement plan.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications of this report.

RESOLVED

THAT the information be received.

MOVED: Councillor M M Collins

SECONDED: Councillor M J Wilson.

CARRIED

ITEM:5 EPS - 06/02/06 - HERITAGE ASSETS WORKING PARTY

REFERENCE

Previous minutes from the Heritage Assets Working Party.

SUMMARY

To advise Council of the recent matters relevant to the Lithgow Heritage Assets Working Party.

COMMENTARY

The Lithgow Heritage Assets Working Party was created as part of Council's Heritage Advisor's three year heritage strategy for the Lithgow Region. It seeks to provide a forum to support the monitoring, conservation and Management of Council's heritage assets in relation to:

- ❖ Conservation and maintenance
- ❖ Education and community awareness
- ❖ Development assessment
- ❖ Identification and protection
- ❖ Management of Council's Assets
- ❖ Tourism and museum development

Since its creation, the Working Party has reported its minutes directly to the elected Council or appropriate committee of the day. It appeared with this practice that many items were not necessarily relevant or appropriate to warrant direct consideration of the Council. Some items may have also been outside the scope of such a forum and as a result the working party is re-considering its charter to ensure it remains appropriate. The working party has now agreed to provide its minutes to the Manager of Environmental and Planning Services who will decide what items should then be reported. The Committee may also request in its deliberations that certain matters be reported. This will represent a more streamlined method of reporting whilst ensuring the elected Councillors remain informed of important strategic issues.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Matters that impact on Council Policy are one of the issues that will be reported.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Matters involving financial implications will be reported.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Matters involving legal implications will be reported.

CONCLUSIONS

As an example of the types of matters that will be forwarded to the Policy and Strategy Committee, the working party has prepared a report on the future of old Blaxland Shire Chambers at Wallerawang. This will be reported to a future meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee where policy, financial and legal issues will all require consideration. It is more appropriate for a forum of elected councillors to consider these types of issues rather than those which are of a operational nature.

RESOLVED

THAT the information be received.

MOVED: Councillor M M Collins

SECONDED: Councillor M J Wilson.

CARRIED

CORPORATE SERVICES REPORTS

ITEM:6 CORP - 06/02/06 - PROPOSED 2006/07 SPECIAL RATE VARIATIONS

REFERENCE

Nil

SUMMARY

To advise Council of proposed Special Rate Variations for the 2006/07 rating year, which if approved, will generate additional General rate income of \$691,225.

COMMENTARY

It is proposed to make application to the Minister for Local Government to apply Special Rate Variations to nominated properties for the 2006/07 financial year.

The proposed variations include:

- Rural Fire Service & NSW Fire Brigade Levies applied to all properties
- Tourism levy to be applied to all business properties
- Stormwater of varying amount to be applied to all properties

Application is required to the Department in line with the release of the 2006/07 rate pegging allocation but prior to lodging details extensive preparation is required for the pending application.

The DLG has issued detailed guidelines for applying for a Special Variation under Section 508(2), or Section 508A, of the Local Government Act 1993, but in summary detail adequate community consultation for the proposed rating and revenue raising policy including details within the Draft Management Plan. Council must make a clear statement of its intention to apply for a special variation, the reasons for the increase and the level of variation sought as a percentage increase of general income.

The Draft Management Plan must provide two scenarios of proposed rates and charges in the Statement of Revenue Policy. The first should be the rating structure that will be adopted if the special variation is approved and the second should demonstrate what the rating structure will be if the application is not approved. Extensive supporting financial data must accompany the application such as a detailed assessment of councils financial and planning operations, details of the specified outcomes to be achieved and how the outcomes and the success of the Special Variation will be measured and reported.

Should the applications be successful the following income will be generated:

FIRE

- Rural Fire Service & NSW Fire Brigade Levies
To be applied to all properties

RFS \$190,000
NSW Fire Brigade \$ 98,700

TOTAL \$288,700 / 10,660 properties Levy proposed \$ 27.05 per property

TOURISM

- Tourism levy
To be applied to all business properties

TOTAL \$100,000 / 500 properties Levy proposed \$200.00 per business property

The Department of Local Government is also implementing a new funding mechanism to improve the management of urban stormwater in NSW. This will also enhance prior achievements of the former NSW Stormwater Trust.

The Local Government Amendment (Stormwater) Act 2005 has recently passed through Parliament and amends the Local Government Act 1993 to allow Councils the option to make a charge for the provision of stormwater management services outside their capped rating arrangements.

The proposed levy is:

STORMWATER

- Residential Properties \$25.00 per property (10,157 properties)

Sub Total \$253,925

- Business Properties \$100.00 per property (486 properties)

Sub Total \$ 48,600

TOTAL \$302,525

It is appropriate to remind Council of past and future Flood Mitigation works which have committed ratepayer funds in excess of \$1,149,754. Bearing this in mind it would not be inappropriate to apply a Special Rate Variation for the purpose of stormwater management.

Should Council wish to proceed with the proposed Special Rate Variations the appropriate applications will be prepared for submission to the Minister for Local Government at the appropriate opportunity.

(a) Policy Implications

Special Rate Variations for fire, tourism and stormwater.

(b) Financial Implications

Additional General rate income of \$691,225 for the 2006/07 financial year

(c) Legal Implications

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council agree in principal to the proposed Special Rate Variations for fire, tourism and stormwater and preparations be commenced for their inclusion in the Draft 2006/07 Management Plan

RESOLVED

THAT Council defer the proposals for the Special Rate Variations for fire, tourism and stormwater until further information is received at the ExtraOrdinary meeting to be held on Monday 13 February 2006 at 6.00pm.

MOVED: Councillor W McAndrew

SECONDED: Councillor M J Wilson.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

ITEM:7 EXEC - 06/02/05 - MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2006

REFERENCE

NIL

SUMMARY

The Minutes of the Tourism Committee meeting held on the 9 January 2006.

COMMENTARY

Present: Cr M Collins, Ms J Rayner, Mr R Hamment, Mr B Hustwayte, Mr M Wells, Mr P Watson, Mr D Whitty, Mr G Johnson, Mr B Upton, Mrs C Farnsworth

Apologies: Mr P Anderson, Mr M Pascoe, Mrs D Upton, Mrs J Johnston

Declaration of Interests: Nil

ITEM: 1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the 7th November 2005 be taken as read and confirmed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – minutes of the previous meeting of the Tourism Board held on the 7th November 2005

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Minutes of the meeting of the 7th November 2005 be taken as read and confirmed with a change to the spelling of W Dolman to W Dolan in the present listing.

MOVED: Mr B Hustwayte **SECONDED:** Mr M Wells

ITEM: 2 ACTION SHEET REPORT

SUMMARY

The Action Sheet reports on the progress of actionable items from the Tourism Board meeting of the 7th November 2005.

COMMENTARY

An action sheet reporting on the progress/status of recommendations from the Tourism Board meeting of the 7th November 2005 was presented as a part of the Notice Papers.

Item 6 – Hassans Walls Reserve. Mr B Hustwayte requested an update on the status of the invitation forwarded to the Ministers in regard to visiting Hassans Walls. A report on the status of this issue is to be provided at a subsequent meeting.

Item 11 – Relocation of signage at VIC. Mr M Wells questioned why the Tour Booking signage had been removed. It was further stated that the signage was for all tour operators to display information on impending tours and for the VIC to book in order to increase commissionable bookings. A further report on this issue is to be bought back to the Tourism Advisory Committee.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 2 – Action Sheet Report

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

- a) The information be received.
- b) A report on the status of the invitation forwarded through to the Minister to visit Hassans Walls be bought back to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee
- c) A report on the Tour Booking Signage that has been removed from the VIC be provided to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee

MOVED: Mr M Wells **SECONDED:** Mr D Whitty

ITEM: 3 VIC VISITATION & COMMISSION REPORT

SUMMARY

Summarisation of visitation and commissionable bookings taken at the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre.

COMMENTRY

Visitation statistics for the 2005 period for door statistics at the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre are as follows:

| | Daily Visitation |
|--------|------------------|
| Jul-06 | 3181 |
| Aug-05 | 2846 |
| Sep-05 | 2948 |
| Oct-05 | 4132 |
| Nov-05 | 3701 |
| Dec-05 | 3557 |

Total commissionable bookings at the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre from July 2004 to April 2005 are as follows:

| Month | Total Price for Accommodation | Total Commission | No. of Visitor Nights | Total no. of bookings for the month |
|-------|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
|-------|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|

MINUTES – POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING OF COUNCIL

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| Jul-05 | \$ | 1,923.00 | \$ | 190.16 | 17 | 13 |
| Aug-05 | \$ | 90.00 | \$ | 8.18 | 1 | 1 |
| Sep-05 | \$ | 930.00 | \$ | 99.00 | 4 | 2 |
| Oct-05 | \$ | 125.00 | \$ | 11.37 | 2 | 2 |
| Nov-05 | \$ | 697.00 | \$ | 68.93 | 9 | 4 |
| Dec-05 | \$ | 0.00 | \$ | 0.00 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | \$ | 3,765.00 | \$ | 377.64 | 33 | 22 |

Mr M Wells questioned commission figures, due to the major drop from the same period this year to last year in securing accommodation bookings. A report on accommodation bookings is to be bought back to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee.

Mr G Johnson further questioned the ability to measure the benefit of the VIC via the introduction of an accommodation slip. A report on this is to be bought back to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION**THAT:**

- a) the information be received and
- b) A report on the drop in commissionable bookings be bought back to the next Tourism Advisory Committee.
- c) A report measurement of the benefit to accommodation of the VIC be bought back to the next Tourism Advisory Committee.

MOVED: Mr M Wells **SECONDED:** Mr D Whitty

ITEM: 4 BMTL REPORT – MR M WELLS**SUMMARY**

Update report on the operations of Blue Mountains Tourism Ltd by Mr Malcolm Wells, Lithgow representative on the BMTL Board.

COMMENTRY

The 2004/05 Annual General Meeting for BMTL was held recently at the Hydro Majestic. Appointments to Board positions are as follows:

New Board Members:

Resort Category: Robyn Pontynen

Transport Category: John Bauerhuit

Re-nominated and re-elected by the industry:

Bushland and Country Retreats - Bronwen Johnston (elected President by the Board)

Adventure and Tour Operators - Tim Tranter (elected Vice President by the Board)

Existing Board Members elected by the Industry

B&B, Self Contained & Budget Accommodation - Rita Fisher (elected Secretary by the Board)

Motels & Motor Inns - George Bubalo

Attractions - Peter Austen

Restaurant, Retail & Service Providers - Christine Moeller

Nominated Board Members

NPWS - Geoff Luscombe (elected Treasurer by the Board)

TNSW - Felicia Mariani
 BMCC - Terri Hamilton
 OBERON - Keith Sullivan
 LITHGOW - Malcolm Wells

Observers – Ms J Rayner (representing Lithgow), Mr W Cooper (representing Oberon)

All BMTL member operators were invited to the AGM.

Ms Brownwen Johnston gave a report on the status of the tourism industry and the performance of Blue Mountains Tourism Ltd.

Membership

During the financial year 2004/05, BMTL membership totalled 337. Membership contributions totalled \$308,288, with Tourism NSW contributing a further \$111,000.

BMTL Responsibilities

BMTL is responsible for destination marketing of the Blue Mountains. All activities undertaken are for and on behalf of the members. BMTL also provides tourism industry representation in lobbying all 3 levels of Government.

Visitation Trends

A clear downwards trend has been noticeable within the holiday and leisure market throughout the State, with both overnight and day markets. This downward trend can be attributed to consumers taking less trips, leakage to the outbound market through cheaper airfares and strong Australian dollar, debt, alternative leisure pursuits eg home entertainment and media, and “banked” leave. Interestingly, a market that has received a noticeable increase is the Visiting Friends and Relatives market. Recent statistics however are pointing towards a 1.9% increase in the domestic market.

BMTL 3 Year Regional Strategy – implementation in 2004/05

The 3 Year Regional Strategy aims to revitalise the Blue Mountains appeal in the mindset of the consumer. In relation to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) established by BMTL the following outcomes have been obtained:

| Objectives/KPI | Outcomes |
|--|---|
| Increase visitor nights in Sydney short break market | 1.9% increase achieved in this market |
| Work with the Blue Mountains Tourism industry to develop and promote product that delivers on the 4 core brand experiences | Core Appeal Advisory Group established to further develop key core experiences with the Experience Development Co-ordinator |
| Work with the industry to improve service delivery and sustainability of Blue Mountains product | 70 operators participating in the Business Advantage programme Accredited eco-tourism operators |
| Deliver an enhanced visitor experience through the development of improved and integrated interpretive information | Strategy being developed |
| Secure appropriate resources for the promotion and development of the Blue Mountains region | Business levy submitted to Councils Business partner secured – Railcorp ATDP funding successful for 2005/06 |
| Maintain expenses within adopted budget and actual income | Expenses maintained |

BMTL Marketing

BMTL will continue to market the Blue Mountains destination through:

- Advertising

- Consumer Trade and Travel Shows
- Public relation campaigns
- Internet marketing
- International Sales Missions
- Production of the international planner
- Famil programmes to wholesalers and inbound operators
- Visiting journalist programme

Ms B Johnson further went onto thank both the Lithgow operators and Lithgow City Council for their continued support.

Four Lithgow representatives that are members of BMTL were present at the AGM and the Tourism Advisory Committee would like to encourage further participation from members to lobby BMTL to ensure Lithgow product is highlighted in all marketing collateral and via the VIC's and telephone centres. Mr R Hamment telephoned the BMTL telephone centre and inquired about Lithgow. He was informed by the staff member that there was relatively little accommodation in the area but there was availability in Katoomba. This issue is to be followed up by Mr M Wells at a BMTL Board level. In addition, a report on bookings secured by BMTL staff for the Lithgow area is to be bought back to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee. Also, information on what Lithgow City Council's contributory funds of \$27,500 to BMTL is utilised for.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

- a) the information be received
- b) Mr M Wells inquire to the BMTL Board as to the information disseminated by the VIC's and booking centre with regard to Lithgow
- c) Mr M Wells produce a report on the effectiveness of Lithgow accommodation and tour operators with regard to bookings through BMTL VIC's and the Booking Centre
- d) Mr M Wells to provide a report on what Lithgow City Council's contributory funds of \$27,500.00 are utilised for.

MOVED: Mr R Hamment **SECONDED:** Mr D Whitty

ITEM: 5 TOURISM NSW – TOURISM MANAGERS DEBRIEF

SUMMARY

Update report on information provided by Tourism NSW

COMMENTRY

Ms J Rayner recently attended the Tourism Debriefing held in Sydney by Tourism NSW.

Outlined were Tourism NSW corporate objectives and key priorities for 2005/06. Corporate objectives are as follows:

- Build and convert awareness of NSW destinations in target markets
- Share knowledge and expertise to improve industry effectiveness and stimulate investment
- Demonstrate the importance of tourism to the NSW economy
- Develop private and public sector partnerships to grow and manage tourism

Key priorities for 2005/06 are as follows:

- Extend the reach of Sydney and NSW brands
- Expand the use of research and insights
- Increase communication to industry and stakeholders
- Demonstrate the value of tourism to the NSW economy
- Drive longer term infra-structure vision
- Develop longer term traditional and non traditional partnerships

Throughout 2005/06, Tourism NSW will continue to track brand awareness of product through ongoing research. The research identifies aspirations to visit based on television advertising and website requests.

Major activities to be co-ordinated by Tourism NSW in 2005/06 include:

- Branding campaigns – print, TV
- Sydney surrounds programme – of which Lithgow is a part of within the Blue Mountains Tourism region. Co-operative campaigns to be rolled out via the RTO.
- Regional Flagship Funding for events – NB Ironfest applied for Flagship Funding, however they were unsuccessful. They have previously received funding.
- Research – information is available on the corporate website

Visitation statistics to NSW were also presented, indicating a slight downturn in visitor numbers to NSW.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be received

MOVED: Mr R Hamment **SECONDED:** Mr D Whitty

ITEM: 6 FILM CENTRAL

SUMMARY

Update report on the operations of Film Central

COMMENTARY

To ensure the ongoing sustainability of Film Central a strategy to incorporate additional Council's into the programme has been implemented in order for contributory funds to maintain the current employed Film Officer. An information session for new Council's to consider being incorporated into the Film Central banner was recently held in Forbes. A question and answer session followed allowing time for new Council's to talk to members already involved about the benefits of involvement with Film Central. The following Council's have committed to joining Film Central:

- Gilgandra
- Dubbo
- Narromine
- Hay
- Cobar
- Cootamundra

Three separate location scouts have also conducted famils in the Lithgow area to Archvale Trout Farm, to see a location for a beer TVC, Hassans Walls for a sport drink advertisement and to Mt Walker for a 4wd TVC. Filming for a Toyota commercial has occurred at Mt Walker.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be received

MOVED: Mr R Hamment **SECONDED:** Mr D Whitty

ITEM: 7 WEBSITE OPTIMISATION

SUMMARY

Quote for an identified item in the Lithgow VIC Business and Marketing Plan – Website Optimisation

COMMENTRY

As identified in the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre Business and Marketing Plan 2005/06, website optimisation for the Lithgow Tourism website is to be carried out.

A meeting with Mr R Brewster of Local Direct, a company specialising in Search Engine Optimisation, has been held with a recommendation that the Lithgow VIC firstly instigate the Consultation and Management component at a cost of \$770 for the first 3 months and \$220 thereafter and Google Adword Internet Marketing Campaign at a set up cost of \$660 and ongoing advertising to a set cost thereafter. Please find attached the report from Local Direct in the attachments.

Additional quotes are being sourced on website optimisation.

A budget of \$2000 has been allocated to website optimisation for 2005/06.

In addition, the current Lithgow website is currently undergoing a revamp, with the redesign co-ordinated with Ms J Rayner and Mrs A Shelton.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 3 – Website Optimisation Information, Local Direct

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be received

MOVED: Mr B Hutwayte **SECONDED:** Mr R Hamment

ITEM: 8 IRONFEST

SUMMARY

Update report on Ironfest 2005 and plans for the 2006 event

COMMENTRY

Ironfest, set down for the 22nd to the 25th April, are currently organising its annual major event to once again be held at the Tony Luchetti Showground. At the last meeting of the Tourism Board, Mr M Wells was appointed to the Committee as the tourism representative.

Ironfest are currently seeking event sponsorship and have developed a Sponsorship pack for any operators wishing to support this event. (Please see attachments)

Ironfest 2005 produced the following results:

- Over 780 participants.
- The total number of visitors was approximately 4,673, (1,777 Sat., 2,188 Sun., & 708 Mon.) comprising of 1,774 full paying adults, 471 families and 1,015 concession/children.
- Approximately 16% of visitors came from the Lithgow District, 22% the Central West, 26% Blue Mountains, 19% Sydney Metro area, 12% Canberra, 4% Other NSW and 1% Interstate & Overseas

The Ironfest committee identified, in the following order, the benefits to Lithgow provided by Ironfest:

- Showcasing local art
- Creating awareness of metal trades
- Boosting the local economy
- Providing a social occasion
- Providing a family event
- Showcasing local heritage
- Boosting tourism
- Raising the profile of Lithgow
- Providing a unique Cultural experience for locals to enjoy
- Increasing the use of Council facilities
- Collaborative involvement of numerous community groups
- Providing indirect & indirect employment
- Regional acceptance
- Contributing to the creation of a new identity/image for Lithgow, & promotes it.

Visitor feedback on the event indicated the following issues, which the committee are keen to address for the 2006 festival:

- Parking (Could the oval adjacent to George Coates Drive be opened for parking?)
Tourism Advisory Committee advised that this is not possible due to pitch damage on the grounds
- Vehicular access to the venue particularly the bottom gate
- Permanent signage to the Showground
- Disabled access to toilets & parking
- Toilets (general maintenance & signage to)
- Sewage (throughout the weekend there were very strong & unpleasant outdoor smells)
- An accurate map of the site
- Improved first aid station (Cloak room)
- An evacuation plan

The Lithgow Visitor Information Centre has provided a feedback form for the use at Ironfest 2006, to gather market intelligence and recognise the events impact on:

- Determination of meeting aims and objectives
- The community
- Economic benefits
- Customer satisfaction
- Ongoing event demands
- Identification of areas for improvements.

The Tourism Advisory Committee questioned the number of free tickets provided at Ironfest 2005, with a report to be provided on this issue. Further, the introduction of Seniors tickets is also to be investigated. Mr M Wells to inquire as to these issues at the next meeting of Ironfest.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 4 – Ironfest Sponsorship Pack

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

- a) the information be received
- b) Ironfest be advised that parking on the oval adjacent to George Coates Drive is not possible due to pitch damage to the fields
- c) Mr M Wells to provide a report at the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee with regard to the number of free tickets provided by Ironfest and Seniors discounts

MOVED: Mr B Hustwayte **SECONDED:** Mr R Hamment

ITEM: 9 NSW CARAVAN, CAMPING, 4WD & HOLIDAY SUPERSHOW

SUMMARY

Identified item in the Lithgow VIC Business and Marketing Plan – Participation in the 2006 NSW Caravan, Camping, 4WD and Holiday Supershow.

COMMENTRY

As identified in the 2005/06 Business and Marketing Plan, a site at the 2006 NSW Caravan, camping, 4WD and Holiday Supershow has been booked for Lithgow Tourism in collaboration with Tourism NSW. The show is set to held from 22nd April and runs for 9 days. Participation rates are to remain similar to last year, with operator's brochures to be displayed on the stand at a cost of \$110 per operators. Those operators wishing to attend the show on the stand contribute \$200.

Information to be disseminated at the Show is to focus on “experiences” that can be enjoyed in the Lithgow region. Further to this, a giveaway is to be investigated, with prizes provided by tourism operators, in order to garnish personal information from interested consumers so that the information can provide the basis of a database. The giveaway needs to comply with the Department of Gaming regulations.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

- 1. operator rates to display brochures on the Lithgow stand be advertised at \$110
- 2. Operator attendance on the Lithgow stand be set at \$200
- 3. The above rates be incorporated into Council's annual fees and charges
- 4. Investigate the feasibility of a competition in order to collect personnel information of consumers interested in the area, to database information.

MOVED: Mr G Johnson **SECONDED:** Mr D Whitty

ITEM: 10 SCHOOL EXCURSION STRATEGY

SUMMARY

Update on the development of the School Excursion Strategy

COMMENTRY

A meeting was held recently involving the attractions sector regarding the issue of school excursions to the region. An implementation strategy on how to attract and market effectively to school groups is to be developed collaboratively with the attractions sector, looking firstly to define the unique selling point and share research on this market. The committee noted the importance that other sectors, particularly accommodation play in supporting the strategy and will involve other sectors once a definite role has been developed. A further report on this will be presented to the Tourism Board when information becomes available.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be received.

MOVED: Mr B Hustwayte **SECONDED:** Mr R Hamment

ITEM: 11 GATEWAY PROJECT – DRIVER CAMPAIGN

SUMMARY

Driver safety programme co-ordinated by Road Safety Officers of Lithgow, Bathurst, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury, RTA and Police with information dissemination via Visitor information Centres

COMMENTRY

Mr M Irvine, Road Safety Officer has provided marketing collateral to be disseminated at the VIC regarding The Gateway Project.

Marketing collateral includes:

- Brochure, which includes a sticker
- CD –(for listening in the car) Recorded tourist information for the target area of the Gateway Project mixed with road safety messages
- Survey form – required to be completed and returned by post by the end of December to be in the running for a petrol voucher

The Gateway Project incorporates several Councils including:

- Lithgow
- Blue Mountains
- Bathurst
- Hawkesbury
- Oberon

In addition the Project is also sponsored by the RTA and Police.

The project targets speeding and is a “Slow down” message.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be received

MOVED: Mr B Hustwayte **SECONDED:** Mr D Whitty

ITEM: 12 LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY

Attached – Lithgow Visitor Information Centre Annual Report for inclusion in the Lithgow City Council Annual Report

COMMENTRY

Lithgow City Council has compiled the annual report for 2004/05. Please find attached the Tourism component in the attachments.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 5 – Lithgow VIC Annual Report

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be received

MOVED: Mr M Wells **SECONDED:** Mr B Hustwayte

ITEM: 13 IMPACT OF INCREASED PETROL PRICES ON TOURISM IN LITHGOW

SUMMARY

Updated report on the effect of petrol prices on tourism in the region

COMMENTRY

Further to the report on petrol prices and the impact on tourism - During the period from late September to the 31st October 2005, a system of cash back or vouchers for visitors staying in the region was implemented by a private operator, to offset the impact of increasing petrol prices on the consumer. The marketing ploy, designed to increase overnight visitation to the area, aimed to encourage conversion of visitor inquiries, within the given period. Guests were offered the choice of a \$25 cash back deal or a reduction voucher on check-out, if staying a minimum of 2 nights. 48 accommodation providers and retail outlets throughout the Blue Mountains region participated in the programme, with the call to action a website. Intense media coverage by television and print media, driving customers to the website, seen over 2000 hits on the site, predominately within the first 2-3 weeks of the campaign. Several operators from the Lithgow area participated in the marketing opportunity. Statistics on conversion from the tourist inquiries off the website are not yet available.

Visitation to the Blue Mountains Region

Intention to travel to the Blue Mountains region, of which Lithgow is an integral component, has seen an increase of 2.4% on 2003 figures. The National Visitor Survey for the year ending 2004 also indicated an increase of 1.9%. Day visits were however down, due partly to conversion of this market to overnight stays. Increases in visitation to the region can be tracked back to increased marketing by Blue Mountains Tourism associated with the implementation of the 3

Year Regional Strategy – the strategy that has aimed to revitalise the Blue Mountains in the eye of the consumer. Marketing tactics have included motivational television campaigns, attendance at targeted tradeshows, print campaigns and increased web presence. Lithgow has also co-operatively participated in some of these campaigns including television and tradeshows. In addition, the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre also attended the 2005 Caravan and Camping Show at Rosehill.

Traditionally, visitors to Lithgow have been from the corporate market, however a noticeable increase in tourist numbers has led to increasing tourism development. Target markets include compatriots (families), wanderers (off peak tourers/grey nomads) pampadours (indulgent sector) and groupies (eg backpackers and sporting groups). As noted in the 2004/05 Lithgow Visitor Information Centre Business and Marketing Plan, visitation to attractions had seen a slight decrease from 2003 statistics in comparison to 2004, however 2005 statistics have shown a slight upward trend.

The Tourism Impact Models, developed by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, identified the following visitor patterns for Lithgow for 2003:

- Annual day visitation to Lithgow – 595,000
- Annual visitor spending in Lithgow by tourists - \$56.3mil
- Direct employment in tourism – 428
- Domestic overnight stays in Lithgow – 1,596,000
- Overnight stays as a percentage of total regional visitation – 14.35%

The Tourism Impact Models provide information on visitor numbers and expenditure in local Government areas.

It should be noted that the backpackers Association of Australia noted a downward trend in total backpacker visitation to Australia. You should also be aware that although the backpacker market has seen some decline, it is a seasonal and reactive market.

Visitation statistics to the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre have dramatically increased, due in part to the re-location of the centre and active marketing campaigns.

Impact of rising petrol price on tourism visitation in Lithgow

Noting that petrol prices are dependant upon the global market, with little regulatory control from the Government, increasing prices for petrol have the potential to affect the industry as a whole, with consumers reactive to subtle changes. The effect of increasing petrol prices however, has been minimal. Advance bookings for October, when prices substantially increased, seen minimal numbers of visitors cancelling. Therefore, petrol price has had limited influence on travel motivations.

Conclusion

The Sydney domestic market is one of the largest target markets for visitors to the Lithgow and Blue Mountains region. Based on the short haul destination that the area is, ensures that a minimal effect on visitation will result from rising petrol prices.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be received

MOVED: Mr D Whitty **SECONDED:** Mr B Hustwaite

ITEM: 14 GENERAL BUSINESS

- a) Committee Restructure – The issue of the restructure of the Tourism Advisory Committee was discussed. The committee was informed that the restructure should be in place within the next 3 months
- b) The issue of alternative delegates was discussed. Several delegates on the Tourism Advisory Committee provided alternatives in their absence eg NPWS, LBA, Attraction sector delegates. Alternatives on the Committee are allowable.
- c) The issue of signage around Lithgow was raised. Ms J Rayner advised that a signage plan for Lithgow has been developed and is in draft format, awaiting comments from Council. This document would be presented at the next Tourism Advisory Committee for discussion. An audit of Lithgow signage is to be completed and Mr M Irvine, Council's RTA representative, be invited to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee.
- d) Parking issues at the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre were raised. Ms J Rayner advised that this issue had been referred to TALC.
- e) Issues with the VIC toilets getting stuck was raised. Ms J Rayner advised that the Council plumbers were aware of this issue.
- f) Closure of cafes over public holidays was discussed, with the possibility of discussing with operators a roster system to ensure that at least some cafes were open over peak times. It is a commercial decision on behalf of the café operators whether to open or not, however this issue is to be referred to Mr M Pascoe to discuss with the LBA. Ms J Rayner to ascertain opening and closing times of businesses including cafes and shopping centres during Public Holidays and disseminate information to operators.
- g) Mr D Whitty advised that in his role as Security Officer, he has spoken to several 4WD's accessing the Newnes Plateau and driving in areas that they should not be. It is believed that information and maps have been provided by Glenbrook VIC. Ms J Rayner to check information on the area being disseminated by staff at Glenbrook.
- h) The Central Tableland Mountain Bike Club have submitted a bid document to host the 2007-2009 MTBA National MTNB Championships at the State Mine Tracks in Lithgow. Ms J Rayner helped to compile the documentation. Notification of the success of this bid will be in April 2006.
- i) Operators should be aware that a Heritage Grant Scheme is now available for heritage properties. This information to be disseminated to appropriate operators.
- j) Mr B Upton inquired as to the details of maps disseminated from the Lithgow VIC. Maps are to be checked to ensure that the Capertee Valley is included in all information.

***Next meeting of the Tourism Board Monday 13th March at 4.00pm
at the
Lithgow Visitor Information Centre.***

Meeting closed: 6.00pm

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

NIL

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 January 2006 be accepted:

- Item 1: The Minutes of the meeting of the 7th November 2005 be taken as read and confirmed with a change to the spelling of W Dolman to W Dolan in the present listing.
- Item 2:
- a) The information be received.
 - b) A report on the status of the invitation forwarded through to the Minister to visit Hassans Walls be bought back to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee
 - c) A report on the Tour Booking Signage that has been removed from the VIC be provided to the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee
- Item 3:
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 - b) A report on the drop in commissionable bookings be bought back to the next Tourism Advisory Committee.
 - c) A report measurement of the benefit to accommodation of the VIC be bought back to the next Tourism Advisory Committee.
- Item 4:
- a) the information be received
 - b) Mr M Wells inquire to the BMTL Board as to the information disseminated by the VIC's and booking centre with regard to Lithgow
 - c) Mr M Wells produce a report on the effectiveness of Lithgow accommodation and tour operators with regard to bookings through BMTL VIC's and the Booking Centre
 - d) Mr M Wells to provide a report on what Lithgow City Council's contributory funds of \$27,500.00 are utilised for.
- Item 8:
- a) the information be received
 - b) Ironfest be advised that parking on the oval adjacent to George Coates Drive is not possible due to pitch damage to the fields
 - c) Mr M Wells to provide a report at the next meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee with regard to the number of free tickets provided by Ironfest and Seniors discounts
- Item 9:
- a) operator rates to display brochures on the Lithgow stand be advertised at \$110
 - b) Operator attendance on the Lithgow stand be set at \$200
 - c) The above rates be incorporated into Council's annual fees and charges
 - d) Investigate the feasibility of a competition in order to collect personnel information of consumers interested in the area, to database information.

RESOLVED

THAT the Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 January 2006 be accepted:

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 - d) Investigate the feasibility of a competition in order to collect personnel information of consumers interested in the area, to database information.
- Item 14: Council seek a further report on the user numbers of 4wd vehicles in the Lithgow City Council area.

MOVED: Councillor B P Morrissey

SECONDED: Councillor M J Wilson.

CARRIED

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

COUNCILLOR M F TICEHURST

1. Mr Mayor it is over six weeks since the Councils Insurers advised the ratepayers residents that they, the Councils Insurers were denying any liability which also advised that a copy of the letter was forwarded to Att: Amy Weldon, The General Manager City of Lithgow Council?

Council has no control over correspondence time of insurer "Jardine Lloyd Thompson". A claim from the owner was submitted to Council on the 25.08.05, it was forwarded to Councils insurer on the 09.09.05

2. Mr Mayor as this is a matter for due consideration by the Finance and Services Committee, why was this urgent matter not FULLY REPORTED to Councillors for their meeting on the 6 February 2006.

This is an Operational matter and does not require Councils consideration.

3. Mr Mayor why are Council officers denying any liability when the ratepayers owners were provided with verbal assurances by Council officers that the Lithgow City Council would repair the sewerage lines and the consequent damage caused by the sewerage lines to the back corner of the house at 42 Hill Street, Lithgow.

Council Officers inspected the site and provided advice that Councils sewer main and surrounding area would be rectified and the matter would be referred to councils insurer should a claim be made.

4. Mr Mayor why did Council Officers provided approval for and make arrangements for the hiring of several builders props to be installed under the house; for which the Council has now subsequently failed to pay for to a local business, leaving the ratepayers owners to commit to the full late payment to avoid the props being removed and causing further house damage?

Council Officers concurred with the builders advise to install acro props to ensure that no further subsidence or damage would occur to the building as the builder stated that the house was in danger of collapse. Council Officer did not arrange for the hire and installation of the acro props, the builder arranged for the hire of the props so as no further damage would occur.

5. Mr Mayor why have Council Officers not previously reported this matter to Council given that the matter was passed onto council Insurer as the estimated damage bill had exceeded Councils public liability excess of \$20,000?

Operational matter not requiring Councils consideration. Until acceptance by insurer excess not an issue.

RESOLVED

THAT the questions posed be noted, that the responses given by the Mayor and the Senior Officers be noted, and the appropriate necessary actions be taken including the further reporting of any unresolved matters to Council.

MOVED: Councillor M M Collins

SECONDED: Councillor M J Wilson.

CARRIED

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.