

Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 17 June 2025



Minutes of the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee**Held on Tuesday, 17 June 2025 at the****Cooke Park Pavillion, Parkes****Present:**

Cr Neil Westcott	Mayor
Cr Marg Applebee	Deputy Mayor
Cr William Jayet	Councillor
Cr Doug Pout	Councillor
Cr Glenn Wilson	Councillor
Mr Andrew Rice	Chair
Ms Kristy Berry	
Mr Peter Giles	
Mr Andrew Hall	
Ms Kelly Hendry	
Mr Steve Lindsay	
Mr Greg Nash	
Ms Tracie Robertson	
Mrs Marty Sammut-Paul	

Council Officers in Attendance:

Mr Kent Boyd	General Manager
Ms Carolina Cruz	Events and Festivals Specialist
Ms Lisa Moon	Tourism and Visitor Services Coordinator
Mr Brendan Shipley	Festivals Producer
Mr Hamish Ritchie	Economic Development Specialist
Ms Veronica Shaw	Manager Governance, Risk and Corporate Performance
Ms Bronte Thompson	Business Services Officer Trainee

Guests:

Cr Louise O'Leary	Councillor
Mr Matt Armstrong	NBN Co.
Brendan Maher	Transport for NSW
Representatives of Parkes Energy Recovery	

NOTES

Cr Marg Applebee and Ms Carolina Cruz attended via audio-visual link.
The meeting commenced at 10:00am and concluded at 12:28pm.

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1 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairperson will declare the meeting open.

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

The Chair described their intention for this to be a less formal meeting and a forward thinking Committee.

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.

Cr Joy Paddison, Ms Treen Swift and Ms Carrie Olsen were apologies for the meeting.

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

The Committee noted two deferred items from the last meeting still requiring actions:

- *Economic tracking*
- *Signage strategy to be circulated outside of session*

The Economic Development Specialist confirmed that the first action was included in this months reports and the second action will be completed shortly.

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.

Nil disclosures were made.

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

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.

Discussion

Matt Armstrong from NBN Co. presented a slideshow on Network upgrades and planned community engagement across the Shire.

Highlights included:

- The increase in data usage due to AI.
- NBN is upgrading fibre and upgrading the speeds of their websites.
- Parkes is right in the centre of the Fibre upgrades taken place.
- Coming to Peak Hill for Fibre updates in the new financial year.
- NBN products suit a range of business segments – Home/Micro, Business, Enterprise and non-premises IoT.

Kent Boyd asked about the future of Starlink and what is the difference.

Matt Armstrong commented that Star Link service is good technology but compared to fibre we are going to 2G where they are going to 1G in the near future and that it is really about the price and user requirements which makes it different.

The Chair commented on what is the next step to inform committee, time frames and dates.

Matt Armstrong replied there will be a range of engagement, stands set up in the main street, will advertise everywhere including our town villages and a range of direct face to face engagement.

7.2 NEWELL HIGHWAY BYPASS UPDATE**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.

Discussion

Brendan Maher from Transport for NSW presented an update on the Newell Bypass including progress and signage.

Highlights included:

- Halo sculpture is coming on the roundabout.
- The quicker the roads are open the better, North and South bound.
- There have been challenges arise since opening the bypass and changes are to be made including effective signage.
- London Road is to be open in July.
- Acknowledgement of complaints and issues regarding the houses near the bypass and awareness that they are not used to the sound. There are resources to help support those with these issues.
- A test will be undertaken to determine future requirements regarding noise.
- The Victoria Bridge has taken longer than expected but there has been a lot of engagement for the Wiradjuri Artwork done by local artists.
- The Halo urban design feature final colouring and fabrication is underway currently, it will be a Council Asset, TfNSW has maintained features to improve access and safety for Council staff and is expected to be done June 2025.
- When the handover occurs it will be advertised via VMS signage, letters, website updates, media release, social media and many more.
- Information on large signs including massive bypass information signs and totems to designate the SAP.

Mayor Neil Westcott stated that he noticed there was soil being placed around the Halo and asked what is being planted.

Brendan Maher replied that the top soil is underway and they plan on planting over 1,000 plants.

Cr Glenn Wilson asked details about several of the speed limits on the bypass and the possibility of increasing the speed limit for Hartigan Avenue from 50kms.

Brendan Maher replied that the speed limits are going to increase along the bypass but that the conditions will need to be reviewed. The 50km speed limit at Hartigan Avenue will also be reviewed but is unable to comment on any exact increases.

7.3 LOCAL ECONOMY UPDATE**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.

Discussion

Committee noted this item did not require discussion.

7.4 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION**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.

Discussion

Not discussed due to time constraints.

7.5 LOCAL TOURISM UPDATE**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.

Discussion

Committee noted this item did not require discussion.

7.6 PARKES ELVIS FESTIVAL 2026: PROJECT UPDATE**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.

Discussion

Not discussed due to time constraints.

7.7 LOCAL EVENTS**RECOMMENDATION**

That:

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

Discussion

Committee noted this item did not require discussion.

7.8 ENERGY FROM WASTE**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.

Discussion

Representatives from Parkes Energy Recovery provided a short presentation and question and answer session to the Committee.

Parkes Energy from Recovery noted the following:

- The facility won't be seen, smelt or heard.
- There will be ongoing engagement and sessions going ahead in the near future.
- They will be providing comparison to other countries but will focus more on the particular conditions in Parkes, such as weather etc.
- They noted that this time next year they will be completing an application to the NSW Government.
- From now until their application 30 different studies will be undertaken by them and by independent assessors, including cultural heritage, flora and fauna studies, human health, water, economic studies and many more.

The Committee noted that several of the questions and comments they have are for the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and request that they visit the community to discuss issues and directly answer questions that the community is concerned about.

The Committee also noted the absence of the Regional Growth Development Corporation NSW (RGDC) from community engagement who are responsible for running the Special Activation Precinct (SAP) program which includes this development.

Mayor Neil Westcott agreed with the Committee's comments and the need for the EPA and RGDC to address concerns.

Member from the Committee questioned that if the technology was so new that whether it would be untested.

Councillor Wilson also questioned whether it was the most advanced technology.

Parkes Energy Recovery replied that the technology is always incrementally improving and that the technology is based on a facility in Dubai but that the facility in Parkes will be built in a way that allows for updates over its 40 year lifetime.

A discussion around how the Committee can engage and wanting more information on the Secretaries Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) process also took place with the Council offering to send through examples and commentary to help explain the process.

The Committee asked if the community can have input into the EIS that the Parkes Energy Recovery organisation needs to submit to the EPA.

Parkes Energy Recovery noted that community engagement is part of their submission but that input on what is included and what is written is the responsibility of Parkes Energy Recovery.

The General Manager noted that Council are representing the community and are trying to get the minister to come and talk to our community to explain what they are doing.

Committee members commented on the number of councillors, community members and even schools that have already come out strongly against the project and that it will be hard to reverse their beliefs and that communication and engagement so far has been terrible, particularly in the lack of counter commentary to comments online.

The Committee also noted the negative and aggressive commentary against the project online and the fear of people to speak out with any different view to the online commentary.

The Committee also noted the negative backlash Parkes Shire Council are receiving toward anything they do especially on their social Media Posts even for very positive projects which is sad to see.

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.

Meeting did not go into Closed Session due to time constraints.

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.

8.1 COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION**RECOMMENDATION**

That:

1. Committee members review the attached confidential contact list and advise Council of any inaccuracies.
2. Committee members notify Council of any future changes to their contact details to ensure records remain current and accurate.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The following general business was discussed:

- The Committee noted that items 7.3, 7.5 and 7.7 which relate general updates did not need to be discussed and discussed potential ways they might manage this moving forward, including potentially adopting as multiple items at the beginning of the meeting and discussing it if a Committee member requests to.
- The Committee also asked how they can capture their questions and get answers.
- The Committee asked what the response rate was for business surveys which the Economic Development Specialist noted is dependant on the type of survey and will follow up.
- The Committee wants to know what Council is looking for their input on.
- The Committee want to look toward the future.
- The Committee wants to know what information Council needs to get projects, for example grants.
- The Committee also discussed dates and times and whether 1.5 hours and quarterly is enough time to be effective.
- The Committee noted there was a lot of content in the agenda and that they don't want to be sitting and listening but want to be heard, to be helping inform decisions and drive direction.
- The Chair noted that he would like to challenge the group to keep the same time and schedule and look at ways to instead make the Committee more efficient, such as having bulk information items that are not discussed in the meeting.
- The Councillors and Council were asked by the Committee to reflect on what support they want from the Committee and to communicate this back.
- The Committee briefly discussed meeting sooner to talk about meeting logistics, such as agenda planning, and what to do in relation to EPA and SEARS.
- The Committee reminded Councillors that their primary role attending these meetings is to listen to the Committee which was briefly discussed.
- Councillor O'Leary asked the Committee to remember the villages and to include sporting events in event updates. Councillor O'Leary also noted the uptick in tourism in Peak Hill since the bypass opened.

The meeting concluded at 12.28.

Actions from meeting	Responsible Department
Signage strategy to be circulated outside of session	EDS
Councillors and Council to reflect on what support they want from the Committee and provide this information to the Committee	EDS
Information on rates of responses to business surveys to be followed up out of session	EDS
Council to provide comparable SEARS and commentary to be featured at next meeting.	EDS
Explore tentative 15 July meeting to feature meeting logistics and SEARS	EDS
Let the Committee know how they can provide ideas and questions for the Committee meeting.	EDS
Organise some sort of adoption of multiple items for information items in the agenda	EDS

The Committee noted that the next meeting is confirmed for 16th September 2025 but have asked Council to explore an Extraordinary meeting to be held on 15th July 2025.

This is the final page of the minutes comprising 12 pages numbered 1 to 12 of the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 17 June 2025 and confirmed on Tuesday, 16 September 2025.