

Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 16 September 2025



Minutes of the Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee**Held on Tuesday, 16 September 2025 at the****Parkes Council Chambers, 2 Cecile Street, Parkes****Present:**

Cr Neil Westcott	Mayor
Cr Marg Applebee	Deputy Mayor
Cr William Jayet	Councillor
Cr Doug Pout	Councillor
Mr Andrew Rice	Chair
Mr Steve Lindsay	Deputy Chair
Ms Kristy Berry	
Mr Peter Giles	
Mr Andrew Hall	
Ms Kelly Hendry	
Mr Greg Nash	
Ms Treen Swift	

Council Officers in Attendance:

Mr Anthony McGrath	Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy
Mr Hamish Ritchie	Economic Development Specialist
Mr Andrew Francis	General Manager (Acting)

NOTES

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 12:00pm.

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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.

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.

Apologies from:

- Cr Joy Paddison
 - Cr Glenn Wilson
 - Ms Tracie Robertson
 - Mrs Marty Sammut-Paul

 - Mr Kent Boyd General Manager
 - Mr Brendan Shipley Manager Events and Tourism
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Nil

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE ECONOMY, DESTINATION AND EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JULY 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That the receive and confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 July 2025 appended at *Annexure A*.

Discussion

No additional changes requested at time of committee meeting.

Amendment proposed via e-mail prior to meeting:

Item 7.1 - Replace "Not discussed due to time constraints" with

“Chair asked if any feedback from committee members on the SEARs circulated, no comments offered. In lieu of this, Chair requested that members email any subsequent feedback to Hamish to pass onto Kent Boyd.”

Changes agreed by committee.

Chair sought clarity on if any action items were missed from the previous meeting.

Committee confirmed the only action item was related to Shop Parkes which was an agenda item in this meeting.

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.

No disclosures were made.

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

No Disclosures of Interest.

6 LATE BUSINESS

7 OFFICERS' REPORTS

7.1 LOCAL ECONOMY UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Note the update on local economic conditions and consider any insights relevant to the other agenda items. This report is for informational purposes only.

Committee confirmed nothing further to be discussed.

7.2 COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The Committee note this standing agenda item as an opportunity to raise and discuss matters relevant to recent or upcoming Council Meetings.

Committee confirmed nothing to be discussed.

7.3 SHOP PARKES REVITALISATION

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Participate in a structured discussion to explore the goals, scope, and components of a revitalised *Shop Parkes* program, including gift cards, digital presence, event activations, coordination models, and shopfront revitalisation.
2. Considers the merits of progressing the initiative and discusses potential approaches to delivery.
3. Identifies possible next steps or structures to support continued progress beyond the meeting.

Discussion

All committee members discussed how to revitalised the Shop Parkes program with mention of long and short term aims.

The discussion included

- Recap of the items included in the discussion were given to initiative and frame the discussion and different aspects of the Shop Parkes program.
- Suggestion made to discuss responsibilities first before going into specific items.
- Noted that is was unfortunate that the member that initially raised the item, as well as the member that is also part of the Business Parkes (i.e. Parkes' Chamber of Commerce, ongoing referred to as "Chamber") were not in attendance.
- Chamber seen by committee as the ideal entity to act as a conduit between Council and the businesses in Parkes. Issue cited that a large percentage of businesses are likely not part of the Chamber and therefore that would need to be taken into consideration with an idea that part of any solution would likely required the building up of the Chamber in terms of numbers of associated businesses.
- Outlined that initiatives need to be driven by the businesses themselves to be most successful.
- Context given to the Shop Parkes Gift Cards around it originally being a response to a drought. It acted as a mechanism to get cash back into the local economy. Deemed the most fair and equitable way to do this as it removed any potential negative perceptions on their use.

- Question raised whether Hamish (Economic Development Specialist at Council) was the conduit to help “recreate” the Chamber. Noted in relation to cards that the council through their Economic Development Department should look back on the cards and be able to see a measurable outcome. This outcome then needs to be considered in the current environment and determine if it is still working as intended.
- Conversation switched to Social Media playing a large role in everything. Mention of the ShopParkes facebook page being highly beneficial and it would be good to get it back up and running.
- Cited that one major benefit was the neutrality it had as it wasn’t just one business and was moderated by a more independent person.
- Clarification given around whom has access. Access currently sits entirely with council.
- Discussion brought back to implementation due to high levels of interest in doing something within the scope of the Shop Parkes program. Question posed what it should be. Does it need to be independent or collective? Could council play a role in support a reset and establishment of something. Chamber brought up again and its heavy reliance on three individuals. Is this the best situation? What can be done to support them or is there a group that want a change?
- Cited that any initiative around business engagement lead by council will likely have the same issues as the Chamber has had. We need to look at what that issue is and solve that root problem, then ideally create a strong body that can support other businesses in getting involved.
- Suggest that the Chamber’s focus on the main street could have resulted in low membership. Perception that they had no interest in representing anything outside the CBD. The top two industries in Parkes had no representation. If we are to go forward we need to keep in mind that there is a lot more in relation to business in the Parkes Shire than just the Main Street in Parkes. Any initiatives would need to be able to help all businesses. Shop Parkes for example may help retailers but that is only one portion.
- Pointed out that we need to determine what businesses actively want. What are the needs across all business sectors. Example given of initiatives to support local suppliers in connecting with emerging businesses like renewable energy projects.
- Next step posed as inviting the Chamber and see what they think and their vision is.
- Discussion brought back to need. To determine a specific need that can then be responded to as opposed to create something and then find a need for it to solve. Referenced current activities as an opportunity to get local businesses involved. It would be good to get them in.
- Agreed by Chair that potentially a business engagement activity should not be an agenda item in this meeting but a dedicated session solely to them and the Chamber. Potential for it to be an intermediary session.
- Preference for being able to get something implemented before Christmas.
- Concern raised about the same people constantly being the ones involved. Question raised as to how we can extend it to get new individuals involved.

- Committee members expressed views that they believe there are people that would want to get involved in a Shop Parkes initiative. Acknowledged that often industrial areas can be forgotten in such initiatives but potentially a Shop Parkes social media page may be a catalyst for more broader interest.
- Discussion around time frames and how broad consultation, then narrowing down to key players might be difficult prior to Christmas.
- Statement that by doing a social media page is will be quick and simple.
- Question raised over whom would actually be shouldering the burden of running any such program, engagement, or running a social media page.
- Council cited having had difficulty in recent engagement activities with only 6 businesses in the CBD showing interest. Acknowledged the approach taken by council was not ideal.
- Quick back and forth discussion occurred revolving around the desire to focus on the Shop Parkes social media page as the starting point for getting something up for Christmas. Council department to take on administration burden. Belief among committee that once a reshare of facebook posts system is established it will gather momentum becoming self-sustaining.
- Premise of self-sustaining momentum question as the current Shop Parkes social media page stopped being effective in 2023. This would indicate the belief of a self-sustaining momentum didn't hold true then, so what is different.
- Committee spoke to a previous media rulebook that was created for council that could help with the administration of the Shop Parkes social media page. In relation to 2023, observed that if council stopped following the media rulebook in 2023 then likely the program stopped being effective due to council ceasing to administrate it. If the Social Media page is run through council, ultimately they will have to administrate it.
- Viewpoint of council that realistically if something was to happen this year, Council would need to resource it. Long term it would then be about bringing the businesses back on board. This could then act as a test to determine if it is worthwhile to continue when long term planning occurs in January.
- Committee member pointed out that we do not want to neglect print media. There are potential opportunities with Champion Post to reach an audience that doesn't engage with social media.
- Recollection from a member that Christmas promotions used to always be done in conjunction with the Champion Post. There was also then a \$1,000 prize draw each day. Discussion brought back to how the committee could help in creating a large engagement event that would involve businesses and the Chamber to get what is being discussed here and the opportunities out to the rest of the Parkes Shire business community.
- Committee discussed different ways they could help including taking on extra responsibilities, doing flyer drops.
- Discussion shifted to Shop Parkes gift cards. Established that the Economic Development department at council currently controls the system. The administrative burden to have the system is minimal from a basic end. Any uplift spoken of would sit with a promotional lens, not a structured administrative lens.

- Discussion shifted back to the Shop Parkes social media page. Emphasis on a lot of individuals being willing to run it. A need to start something is important, content is just currently being reshared, not created.
- Discussion around councils ability to reactivate the Shop Parkes social media page. Does it need councillor approval, could it be done without it. Belief being it does not need councillor approval to reinstate the website as it is alright a live asset of councils.
- Desire expressed for something up and running in two weeks in relation to the Shop Parkes social media page.
- Council expressed they would like to review the Social Media rulebook to determine level of work required to effectively reengage a Shop Parkes social media page.
- Quick discussions point around connection of Shop Parkes Cards to Shop Parks social media page and potential requirements for businesses. Idea being you can only gain advertising through the webpage if you become part of the Shop Parkes Cards. Issues cited with this due to nature of some businesses, cited example AirBnB. Exemptions would need to exist. Overall consensus that while a system to encourage uptake of systems is beneficial it would need to ensure it does not unfairly affect certain business types.
- Operational concern cited by council in relation to changes in Social Media Law and the owner of a social media page being liable for everything posted on it. Might impact timeline based on Social Media rulebook content.
- Question posed about whether the purpose is to market as a unified brand, or it merely promotes others. Committee agrees it should do both.
- Transparency concerns cited in relation to the program and how to ensure a rigorous framework around it. Question posed as to how.
- Councillors offered to take on part of the responsibility in their monthly meetings. Intention being to slowly create over 3 months. Reemphasised a viewpoint that we need to focusing on engaging people that are keen. Additionally we should not conflate the Parkes Card with the Shop Parkes activity focusing on promoting our community. Priority should be to get Shop Parkes going again, start sharing half a dozen posts, then in two weeks 20. There will then be information to consider. Time cited as being the primary issue as next meeting scheduled for December.
- Discussion around different aspects of a Shop Parkes activation, through discussion consensus reached on focusing on the promotional aspects through social media and build from there.
- Concerns around Champion Post and other equivalent businesses potentially having reservations with the proposal as businesses would be able to obtain free advertising through the reactivated Shop Parkes social media page instead of through them. Noted as something to speak about next time.
- Suggested idea of trying to engage Youths with the Shop Parkes social media page. Is it possible to engage with schools?
- Discussion pivoted to the other aspect included in the agenda topic of empty shop fronts. Enquiring to council about what power there is to actually influence the appearance of empty shops.

- Response from council was that it is very limited due to it being a privately owner asset. Typically what power there is, is related to the structural aspects of safety.
- Question asked in relation to Council's CBD Vibrancy Strategy and the level of detail it goes into citing an empty building.
- Council outlined that the strategy would be similar in nature and level as the current CBD Vibrancy Strategy. It typically would not go into detail about specific stores (E.g. clean X building) but could absolutely put forward strategies around beautifying the area. Specific example of graffiti in some urban environments.
- Specific examples discussed in relation to what options are available and the difficulties in implementing anything to improve the presentation of empty shops. The ability to contact the owner is a limiting factor as well as the cost involved in any activity.
- Recommendation that council continue to pursue options around managing the negative aspects of empty shops in the CBD.
- Negative discussion they generated talk about with cited example of a facebook post in relation to the Light Up Parkes activities.
- Proposal to focus on the ANZ building as it attracts a lot of feedback from the public. Explore solutions to that building alone with a second view for options on a larger scale for all empty shop fronts. Suggested ideas included nice photos, marketing space, or a pop up store.

7.4 BUSINESS COLLABORATION AND ALIGNMENT ACROSS KEY ENTITIES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Considers strategies to strengthen alignment, communication, and engagement across all entities involved in economic and business development.
2. Explores ways to build the capacity of organisations like the Chamber to contribute meaningfully and sustainably to the local business environment.
3. Identifies opportunities for practical steps forward or pilot actions to test improved engagement models.

Discussion

Committee noted this agenda item was included in discussions of 7.3. Opened discussion to the committee about any additional aspects of this item they wish to discuss.

- Committee asked council whether there was funding in the CID Grant to help coordinate a workshop that could bring the businesses together for a discussion.

- The CID Grant has a narrow scope of the Parkes CBD which we don't want to risk undermining the goal of including all businesses. Council to review options as confident something could be done here.
- Committee member made note of having tried to join the Chamber but was unable to.

7.5 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT: LIGHT UP PARKES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Note the following information on activities relating to the Community Improvement District (CID) Pilot Program. This is for information purposes only, with no decision or formal agreement sought.
2. Provide feedback and engagement activities and how we can best promote the activities taking place.

Council outlined the different aspects of the Light Up Parkes project. Content included in agenda.

7.6 IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITY

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Considers what role the Committee may play in addressing or responding to these impacts.
2. Identifies any specific ideas or concerns to be explored further or developed into future recommendations or actions.

Item not directly discussed. General feeling that discussions in point 7.3 spoke to the ways to explore aspects of Parkes and drive positive action more generally.

8 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.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The following item was discussed:

- Next meeting in December determined to be too far away in relation to Shop Parkes social media page.
- Proposal to bring forward 2nd of December meeting to 18th November.

Consensus of the Committee was that Council:	
1.	Review the Digital Playbook and the reactivation of the Shop Parkes facebook page. Intent for the Shop Parkes facebook page to be reactivated within the next two weeks.
2.	Look to update the Visit Parkes Region Website, specifically the listing of businesses that are a part of the Shop Parkes Gift Card program.
3.	Continue to pursue avenues around addressing the aesthetics of empty shop fronts with a focus on more prominent ones. - Council to consider financial vs non-financial possibilities.
4.	Council to review CID Grant to explore possibilities of using fund to help facilitate a larger meeting as discussed in point 7.3. - Larger meeting to include Council, Chambers, and Businesses from Parkes Shire to try and network and create a collaborative group and approach to benefit everyone.

Actions from meeting	Responsible Department
“Energise Parkes Shire” to be included as an agenda in the next meeting with a large portion of time allocated to it. To include items from the Shop Parkes programs including the social media page and cards.	Economic Development
Council to determine viability of bringing forward 2 nd December meeting to 18 th November.	Economic Development