

Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee Meeting

Business Paper

Notice is hereby given that a Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee Meeting of Parkes Shire Council will be held in the Committee Room, Parkes Shire Council, 2 Cecile Street, Parkes, on Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 11:00am.



Kent Boyd PSM
GENERAL MANAGER

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1 OPENING OF MEETING

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Committee Chairperson will invite a Committee Representative to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country:

Parkes Shire Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri People who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging of the Wiradjuri Nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal peoples from other nations who are present.

Alternatively, the Committee Representative may deliver the following Acknowledgement of Country in Wiradjuri language, which has been provided by Mr Geoff Anderson, a Wiradjuri Elder resident of the Parkes Shire:

Wiradjuri language	English translation
Badhu yinganha yindyamarra-gu Wiradjuri mayiny bu Wiradjuri manhang	<i>I give respect to Wiradjuri people and Wiradjuri soil.</i>
Badhu gulbarra ngali Yama Wiradjuri ngurambang bu ngali garrariwibarra gu marambir Niiringal	<i>I understand we are on Wiradjuri country and can work together to a better tomorrow.</i>
Mandaang guwu	<i>Thank you.</i>

3 APOLOGIES

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE DESTINATION AND MAJOR EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2023

IP&R Linkage: **Pillar:** Leadership

Goal: Our local government is open, accountable and transparent.

Strategy: Provide open and transparent decision-making and undertake the civic duties of Council with professionalism and integrity.

Annexures: **A. Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - 21 November 2023**

RECOMMENDATION

That the receive and confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 November 2023 appended at *Annexure A*.

Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday 21 November 2023



Minutes of the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee Meeting**Held on Tuesday, 21 November 2023 at the****Parkes Council Chamber, 2 Cecile Street, Parkes****Present:**

Cr Marg Applebee	Councillor
Cr Jacob Cass	Chairperson
Cr William Jayet	Councillor
Cr Ken Keith OAM	Councillor
Cr Neil Westcott	Councillor
Mr Dave Chambers	External Member
Mr Gary Crowley	External Member

Council Officers in Attendance:

Mr Anthony McGrath	Executive Manager Corporate Services
Mrs Carrie Olsen	Executive Manager Economy, Destination and Activation
Ms Katie Nash	Economic Development Specialist
Hayley Roach	Events Officer (Trundle ABBA Festival)

NOTES

Cr Ken Keith attended via audio-visual link.

The meeting commenced at 10:30 am and concluded at 12:30 pm.

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1 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairperson declared the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee Meeting of Tuesday, 21 November 2023 open and welcomed Council Officials in attendance.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chairperson read the following Acknowledgement of Country:

Parkes Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Wiradjuri Country and recognises and respects their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the lands and rivers of the Parkes Shire.

Council pays its respects to Elders past, present and emerging and extends this respect to all First Nations peoples in the Parkes Shire.

3 APOLOGIES

Nil

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

The Chairperson reminded Council Officials of their obligation under Council's Code of Conduct to disclose and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at the meeting, and invited Council Officials present to disclose any such interests.

Nil interests were disclosed.

6 LATE BUSINESS

The Chairperson advised that no late items of business had been submitted to the meeting.

OR

The Chairperson advised that the following late items of business had been submitted by Council Officers, and invited a motion to enable the addition of the late items to the meeting agenda.

1. *Type list of late items*

7 OFFICERS' REPORTS

9.1 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

AMENDMENT

That the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee:

Continue to be chaired by Cr Jacob Cass as he had not resigned from the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee.

9.2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2023**RESOLVED DMEA 006/23**

Moved: Cr William Jayet
Seconded: Cr Marg Applebee

That the Committee:

1. Confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.

CARRIED**9.3 TRUNDLE ABBA FESTIVAL - POST EVENT REVIEW****COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

Moved: Cr Marg Applebee
Seconded: Cr William Jayet

That:

1. A tentative date be agreed upon.
2. Parkes Shire Council staff develop and present a risk appetite matrix for events and festivals.
3. Parkes Shire Council staff complete a post-event report for the Trundle ABBA Festival, including all available financial data.

9.4 2024 PARKES ELVIS FESTIVAL UPDATE**RESOLVED DMEA 007/23**

Moved: Cr Neil Westcott
Seconded: Cr William Jayet

That the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee:

1. Receive and note the information regarding the 2024 Elvis Festival update.

CARRIED**9.5 CUSTOMER PROFILES - PROJECT UPDATE****RESOLVED DMEA 008/23**

Moved: Cr Marg Applebee

Seconded: Cr Neil Westcott

That the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee:

1. Receive and note the Customer Profiles project update report.

CARRIED

9.6 DEVELOPMENT OF PARKES SHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN & BYPASS STRATEGY

RESOLVED DMEA 009/23

Moved: Cr Neil Westcott

Seconded: Cr Marg Applebee

That the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee:

1. Receive and note the briefing on the development of the Parkes Destination Management Plan & Bypass Strategy, as detailed in this report.

CARRIED

8 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

RECOMMENDATION

That Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee:

1. Moves into Closed Session to deal with the matters below, which are classified as confidential under section 10A(2) of *the Local Government Act 1993* for the reasons specified:

9.1 DEVELOPMENT OF PARKES REGIONAL ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURAL CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) - c of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.

Further it is considered that discussions of this matter in open Council would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it would prejudice Council's ability to secure the optimum outcome for the community.

2. Exclude the media and public from the meeting on the basis that the business to be considered is classified as confidential, pursuant to 10A(1), 10(2) and 10A(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.
3. Withhold reports and correspondence relevant to the subject business be withheld from the media and public as provided by section 11(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.
4. Make public resolutions made by the Council in Closed Session after the conclusion of the Closed Session, and record such resolutions in the minutes of the Council meeting.

BACKGROUND, ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

In accordance with section 10A(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council may close part of its meeting to deal with business of the following kind:

- (a) Personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors).
- (b) Personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer.
- (c) Information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
- (d) Commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
 - (i) Prejudice the commercial position of a person who supplied it: or
 - (ii) Confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of Council;
 - (iii) Reveal a trade secret.
- (e) Information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law.
- (f) Matters affecting the security of Council, Councillors, Council staff and Council property.
- (g) Advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the grounds of legal professional privilege.
- (h) Information concerning the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance on community land.
- (i) Alleged contraventions of any Code of Conduct requirements applicable under section 440.

It is my opinion that the business listed in the recommendation is of a kind referred to in section 10A(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993* and, under the provisions of the Act and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, should be dealt with in a part of the meeting that is closed to members of the public and the media.

Pursuant to section 10A(4) of the Act and clauses 14.9–14.10 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, members of the public may make representations to the meeting immediately after the motion to close part of the meeting is moved and seconded, as to whether that part of the meeting should be closed.

At 12:10 pm, the Meeting went into Closed Session.

MOTION

That the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee:

1. Resume in Open Session and note the Chairperson's report on Confidential Resolutions.

At 12:20 pm, the Council in Closed Session returned to Open Session.

9 REPORT OF CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTIONS

In accordance with clauses 14.22 and 14.23 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, resolutions passed during a meeting, or a part of a meeting that is closed to the public must be made public by the Chairperson as soon as practicable. Such resolutions must be recorded in the publicly available minutes of the meeting.

9.1 DEVELOPMENT OF PARKES REGIONAL ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURAL CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

RESOLVED DMEA 010/23

Moved: Cr William Jayet

Seconded: Cr Marg Applebee

That the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee:

1. Receive and note the briefing on the development of the Parkes Regional Entertainment and Cultural Centre Feasibility Study, as detailed in this report.

CARRIED

10 CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting concluded at 12:30 pm.

This is the final page of the minutes comprising 8 pages numbered 1 to 8 of the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 21 November 2023 and confirmed on .

CHAIRPERSON

5 LATE BUSINESS

6 OFFICERS' REPORTS

6.1 MAJOR EVENTS & FESTIVALS STRATEGY PROJECT UPDATE

IP&R Linkage: Pillar: Economy

Goal: Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.

Strategy: Promote Parkes Shire as a tourist destination and support the continued growth of our visitor economy.

Author: Mikaela Cass, Events and Festivals Specialist

Authoriser: Carrie Olsen, Executive Manager Economy, Destination and Activation

Annexures: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The Committee note the update provided by Silver Lining Strategy on the Major Events and Festivals Strategy.
 2. The Committee engage with Silver Lining Strategy for the purpose of collating feedback from key stakeholders for the development of the Major Events and Festivals Strategy.
-

BACKGROUND

Council currently lacks a documented strategic framework for its events and festivals. Development of such a strategy was a recommendation of the Parkes Elvis Festival Service Review, which was undertaken by consultants Morrison Low on behalf of Council, with findings presented in early 2023.

In February 2023, Council issued a Request for Quotation ("RFQ") to engage a suitably skilled, qualified and experienced consultant to undertake the preparation of a Major Events and Festivals Strategy and Action Plan ("Strategy"). The successful proponent is Silver Lining Strategy. Work on this project commenced in January 2024.

As part of the development of this Strategy, Council will consider a current situation analysis of the events industry, including trends, issues, challenges and risks, and how the organisation can respond to these factors to ensure the ongoing successful development, implementation and sustainability of its events and festivals program.

It is expected that this Strategy, once finalised, will assist in informing Council's future decision-making regarding major events and festivals such as the Parkes Elvis Festival and Trundle ABBA Festival.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Stu Speirs from Silver Lining Strategy will be in attendance at the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee meeting to provide an update on the Major Events and Festivals Strategy. As part of the update, Stu will engage with Committee members to gain insight into their understanding of the current state of the Events and Festivals portfolio and delivery of events at Parkes Shire Council, including any areas of improvement to consider as part of the strategy development. Committee members are tasked to consider the above prior to the meeting to ensure meaningful and constructive discussion at the Committee meeting.

Further reports regarding this project will be taken to Council's Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no legislative or policy implications for the Committee associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council Investment

Council has invested \$25,454 from the 2023/24 Events and Festivals operational budget to the development of the Major Events and Festivals Strategy.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that the Major Events and Festivals Strategy, once finalised, will better equip Council to make associated future decisions surrounding Council's signature and major events.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

There are no community consultation requirements for the Committee associated with this report.

For the information of the Committee, the Major Events and Festivals Strategy will not be placed on public exhibition prior to being endorsed by Council as we are not seeking public input. However, the Strategy will not be confidential, and a copy will be made available on Council's website via the Council Business Paper and once endorsed, as a supporting document that works hand-in-hand with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.

6.2 TRUNDLE ABBA FESTIVAL 2023 PROJECT WRAP-UP**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Promote Parkes Shire as a tourist destination and support the continued growth of our visitor economy.**Author:** **Mikaela Cass, Events and Festivals Specialist****Authoriser:** **Carrie Olsen, Executive Manager Economy, Destination and Activation****Annexures:** **A. Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 Financial Report as at 26 February 2024** [↓](#)

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The information contained in this report be received and noted by the Committee.
-

BACKGROUND

The Trundle ABBA Festival ("the Festival") was launched in 2012 by Gary and Ruth Crowley, and since then the event has gone from strength to strength. The Festival is a true celebration of all things ABBA - the music, the fashions, as well as disco and music from the 70's. It's an opportunity for festivalgoers to dig out their platforms, sparkles, and flares.

In 2022, the Festival founders approached Parkes Shire Council to undertake the 2022 Trundle ABBA Festival. However, due to severe weather, Parkes Shire Council cancelled the 2022 event.

Hayley Roach was appointed Manager of Trundle ABBA Festival in August 2022 on a short-term contract ending in November 2022. In February 2023, Hayley Roach was re-engaged as an Events Casual, working remotely to facilitate the Festival, relocating to Parkes in August 2023 to deliver the event in person.

A report was tabled at the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee on 21 November 2023 providing a post-event review. At that stage, the final costs to deliver the 2023 Trundle ABBA Festival and the results of the feedback survey weren't available. The Committee were advised that a report will be tabled to a future meeting with these details.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY***Financial Implications of the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023***

The financial operating result of the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 was budgeted at **(\$107,000)**, based on an income budget of \$361,000 and expenditure budget of \$468,000. This signified an intended investment by Parkes Shire Council to the value of \$107,000.

The current financial result for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 is an investment of \$160,680 by Council. A copy of the final Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 financial report has been provided at *Annexure A*, capturing actuals to 26 February 2024.

Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 Attendee Survey

An attendee survey for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 was conducted by Council during November. The Committee were provided with insights from the responses received by 30 attendees at the meeting held 21 November 2023. No further survey responses were received following the meeting and as such, there are no further insights to provide.

CommBank IQ Data

Council has begun a partnership with a credit card data analysis provider, CommBank IQ. This service provides access to meaningful consumer spend data that combines movement and economic insights to create a single, robust asset to empower decision-making. Insights provided in relation to the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 demonstrate a local economic impact/uplift of \$97,000 as a direct result of visitor expenditure. Further information including associated workings and data limitations can be provided.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no legislative or policy considerations for the Committee associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council Investment

In summary, expenditure was well managed for the 2023 event: all things considered, expenses were less than budget by \$82,905, however the budgeted income fell short by \$136,585 due to lower-than-expected ticket sales revenue and committed grant funding being invoiced in the 2022/23 financial year.

Based on the current results, the event incurred a (\$160,680) loss in this financial year. Council had budgeted for a (\$107,000) loss. There is income yet to be realised for event merchandise sales. Once the final position is determined at the end of the current financial year, Council is likely to be required to transfer funds from other budget areas to off-set the budget variance.

Grant Funding

Grant funding of \$120,000 was secured for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023, comprised of \$90,000 in Round 2 of REAF with the Department of Regional NSW and \$30,000 through the Regional Event Fund Flagship Event Agreement with Destination NSW. As \$72,000 of the \$120,000 committed in grant funding for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 was invoiced and received from the funding body during the 2022/23 financial year, it is not represented on the provided report and signifies a (\$72,000) variance against the budget.

Merchandise Sales

It should be noted that some merchandise purchased for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2023 remains in stock and available for sale at the Parkes Visitor Information Centre. As such, additional sales income associated with this project will be realised in due course, with a journal entry at the conclusion of the 2023/24 financial year to confirm final results.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

There are no community consultation requirements for the Committee associated with this report.

TRUNDLE ABBA FESTIVAL 2023 Trundle ABBA Festival Budget								
INCOME	GL ACCOUNT	2023 BUDGET	2022 CANCELLED EVENT	ACTUALS @ 31/12/2023	COMMITMENTS @ 31/12/2023	TOTAL ACT + COM @ 31/12/2023	VARIANCE (ACT + COM) V BUD	Commentary
Ticket Sales, Travel Sponsorship & Food Vendors	10-1024-1001-41475	226,000	96,192	160,882	-	160,882	(65,118)	
Merchandise	10-1024-1001-41475	15,000		15,533	-	15,533	533	
DNSW Flagship Funding / Dept RNSW REAF Round 2	10-1024-1001-49029	120,000		48,000	-	48,000	(72,000)	
TOTAL INCOME		361,000	96,192	224,415	0	224,415	(136,585)	
EXPENDITURE	WORK ORDER	2023 BUDGET	2022 CANCELLED EVENT	ACTUALS @ 31/12/2023	COMMITMENTS @ 31/12/2023	TOTAL ACT + COM @ 31/12/2023	VARIANCE (ACT + COM) V BUD	
Performance Fees	1005811	49,000	155,491	48,545	-	48,545	(455)	
Production & Staging	1005855	45,000		41,481	-	41,481	(3,519)	
Catering	1005856	5,000		4,066	-	4,066	(934)	
Accommodation & Travel	1005857	12,500		10,873	-	10,873	(1,627)	
Workforce	1005858	103,340		128,719	-	128,719	25,379	
Overlay	1005859	75,000		31,460	-	31,460	(43,540)	
Trundle Theming & CBD Entertainment	1005860	21,000		23,424	-	23,424	2,424	
Promotions, advertising and marketing	1005861	80,500		47,439	-	47,439	(33,061)	
Licencing & Insurances	1005862	16,660		12,511	-	12,511	(4,149)	
Merchandise	1005863	10,000		9,410	-	9,410	(590)	
Services	1005864	35,000		23,082	-	23,082	(11,918)	
Consumables & Contingency	1005865	15,000		4,085	-	4,085	(10,915)	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		468,000	155,491	385,095	0	385,095	(82,905)	
SUMMARY		2023 BUDGET		ACTUALS @ 31/12/2023	COMMITMENTS @ 31/12/2023	TOTAL ACT + COM @ 31/12/2023	VARIANCE (ACT + COM) V BUD	
TOTAL INCOME		361,000	96,192	224,415	-	224,415	(136,585)	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		468,000	155,491	385,095	-	385,095	(82,905)	
OPERATING RESULT - PROFIT/(LOSS)		(107,000)	(59,299)	(160,680)	0	(160,680)	(53,680)	<p>Based on the final results, the event incurred a (\$160,680) loss. Council had budgeted for (\$107,000) loss. Therefore, council will be required to transfer an additional \$53,680 from other budget areas to off-set this loss.</p> <p>Financial Risk Implications - The organisation carries significant financial risk as part of coordinating the annual ABBA Festival. The festival was unable to achieve a break-even point in the current year and could result in the general fund posting a deficit result. Moving forward, a reduction in council services across other functions would be required to fund this event if sufficient income is not obtained to achieve a break-even point.</p>

6.3 TRUNDLE ABBA FESTIVAL 2024 PROJECT UPDATE**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Promote Parkes Shire as a tourist destination and support the continued growth of our visitor economy.**Author:** **Mikaela Cass, Events and Festivals Specialist****Authoriser:** **Carrie Olsen, Executive Manager Economy, Destination and Activation****Annexures:** **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The information contained in this report be received and noted by the Committee.
-

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2012 by Gary and Ruth Crowley, the Trundle ABBA Festival ran successfully for eight years prior to the onset of the Novel Coronavirus ("COVID-19") pandemic in early 2020. As a result of the ongoing pandemic, associated Public Health Orders and various travel restrictions and social distancing requirements in place during this time, the festival was postponed in both 2020 and 2021. Trundle ABBA Festival Incorporated subsequently approached Parkes Shire Council ("Council") and requested that it assume ownership and management of the festival.

Hayley Roach was appointed Manager of Trundle ABBA Festival in August 2022 on a short-term contract ending in November 2022. In February 2023, Hayley Roach was re-engaged as an Events Casual, working remotely to facilitate the Festival, relocating to Parkes in August 2023 to deliver the event in person.

Following a request made by the Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee at the meeting held 21 November 2023, an Extraordinary Council Meeting was held on 4 December 2023 to discuss the planning and delivery of the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024, including the provision of all available financial data.

At its Extraordinary Council Meeting held 4 December 2023, Council resolved to proceed in planning and delivering the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024, to be held Saturday, 19 October 2024 [res. ECM 23-027].

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY***Trundle ABBA Festival Manager***

Hayley Roach has once again been re-engaged as Trundle ABBA Festival Manager on a short-term contract ending 31 October 2024 to support the planning and delivery of the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024. As part of the Events and Festivals team and in consultation with the Events and Festivals Specialist, the Trundle ABBA Festival Manager will be responsible for the following deliverables for 2024:

- Develop, negotiate and secure the event program, including performing artists, ancillary events, theme (special anniversary) and full Festival schedule (working to budget).
- Staging and production (audio visual).
- Music licensing.

- Artist management, travel, accommodation, and hospitality.
- Operational delivery and run sheet management.
- Community and Trundle stakeholder engagement.

The remainder of the deliverables for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024 will be the responsibility of the Events and Festivals Specialist and the wider Events and Festivals team, with specialist advice provided by the Trundle ABBA Festival Manager as needed.

Trundle ABBA Festival planning update

At this early stage in the planning process for the 2024 event, the following performers have been engaged:

- Performer - Bjorn Again (*headline act #1*)
- ABBA Stage MC - Tristan McManus

In line with the work being undertaken in the Events and Festivals portfolio to better align with Council procedures, a new process for contracts, programming and invoicing is being developed. This will also help to mitigate the risks associated with potential budget over-runs.

The Trundle ABBA Festival Manager met with the Swedish Embassy on 19 February 2024 to discuss support for the 2024 event, including the Embassy's support of an invitation to "ABBA Royalty" to attend the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024, and to jointly celebrate and mark the 50-year anniversary of ABBA winning the Eurovision song contest, through an activation in metro-Sydney.

Partnership Prospectus

Council's Events and Festivals team have commenced work on developing a holistic Partnership Prospectus for the Events and Festivals portfolio, rather than stand-alone documents for individual major events.

The objective of the Partnership Prospectus is to develop a strategy that builds and increases investment and partnership opportunities with strong value propositions that align with the respective target audience of the Events and Festivals held within the Parkes Shire, therefore generating an increase in income for the Events and Festivals operational budget.

A copy of the Partnership Prospectus will be made available to the Committee once developed.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no legislative or policy considerations for the Committee associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council Investment

Budget allocation will be made in the 2024/25 Operational Plan and Budget. As per the resolution of the report tabled at the Extraordinary Council Meeting held 4 December 2023, Council investment of \$100,000 will be considered when drafting the operational budget for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024. Council's Events and Festivals Specialist is working closely with the Trundle ABBA Festival Manager to ensure the budget is conservative with a reduction in expenses.

The final budget for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024 will be tabled at Council's Ordinary Council Meeting scheduled to be held Tuesday, 16 April 2024.

Grant Funding

To-date, \$30,000 has been committed to the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024 under a triennial agreement through the Destination NSW Regional Event Fund Flagship Event Agreement, which spans the period 2022 through 2024. The Events and Festivals team are working with the Communications team to develop a structured and effective Marketing and Promotions Plan which will utilise the funds committed through the Destination NSW Regional Event Fund Flagship Event Agreement.

Council's Events and Festivals Team are pursuing all available grant funding opportunities to offset the costs associated with delivering the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024 and further activate aspects of the event including Trundle Main Street.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

With all events, there are risks of budget over-runs due to market volatility and the increasing cost of goods and services. Once an operational budget for an event is agreed, should there be over-runs, there are risks that other proposed Council events or community events support programs will be impacted.

Managing outdoor events has high inherent risks. Considering progressively unpredictable weather patterns and severe weather events, it is increasingly difficult to secure appropriate insurance coverage for large outdoor events. Council Officers have approached Council's insurance provider for a quote for coverage for the Trundle ABBA Festival 2024.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Council officers will plan and execute a program of communication and engagement activities to meet community and stakeholder needs.

6.4 PARKES ELVIS FESTIVAL 2024 PROJECT WRAP-UP**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Promote Parkes Shire as a tourist destination and support the continued growth of our visitor economy.**Author:** **Mikaela Cass, Events and Festivals Specialist****Authoriser:** **Carrie Olsen, Executive Manager Economy, Destination and Activation****Annexures:** **A. Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 - Financial Report as at 26 February 2024****B. [Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 - Media Coverage Report](#)**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The information contained in this report be received and noted by the Committee.
-

BACKGROUND

Recognised as one of the top three Festivals and Events in Australia, the Parkes Elvis Festival ("the Festival") attracts 25,000 fans with a global reach of 1.87 billion across over 3,000 media outlets.

Due to staffing changes in the Events and Festivals portfolio throughout 2023, a fresh Parkes Elvis Festival team was formed in late 2023 with a combination of Parkes Shire Council ("Council") staff, external contractors and volunteer Portfolio Holders to deliver an amazing Parkes Elvis Festival from 10-14 January 2024.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

In summary, Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 was a success; over 150 events delivered across multiple venues to thousands of keen Elvis-lovers in rural NSW - unforgettable!

A short Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 highlights reel is available to watch [here](#).

Successes

- Parkes Elvis Festival team worked to rebuild relationships with Portfolio Holders to a level of strength.
- Credit to the incredible team, or the "nucleus". To see them pick up the project in November and hit the ground running to deliver in January was a highlight. Special mentions for Joel Ulbricht, Mikaela Cass, Natalie Williams, Lisa Moon (and the wider Tourism team), Megan Morrison, Jolie O'Shannessy, Rebecca Scully, Cassidy Martin-Scully and Ash Weaver - the dream team!
- Over 5,000 tickets sold over three venues (Parkes Leagues Club, Parkes Services Club and the Little Theatre).
- Up-and-coming talent, Charlie Gaylard, was unleashed on Cooke Park Main Stage, setting him up for a bright future as an Elvis Tribute Artist.
- Highest marketing footprint achieved in Festival history, with over 1.87 billion mentions across over 3,000 media outlets both locally, domestically, and internationally.
- Significant improvement on integrating Council processes within the festival framework - more work will be undertaken for 2025 delivery and beyond.
- The involvement, enthusiasm and positivity shown from all Council staff across all areas. Incredible feedback received by staff and the public noting the streamlined and smooth

delivery across multiple areas of the Festival. A short video highlighting some of the team responsible for delivering the 2024 festival can be viewed [here](#).

Key Learnings

Several key learnings have been identified as part of the debrief for Parkes Elvis Festival 2024. Key learnings have been identified below:

Administration

- Opportunity to introduce a more centralised program document, that once established, will become the source of truth for all information around marketing, website, programme booklet and information for internal stakeholders.
- A need to continue to incorporate Council processes and collaboration with relevant departments throughout the preparation, onsite and post-Festival plans.
- Monthly financial reporting with results to be communicated to the Executive Leadership Team to ensure a healthy position and that Council's investment is as per the 2024/25 Operational Plan and Budget.

Marketing

- Opportunity to develop a Partnership Strategy that builds and increases investment/partnerships for the Festival and the broader Events and Festivals portfolio.
- Creating a strategic multi-week Marketing and Communications Plan that incorporates website, email, ticket box office, social media, and advertising (print/on-air) in an approach that presents an exciting Parkes Elvis Festival 2025.

Operations

- Working with local businesses, cafes, and restaurants to encourage innovation and extended hours which will generate greater local economic impact and provide improved dining/café/shopping experiences and options for visitors.
- Activating the top end of Clarinda Street.
- Greater focus placed on the activation of the Traffic Control Plans put in place for the Festival including communication with local businesses and movement of vehicles in no parking zones.
- Additional disability viewing platforms in Cooke Park for Main Stage.
- Investigate options to enhance distribution of sounds from Cooke Park Main Stage to the south end of the park.
- Streamlined storage and cataloguing of Festival assets.
- Wayfinding signage throughout the Festival Boulevard and Cooke Park precincts to enhance the visitor experience.

Programming

- Creating and establishing a new process for artist contracts, programming, and invoicing.
- Maximising the top end of Clarinda Street, generating more entertainment and experiences in the broader Festival Boulevard precinct.

Portfolio Holders

The efforts of the Portfolio Holders cannot be understated; the valuable input from all for their respective portfolios is to be commended and was greatly appreciated by the incoming Parkes Elvis Festival team.

2024 Portfolio Holders included:

- Street Parade and Cars of the Era - John Kennedy
- Wall of Fame and Heritage Car Show - Bob Steel
- Main Stage - Nola Short
- Volunteers - Sue McGrath
- Busking - Kenny McGrath
- Rock N Roll Dancing - Kristen Barrass
- Miss Priscilla - Anne Steel
- Renewal of Vows - Anita Beddowes
- Main Stage Competitions - Ashlee McGrath

Debriefs are scheduled to be held with each Portfolio Holder in March 2024. The debriefs will also include a brief introduction to a revised way of working for portfolios including a framework around expenditure of Council funds and a standard authorisation process for major decisions for each portfolio.

Media Update

Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 achieved the highest marketing footprint in festival history, with over 1.8 billion mentions across over 3,000 media outlets both locally, domestically, and internationally.

Council engaged PR company, Original Spin, to coordinate PR activities associated with the Festival. Original Spin worked closely with the Festival Producer and Council's Communications team to achieve this fantastic result.

A copy of the coverage report has been included at *Annexure B*, for the information of the Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no legislative or policy considerations for the Committee associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council Investment

The final financial result for the Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 is yet to be realised with some supplier invoices outstanding. A preliminary financial report has been provided at *Annexure A*, capturing actuals to 26 February 2024, and outstanding commitments.

In summary, the operating result of the Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 was budgeted at **(\$202,231)**, based on an income budget of \$804,309 and expenditure budget of \$1,006,540. This signified an intended investment by Parkes Shire Council to the value of \$202,231. The current financial result for the Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 is an investment of \$593,202 by Council.

There is outstanding income yet to be recognised associated with the Destination NSW Strategic Investment Agreement. This additional income will be realised within the current financial year, upon meeting of reporting milestones and achievement of agreement KPIs. This income will amount to approximately \$60,000.

Council's Events and Festivals Specialist is working closely with the Festival Producer and wider Events and Festivals team to finalise outstanding commitments against the budget.

Grant Funding

Nil grant funds were secured for the delivery of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024.

Support from Destination NSW is provided through a Strategic Investment Agreement. This income is captured on the sponsorship income line. The total value of the 2024 event investment is

\$90,000. Around \$60,000 of that is yet to be invoiced and as such is not recognised on the report appended at *Annexure A*.

Merchandise Sales

It should be noted that some merchandise purchased for the Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 remains in stock and available for sale at the Parkes Visitor Information Centre. As such, additional sales income associated with this project is likely to be realised in due course, with a journal entry at the conclusion of the 2023/24 financial year, to confirm final results.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

The organisation carries significant financial risk as part of coordinating the Parkes Elvis Festival. The Festival was unable to achieve the budget target in the current year and could result in the general fund posting a deficit result.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

There are no community consultation requirements associated with this report.

Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 Festival Budget						
	2024 Festival Budget	2024 Actuals & Commitments @ 26/02/2024	Variance (Act + Comm) v Bud	2020 Festival Actuals	2022 Festival Actuals	2023 Festival Actuals
Operating Income						
Op. Contributions - Elvis Merchandise	119,379	118,736	(643)	119,749	102,302	96,951
Op. Contributions - Elvis Sponsorships	179,107	222,000	42,893	166,213	152,621	174,770
Op. Contributions - Ticket Sales and Registrations	452,710	483,169	30,459	457,478	465,911	589,633
Op. Contributions - Marketing & Advertising	47,933	14,460	(33,473)	23,950	30,850	21,854
Op. Contributions - Accommodation Programs	5,180	7,612	2,432	4,793	28,243	9,836
Op. Contributions - Operational Grant	-	-	-	-	153,665	243,498
Total Income	804,309	845,978	41,669	772,183	933,592	1,136,543
Operating Expenses						
Elvis Festival - Employee Costs	333,003	353,487	20,484	276,965	319,804	351,165
Elvis Festival - Materials & Consumables	67,620	100,539	32,919	81,061	56,183	73,199
Elvis Festival - External Services	461,695	745,349	283,654	519,366	599,505	728,313
Elvis Festival - IT & Communications	1,400	60	(1,340)	2,223	-	-
Elvis Festival - Administration	102,241	69,804	(32,437)	95,894	64,958	133,946
Elvis Festival - Travel & Entertainment	40,581	164,909	124,328	36,998	101,331	183,386
Elvis Festival - Works & Services (Festival Coordination Costs)	<i>Costs for Festival Coordination Costs (Outdoor Staff, etc) allocated into the above categories this year</i>			135,037	152,677	149,637
Elvis Festival - Unreconciled credit cards	-	5,032	5,032	-	-	-
Total Expenses	1,006,540	1,439,179	432,640	1,147,544	1,294,458	1,619,646
NET OPERATING RESULT FOR THE YEAR - Profit/(Loss)	(202,231)	(593,202)	(390,971)	(375,361)	(360,866)	(483,103)

PARKES ELVIS FESTIVAL 2024

*Original Spin
PR Report
September 2023 – January
2024*





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ACHIEVEMENTS

Earned Media

Overall, OS secured **3,482** pieces of media coverage for Parkes Elvis Festival 2024.

This resulted in **655 TV, 1545 Radio, 109 Print, 1159 Online** earned media items, with a combined circulation of **1,873,655,869**.

142 national + 306 international + 1,447 NSW and 1,587 inter-state earned media were achieved to promote the Parkes Elvis Festival 2024.

The total AVE for secured coverage is approx **\$16,700,000.00**

Earned media highlights include top national and state media publications such as – **7 Sydney (Sunrise), Nine Sydney (Today Show), The Project, Today Show, 2GB Radio, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian, The Daily Telegraph.**

Earned television highlights include an Interviews with:

- Media crosses with Elvis Talent during Elvis Express Media Call on **The Today Show, Sunrise, ABC TV, SBS and The Project.**

During the campaign, the Agency issued **five** releases nationally, **one** Elvis Express media call & **one** media accredited call out.

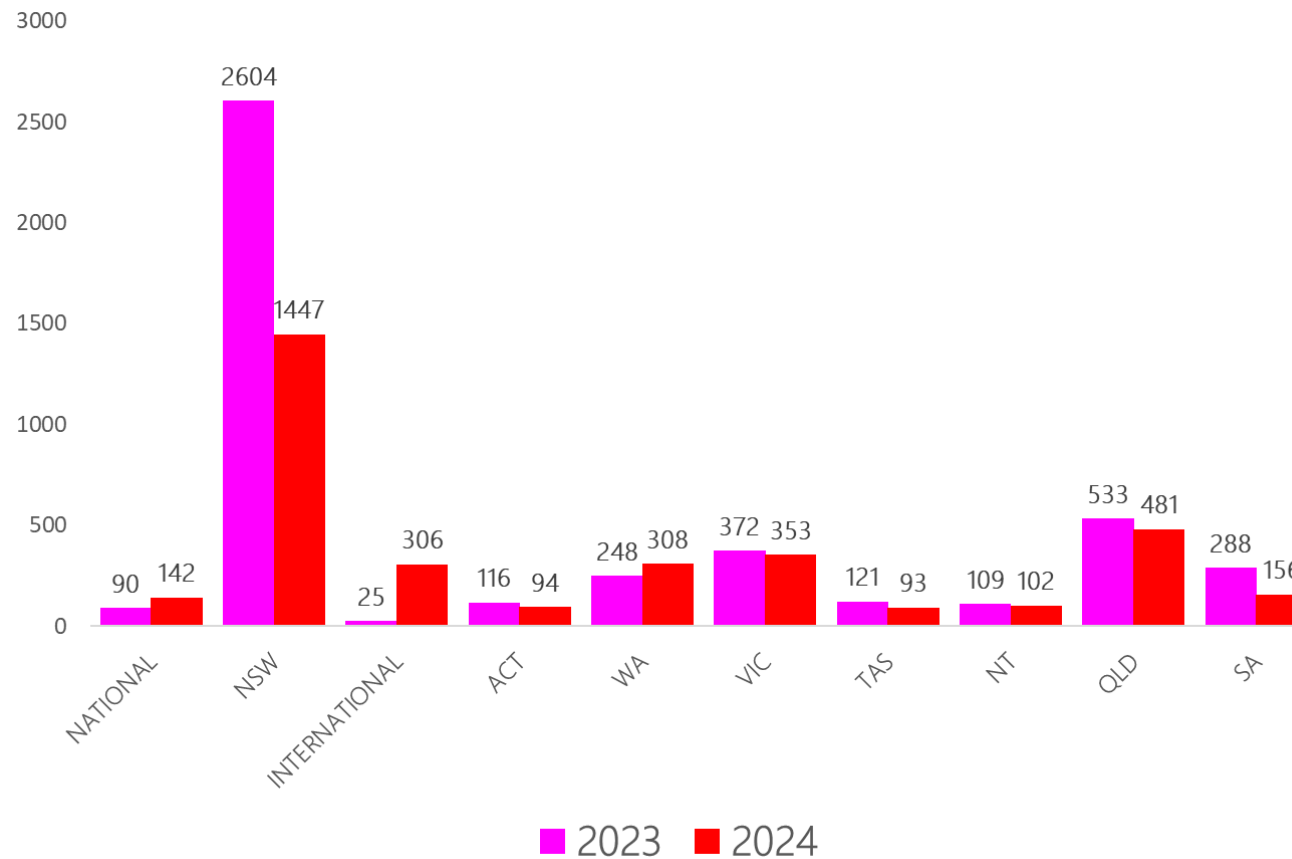


THE EARNED MEDIA



THE STATISTICS

STATE X STATE BREAKDOWN – 2023 vs 2024



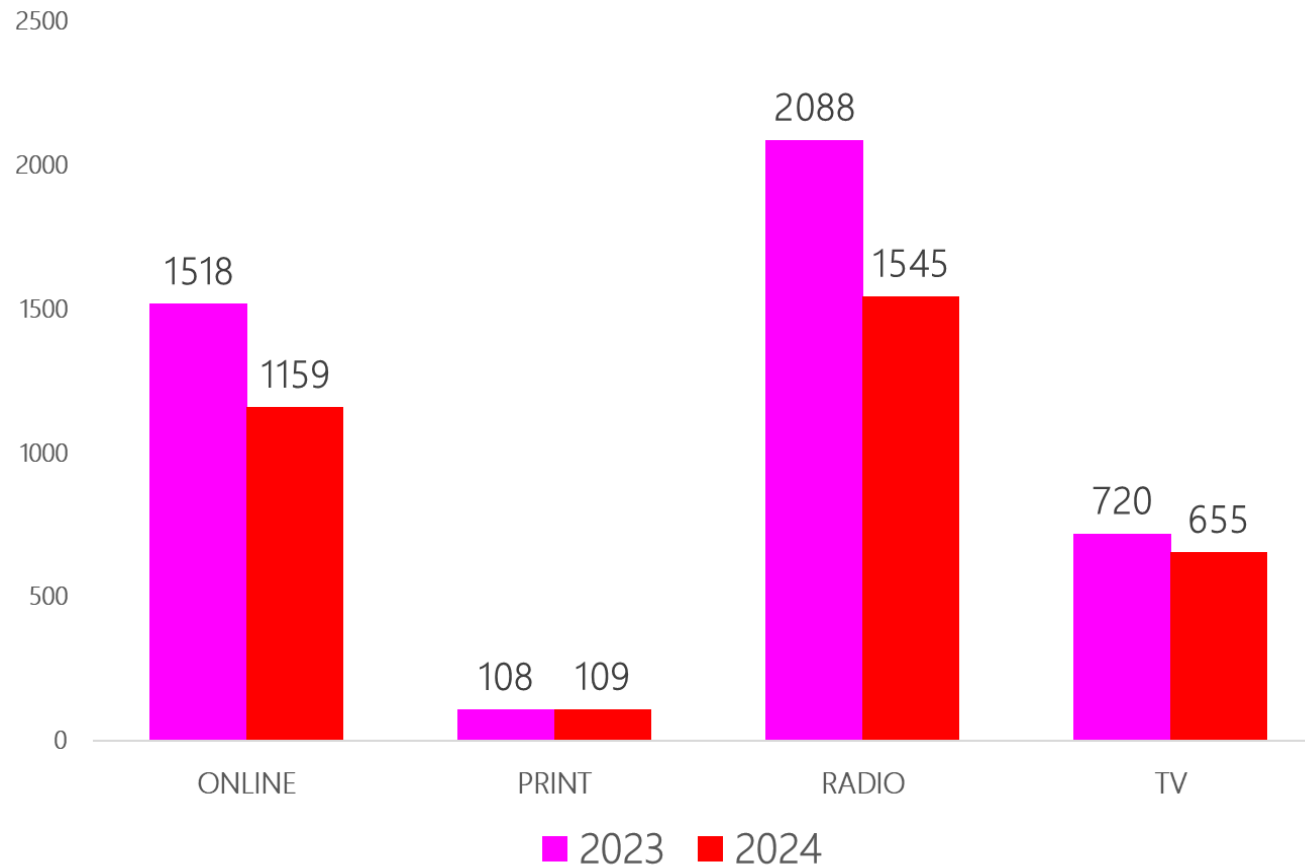
Total Circulation Figure: 1,873,655,869.

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THE STATISTICS

TYPES OF CLIPPINGS – 2023 vs 2024



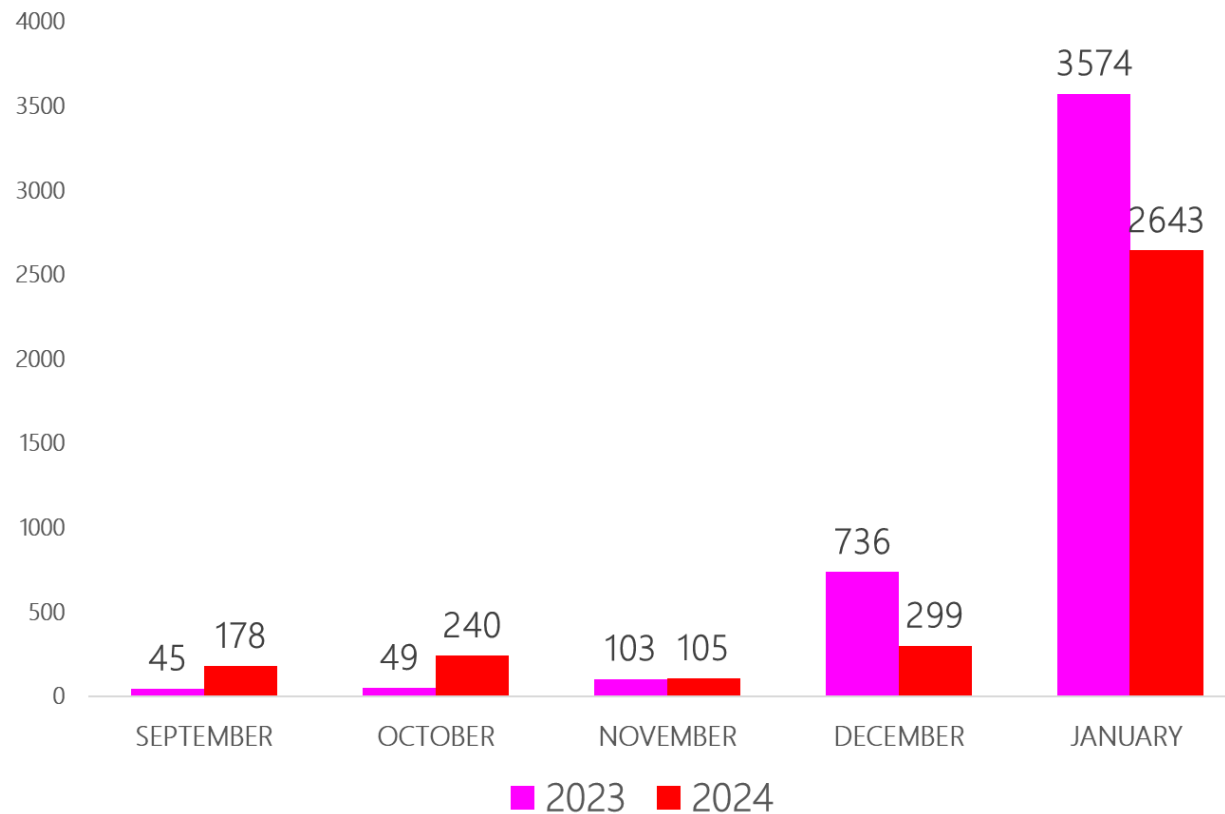
Number of clippings: 3,482

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THE STATISTICS

MONTH X MONTH BREAKDOWN – 2023 vs 2024



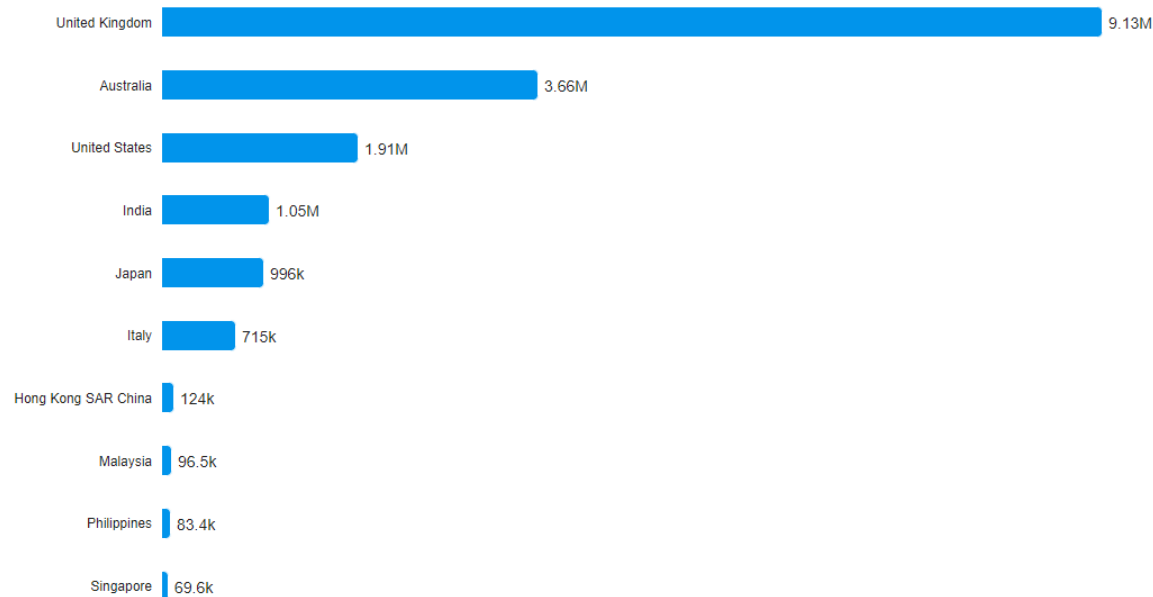
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TOTAL ADVERTISING VALUE ESTIMATE (AVE) FOR SECURED COVERAGE

Top Locations by AVE

Sep 10, 2023 - Feb 6



Source: Meltwater

TOTAL AVE: approx \$16,700,000.00

COVERAGE ANALYSIS

2024 Festival Media Coverage Overview

While our media coverage for the 2024 Festival did not surpass the record-breaking attention received in 2023, it is important to note that this year's coverage ranks as the second-highest in the Festival's esteemed history. This is an achievement that reflects the enduring appeal and growing legacy of the Festival.

Several contributory elements have been identified for the variance in year-over-year coverage:

Milestone Anniversary:

The 2023 Festival marked a milestone 30th anniversary, a celebratory occasion that naturally stimulated a surge in media engagement. This heightened interest led to an extensive radio distribution and increased online syndication of articles, contributing to the significant difference in radio and online coverage between the two years.

Operational Dynamics:

Operational challenges within the Festival management team from September to November impacted the flow of information and approval processes for PR initiatives. Despite these hurdles, the publicity team continued to actively pitch stories and highlight Festival performers. With the onboarding of a new management team in November, there was a marked improvement in the dissemination of press releases on Festival activities, subsequently boosting coverage.

However, this transition coincided with the approach of the holiday season, which constrained the time frame for comprehensive media outreach as newsrooms shifted to reduced staffing.

In conclusion, while external factors and internal transitions influenced the volume of coverage in 2024, the Festival maintained a strong media presence, underscoring its significance as a cultural touchstone and public favourite.



THE TV HIGHLIGHTS



- [Prime7 Local News](#) (NSW) -- News grab on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024 + interview with **Anne Steel**;



- [ABC 24](#) (National) - Interview with Darren Armstrong at Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [SBS One](#) (National) - Cross from Elvis Express Media Call for Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [GWN7 Television](#) (WA) - News grab on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [7 Sydney // Sunrise](#) (NSW) --Live weather cross on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Nine Western Victoria](#) - (VIC) - News grab on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Nine Sydney // Today Show](#) (NSW) --Interview with Emilio Prince and Kingsley Rock for Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [10 Brisbane // The Project](#) (QLD) - News grab on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [7 Sydney](#) (NSW) - News grab on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

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THE RADIO HIGHLIGHTS



- [2DU 1251AM](#) (NSW) - Mention on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [smoothfm 91.5 Melbourne](#) (VIC) - Mention on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [ABC North West Queensland](#) (QLD) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [ABC Central West NSW AM](#) (NSW) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Triple M 104.5](#) (NSW) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [2GB Radio](#) (NSW) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Forever Classic 2GN](#) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [2CC Talking Canberra](#) (ACT) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [FIVEaa](#) (SA) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Hit90.9 Gold Coast](#) (QLD) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Perth's 6ix](#) (WA) - Mention on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [702 ABC Sydney](#) (NSW) - Mention of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

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THE PRINT HIGHLIGHTS



· [The Daily Telegraph](#) (NSW) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [Daily Liberal](#) (National) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [CQ Today Weekend](#) (National) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [Kalgoorlie Miner](#) (WA) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [Emerald Today](#) (QLD) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [Sunday Examiner](#) (National) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [The Canberra Times](#) (ACT) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [The Australian](#) (National) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [The Daily Telegraph](#) (National) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) (NSW) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



· [The Canberra Times](#) (ACT) Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024

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PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

The Sydney Morning Herald INDEPENDENT. ALWAYS.



Priscillas shake up the Elvis Express

Helen Pitt

As the sequins, rhinestones, and jumpsuits amassed at Central Station yesterday morning for the annual Elvis Express to Parkes, the King himself may have been feeling a little shook up. The Priscilla Presleys, used to making a little less conversation, are this year taking a little more action.

Priscilla impersonators Gail Goulding from Albion Park and Deborah Petreski from Wollongong, who have been attending the festival for 13 years, were among many eagerly awaiting Sofia Coppola's *Priscilla*, due on Australian cinema screens next week (January 18).

They say it is time the 78-year-old former chair of Elvis Presley Enterprises is celebrated as a successful businesswoman rather than just the wife in the shadow of the singer, thanks to the film based on her 1985 memoir, *Elvis and Me*.

"She helps keep his memory alive. If it wasn't for her, Elvis would have faded away," said Goulding.

"As guardian of Elvis's estate she safeguards his legacy and approves the Elvis tribute artists," said Petreski. "She is the power behind the throne."

They were among hundreds of



Jenny Parsons, Kim Condon, Wendy McIntosh and Kerry Elson at Central Station; (top from left) Gail Goulding, Sean Wright and Deborah Petreski; train driver Peter White; Anne Pagano and Mary Carrolo. Photos: Louise Kennerley

Presley fans at the station, boarding the train headed for the 31st Parkes Elvis Festival.

Their Priscilla wig is their "signature look", they explained, while each year they change their outfits to fit the theme of each festival. This year's theme is the 1957 classic Elvis film *Jailhouse*

Rock, so there were lots of black and white striped jail-themed outfits, along with sequined Elvi, hamming it up as they boarded the train.

Aficionados of the singer and Parkes Elvis Festival, which attracts about 25,000 Elvis enthusiasts to the central-western NSW town annually, were

welcomed at Central by Parkes' new mayor Neil Westcott, a fifth-generation farmer, who sported a blue jumpsuit with rhinestones.

"The mood in the main street is buzzing – we can't wait to welcome visitors to our town.

"Baz Luhrmann's film about Elvis has really reignited interest

in Elvis post-COVID," he said, adding next week's *Priscilla* release was eagerly awaited by people in Parkes.

The four-day festival is an opportunity to step out in Elvis-inspired fashion for four friends from Lismore and the Gold Coast who have been coming to the festival for a decade now.

Wearing homemade black-and-white tailored outfits with matching luggage covers inspired by Presley's *Viva Las Vegas* jumpsuit, twins Kim Condon and Kerry Elson say this is a chance to express their lifelong love of Presley, who would have turned 89 on Monday.

"Every year they would come into the store where I worked to buy fabric for their costumes, so I asked to come along," said one of the quartet, Wendy McIntosh, who waved the train off at Central, before heading to the airport to take the Rex "Hound dog" flight to Parkes, piloted by an Elvis impersonator.

For the second year in a row, the Elvis Express was driven by jumpsuit-wearing Parkes local, Peter White, a NSW train driver for more than 30 years. "There's no one in Parkes who doesn't have an Elvis suit or a Priscilla wig," said White.

PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

The Daily Telegraph

**Elvis impersonator
Darren Armstrong
busts a move.
Picture: Richard
Dobson**

The 'Ghost of Elvis' aims to shake, rattle 'n roll his way to Memphis

James Dowling

Every year a range of Elvises go head to head at the Parkes Elvis Festival, and this year Darren Armstrong, known as the "Ghost of Elvis", has a winning feeling.

The Parkes Elvis Festival runs from January 10 to 14 and seeks to find Australia and New Zealand's greatest Elvis tribute artist.

The competition is endorsed by Elvis Presley Enterprises, and this year 15 impersonators will vie for awards in stage presence, vocals, performance, and general shaking, rattling and rolling.

The 2024 competition's theme will be Jailhouse Rock.

This year's winner will make their way to an even more elite semi-final round in the 2024 Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest based in Memphis, Tennessee.

That competition takes place during Elvis week (August 9- 17).

Handyman by day and Elvis by night, Armstrong has hip-shaking performances in his blood.

Based in Narellan, he was almost named Elvis as a child, and was encouraged to take up the role by friends and family who remarked on his similarity to the performer.

"I didn't really see it myself back then, but I entered the lookalike contest anyway," he said. He wound up winning the lookalike contest seven years in a row.

"It's some of the best fun I've ever had," he said. "This is what I'd love to do for the rest of my life."

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PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

THE AUSTRALIAN

Can't help falling in love with Elvis Express



Elvis impersonator Johnny Angel, aka Pacific Elvis, at Central Station ahead of Thursday's annual Parkes Elvis Festival

TILEAH DOBSON

As the clock strikes 8.33am on Thursday, a peculiar crowd will emerge on the platforms of Sydney's Central station.

"Dozens of performers and hundreds of fans in white studded jumpsuits, electric-coloured scarves and shiny aviators will flood the station, desperate to board the Elvis Express and chug off to the annual Parkes Elvis Festival.

Among them will be Kiwi tribute performer Johnny Angel, who has been dressing up as his idol for close to a decade yet treats every performance like it's his first.

"I still get the pre-show jitters and love the rush that comes with

performing as someone who I admired so much on stage," said Mr Angel, who's also known as Pacific Elvis.

"I'm always so honoured to perform as my idol and to see the smiles on people's faces when they watch. To have them sing along with me and join in on the fun is always the best feeling," the passionate rocker said.

"Having people travel all around to come and celebrate at the festival is always so amazing to see, and for me to be a part of it ... I'm forever grateful.

"This will be my seventh time attending the Parkes Elvis Festival and I love it every year. I

haven't been booed yet in the years I've done this, so I'm taking that as a good sign."

The 2024 Parkes Elvis Festival runs until Sunday, with this year's theme being the 1957 Elvis film Jailhouse Rock.

It is predicted that more than 25,000 die-hard Elvis fans will be in attendance, with popular events happening, including the Northparkes Mines Street Parade, Renewal of Vows ceremony, the iconic festival markets, with performances happening on the Memphis Stage and the Cooke Park Main Stage.

Mr Angel said the way he connects to the iconic musician and actor is through their shared love of family.

"Just the way he loved his family and how he loved his mum, it reflected on my life and how much I love my own family," he said.

"It really helped me to connect with him in a way that wasn't just through his music or stage presence. It was how he was off the stage, how he spoke and interacted with people that really resonated with me."

Having been exposed to the King's music and films at a young age by his parents, Mr Angel has spent many years refining his performances and is thrilled to be carrying on the King's legacy across Australia and New Zealand.

Seeing the sea of Elvis fans

boarding the train to the festival is something NSW TrainLink chief executive Dale Merrick is looking forward to the most.

"(I'm) incredibly excited and as always excited to see the NSW TrainLink Elvis Express playing a key role in the iconic Parkes Festival in its 31st year," he told The Australian.

"We've partnered with the Parkes Festival for a number of years and this particular dedicated train has run for over two decades."

While it's been confirmed that there will be no special mention of Priscilla Presley's upcoming film, The Vegas Legends tributes will mention the late Tina Turner who passed away in May last year.

JOHN FEDER

The Canberra Times

TO SERVE THE NATIONAL CITY



Elvis tribute artists hit the main street of Parkes, NSW. Picture AAP

Why love is still burning for Elvis

FOR much of the year Ross Cummings builds luxury Sydney homes and renovates upscale bathrooms.

Come January he leaves the harbour city behind, pulls on a flared turtan suit and spends a long weekend being Scottish Elvis.

Cummings is a beloved fixture at the Parkes Elvis Festival, a wacky celebration in rural NSW that coincides with the king of rock 'n' roll's birthday.

He stands out from the crowd of polyester-clad Elvis lookalikes, wearing immaculate finery designed and tailored in Canada.

Cummings grew up in Scotland listening to his father's Elvis records, and first visited the festival six years ago for nostalgic fun.

He's quite handsome ... But he can sing. If you think of all the singers we've had, Elvis is out there.

Kerry Eldon

"I was hooked," he said. "That's when I started watching a lot of Elvis and getting my suits together."

"Then two years ago, I sang for the very first time and that was it."

Scottish Elvis had five gigs in pubs and clubs during the festival, though emulating the king doesn't always come naturally.

"I'm still a novice at performing, I'm working my way into it. If I get better, then I'll think about doing it more."

Cummings attracted a swell of applause during the festival's main event on Saturday morning, a parade of hundreds of tribute artists, lookalikes, dancers and fans.

Some Elvis - the affectionate collective noun for a group of lookalikes - zoomed down the main street on rollerskates, while others danced and swivelled their hips.

The smell of diesel lingered in the air, with a cavalcade of classic cars, trucks

and tractors making their way down Clarinda Street.

Friends Wendy McIntosh, Kerry Eldon, Jenny Parsons and Kym Condon dressed in slick black prison warden uniforms for the festival's Jailhouse Rock theme.

The women set upon groups of obliging Elvis impersonators and handcuffed them in mock arrests.

The festival is at the heart of their decades long friendship, as they spend months planning and making their costumes.

Ms Eldon said she and her sister Kym are lifelong Elvis fans, for obvious reasons.

"He's quite handsome," she laughed.

"But he can sing. If you think of all the singers we've had, Elvis is out there."

"No matter how old you are he's always there."

The festival was founded in 1993 to attract visitors to the small farming town in the traditionally quiet summer period.

Three decades on, the event has international recognition and triples Parkes' population for five days.

Nick Gilbert travelled from Melbourne to join the parade, enduring the 30-degree heat in a frilly gold suit.

But Mr Gilbert had no regrets.

"I was looking for a jumpsuit all year and it's really hard to find one," he said.

"We inquired with a costume shop and they had one gold suit left. I thought, this is fate, I've got to take the gold one."

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PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

Central Western Daily



CLASSIC TRACKS

Deborah Petreski and Gail Goulding made the trek from Wollongong and Albion Park respectively on board the Elvis Express on Thursday as they headed to the Parkes Elvis Festival. Chatting during a brief stop in Orange, the pair revealed they had nearly two decades worth of experience attending the event and looked forward to it each year.

HOW THE KING CHANGED MY LIFE - PAGE 4

ORIGINAL
SPIN

CQToday

Fans can't help falling in love

By Nyk Carnsew and
Stephanie Gardiner in Parkes

Under the strains of Jailhouse Rock, the Elvis Express rolled into Parkes as smooth as the king's iconic Cadillac.

"Get excited," the stationmaster said over the loudspeaker, but the hundreds of Elvis fans didn't need the encouragement.

The arrival of the train from Sydney on Thursday afternoon marked the official start of the annual Parkes Elvis Festival, Australia's biggest - and wackiest - celebration of the king of rock 'n' roll.

Regular attendee Alfred Vaz - better known as "Bollywood Elvis" - made the journey to his 15th festival in a bejewelled red jumpsuit dripping with gold.

On Central Station's platform one, Mr Vaz broke into a rendition of his favourite Elvis song, (Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear.

First-time attendees Liz Connell and Nancy Richards were joined at the wrist with handcuffs and wore matching police and prisoner costumes to go with the festival's Jailhouse Rock theme.

The duo are life-long Elvis fans.

"Sixty-four years old and we've never been before," Ms Connell said.

Uncle and nephew Damien and Luke Barden wore matching gold Elvis costumes for a trip they have been making together for several years.

"It's just too much fun ... when 30,000 Elvis fans are at the same thing as you, you can't go



Fans wore outfits to match the festival's 2024 theme Jailhouse Rock.

Pictures: BIANCA DE MARCH/AAP PHOTOS

wrong," Damien Barden said.

Mel Gray is not an Elvis devotee, but she is attending the festival with her husband and fan David, as well as friends Mandy Connor and Noumi Clarke.

The couple wore matching Elvis and Priscilla costumes.

"We're not Elvis fans, we're his harem," Ms Gray said with a laugh.

The train's interior was decorated with coloured streamers and fans sang their favourite songs together.

The festival is in its 31st year and attracts

about 25,000 visitors to the small town in central west NSW, bringing in an estimated \$13 million per annum.

Parkes' Clarinda Street has transformed into a country Australia version of Graceland: shop windows are filled with Elvis cut-outs, vintage cars line the streets and crooners sing on every corner.

International tribute acts Taylor Rodriguez and Cote Deonath will headline a concert series, while Elvis-themed rock 'n' roll dances, dog shows and bingo rounds will fill the town's pubs, clubs and street corners.

With temperatures set to rise as high as



Alfred Vaz broke out into a rendition of (Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear.

35C during the festival, revellers will be full of burning love for Elvis in their polyester suits and pompadour wigs.

Festival director Joel Ulbricht said while the event has international recognition, the town's residents remained at the heart of festivities.

"For small businesses, hotels, restaurants, cafes, retail outlets, all of our 25,000 visitors help bring a great start to January, which is traditionally a very dry season for the central west," he said.

"It's not just one or two people running this event, this is community-driven."

PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

The Canberra Times
TO SERVE THE NATIONAL CITY

Elvis fans all shook up for Parkes festival

Nyk Carnsew, Stephanie Gardiner

TENS of thousands of rock'n'roll fans will make the journey to the rural NSW town of Parkes, which is set to host the 31st Elvis Festival at the weekend.

Blue suede shoes and jumpsuits have adorned the platform at Sydney's main train station as hundreds of Elvis fans gathered for the nation's biggest celebration of the king.

The crowd - full of costumed fans - awaited the annual "Elvis Express" at Central Station on Thursday morning before making the six-hour rail pilgrimage to the Parkes Elvis Festival, which runs until Sunday.

Besuited Elvises and Priscillas of all ages waited while live performers played covers of the singer's iconic songs. Regular attendee Alfred Vaz - better known as the "Bollywood Elvis" - turned up for this year's departure in a gem-studded red costume as he made the journey to his 15th festival.

When asked for his favourite Elvis song, Mr Vaz



responded with (Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear before breaking into a rendition of the 1957 number.

First-time attendees Liz Connell and Nancy Richards were joined at the wrist with handcuffs and wore matching police and prisoner cos-

tumes to match the festival's 2024 theme, Jailhouse Rock.

While they haven't attended the festival before, the duo are life-long Elvis fans.

"Sixty-four years old and we've never been before," Ms Connell said.

Uncle and nephew Dami-



Elvis Presley fans travelling on the Elvis Express Sydney bound for Parkes. Pictures AAP



en and Luke Barden arrived in matching gold Elvis costumes for a trip they have been making together for several years.

"It's just too much fun ... when 30,000 Elvis fans are at the same thing as you, you can't go wrong," Damien

Barden said.

Mel Gray is not an Elvis devotee herself, but she will be attending the festival with her husband and fan David, as well as their friends Mandy Connor and Naomi Clarke.

The couple wore matching Elvis and Priscilla costumes.

"We're not Elvis fans, we're his harem," Ms Gray said with a laugh.

The train's interior was decorated with coloured streamers and fans sang their favourite songs together as they made their way to their seats.

The annual festival is in its 31st year and attracts about 25,000 visitors to the small farming town in central-west NSW, bringing in an estimated \$13 million each year.

Parkes' Clarinda Street briefly transforms into Graceland, jam-packed with vintage car enthusiasts and crooning performers.

International tribute acts Taylor Rodriguez and Cote Deonath will headline a concert series, while Elvis-themed rock 'n' roll dances, dog shows and bingo rounds will fill the town's pubs, clubs and street corners.

With temperatures set to rise as high as 34C during the festival, revellers will be full of burning love for Elvis.

Festival director Joel Ulbricht said while the event has international recognition, Parkes residents remain at the heart of festivities.

**ORIGINAL
SPIN**

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PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

Liberal



Rock and roll fans are strapping on their blue suede shoes for the 31st Parkes Elvis Festival. Picture by Stephanie Gardiner/AAP

All in for The King and country

Stephanie Gardiner

Lonnie Lee was destined to spend his life on a sheep farm, following in the tradition of his father and grandfather.

That is until Elvis Presley intervened.

Lee was crowned "Australia's own Elvis Presley" in a competition at Sydney's Trocadero club in 1957, becoming one of the nation's first tribute acts.

"I sang three songs and the audience went absolutely bananas," Lee recalls to AAP.

That early success led to a life of touring and performing with his rockabilly band, far from the dust and heat on the family property at Rowena, in northern NSW.

The band appeared on Six

O'Clock Rock in the early era of television, giving Lee a taste of Elvis mania.

"On tour the girls would write their names and 'we love you Lonnie' and their phone numbers in lipstick all over the cat," Lee says.

"It sounds wonderful, but it ruined the cat."

Lee, now 83, is set to relive those halcyon days when he returns to perform at the Parkes Elvis Festival, in central western NSW, from January 10.

The five-day festival, complete with tribute concerts, dress-up competitions, a parade, and a hound dog pet show, is marking its 31st year with a jailhouse Rock theme. About 25,000 visitors are expected to travel to the rural town, some on the Elvis

Express train from Sydney, the Regional Hound Dog Express plane or maybe in a Long Black Limousine.

The Elvis fans, who sweat through the dry summer heat in wigs, polyester jumpsuits and rhinestones, could bring in more than \$13 million to the town of 10,000.

It was the unlikely setting that first drew John Connell to Parkes in the early days of the festival, along with his friend and fellow geography professor Chris Gibson.

"We got into it more because it was this weird festival than because it was Elvis," Professor Connell says.

"It looked like a small country town, the long main high street, the shops that close on Saturday afternoons.

"The festival was a bit like that as well, a bit more like a country women's cake sale."

But the academics returned to the festival for years to witness its evolution from an off-beat community and rhinestones, could bring in more than \$13 million to the town of 10,000.

The town was right to look to the king for hope, Professor Connell says.

"They hit on the right person ... Elvis lends himself to a degree of fanaticism and creativity."

In an era marked by bushfires, floods and rural decline, the festival has boosted just about every business in town.

"The vets were producing costumes for the smaller dogs, the tattoo parlours were booming, the hotels

were booked out years in advance," Prof Connell says.

"The only people who didn't (benefit) were the undertakers."

That's not the case this year.

Festival director Joel Ulbricht says even the undertakers have a look-in, having produced some of the Hall of Fame plaques.

There is nothing quite like the Elvis festival, Mr Ulbricht says.

"There are two particular audiences that come to Elvis Festival: your first is your die-hard fans of Elvis."

"The second side of it is the novelty of 25,000 Elvis impersonators, people who are madly in love with music, Elvis himself and the legacy he has left." - AAP

THE SUNDAY
EXAMINER



Elvis tribute artists hit the main street of Parkes, NSW. Picture AAP

Why love is still burning for Elvis

FOR much of the year Ross Cummings builds luxury Sydney homes and renovates upscale bathrooms.

Come January he leaves the harbour city behind, pulls on a flared tartan suit and spends a long weekend being Scottish Elvis.

Cummings is a beloved fixture at the Parkes Elvis Festival, a wacky celebration in rural NSW that coincides with the king of rock 'n' roll's birthday.

He stands out from the crowd of polyester-clad Elvis lookalikes, wearing immaculate finery designed and tailored in Canada.

Cummings grew up in Scotland listening to his father's Elvis records, and first visited the festival six years ago for nostalgic fun.

He's quite handsome ... But he can sing. If you think of all the singers we've had, Elvis is out there.

Kerry Eldon

"I was hooked," he said. "That's when I started watching a lot of Elvis and getting my suits together."

"Then two years ago, I sang for the very first time and that was it."

Scottish Elvis had five gigs in pubs and clubs during the festival, though emulating the king doesn't always come naturally.

"I'm still a novice at performing, I'm working my way into it. If I get better, then I'll think about doing it more."

and tractors making their way down Clarinda Street.

Friends Wendy McIntosh, Kerry Eldon, Jenny Parsons and Kym Condon dressed in slick black prison warden uniforms for the festival's jailhouse Rock theme.

The women set upon groups of obliging Elvis impersonators and handcuffed them in mock arrests.

The festival is at the heart of their decades long friendship, as they spend months planning and making their costumes.

Ms Eldon said she and her sister Kym are lifelong Elvis fans, for obvious reasons.

"He's quite handsome," she laughed.

"But he can sing. If you think of all the singers we've had, Elvis is out there."

"No matter how old you are he's always there."

The festival was founded in 1993 to attract visitors to the small farming town in the traditionally quiet summer period.

Three decades on, the event has international recognition and triples Parkes' population for five days.

Nick Gilbert travelled from Melbourne to join the parade, enduring the 30-degree heat in a frilly gold suit.

But Mr Gilbert had no regrets.

"I was looking for a jumpsuit all year and it's really hard to find one," he said.

"We inquired with a costume shop and they had one gold suit left. I thought, this is fate, I've got to take the gold one."

ORIGINAL
SPIN

PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

Kalgoorlie Miner

No hound dogs Elvis at tribute festival

Elvis had his fill of hound dogs crying all the time, but he never had to contend with an eastern brown snake named Frank.

American Elvis tribute artists Cote Deonath and Taylor Rodriguez were more twinkle-toed than usual on Friday morning, watching out for the reptile during a photo call at the Parkes Elvis Festival in rural NSW.

Frank — apparently even-tempered despite his dangerous reputation — is the resident snake at the CSIRO Observatory, set among farmland 20km out of town.

CSIRO staffers warned the artists and media about Frank's occupancy of a grassy culvert on a tree-lined road.

The group was reassured the snake usually enjoys a sleep-in, preferring to come out when frogs are active in the evenings.

Frank was always on the artists' minds as they posed for photos in front of the 64m-wide radio telescope, Murriyang.

"Taylor, that's the most dangerous snake in the world," Deonath told his offside with a laugh.

Rodriguez replied: "I'm more scared of spiders."

The pair were unscathed by the uniquely Australian experience and will play a series of hotly anticipated shows.

Charlie Gaylard, a 15-year-old tribute artist from Colac, Victoria, posed alongside the



Elvis tribute artist Cote Deonath poses in front of Murriyang, the CSIRO radio telescope, in Parkes, NSW, on Friday. Picture: Stephanie Gardiner

American duo in a shimmering blue velveteen shirt.

With a resemblance to baby-faced 1950s-era Elvis, Gaylard connected with the king through 18 viewings of Baz Luhrmann's 2022 biopic.

"That maybe put a spark in me to want to continue his legacy," Gaylard said.

"It's a strange passion to have,

I'll admit, impersonating someone, but it's something I get a lot of enjoyment out of."

Gaylard hopes to one day compete in the Ultimate Elvis tribute contest in Memphis.

"That is a big dream of mine," he said. "There could be something else that comes along that I find a little more suitable for a career path, but at the

moment it's this that I'm really focusing on."

The main street of Parkes is jam-packed with Elvis and Priscilla lookalikes, classic cars, swing dancers and buskers as the festival ramps this weekend.

The festival, which is celebrating its 31st year with a Jailhouse Rock theme, triples the population of the town.

James Webb, 79, a farmer, wandered through town in a red jumpsuit with plastic jewels.

Mr Webb said Elvis's music is alive and well in his home of Dunedoo, a village near Dubbo.

"It doesn't make any difference whether it's Dunedoo, Sydney or Tasmania, wherever you go it's Elvis," he said. "I've been an Elvis fan all my life."

PRINT HIGHLIGHTS



Fans can't help falling in love

By Nyk Carnsew and
Stephanie Gardiner in Parkes

Under the strains of Jailhouse Rock, the Elvis Express rolled into Parkes as smooth as the king's iconic Cadillac.

"Get excited," the stationmaster said over the loudspeaker, but the hundreds of Elvis fans didn't need the encouragement.

The arrival of the train from Sydney on Thursday afternoon marked the official start of the annual Parkes Elvis festival, Australia's biggest - and wackiest - celebration of the king of rock 'n' roll.

Regular attendee Alfred Vaz - better known as "Bollywood Elvis" - made the journey to his 15th festival in a bejewelled red jumpsuit dripping with gold.

On Central Station's platform one, Mr Vaz broke into a rendition of his favourite Elvis song, (Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear.

First-time attendees Liz Connell and Nancy Richards were joined at the wrist with handcuffs and wore matching police and prisoner costumes to go with the festival's Jailhouse Rock theme.

The duo are life-long Elvis fans.

"Sixty-four years old and we've never been before," Ms Connell said.

Uncle and nephew Damien and Luke Barden wore matching gold Elvis costumes for a trip they have been making together for several years.

"It's just too much fun ... when 30,000 Elvis fans are at the same thing as you, you can't go



Fans wore outfits to match the festival's 2024 theme Jailhouse Rock.

Pictures: BIANCA DE MARCHI/AAP PHOTOS

wrong," Damien Barden said.

Mel Gray is not an Elvis devotee, but she is attending the festival with her husband and fan David, as well as friends Mandy Connor and Naomi Clarke.

The couple wore matching Elvis and Priscilla costumes.

"We're not Elvis fans, we're his harem," Ms Gray said with a laugh.

The train's interior was decorated with coloured streamers and fans sang their favourite songs together.

The festival is in its 31st year and attracts

about 25,000 visitors to the small town in central west NSW, bringing in an estimated \$13 million per annum.

Parkes' Clarinda Street has transformed into a country Australia version of Graceland: shop windows are filled with Elvis cut-outs, vintage cars line the streets and crooners sing on every corner.

International tribute acts Taylor Rodriguez and Cote Deonath will headline a concert series, while Elvis-themed rock 'n' roll dances, dog shows and bingo rounds will fill the town's pubs, clubs and street corners.

With temperatures set to rise as high as



Alfred Vaz broke out into a rendition of (Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear.

35C during the festival, revellers will be full of burning love for Elvis in their polyester suits and pompadour wigs.

Festival director Joel Ulbricht said while the event has international recognition, the town's residents remained at the heart of festivities.

"For small businesses, hotels, restaurants, cafes, retail outlets, all of our 25,000 visitors help bring a great start to January, which is traditionally a very dry season for the central west," he said.

"It's not just one or two people running this event, this is community-driven."

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PRINT HIGHLIGHTS

FORBES ADVOCATE



Saturday's Northparkes Mines street parade is a must-see event of the annual Parkes Elvis Festival, get your spot early! File picture

Shake, rattle and roll your way to festival parade

SHAKE, rattle and roll your way to Festival Boulevard early Saturday morning because you won't want to miss the Northparkes Mines street parade starting 10am!

The *Northparkes Mines Street Parade* is unquestion-

ably a major annual highlight of the Parkes Elvis Festival.

Elvis-themed floats, vintage and classic cars and motorcycles join Elvis and Priscilla look-a-likes and marching bands as they head from Bushman Street to

Cooke Park down the length of Clarinda Street.

The inspiration and creativity that goes into the many parade entries every year is extraordinary, and we can't wait to see what everyone does with this year's festival

theme of Jailhouse Rock.

Follow the parade down to Cooke Park for the festival's official opening at 11.30am on the main stage, followed by a much-anticipated performance from Parkes' own Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist

competition winner Johnny Lee Memphis at midday.

The shuttle buses depart Forbes from 8am Saturday to get you there in time.

Go online to parkeselvis-festival.com.au for more information.

THE ONLINE HIGHLIGHTS



- [The Guardian](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [BBC](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;
Syndicated internationally across 3 other media outlets including;



- [Yahoo! New Zealand](#)

- [Yahoo! News](#)



- [The Young Witness](#) (NSW) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



The Holiday and Travel Magazine

- [The Holiday and Travel Magazine](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

- [The Holiday and Travel Magazine](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis 2024;



- [Yarrawonga Chronicle](#) (National) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [The Canberra Times](#) (ACT) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [The Daily Telegraph](#) (National) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Yahoo! News \(FR\)](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [The Advertiser](#) (SA) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



The West
Australian

- [CNBC Africa](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

- [The West Australian](#) (WA) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

THE ONLINE HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

The Sunday Telegraph

- [The Sunday Telegraph](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [SBS TV](#) (VIC) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

MALAY.NEWS

- [Malay News](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

The Courier-Mail

- [The Courier-Mail](#) (QLD) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Australian Associated Press](#) (National) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

THE LAND

- [The Land](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;



- [Visit NSW](#) (NSW) -- Listing of Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

Bunbury Mail

- [The Bunbury Mail](#) -- Syndication on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024



- [Dailyhunt](#) (International) -- Editorial on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

The Advocate

- [The Advocate](#) -- Syndication on Parkes Elvis Festival 2024;

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THE SERVICES

THE STRATEGY

- Comprehensive timeline of key announcements to maximise PR opportunities;

THE MEDIA RELATIONS

- Media matrix of targeted/ suitable publications developed across print/ TV/ broadcast and digital media;
- Supporting publicity arranged and executed.

THE MATERIALS

- Five media releases written and distributed to media;
- Hosted online media pack including media release, info sheet and image library.
- One media call written and distributed to media;
- One media accreditation written and distributed to media;

THE INTERVIEWS

- Schedule of interviews arranged and managed for the talent to promote event;
- Key message briefings supplied to talent.

THE MEDIA EVENT MANAGEMENT

- Onsite media management throughout the Festival;
- Media management of multiple media photo/film calls throughout the Festival;
- Parade media management;

THE REPORTING

- Regular coverage updates supplied;
- End of campaign report produced.

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THE MEDIA RELEASES

1. [PEF FULL PROGRAM](#) // SEPTEMBER 2023;
2. [PEF MEDIA ACCRED 2024](#) // NOVEMBER 2023;
3. [PEF UETA](#) // DECEMBER 2023;
4. [PEF ELVIS EXPRESS MC](#) // JANUARY 2024;
5. [PEF WRAP](#) // JANUARY 2024

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6.5 PARKES ELVIS FESTIVAL 2025 PROJECT UPDATE

IP&R Linkage: Pillar: Economy

Goal: Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.

Strategy: Promote Parkes Shire as a tourist destination and support the continued growth of our visitor economy.

Author: Mikaela Cass, Events and Festivals Specialist

Authoriser: Carrie Olsen, Executive Manager Economy, Destination and Activation

Annexures: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The information contained in this report be received and noted by the Committee.

BACKGROUND

Recognised as one of the top three Festivals and Events in Australia, the Parkes Elvis Festival ("the Festival") attracts 25,000 fans with a global reach of 1.8 billion across over 3,000 media outlets. The 2025 Festival will be held 8-12 January and will celebrate its 32nd year.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Planning is well and truly under way for the Parkes Elvis Festival in January 2025. The Events and Festivals team ("team") have commenced engaging with Portfolio holders, committee members and visitors from past years.

While there are a variety of ideas and suggestions to incorporate into planning, the team will be ensuring that changes enhance the rich thirty-one years of Festival history without over-hauling what is a tried and trusted format.

In 2025, the overall programming will be consistent with previous years. The team are currently working on the following areas to introduce a touch of fresh paint and some new processes to complement, based on the experience/feedback received.

In summary:

Area	Deliverables
Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Event • UETA Competition Reimagined • Feature Artists • Australian Elvis Tribute Artists • Miss Priscilla
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEF2025 Launch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Earlier launch date • More ticketed shows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lower priced tickets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Plan introduced with four phases • Website: improvements on user experience • Sponsorship to Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase in income
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review configuration of market and food stalls • Work with local cafés and restaurants to extend trading hours • Look to create expanded dining spaces "on" Clarinda Street under shaded marquee

Let's take a deeper dive...

Programme

The 2025 Programme is currently being reviewed and some areas of focus include:

Launch Event

The 2025 launch event may be brought forward to help generate a longer lead time in overall promotion and encouraging visitors to lock in accommodation, travel plans and also get a glimpse of the programme.

Traditionally this has taken place in mid-late September and a proposal is currently being drawn up to bring the launch into August. The team expect to be providing a detailed recommendation during April.

Feature Concert Series Plus Other Ticketed Shows

Throughout the lead up to PEF, much online debate and discussion has seen many visitors confused about the length of time that shows were being played. One show may play for two hours, while another show plays for ninety minutes. Both shows are ticketed at the same price, and caused confusion, and for the shows that were shorter - a little disappointment.

In centralising and creating a new template - all ticketed shows will be played for 90 minutes. This also allows the feature artists, session musicians and production providers a chance to avoid fatigue and voice-loss during the five days of entertaining.

Further to this, it also opens an opportunity to consider additional shows for other Australian artists and performers (*more on that shortly*).

UETA Competition Reimagined

The UETA (Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist) competition is a much-loved annual competition, with the eventual winner going on to represent Australia in the ETA competition in the United States in August.

As part of a long-term strategy, there is a need to continually develop new talent. Without Tribute Artists, Parkes does not have a Festival. In line with this thinking, the UETA competition may include the introduction of some satellite competitions outside of Parkes to generate excitement, increase the profile of the Festival and capture any young artists who may be interested in taking part.

Upon introduction of 15-year-old Charlie Gaylard to the Cooke Park Main stage on Saturday night of the 2024 Festival, there was a significant response from the crowd, who enjoyed seeing the fresh-faced Tribute Artist provide a brilliant inaugural performance.

As part of a review, the team will be considering how the UETA Competition can become an annual talent quest that grows the volume of Tribute Artists, helping prolong the life of the Festival.

Feature Artists

Each year, as a requirement of the Destination NSW Strategic Agreement, Parkes Elvis Festival is required to feature two international feature artists. The team will work closely with Elvis Presley Enterprises and seek to have the winner of the international UETA competition (Memphis, August) as one of the feature artists.

This will ensure that Parkes is featuring the global number one artist, and also provides an incentive for artists competing in that competition, with the unique opportunity to travel Down-Under.

A final proposal for 2025 international feature artists will be ready in April 2024.

Australian Elvis Tribute Artists

Over recent years, programming focus and attention has been on international artists for ticketed events, and the Cook Park Mainstage free programme.

In a bid to provide opportunities for Australian ETAs, several new shows are proposed in 2025, making better use of existing venues (Little Theatre, Services Club) where event infrastructure is already in place.

Proposed show titles are:

- Happy Hour with ...
- The Easy Come, Easy Go Sessions, and
- Australian Made

These shows will not only highlight local Australian talent, but also increase the range of shows on offer for patrons, all without increasing overall expenditure (production, backline and venue already paid for).

Miss Priscilla

A review of the current Miss Priscilla format is underway. While a long-time Festival favourite, there are opportunities to provide a refresh to this competition.

Marketing

The Parkes Elvis Festival is a much-loved experience and sees many happy returning fans each year. As part of a longer-term strategy, there will be a focus on ensuring the Festival's patronage does not decline due to the aging population of its primary demographic.

For 2025, the Festival team will focus on:

PEF2025 Launch

In response to feedback and recognised challenges associated with the 2024 Festival launch, for 2025, a plan will be implemented to ensure the website, ticket box office and social media messaging is clear, accurate and simple. A launch strategy and timeline will be finalised in April 2024.

Launch Date

The team are currently working on a strategy that would see marketing and communications of Parkes Elvis Festival 2025 commence earlier than usual, in August. This would allow an additional six weeks in market to help provide profile and awareness, ensure more planning time for patrons, and the potential to generate additional ticket sales.

More Ticketed Shows

Over past years, most of the ticketed shows on offer have sold out or been near capacity. Around 5,700 tickets were sold in 2024. For 2025, a proposed 7,700 tickets will be made available, with the addition of eight new shows.

Ticket Pricing

As the increased cost of living continues to put pressure on household budgets, and based on patron feedback, Festival ticket pricing is being reviewed. Detailed budget modelling is underway, and it is expected that the Feature Concert Series ticket pricing will be reduced by 9%.

Marketing Plan introduced with four phases

Internal administration improvements will see a comprehensive marketing plan introduced that includes four phases. This strategy is currently in design and scope mode however includes:

- Phase One - Branding, Save The Date and Generic Information
- Phase Two - Shows, Tickets and Website Launch
- Phase Three - Detailed Programme, Artist Reviews, Competitions
- Phase Four - Festival Week Communications

Each of the four phases will also focus on the user experience, using best practice to achieve patron satisfaction.

Sponsorship to Partnership

The team are developing the sponsorship prospectus and reviewing grant funding opportunities, seeking to connect with major sponsors and brands to complement the festival audience. The sponsorship prospectus will look to incorporate the broader Parkes Shire Council portfolio of events, including the Trundle ABBA Festival and Sounds at the Pavilion Series.

Operations

The Festival operations and logistics are continually under review. After thirty years, management of the Street Parade, Waste Management and Emergency Management is world class. The team are currently reviewing:

Configuration of market and food stalls

Each year many local and interstate market and food stall providers get the opportunity to engage with a large audience over Festival weekend. As part of maximising the Cooke Park experience, a review of the site map layout, featured providers, and potential amusement rides will be conducted.

An overall plan for this aspect of Festival will complement an earlier launch date for vendors to apply.

Work with local café's and restaurants to extend trading hours

Clarinda Street forms a central pathway for many visitors heading to venues, shops, pubs and Elvis Central. A large amount of feedback has been received over the years on the trading hours of shops, cafes and restaurants. Efforts will be taken throughout 2024 to engage with local businesses to maximise their opportunities to capture trade over the five Festival days.

Look to create expanded dining spaces "on" Clarinda Street under shaded marquee

In line with increasing trade opportunities for local business, there has been some conceptualisation to erecting marquees on Clarinda Street, providing additional, extended dining seating on-street.

Other concepts are also being explored that would see experiences, entertainment and/or programming included at the top end of Clarinda Street.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no legislative considerations for the Committee associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council Investment

Budget allocation will be made in the 2024/25 Operational Plan and Budget. Council Officers have identified a prospective investment of \$450,000 by Council for delivery of the Parkes Elvis Festival 2025. This budget will be considered by Council at the Ordinary Council Meeting scheduled to be held Tuesday, 16 April 2024.

Council's Events and Festivals Specialist is working closely with the Festival Producer to ensure a reduction in expenses and increase in income to allow for this budget allocation.

Grant Funding

Council's Events and Festivals Team are pursuing all available grant funding opportunities to offset the costs associated with delivering the Parkes Elvis Festival 2025, with focus placed on activation of the northern end of Festival Boulevard (Clarinda Street).

RISK IMPLICATIONS

With all events, there are risks of budget over-runs due to market volatility and the increasing cost of goods and services. Once an operational budget for an event is agreed, should there be over-runs, there are risks that other proposed Council events or community events support programs will be impacted.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Council officers will plan and execute a program of communication and engagement activities to meet community and stakeholder needs.

6.6 SOUNDS AT THE PAVILION EVENTS UPDATE**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Promote Parkes Shire as a tourist destination and support the continued growth of our visitor economy.**Author:** **Mikaela Cass, Events and Festivals Specialist****Authoriser:** **Carrie Olsen, Executive Manager Economy, Destination and Activation****Annexures:** **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The update on the Sounds at the Pavilion events be noted by the Committee.
-

BACKGROUND

Presented by Parkes Shire Council and proudly funded by the NSW Government's *Reconnecting Regional NSW - Community Events Program*, the Sounds at the Pavilion series started in December 2022 with "Latin Sounds" at the Pavilion and "Disco Sounds" at Tullamore and the Pavilion. Both events were well-attended and supported by the Parkes Shire community, with 1,600 attendees between the three events.

Following the success of Latin Sounds and Disco Sounds events, Parkes Shire Council committed in the [2023/24 Operational Plan](#) to deliver a subsequent three Sounds at the Pavilion events.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Council's Events and Festivals Team have delivered two Sounds at the Pavilion events in the 2023/24 financial year to date. Whilst a commitment was made in the 2023/24 Operational Plan to deliver three Sounds at the Pavilion events, a budget of \$60,000 was committed for all three events, and as of 26 February 2024, the total expenditure to deliver two events is \$90,125, resulting in a \$30,125 budget over-run.

An overview of the Country Sounds and Sounds of the Decades: 70's, 80's and 90's events, as well as an update on the preliminary planning for the third Sounds at the Pavilion event, Local Sounds of Rock, is provided below for the information of the Committee.

Country Sounds

Country Sounds was delivered on 18 November 2023 at Cooke Park Pavilion. The event attracted 2,500 attendees from the Parkes Shire LGA and beyond.

The lineup featured well-known country artists including Robbie Mortimer (headliner), Raechel Whitchurch, Austen Logan and Megan Woods. Positive sentiment was received for all performers via social media following the event.

The total event cost was \$43,107 and included performance fees, event equipment, accommodation and travel, workforce costs, Cooke Park activations, event infrastructure and event services.

The post-event survey was distributed via social media and received 8 responses. Survey responses indicate clear support for events such as this to continue. Further information has been provided in the Community Consultation section of this report.



Sounds of the Decades: 70's, 80's and 90's

Sounds of the Decades: 70's, 80's and 90's was delivered on 3 February 2024 at Cooke Park Pavilion. The event attracted 3,000 attendees from the Parkes Shire LGA.

The lineup featured a variety of metro and regional artists including Yacht Rock Revival (headliner - Melbourne), Panorama Band (Sydney) and Tanya Andrews (Dubbo). Positive sentiment was received for all performers via social media following the event, with locals showing fantastic support for Panorama Band and expressing support for their return to the Parkes Shire LGA.

The total event cost was \$47,018 and included performance fees, event equipment, accommodation and travel, workforce costs, Cooke Park activations, event infrastructure and event services.

The post-event survey was distributed via social media and has received 160 responses. Survey responses continued to indicate clear support for events such as this to continue. Further information has been provided in the Community Consultation section of this report.



Local Sounds of Rock

Council's Events and Festivals Team have commenced preliminary planning to deliver "Local Sounds of Rock" in May 2024. The Events and Festivals Team are pursuing all available grant funding opportunities to deliver the third Sounds at the Pavilion event, including the NSW Government's [NSW Social Cohesion Grant for Local Government](#) which closes on 29 February 2024. Should Council be unsuccessful in obtaining the grant funding, it is unlikely that the third Sounds at the Pavilion event will be delivered.

If grant funding is secured, preliminary planning for the event provides an estimated cost of \$42,605 which consists of performance fees for local performers, event equipment, accommodation and travel, workforce costs, Cooke Park activations, event infrastructure and event services.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no legislative or policy considerations for the Committee associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council Investment

Council's 2023/24 Operational Plan and Budget committed \$60,000 to the delivery of three Sounds at the Pavilion events. As of 26 February 2024, \$90,125 has been expended on two Sounds at the Pavilion events, resulting in a **(\$30,125)** operating result for the project YTD.

Operating Expenses: 2023/24 Sounds at the Pavilion events			
Event Name	Budget	Actuals + Commitments	Variance
Country Sounds	\$20,000	\$43,107	(\$23,107)
Sounds of the Decades	\$20,000	\$47,018	(\$27,018)
Local Sounds of Rock <i>(TBC)</i>	\$20,000	-	-
Total	\$60,000	\$90,125	(\$30,125)

Considering the Council investment to-date, the feasibility of delivering the third Sounds at the Pavilion event, "Local Sounds of Rock", is under review. Alternate funding opportunities are being explored as Council does not have the internal funds to commit to the event in the Events and Festivals budget.

Grant Funding

Council's Events and Festivals Team are pursuing all available grant funding opportunities to deliver the third Sounds at the Pavilion event.

The NSW Government has released the [NSW Social Cohesion Grant for Local Government](#) which supports local councils to develop innovative programs for stronger and more resilient and cohesive communities. The aim of the grant is to strengthen:

- Connection and belonging within local communities.
- Connection and belonging between local communities.
- Connection and trust between local communities and institutions.
- The capabilities of Local Governments to design, implement and evaluate social cohesion initiatives.

Parkes can be considered a Shire of a lower concentration of wealth (Census) with access to experiences outside of sport very limited for the majority of the community. As highlighted in Council's Community Strategic Plan, "public space is essential to our physical and mental wellbeing: it's where we meet our friends, exercise, play sport and relax". The opportunity for Council to host a free, family-friendly event in the heart of Parkes in Cooke Park addresses the social cohesion challenge of bringing together people from all walks of life to build connection and give a sense of belonging.

Announcement of successful grant applications is due 31 March 2024.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

There is a reputational risk to Council associated with the decision to proceed in hosting the third Sounds at the Pavilion event, or not. Some community members would be disappointed to see Council choose not to proceed with delivery of the third event due to the overwhelmingly positive response received from the previous Sounds at the Pavilion events.

Managing outdoor events has high inherent risks. Considering progressively unpredictable weather patterns and severe weather events, there is a risk of event cancellation due to inclement weather and/or unsuitable grounds conditions. Further, it is difficult to secure appropriate insurance coverage for outdoor events.

With all events, there are risks of budget over-runs due to market volatility and the increasing cost of goods and services. Over-runs in the operational budget will impact other Council programs.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Post-event surveys were distributed via social media for Country Sounds and Sounds of the Decades: 70's, 80's and 90's.

Survey responses: 2023/24 Sounds at the Pavilion events		
	Country Sounds	Sounds of the Decades: 70's, 80's and 90's
Number of responses	8	160
Postcode data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2870 - Parkes NSW (5) 2869 - Peak Hill NSW (1) 2860 - Eugowra NSW (1) 2879 - Menindee NSW (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2870 - Parkes NSW (140) 2869 - Peak Hill (7)
Commentary and/or suggestions for future events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep it a free event. Local musicians. More food vendors. Unable to hear the music at the back of the park near the Kids Entertainment Zone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local entertainment by local performers. More food vendors. More variety of covers by performers. Jumping castles were a hit and it was all free - such a relaxing experience! A mixture of all genres of music. Provide extra seating at the event. Extend shade cloth to the east of Cooke Park. If running the events in winter, start earlier in the day and finish earlier. Advertise that camp chairs and picnic blankets are required. Recycling bins would be handy. No need for fireworks all the time - special occasions are OK. Improved stage lighting.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More entertainment for young kids (e.g. magician)• More events - every two months!
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Feedback received will be taken into consideration when planning for future events.

Next meeting date: Tuesday 4 June 2024.
