

# Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee

## Business Paper

Notice is hereby given that a Economy, Destination and Events Advisory Committee of Parkes Shire Council will be held in the Cooke Park Pavilion, 17 Welcome Street, Parkes, on Tuesday 18 November 2025 at 10:30 am.



Kent Boyd PSM  
**GENERAL MANAGER**



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## **1 OPENING OF MEETING**

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The Chairperson will declare the meeting open.

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

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## **2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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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.

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## **3 APOLOGIES**

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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.

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## 4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

|                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4.1 MINUTES OF THE ECONOMY, DESTINATION AND EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE<br/>HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2025</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**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 -  
16 September 2025**

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### RECOMMENDATION

That the receive and confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 16 September 2025 appended at *Annexure A*.

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# **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.

## Order Of Business

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| <b>3</b> | <b>APOLOGIES .....</b>                                                                         | <b>4</b>  |
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## 3 APOLOGIES

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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
- 

Nil

## 4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

|                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4.1 MINUTES OF THE ECONOMY, DESTINATION AND EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JULY 2025</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### RECOMMENDATION

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

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### 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

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“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 revitalise 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 it 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 function as a conduit between Council and the businesses in Parkes. Issue cited that a large percentage of businesses are not part of the Chamber and therefore that would need to be taken into consideration with an idea that part of any solution would require 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 functioned 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 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 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 administer it. If the Social Media page is run through council they will have to administer it.
- Viewpoint of council that realistically if something were 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 function 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. 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 be 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 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 2<sup>nd</sup> of December meeting to 18<sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>nd</sup> December meeting to 18 <sup>th</sup> November.                                                                                               | Economic Development   |

## **5 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

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**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 LOCAL ECONOMY UPDATE**

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

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee:

1. That the Committee note the update on recent Economic Development activity, including key findings from engagement for the CBD Vibrancy Strategy.
  2. Committee flag if they would like to receive the draft CBD Vibrancy Strategy for review and feedback as an out of session action.
- 

#### **BACKGROUND**

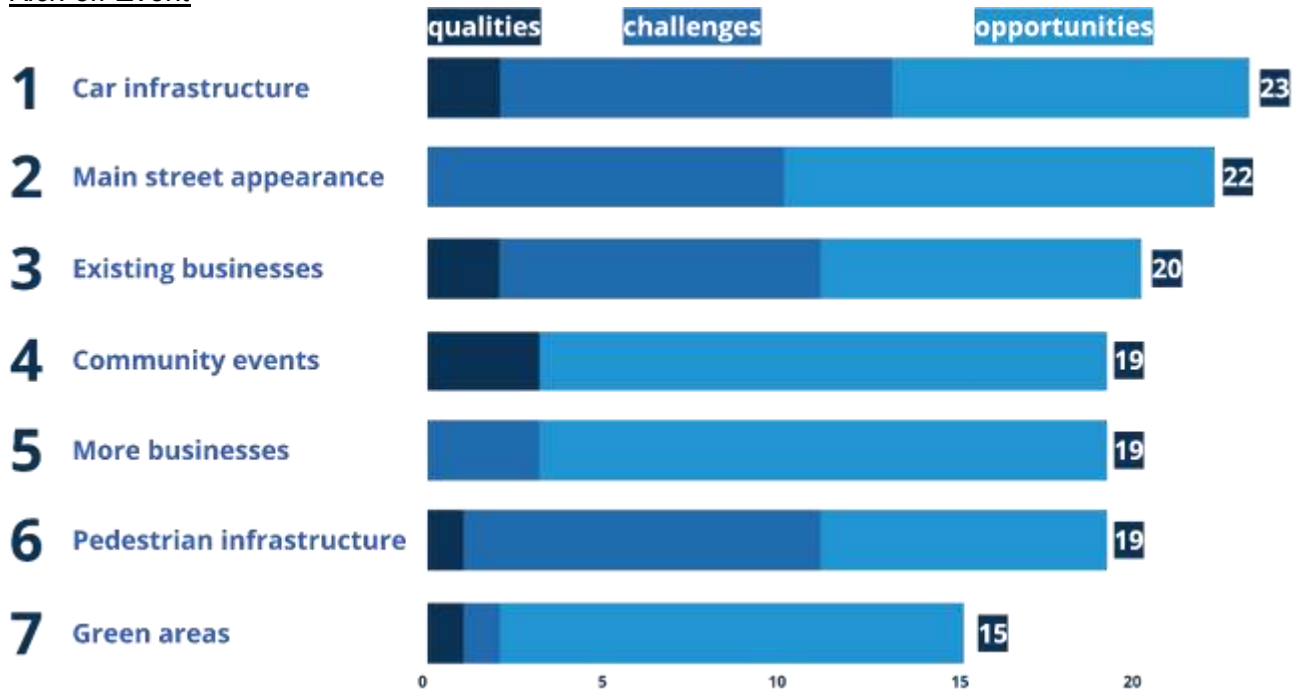
**PARKES SHIRE COUNCIL IS CONTINUING ITS WORK IN DELIVERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR THE REGION, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON SMALL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND CBD REVITALISATION. THIS UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS RECENT PROGRESS MADE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CID) PILOT PROGRAM, PARTICULARLY THE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UPCOMING CBD VIBRANCY STRATEGY. ISSUES AND COMMENTARY**

#### **Shape Your CBD**

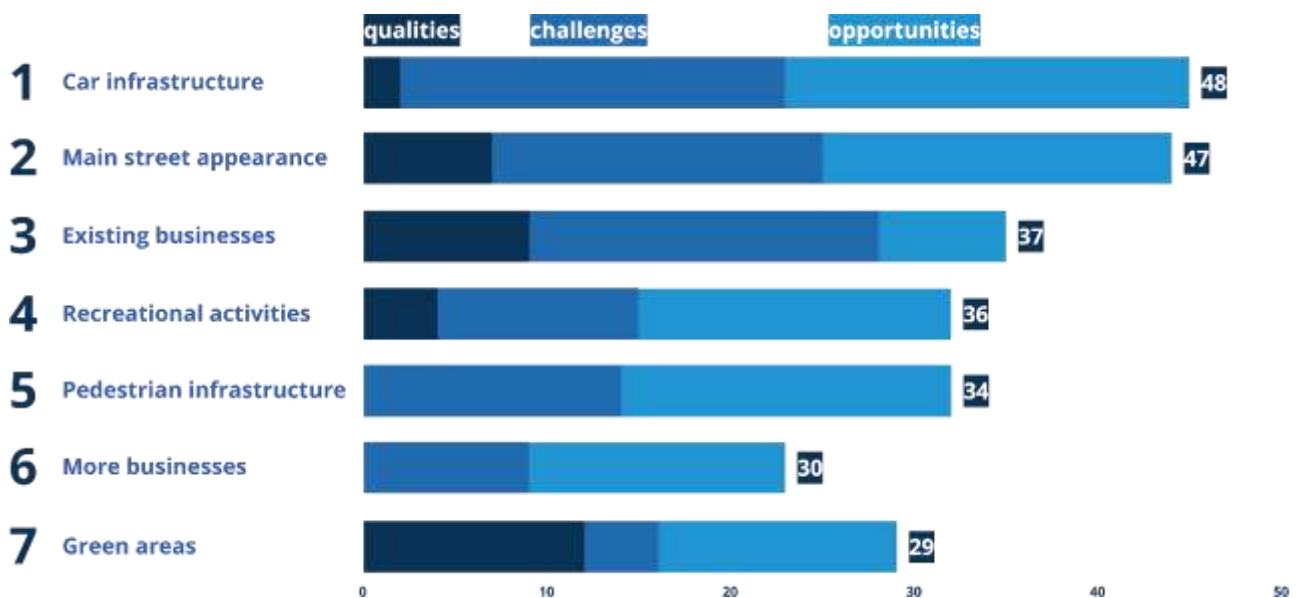
As part of the CID Pilot Program, a range of engagement activities have been conducted to inform the CBD Vibrancy Strategy.

## Key Preliminary Findings

### Kick-off Event



### Strategic Workshops



## Key Points

- A balance between a pleasant main street to occupy as a pedestrian and practical for a cars is required.
- Businesses and recreational activities are important for longer stays. Variety, opening hours, and price points are key factors.
- Events play a large role in perception of a vibrant city centre.

## Small Business Workshops

Council is delivering a series of free workshops designed to build capability across the local business community. Sessions are tailored to align with feedback from previous engagement, covering topics such as:

- Digital marketing and e-commerce
- Visual merchandising and retail presentation
- Business planning and resilience
- Technology and AI in the workplace

Preliminary indicators of success include (based off first week):

- Attendance rate: Our attendance rate was always expected to be low because of the lack of engagement by businesses in the CID project as a whole. Bookings for marketing and network-based events typically sit in the high 80% while more data driven topics around the 50% mark. Attendance vs booking rates varied between 50% and 75%. 80% attendance vs booking is expected at high end events.
- Participant feedback: Feedback was extensive when prompted in online forms with almost all members waiting to scan QR codes. This reflects the overall very positive responses we have received from our participants. Our presenters have all been given high praise in their content knowledge and delivery and the facilitation of the event met with those standards. More feedback will be sought via an e-mail to all attendees and presenters post event to:
  - Obtain more written information as feedback reminders at events could be improved.
  - Hopefully obtain information from those that did not attend as to the reasons why.
  - Feedback from presenters on how well they felt the event ran for them.
- Diversity of participants: The majority of participants at the event have been female with no more than 2 males attending any event. Main street retailers had a tendency to send more than one staff member to attend. The business sectors were primarily retail however have included some service industries (midwifery) and farming.

A keynote is the satisfaction of individuals post event. Engagement throughout the entirety of all sessions is a compliment to the presenters but also indicates that those attending are truly engaged with the topics. This suggests the event itself is being delivered at an appropriately high level in terms of quality. Improvement therefore needs to sit within the context of the greater market that the event sits within.

These workshops are part of Council's broader economic development focus on capacity building and long-term viability for Parkes' small business community. The program was funded as part of the CID Pilot Program facilitated by Transport for NSW.

## Brightening Our Brand

As part of the NSW Government's Community Improvement District (CID) Pilot Program, Council is progressing the *Light Up Parkes: Brightening Our Brand* initiative. A strategic branding and identity project focused on how the Parkes CBD, and by extension the broader Shire, is perceived and expressed.

This initiative goes far beyond designing a logo. While a logo might be the most visible output, it's only the tip of the iceberg. The real focus is on defining Parkes' identity. The tone, personality, and story that make the place recognisable and meaningful. A strong identity helps people understand what Parkes stands for, how it feels to be here, and why it matters. It's about capturing the spirit of the community, not just creating a graphic. By starting with people and their experiences, the

project aims to build a brand that reflects pride, creativity, and connection. Something that businesses, Council, and the community can all use to tell a shared story.

To illustrate the difference: think of Apple. The apple logo is iconic, but it's not what defines the brand. Apple's identity is expressed through its sleek product design, minimalist packaging, consistent use of colour and typography, and the intuitive experience of its stores and devices. That identity tells you what Apple stands for. Innovation, simplicity, and premium quality, even when the logo isn't present. In the same way, Parkes' identity will shape how we communicate, promote, and present ourselves across signage, events, business materials, and Council messaging. It's about creating a consistent personality, not just a consistent look.

To support this work, Council is engaging two key consultative groups:

1. **Councillor Workshop** – A one-off session scheduled for 2 December 2025, designed to capture councillor perspectives as elected representatives of the community. This workshop will focus on identity, what Parkes means and how it should be portrayed, and will provide foundational input into the branding process.
2. **Branding Reference Group** – A light-touch, strategic group that will help guide and test emerging ideas throughout the project. This group is not expected to undertake detailed work, but rather to provide high-level feedback, ensure alignment with local values, and help keep the project grounded in community experience. It will include representatives from Council staff, Councillors, CID (CBD) businesses, and this Committee, participating through one in-person workshop and short online check-ins.

At the time of the meeting an out-of-session communication will have been circulated to seek expressions of interest from Committee members who would like to be involved in the Branding Reference Group. This is a valuable opportunity to help shape how Parkes is represented, not just visually, but through the stories and tone that define our shared identity.

### Upcoming Projects and Activities

- *CBD Vibrancy Strategy* – Draft, review, and finalisation.

### LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

This update supports the Council's commitment to local economic development and aligns with Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) objectives.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil directly from this update.

### 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.

**7.2 LOCAL DESTINATION REPORT****IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Support our visitor economy through promotion of our Shire, supporting and delivering local events, and enabling the continuation of the iconic Elvis Festival.**Author:** **Lisa Moon, Tourism and Visitor Services Coordinator****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

That:

1. That Council note the updates provided in this report on current Tourism projects and activities.
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**BACKGROUND**

The Tourism team continues to deliver key projects aligned with the Parkes Destination Management Plan, focusing on enhancing the visitor experience, promoting the Shire as a destination, and supporting local business through tourism-driven initiatives.

**ISSUES AND COMMENTARY****Parkes Visitor Guide Redesign and Refresh**

Following the implementation of the new colour scheme as part of the Parkes Signage and Wayfinding Strategy, the long-awaited redesign and refresh of the Parkes Visitor Guide has now commenced after a three-year hiatus. Initial design work is underway, with the updated guide expected to be printed and distributed by early 2026. The refreshed guide will align visually with new town signage and branding, ensuring a consistent destination identity across all visitor touchpoints.

**Public Art Refresh – Woolworths Facade**

A refresh of the Sean Cassidy artworks located on the Woolworths building façade has recently been undertaken. The project includes a reskin of the existing panels and updated linkages to the interpretive videos that tell the story behind the artwork. This initiative contributes to the continued vibrancy of the CBD and enhances the public art trail experience for both residents and visitors.

**Destination Flags, Banners and Billboard Strategy**

Development of a coordinated strategy for the destination flags, banners, and the Parkes Gateway billboard is currently underway. The strategy aims to create a transparent and structured vision for promotional display assets across the CBD and key entry points. An audit of the CBD banner locations has been completed to ensure even visual distribution, and a rotational schedule has been implemented to provide balanced exposure for both tourism promotions and major event campaigns throughout the year.

**Visitor Centre Data**

Walk-in visitation to the Parkes Visitor Information Centre has shown only a minor decrease compared to the same period in 2024, indicating that the opening of the bypass has had limited impact on overall visitation. Encouragingly, merchandise sales and museum ticket entries have both increased during the past six months, demonstrating that visitors who do stop in Parkes are engaging more deeply with local attractions and experiences.

**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 minimal risks associated with the projects outlined in this report. Project management processes and internal collaboration ensure that design, production, and installation activities are delivered in accordance with Council's procurement and safety guidelines.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

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

**7.3 LOCAL EVENTS REPORT****IP&R Linkage:** **Pillar:** Economy**Goal:** Our Shire is an attractive destination to live, work, visit and invest.**Strategy:** Support our visitor economy through promotion of our Shire, supporting and delivering local events, and enabling the continuation of the iconic Elvis Festival.**Author:** **Brendan Shipley, Manager Events & Tourism****Authoriser:** **Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy****Annexures:** **Nil**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

That the committee review the update on the festival's status below as a Major Event for the shire and make any further recommendations on additional avenues of support

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**BACKGROUND**

The Parkes Elvis Festival 2026 is a major cultural celebration that honours Elvis Presley's legacy while delivering substantial economic and community benefits to the region. Drawing thousands of visitors annually, the festival boosts local tourism and business activity through a diverse program of performances, competitions, workshops, and community events. Its success relies on strong stakeholder engagement, including sponsors, local businesses, artists, and government bodies, alongside a strategic marketing plan aimed at maximising audience reach through digital and media channels.

Operational excellence is central to the festival's delivery, encompassing logistics, venue management, licensing, and risk mitigation. Coordinated event execution ensures smooth scheduling and staffing, while post-event evaluation provides insights for future improvements. Key outcomes include a vibrant and inclusive program, secured partnerships, effective marketing, and a comprehensive post-event report. The festival not only enhances regional tourism and economic growth but also strengthens cultural identity and community spirit. A wide network of stakeholders from volunteers, council staff and attendees plays a vital role in shaping the festival's enduring success.

**ISSUES AND COMMENTARY**

The planning for the Parkes Elvis Festival is now entering a critical phase, with key decisions and coordination efforts ramping up to ensure the event's success. With the 2025 theme "Love Me Tender" guiding the creative direction, organizers are finalizing programming, locking in final performers, and coordinating logistics across accommodation, transport, and infrastructure. This stage is pivotal: vendor contracts, marketing campaigns, and community engagement strategies must be confirmed to meet production timelines and regulatory requirements.

Stakeholder collaboration is essential right now. Local businesses, volunteers, emergency services, and tourism operators are being engaged to align on responsibilities and expectations. Infrastructure planning such as traffic flow, crowd control, and accessibility requires detailed mapping and contingency planning, especially given the anticipated surge in attendance. Promotional materials and media outreach are also being developed to maximize visibility and ticket sales.

With only weeks remaining before final approvals and rollout, any delays or missteps could impact the festival's delivery. This is the moment for decisive action, clear communication, and proactive problem-solving to ensure Parkes is ready to welcome thousands of Elvis fans with the charm, safety, and spectacle they've come to expect.

Regarding the ABBA Festival, the Events team are in discussions with a proponent who is proposing to hold an event in 2026 with the assistance of Council through its grants program.

#### **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 community consultation requirements for Council associated with this report

#### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

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

**7.4 ENERGISE PARKES SHIRE****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 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.

**BACKGROUND**

At the June 2025 Committee meeting, members held an open discussion on the potential revitalisation of the "Shop Parkes" initiative, focusing on how to make Parkes a more vibrant and shoppable destination. The conversation explored a range of possible components, including the Why Leave Town gift card program, a digital presence, event-based retail experiences, ownership and coordination models, and ways to address empty shopfronts.

This project has been named "Energise Parkes Shire" as the discussed initiatives extend beyond purchasing.

**ISSUES AND COMMENTARY****Where We Left Off:**

- General agreement that Parkes needs a more coordinated, visible approach to supporting local businesses.
- Interest in reactivating elements of the Why Leave Town gift card, but uncertainty around who should lead and how it fits into a broader strategy.
- Recognition that a simple relaunch of existing tools (e.g. Facebook page, gift card) may not be sufficient to change consumer behaviour or improve business engagement.
- Acknowledgement of the importance of experience-driven shopping and events to encourage foot traffic.

The project can be broken into multiple distinct categories.

## 1. Facebook ShopParkes Page

Council has reviewed the previously developed digital playbook that was referenced at the previous meeting. Key observations include:

- The playbook is now over five years old (originally drafted eight years ago) and predates current legal frameworks around account holder responsibility and comment moderation.
- It outlines best-practice components for developing a digital marketing strategy, beginning with establishing clear goals.
- While it notes the importance of posting frequency, it does not consider the resource requirements for sustained engagement or skills required to maintain a coherent brand.
- Encourages the use of processes which are outdated and no longer reflects current algorithm optimisation strategies.
- The document does not include practical templates, workflows, or examples of content development.
- Relies on workload being done by non-specific individuals on top of established workloads as opposed to dedicated and skilled individuals.

The playbook remains a useful foundation for shared understanding but does not resolve current resourcing, strategic, or procedural concerns.

The current status is the reactivation of the Shop Parkes Facebook page remains under consideration. Key constraints include:

- Lack of clear, measurable goals that align with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.
- Limited resources and potentially skills to sustain high-quality, ongoing content generation and moderation.
- Uncertainty about the long-term viability and value of reactivating the page without strong business ownership or engagement.

## 2. Gift Card Program

Council has reviewed and updated the Shop Parkes Gift Card program listing on the *Visit Parkes Region* website to ensure it reflects current participating businesses. The program remains active and in circulation, but future promotional direction will depend on broader revitalisation discussions.

## 3. Empty Shopfronts

A report has been submitted to Council recommending a trial activation of empty shopfronts using visual treatments to improve main street appearance. Two distinct concepts have been proposed, both intended to:

- Enhance aesthetic appeal and reduce visual clutter caused by vacant shops.
- Test public appetite and the effectiveness of temporary treatments in improving perception.

This proposal has been approved. The trial will include feedback mechanisms to assess impact and inform further activation efforts.

## 4. Collaboration Group

Council has explored the potential use of CID Pilot Program funding to support a larger networking-style event aimed at building collaboration between local businesses, the Parkes Business Chamber, and Council.

This initiative could be supported under the CID objectives, provided that:

- It fosters stronger engagement across the business community and other stakeholders;
- It works toward the formation of an independent working group with a mandate to coordinate initiatives such as ShopParkes social media pages;
- It is business-led.

## **5. Retail Experience and Activation**

Improving the in-store and main street experience has emerged as a key theme from the CBD Vibrancy Strategy engagement, with feedback highlighting that people shop not just for goods but for the experience of being in an active, vibrant place.

Some businesses already participate in activations, particularly around large events, while others may not see the value or have capacity to do so. This raises the core question: how do we make activations, events, and retail experiences sustainable and worth investing in for businesses?

Topics for discussion might include:

- What kinds of experiences draw people into shops beyond regular trading?
- Are there seasonal or themed opportunities we could explore together?
- What would make participation easier or more worthwhile for businesses?
- How does the increase in foot traffic translate to sales for all business types?

## **6. Supporting Both Pedestrian Experience and Vehicle Access**

Initial feedback from the CBD Vibrancy Strategy engagement highlighted two distinct experiences that people value in our CBD:

- The desire for a vibrant, walkable environment that invites people to explore the area on foot; and
- The importance of convenient vehicle access, allowing customers to park close to their destination and complete their shopping with ease.

Rather than viewing these as competing needs, there is an opportunity to explore how both can be supported through thoughtful design, planning, and coordination.

How might we create a CBD environment that embraces both experiences, one that welcomes those who want to stay and stroll, as well as those who want to arrive, shop, and go with ease?

**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 risk implications for Council associated with this report.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

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

## **8 REPORT OF CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTIONS**

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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.

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