

Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee

Business Paper

Notice is hereby given that an Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee of Parkes Shire Council will be held in the Cooke Park Pavillion, Parkes, on Tuesday 17 June 2025 at 10:30am.



Kent Boyd PSM
GENERAL MANAGER

Order of Business

1	OPENING OF MEETING	4
2	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY.....	4
3	APOLOGIES	4
4	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	5
4.1	Minutes of the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee held on 1 April 2025.....	5
5	DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS	15
6	LATE BUSINESS	16
7	OFFICERS' REPORTS.....	17
7.1	NBN Co Parkes Shire Upgrades	17
7.2	Newell Highway Bypass Update.....	19
7.3	Local Economy Update	21
7.4	Community Improvement District Grant Funding Application.....	23
7.5	Local Tourism Update	25
7.6	Parkes Elvis Festival 2026: Project update.....	28
7.7	Local Events	31
7.8	Energy from Waste	33
8	CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS	35
8.1	Committee Member Contact Information	35
9	REPORT OF CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTIONS	37

1 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairperson will declare the meeting open.

Meeting of Council committees are not recorded or streamed to the internet.

2 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.

3 APOLOGIES

In accordance with clauses 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, apologies must be received and accepted from absent Councillors and a leave of absence from the Council Meeting may be granted.

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE ECONOMY, DESTINATION AND EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 APRIL 2025

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. Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee Minutes - 1 April 2025**

RECOMMENDATION

That the receive and confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 April 2025 appended at *Annexure A*.

Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 1 April 2025



Minutes of the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee**Held on Tuesday, 1 April 2025 at the****Cooke Park Pavilion, 17 Welcome Street, Parkes****Present:**

Cr Marg Applebee	Councillor
Cr Joy Paddison	Councillor
Cr Doug Pout	Councillor
Cr Glenn Wilson	Councillor
Mr Peter Giles	Community Representative
Mr Andrew Hall	Community Representative
Ms Kelly Hendry	Community Representative
Mr Steve Lindsay	Community Representative
Mr Andrew Rice	Community Representative
Ms Tracie Robertson	Community Representative
Ms Treen Swift	Community Representative

Council Officers in Attendance:

Mr Anthony McGrath	Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy
Mrs Carrie Olsen	Executive Manager Economy and Engagement
Ms Bec James	Communications and Engagement Specialist
Ms Lisa Moon	Tourism and Visitor Services Coordinator
Ms Katie Nash	Economic Development Specialist
Ms Carolina Cruz	Events and Festivals Specialist
Mr Brendan Shipley	Festivals Producer

NOTES

The meeting commenced at 10:32am and concluded at 12:10pm.

Order Of Business

1	OPENING OF MEETING	4
2	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY.....	4
3	APOLOGIES	4
4	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	4
5	DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS	4
6	LATE BUSINESS	4
7	OFFICERS' REPORTS.....	4
7.1	Committee Terms of Reference	4
7.2	Election of Chairperson	4
7.3	Code of Conduct Council Policy	5
7.4	Committee Objective and Strategic Oversight	5
7.5	Major Events and Festivals Strategy	6
7.6	2024 Parkes Shire Business "Listening Report"	6
7.7	Economic Tracking Report	7
7.8	Community Improvement District Grant Funding Application	7
7.9	Destination Marketing Update	7
7.10	Trundle ABBA Festival 2024: Post event report and future recommendations.....	7
7.11	Parkes Elvis Festival 2026: Project update.....	8
7.12	Late Business: Parkes Energy Recovery Facility.....	9
8	REPORT OF CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTIONS	9
9	CONCLUSION OF MEETING.....	9

1 OPENING OF MEETING

The meeting was declared open at 10.32am, by interim Chairperson, Cr Marg Applebee.

2 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.

3 APOLOGIES

Mayor Neil Westcott, Cr William Jayet, Greg Nash, Kristy Berry and Marty Sammut-Paul.

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Nil.

5 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Nil.

6 LATE BUSINESS

Parkes Shire Council General Manager, Kent Boyd, joined the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee to discuss the proposed Energy Recovery Facility at the Parkes Special Activation Precinct.

7 OFFICERS' REPORTS

7.1 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED EDAAE 001/25

Moved: Mr Andrew Rice

Seconded: Ms Kelly Hendry

That the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee:

1. Adopt the draft Terms of Reference for the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee, appended at *Annexure A*.

CARRIED

7.2 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

RESOLVED EDAEA 002/25

That the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee:

1. Appoint Andrew Rice as Chairperson, pursuant to clause 6.1 of the Committee's Terms of Reference.

CARRIED**DISCUSSION:**

Andrew Rice and Steve Lindsay were nominated by members of the Committee. All voting members were asked to raise their hand to vote either for Steve Lindsay or Andrew Rice.

Andrew Rice received Four (4) votes and Steve Lindsay received Three (3) votes.

Andrew Rice was elected as chairperson.

7.3 CODE OF CONDUCT COUNCIL POLICY**RESOLVED EDAEA 003/25**

Moved: Mr Steve Lindsay

Seconded: Ms Tracie Robertson

That:

1. The Committee receive and note the Code of Conduct Council Policy appended at *Annexure A*.
2. The Committee members acknowledge their obligations under the Code of Conduct Council Policy.

CARRIED**DISCUSSION:**

Andrew Rice highlighted the importance of committee members being engaged with the topics for discussion and raised concern with resolving matters that have not been considered by all.

Carrie Olsen highlighted the need for committee members to review business papers prior to meetings and express their thoughts and insights during the meeting.

7.4 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT**RESOLVED EDAEA 004/25**

Moved: Mr Steve Lindsay

Seconded: Ms Tracie Robertson

That:

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

CARRIED**DISCUSSION:**

Carrie Olsen provided an overview of current strategies and plans under the Committee's oversight.

Kelly Hendry requested a copy of the Parkes Shire Signage Strategy.

Carrie Olsen noted Kelly's request and confirmed that an abridged copy of the internal document, which currently includes extensive construction detail, will be provided to the Committee out of session.

7.5 MAJOR EVENTS AND FESTIVALS STRATEGY

RESOLVED EDAEA 005/25

Moved: Mr Steve Lindsay

Seconded: Ms Kelly Hendry

That:

1. The Committee receive and note the briefing on the development of the Major Events and Festivals Strategy, as detailed in this report.
2. The Committee resolve to take the draft Major Events and Festivals Strategy to Council for public exhibition and endorsement.

CARRIED

DISCUSSION:

Carrie Olsen introduced the Events and Festivals Strategy and welcomed Stu Spiers to present on the draft document.

Stu Spiers highlighted the strategic insights that had been captured in the Events and Festivals Strategy and noted several of the recommended action items for Council to undertake based on the strategy findings.

Carolina Cruz added that the strategy had been developed through thorough consultation and is evidenced backed. This approach will ensure future major event decisions are guided through logic and community interest rather than personal preference.

Treen Swift raised the concern of seeking engagement during the months of May and December, which are challenging for some community members, due to seasonal agriculture demands.

7.6 2024 PARKES SHIRE BUSINESS "LISTENING REPORT"

RESOLVED EDAEA 006/25

Moved: Ms Kelly Hendry

Seconded: Ms Treen Swift

That:

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

CARRIED

DISCUSSION:

Katie Nash presented findings from the listening report to the Committee.

Kelly Hendry enquired about work undertaken by the Parkes Business Chamber.

Tracie Robertson confirmed the Parkes Business Chamber is continuing to operate, with a small number of active participants. The Chamber has rebranded to Business Parkes and is encouraging new community members to get involved.

7.7 ECONOMIC TRACKING REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The Committee receive and note the briefing on the Shire's Economic Snapshot.

Due to time constraints, Katie Nash was unable to present the economic insight findings to the Committee. This item will be tabled again for the next meeting.

7.8 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The information contained within this report be noted by the Committee.

Due to time constraints, Katie Nash was unable to discuss the Community Improvement District grant funding application with the Committee. Should the application result in a successful outcome, this item will be tabled at a future meeting.

7.9 DESTINATION MARKETING UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That:

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

Due to time constrains, Bec James was unable to provide an update on Destination Marketing for the Parkes Shire.

7.10 TRUNDLE ABBA FESTIVAL 2024: POST EVENT REPORT AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED EDAAE 007/25

Moved: Mr Andrew Hall

Seconded: Ms Treen Swift

That:

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

CARRIED**DISCUSSION:**

Kelly Hendry queried the provided budget, seeking clarification on the distinction between salary and workforce expenses.

Carrie Olsen clarified that internal salaries represents expenses for the dedicated events team, while workforce expenditure pertains to on-the-day or short-term work undertaken by the broader Council workforce.

Kelly Hendry queried whether there would continue being a budget allocation for the Trundle ABBA Festival; Carolina Cruz confirmed the likely budget outcome is that Council will not directly fund the Festival, but would continue providing support through grant funding and Council event staff support.

Steve Lindsay expressed concerns about removing the ticketing income component of the event, and the potential heat associated with a February event.

Carolina Cruz noted that February is the proposed event date under the Open Streets Grant Program, necessitated by the grant funding criteria, and there may be opportunities to adjust the event timing if the grant submission is successful.

Cr Applebee noted that the Trundle Community Consultative Committee has the opportunity to seek Council funding support through the Council Events Financial Assistance Program or Trundle Town Improvement Fund.

Cr Patterson emphasised the community's eagerness for an October event date.

Andrew Hall asked if allocated internal staff costs would continue to be used to support Trundle.

Carolina Cruz confirmed that resources are provided for recipients of the Events Financial Assistance Program. Carrie Olsen added that contract roles designated specifically for the Trundle ABBA Festival would not be reinstated.

7.11 PARKES ELVIS FESTIVAL 2026: PROJECT UPDATE**RESOLVED EDAEA 008/25**

Moved: Ms Kelly Hendry

Seconded: Mr Steve Lindsay

That:

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

CARRIED**DISCUSSION:**

Carolina Cruz provided a brief update on the 2026 Parkes Elvis Festival.

Brendan Shipley discussed prospective changes and improvements for the upcoming event.

Kelly Hendry congratulated the team on the foundational status achievement for the Parkes Elvis Festival. She also enquired about maintaining community involvement.

Brendan Shipley confirmed efforts to stagger scheduling, improve activations and provide greater opportunities for businesses to be involved with the event.

7.12 LATE BUSINESS: PARKES ENERGY RECOVERY FACILITY**DISCUSSION:**

Kent Boyd, General Manager of Parkes Shire Council, attended the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee to discuss the Parkes Energy Recovery facility.

Kent noted that the proponent has made no formal lodgement, as the project is still in the concept phase. Scientific studies and the entire project scope have not yet been undertaken. Environmental safety regulations must be abided by before the facility can be approved.

Andrew Hall questioned the short community consultation period.

Kent Boyd clarified that this is an informal stage, and it is our understanding that the proponent will need to develop a community consultation plan as part of a formal application.

Steve Lindsay asked if Council could block the proposal if deemed unsafe.

Kent Boyd responded that while Council lacks legislative power, political pressure could be applied if necessary.

Cr Wilson noted the importance of community support in the planning approval process, adding that social equity is paramount for the project.

Treen Swift referenced the positive relationships between the Danish community and the Copenhagen Energy Recovery facility but shared concerns about the role of RGDC (Regional Growth Development Corporation).

Treen Swift also questioned whether Council could facilitate information sessions with key stakeholders.

Cr Wilson added that older waste-to-energy plants do not meet modern standards, emphasising the need for updated research and best practice approaches.

8 REPORT OF CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTIONS

Nil.

9 CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed at 12.10pm, by Chairperson, Andrew Rice.

Next meeting/s:

- Tuesday 27 June 2025
- Tuesday 16 September 2025
- Tuesday 2 December 2025

This is the final page of the meeting minutes comprising of 9 pages numbered 1 to 9 of the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 1 April 2025.

5 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

All Council Officials must disclose and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at the meeting.

Council's Code of Conduct deals with pecuniary and non-pecuniary conflicts of interest and political donations, and provides guidance on how these issues should be managed.

Council Officials must be familiar with Council's Code of Conduct and their obligations to disclose and manage any conflicts of interest that they may have in matters being considered at this Council Meeting.

Note: Council Officials who declare an Interest at the Meeting are also required to complete a Declaration of Interest form.

6 LATE BUSINESS

7 OFFICERS' REPORTS

7.1 NBN CO PARKES SHIRE UPGRADES

IP&R Linkage: **Pillar:** Economy

Goal: Our economy leverages smart technology, data and innovation to solve complex problems.

Strategy: Develop Parkes Shire's smart economy to provide new opportunities for local business, generate new revenue and increase economic prosperity.

Author: **Hamish Ritchie, Economic Development Specialist**

Authoriser: **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy**

Annexures: **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Note the upcoming presentation from NBN Co on planned infrastructure upgrades within Parkes Shire. This is for information purposes only, with no decision or formal agreement sought.
2. That Committee members be invited to provide feedback on external presentation formats to support continuous improvement in meeting planning and stakeholder engagement.

BACKGROUND

NBN Co will deliver a presentation to the Committee outlining proposed upgrades and future service improvements within the Parkes Shire. This initiative aligns with Council's commitment to advancing digital infrastructure and supporting the development of a smart economy. Due to commercial and privacy considerations, presentation materials will not be included in this report.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

The presentation will cover upcoming technology and infrastructure upgrades, proposed timeframes, and potential benefits for businesses and residents. The opportunity to engage directly with NBN Co supports Council's strategic objectives and provides valuable insight for planning and advocacy. Committee members will also have an opportunity to provide feedback on the format and value of the presentation, supporting Council's commitment to continual improvement in meeting facilitation and stakeholder engagement.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Council associated with this report.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate risks associated with receiving the presentation. Broader risks and mitigation strategies, including infrastructure readiness or service transition risks, may be explored as part of future planning and community engagement following the presentation.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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

7.2 NEWELL HIGHWAY BYPASS UPDATE**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Promote opportunities for industry expansion, industry diversification and new investment via the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Parkes Airport Business Park and Parkes Industrial Estate.**Author:** **Hamish Ritchie, Economic Development Specialist****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The Committee note the information provided regarding the Newell Highway Bypass and Council's request for further updates from Transport for NSW. This is for informational purposes only, with no decision or formal agreement sought.

BACKGROUND

The Newell Highway Bypass around Parkes officially opened in mid-April 2025. This major infrastructure project is led by Transport for NSW and aims to improve freight efficiency, road safety, and travel reliability along the Newell Highway corridor. The bypass diverts heavy vehicle traffic away from the Parkes town centre and forms part of a broader network upgrade through the Central West region.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Council has sought an update from Transport for NSW on the status and next steps for the Parkes Bypass. While a formal response is still pending, current information from the Transport for NSW website (last updated 2 June 2025) indicates the following:

- **Construction of the Parkes Bypass is now in its final stages**, with major works substantially completed following the opening of the bypass in mid-April 2025.
- **Ongoing works are focused on landscaping, local road connections, and minor finishing tasks**, including the upgrade of Victoria Street to a local road standard.
- Transport for NSW has indicated that **project completion is scheduled for late 2025**.

The bypass is a 10.5 km new section of the Newell Highway designed to divert heavy vehicle traffic away from the Parkes town centre. The project aims to improve freight efficiency, road safety, and travel times, and is a key part of broader upgrades along the Newell Highway corridor.

Should a representative from Transport for NSW become available, a verbal update may be provided at the meeting. Otherwise, Council will continue to seek a formal update and will provide any new information to the Committee as it becomes available.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

The Newell Bypass is a State Government project delivered and managed by Transport for NSW. Council is not the project proponent or consent authority.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Council associated with this report.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no new risk implications for Council associated with this report.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Council will continue to liaise with Transport for NSW to ensure key project updates and milestones are communicated to the community as they become available.

7.3 LOCAL ECONOMY UPDATE**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Promote opportunities for industry expansion, industry diversification and new investment via the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Parkes Airport Business Park and Parkes Industrial Estate.**Author:** **Hamish Ritchie, Economic Development Specialist****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Note the information presented in this report. This is for informational purposes only, with no decision or formal agreement sought.
 2. Provide feedback on what economic information, indicators, or trends would be most useful to include in future Local Economy Updates.
-

BACKGROUND

In December 2023, Parkes Shire Council subscribed to a data and analytics platform that provides insights into local economic trends by analysing aggregated and anonymised transaction activity from banking networks.

This tool enables Council to better understand economic activity within the Shire and assess the impact of events and initiatives supported by Council. Since adoption, the data has been used to evaluate spending related to events such as the Parkes Elvis Festival, and to monitor purchasing behaviours across the region.

Council also uses a mix of internal and external data sources to provide a broader understanding of the local economy and share relevant updates with the Committee to support informed decision-making.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

This item is intended to become a standing feature of the agenda, providing regular updates on high-level economic data and trends relevant to Parkes Shire. The aim is to support informed discussion and ensure committee members have a clear picture of the current economic environment.

At this early stage, the format and content of the Local Economy Update is still being shaped. Council welcomes input from committee members on what types of information would be most valuable to include — whether it be sector-specific insights, employment data, visitor trends, retail activity, or other indicators.

Over time, it is expected that this agenda item may become more informational in nature, with members reviewing the data in advance and providing feedback only as needed. However, in the short term, active discussion and guidance are encouraged to help shape its future format.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

All data usage complies with relevant banking codes and confidentiality requirements. There are no legislative or policy considerations for Council associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The data subscription is funded from Council's General Fund operational budget and continues on a rolling contract basis.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications for Council associated with this report.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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

7.4 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Support local agriculture, tourism, and retail sectors by promoting diversification, value-adding and capacity building.**Author:** **Hamish Ritchie, Economic Development Specialist****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil****RECOMMENDATION**

That:

1. Provide advice on effective approaches for engaging local businesses in the Community Improvement District Pilot Program, including suggestions for building early interest, participation, and buy-in.

BACKGROUND

Parkes Shire Council was successful in securing \$360,000 through [Round 2](#) of Transport for NSW's (TfNSW) [Community Improvement District \(CID\) Pilot Program](#) in early 2025.

The CID Pilot aims to test new models for place-based partnerships between local businesses, government, and the wider community. Parkes Shire's pilot project focuses on the Parkes CBD, with the goal of exploring how business-led improvement initiatives might enhance vibrancy, visitation, and local economic activity. Insights gained will contribute to a potential State-wide CID policy framework.

The program funds a 12-month demonstration project, comprising both physical and non-physical initiatives — including temporary lighting installations, a public event, branding and place planning, and a series of engagement and training activities with local businesses.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Following confirmation of funding, Council has commenced delivery of the project. A detailed project plan has been developed, covering all phases of delivery from planning and engagement through to implementation and final acquittal.

An internal stakeholder meeting was held in late May to confirm roles, responsibilities, and delivery coordination across relevant Council teams. The project is currently in its early establishment phase, focused on internal planning, procurement preparation, and communications groundwork.

While the first months are intentionally focused on behind-the-scenes development, the project will include a strong emphasis on business engagement throughout. The CID Pilot does not establish a permanent entity but instead simulates how such a group might function — providing businesses with a chance to trial a more coordinated, participatory role in shaping the CBD.

Opportunities for involvement will include co-design sessions, feedback loops, business training, and a flagship lighting activation and event. Formal engagement activities with traders and building owners are scheduled to begin from mid-late 2025. Committee members and the broader business community will be invited to contribute throughout.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no new legislative or policy implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

TfNSW has committed \$360,000 to the Parkes CID Pilot Project. No Council co-contribution is required. Project delivery is being resourced internally and reported through four milestones and a final acquittal.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no new risk implications associated with this report. Risk planning has been integrated into the project management framework.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Formal business and community consultation will begin as the project transitions into engagement and implementation stages. Committee members will be kept informed and are encouraged to share opportunities for participation as they arise.

7.5 LOCAL TOURISM 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:** **Hamish Ritchie, Economic Development Specialist****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Note the information contained within the report. This is for information purposes only, with no decision or formal agreement sought.
 2. Provide feedback on any additional data, insights, or tourism initiatives that would be valuable to include in future updates.
-

BACKGROUND

Parkes Shire Council regularly monitors and reports on local tourism trends to support data-informed decision-making. This update includes visitation figures to the Parkes Visitor Information Centre for January to May 2025, along with a summary of key tourism projects currently underway.

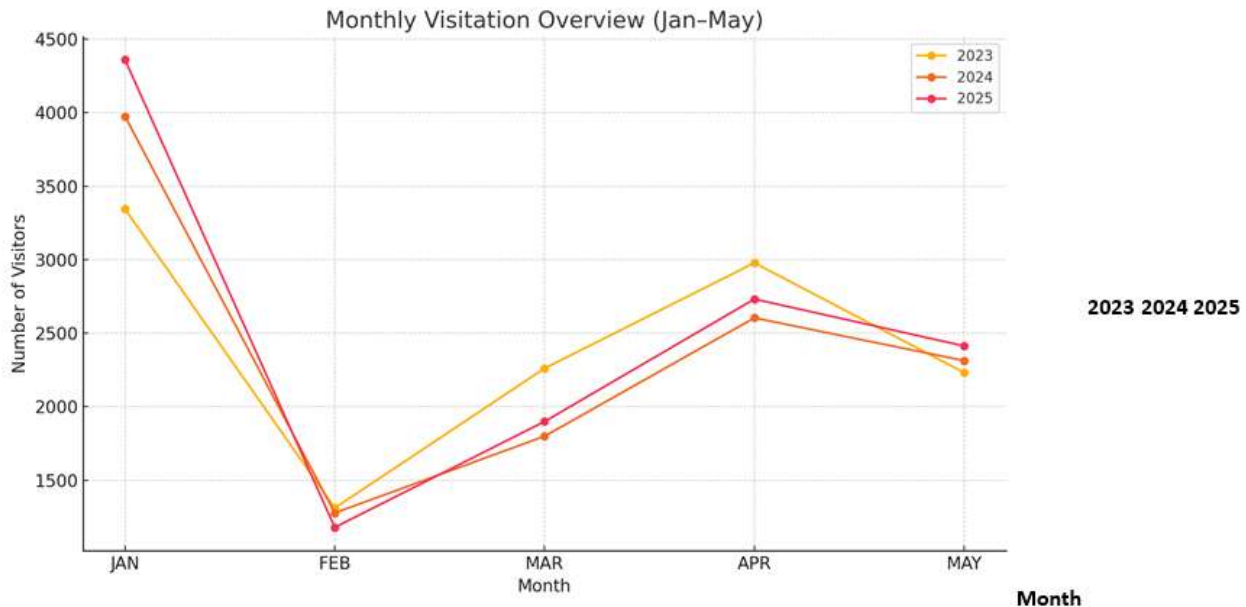
This item is intended to become a standing agenda feature to provide updates and insights into local tourism activity across the Shire.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY**Summary:**

Visitation to the Parkes Visitor Information Centre for the first five months of 2025 continues an upward trend, reflecting sustained interest in the region and a strong start to the year.

Despite initial community and business concerns, the opening of the Parkes Bypass in mid-April 2025 has had no discernible negative effect on visitation figures to the Henry Parkes Centre. In fact, April and May figures have outperformed the same months in 2024 and 2023, demonstrating that Parkes remains a key destination stop.

Monthly Visitation Overview (Jan–May)



Key Insights:

- January 2025 reached a record high of 4,360 visitors, a 9.7% increase over 2024, strongly driven by the Parkes Elvis Festival and summer travel.
- April 2025, coinciding with the bypass opening, saw 2,732 visitors, an increase of 4.9% compared to April 2024. This demonstrates no loss of visitation and, in fact, indicates continued destination strength.
- May 2025 visitation rose to 2,413, maintaining the upward momentum (+4.3% from May 2024 and +8.1% from May 2023).
- February remains the lowest visitation month, consistent across years, due to seasonal travel patterns.

Bypass Commentary:

The Parkes Bypass opening in mid-April this year was expected to alter traveller behaviour. Encouragingly, visitor numbers to the Centre remain strong, suggesting:

- Continued visitor interest in Parkes' offerings.
- Effective marketing and signage strategies.
- Strong destination appeal driven by events, experiences, and attractions.

This outcome reinforces the resilience of Parkes as a stopover and tourism destination, even with altered traffic routes.

Current Key Tourism Projects:

Parkes Shire Council is continuing to invest in strategic initiatives that support and grow the visitor economy across the region:

- Peak Hill Visitor Guide** – A refreshed guide is currently in development to showcase Peak Hill's distinct character and attractions, aimed at encouraging longer visits and deeper engagement.

- **Parkes Destination Rebrand** – A full destination rebrand is underway to modernise Parkes' tourism identity and better align with evolving visitor expectations. Key components include:
 - A new Parkes Visitor Guide with updated, vibrant content and design.
 - A redesigned Visit Parkes website to improve trip planning and increase digital visibility.
- **Social Media Activation** – Targeted growth of our Visit Parkes presence on Instagram and Facebook, now the leading platforms used by visitors to plan and be inspired. Recent analytics confirm social media is our top-performing channel for reaching and influencing potential travellers.
- **Village Touring Map** – A new shire-wide touring map is being developed to highlight the unique appeal of our villages, local experiences, natural attractions, and drive trails, encouraging broader exploration beyond Parkes.

These initiatives are particularly timely and important considering the bypass opening, as they serve to capture and inspire visitors to venture off-route and experience more of what Parkes Shire has to offer.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are no new legislative or policy implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Tourism initiatives referenced in this report are funded through Council's operational budget and relevant grant programs, where applicable.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no new risks identified. Council will continue to monitor tourism trends and performance, particularly considering changing travel patterns due to road infrastructure changes.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

There are no formal community consultation requirements for this item at present. Informal feedback is ongoing through engagement with visitors, local operators, and digital channels.

7.6 PARKES ELVIS FESTIVAL 2026: 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:** **Carolina Cruz, Events and Festivals Specialist****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil****RECOMMENDATION**

That:

1. The committee note the information contained within this report. This is for information purposes only, with no decision or formal agreement sought.

BACKGROUND

Recognised as one of the top three Festivals and Events in Australia, the Parkes Elvis Festival (Festival) attracts 25,000 fans with a global reach of 1.8 billion across over 3,000 media outlets. The 2026 Festival will be held 7-11 January and will celebrate its 33rd year.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Artist programming and theming for the 2026 Parkes Elvis Festival are being shaped by the official branding guidelines aligned with this year's theme, *Love Me Tender*. Drawing inspiration from Elvis Presley's 1956 ballad and film debut, the theme introduces a romantic and nostalgic tone that blends rustic charm with cinematic warmth. The branding evokes earthy colours, vintage textures, and Southern Americana references, which are informing early considerations for artist selection and creative direction. Programming is expected to feature a balance of iconic Elvis Tribute Artists and supporting acts whose aesthetic and musical style align with the emotional and visual tone of the theme. This creates a cohesive narrative across performance, staging, and marketing. These initial concepts present a strong foundation, and there is an opportunity to collaborate further on refining the artist line-up and thematic elements to fully capture the spirit of *Love Me Tender* and enhance audience connection.

The Festival continues to be a cornerstone of Parkes Shire's regional identity and cultural economy. In 2025, it entered a new phase of strategic recognition, following the acceptance of an Expression of Interest from Destination NSW. The Events Team is now collaborating with the Grants Team to develop the full proposal, which represents a critical opportunity to strengthen the Festival's delivery model and long-term viability.

Further elevating the Festival's position is its official recognition as a **Foundation Event** under the NSW Government's major events program. This distinction places the Parkes Elvis Festival alongside high-profile events such as Vivid Sydney, Splendour in the Grass, and the Tamworth Country Music Festival. As a Foundation Event, Parkes Elvis Festival gains increased visibility, greater access to strategic investment, and inclusion in state-led tourism promotion, reinforcing its cultural value and expanding its reach to broader audiences and markets.

The 2026 planning process is being driven by a comprehensive **Event Management Plan** that sets out a streamlined delivery approach grounded in financial discipline, risk awareness, and stakeholder responsiveness. Real-time budget tracking tools, refined site layouts, and curated program content are being used to simplify delivery, reduce duplication, and enhance the quality of

visitor experience. Notably, Cooke Park will undergo a layout revision to reduce infrastructure costs while improving crowd movement and operational flow. The program has been purposefully consolidated, with a shift in focus from scale to impact, retaining the core Elvis Tribute Artist offerings while expanding family-friendly content.

In parallel with broader program and operational refinements, a revised **procurement and contracting process** is being introduced to improve efficiency, clarity, and supplier accountability. This includes tailored agreements for external service providers and a more structured workflow for contract drafting, internal review, approval, and execution by both parties. These enhancements are expected to reduce administrative burden, minimise delays, and ensure deliverables are clearly defined and achievable.

This strategic recalibration reflects the lessons learned from previous editions of the Festival and demonstrates a clear commitment to operational excellence, creative integrity, and sustainable resource management. The 2026 edition prioritises artistic quality, refined logistics, and financial responsibility as guiding principles for delivery. This targeted, quality-focused approach aligns with Council's goal of making Parkes Shire an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest, and supports the strategy to promote the region as a premier tourist destination by reinforcing the cultural significance and national profile of the Parkes Elvis Festival.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial framework for the 2026 Parkes Elvis Festival is based on preliminary planning data and is subject to refinement as broader operational budget decisions are confirmed. At present, total expenditure is projected at \$1.4 million. Forecast income is estimated at \$850,000, creating a preliminary net funding requirement of \$550,000. It is important to note that these figures remain indicative. The draft budget will be endorsed in May 2025, at which point there will be a clearer understanding of the intended funding allocation for events in the 2025–26 financial year. This date represents a critical milestone in finalising the financial parameters within which the Festival will operate.

A key development is the acceptance of an Expression of Interest for funding from Destination NSW. If secured, this funding would significantly reduce the Festival's funding gap and support delivery at the standard expected of a recognised Foundation Event.

Diversification of income remains a financial priority. In addition to government support, the 2026 strategy includes a strengthened focus on corporate sponsorship, in-kind contributions, and local business engagement. A revised sponsorship framework is being developed to better align brand partnerships with audience interaction points, while additional revenue will be generated through merchandise sales, vendor participation, and curated experiences such as workshops and premium access offerings.

On the expenditure side, the Festival's delivery model has been strategically streamlined to manage costs while maintaining a high-quality audience experience. Venue layouts have been redesigned to reduce infrastructure requirements and improve site efficiency. Program volume has been consolidated to eliminate duplication and reduce overheads, while logistics have been optimised to better align with available resources. A contingency allocation will be embedded into the final budget to account for unforeseen costs, and real-time financial tracking systems will be deployed to support ongoing monitoring and adaptive budget control throughout the planning and delivery cycle.

This approach reflects a deliberate shift in focus from scale to sustainability. Rather than pursuing audience growth, the 2026 Festival will prioritise strategic investment, operational discipline, and high-impact programming within a financially responsible framework.

This integrated financial strategy not only promotes a more efficient and sustainable event model

but also directly supports Council's goal of strengthening the visitor economy by ensuring the Festival continues to deliver significant cultural and economic value to the region.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of a high-profile, multi-day event such as the Parkes Elvis Festival entails a complex risk environment that spans financial, operational, reputational, and environmental domains. The 2026 Event Management Plan has been structured to address these risks through a suite of mitigation strategies aimed at ensuring delivery integrity and public confidence.

Financial risk remains a key concern, particularly given rising service costs and the pending finalisation of Council's budget. The draft budget is scheduled for endorsement for public exhibition on 6 May 2025, with final adoption expected at the Council meeting on 17 June 2025. In the interim, expenditure decisions must remain cautious. To manage this uncertainty, the planning process includes strict procurement protocols, a dedicated contingency allocation, and real-time budget tracking mechanisms to enable adaptive resourcing as circumstances change.

Operational risks, including infrastructure failures, supplier shortages, and service delivery disruptions, are being addressed through refined programming, streamlined logistics, and revised site layouts. Lessons from the 2025 edition have informed this approach, which prioritises flexibility, cross-functional coordination, and reduced exposure to over-commitment.

Crowd safety, compliance, and emergency preparedness continue to be high-priority considerations. Updated risk assessments, venue capacity reviews, and revised emergency management plans will be implemented in consultation with local emergency services. Pre-event training for all staff and volunteers will ensure alignment with current safety standards and enhance readiness across the Festival workforce.

Reputational risk has also increased following the Festival's elevation to Foundation Event status. As a flagship cultural product for the region, public scrutiny, stakeholder expectations, and media interest will be heightened. The delivery team is responding through proactive stakeholder communication, a disciplined marketing approach, and a commitment to delivering a Festival experience that reflects the brand promise.

Environmental risks, including weather-related disruptions, remain an ongoing concern for outdoor events. Site planning will be adjusted to increase infrastructure resilience, with added shade, water stations, and transport access forming part of a broader focus on attendee wellbeing and operational adaptability.

This disciplined, forward-looking risk approach is critical to maintaining public trust and safeguarding the Festival's reputation as a leading regional event. It also reinforces Council's broader objective of positioning Parkes Shire as a reliable, attractive and professionally managed destination for tourism, cultural investment and community engagement.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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

7.7 LOCAL EVENTS**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Community**Goal:** Our community is creative, proud and has a strong sense of belonging.**Strategy:** Deliver and support events, festivals and celebrations that promote engaged citizenship and foster community pride.**Author:** **Carolina Cruz, Events and Festivals Specialist****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The committee note the information within this report. This is for information purposes only, with no decision of formal agreement sought.
-

BACKGROUND

Parkes Shire continues to deliver and support a dynamic calendar of events that promote community participation, celebrate identity and contribute to the regional visitor economy. The 2025 program reflects Council's strategic commitment to fostering engaged citizenship and civic pride as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. The calendar is shaped through internal planning, external partnerships and community-led initiatives that align with broader tourism and economic development objectives.

Events staged to date include major hallmark festivals, civic celebrations and family-oriented activities that attract visitors while strengthening local connections. These events build on the success of previous years and reflect Council's ongoing collaboration with stakeholders and the community.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Parkes Shire has already delivered a strong program of events in the first half of 2025, anchored by the Parkes Elvis Festival which attracted significant visitation from across the country. Preliminary feedback suggests high satisfaction levels from attendees and local businesses, reinforcing the festival's position as a cornerstone of the visitor economy.

Australia Day celebrations were delivered in partnership with the Australia Day Committee, featuring citizenship ceremonies and community awards. Country Sounds and PSC Movie Night offered free public entertainment in February and March, engaging residents of all ages.

While some events have been marked as tentative or cancelled due to evolving local factors, the schedule reflects a responsive and diverse approach to programming. Council's internal teams and community groups continue to demonstrate resilience and adaptability.

Forthcoming highlights include the Tullamore Show, Vietnam Veteran's Day, and various NAIDOC Week activities. Planning is also underway for events in the second half of the year, including structured support for community-led initiatives and capacity building across the region.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Council associated with this report.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

The 2025 events calendar presents minimal risk under current planning and operational procedures. Event delivery continues to be supported by cross-team coordination, stakeholder engagement and adherence to standard event safety procedures.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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

7.8 ENERGY FROM WASTE**IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Leadership**Goal:** Our local government is open, accountable, and representative.**Strategy:** Advocate and provide strong representation for our community at the regional, state, and federal levels.**Author:** **Hamish Ritchie, Economic Development Specialist****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil**

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Note the information contained in this report regarding the Energy from Waste proposal and Council's current role in the assessment process. This is for information purposes only, with no decision or formal agreement sought.

BACKGROUND

The Parkes Energy Recovery Project (PERP) is a proposed Energy from Waste facility led by the NSW Government on government-owned land. The project is currently in the early conceptual phase and is subject to a multi-year approval and assessment process governed by State planning and environmental authorities.

ISSUES AND COMMENTARY

Parkes Shire Council is not the proponent or consent authority for the Energy from Waste proposal. The project is being led and assessed by the NSW Government under its own policy and legislative framework. Council anticipates acting as a referral body only during the formal assessment phase.

While the project has generated a high level of public interest, it remains in its early stages. A two-year program of studies, environmental impact assessments, and community consultation is expected before any decision is made by the State Government. During this time, Council will maintain a neutral stance and continue to seek accurate, evidence-based information to support transparent and responsible decision-making.

Council acknowledges the range of community views on this proposal and reaffirms its commitment to public health, environmental protection, and open communication. A dedicated section of the Council website has been established to provide ongoing updates and centralised information.

Committee members and the wider community are encouraged to visit the Council website for the latest updates and context:

<https://www.parkes.nsw.gov.au/Council/News-media-and-projects/Projects-and-works/Energy-From-Waste-Facility>

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

The project will be assessed under State Government frameworks. Council is not the consent authority and has no legislative or statutory role in the approval decision.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Council associated with this report.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Council continues to monitor the project and seek clarification on matters of public interest. Any formal risk assessment will be the responsibility of the relevant State agencies.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Council has requested that the NSW Department of Planning lead a comprehensive community consultation process as part of the formal assessment phase. This is in line with standard State Significant Development procedures.

8 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

RECOMMENDATION

That Economy, Destination and 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:

8.1 COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) - a 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 personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors).

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.

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.
