

LEEP ACTION PLAN 2025/2026

Lithgow Emerging
Economy Plan
(LEEP)

November 2024



'An inspiring vision for Lithgow's future leverages the city's unique competitive advantages including natural resource endowments, pivotal location, transport and energy distribution infrastructure, a solid base of the right sort of human capital and know-how to support growth opportunities in a range of industries.'

Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First People of the Lithgow Local Government Area, the Wiradjuri Nation and its Elders past, present and emerging – the traditional owners and custodians of the lands where we work and live. We recognise the task they have in the protection and healing of Country throughout the transition process. We also extend our respect to our neighbouring Gundungarra and Darug Nations.

LEEP Action Plan 2025/2026

November 2024

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Future Jobs and Investment Committee

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Terms and Abbreviations

Act

The Regional Jobs and Investment Act 2023

Council

Lithgow City Council

DPIRD

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

FJIC

The Lithgow Future Jobs and Investment Committee

LEEP Report

The Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan Transition Report 2023

LGA

The Lithgow Local Government Area

Minister

The Minister for Natural Resources

STEAM

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics education

TAFE

The Institute of Technical and Further Education

VET

Vocational Education and Training

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MAYOR'S FOREWORD

The Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan (LEEP) Transition Report explores opportunities to reinvent and reinvigorate the Lithgow LGA's economy as the Australian energy sector transitions to Net Zero. This document outlines the actions we will take to progress the recommendations of the LEEP Report from January 2025 to June 2026.



Many in our community will already be aware that Lithgow City Council has resolved to be a leading actor with other key partners and actors in the regional economic transition by raising and allocating \$1.1m each year to economic transition management.

This is a significant investment for our Council. It reflects the community's genuine concern about the looming economic transition, and desire to take action to prepare for the transition now.

In March last year, the NSW Government announced it would establish future jobs and investment authorities in regions like Lithgow that are experiencing the prospect of future economic challenges.



Right: The Lost City, Newnes Plateau

Far right: Lithgow City Council offices and Lithgow town centre

To manage the coordination of LEEP implementation efforts until the NSW Government's Authority is operational, Lithgow City Council has established a Lithgow Jobs and Investment Committee under the provisions of s355(b) of the Local Government Act 1993. The FJIC has invited participation from key LEEP strategic partners including the Net Zero Economy Agency, the NSW Government, the Mining and Energy Union, Centennial Coal, Energy Australia, and the university sector.

The FJIC will be supported by working groups and networks which will support the delivery of specific elements of the LEEP Action Plan including the Adaptive Skills Network, Planning and Industry Precincts Working Group, and Transport and Logistics Working Group. This Action Plan makes for provision for additional networks around community engagement, health and aged care, and place-making. Plans for continued engagement around the LEEP Transition process, including with the community, are outlined in the LEEP Engagement Plan which can be viewed on the LEEP website – www.leep.lithgow.com.

A major achievement for LEEP this year is the successful bid for \$830,000 in grant funding from the National Priority Fund, for the establishment of a Central West Adaptive Skills Hub. The Adaptive Skills Hub pilot program will



coordinate science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) teaching support, workforce planning, and micro-credentialing to enable skills training in topics to support the transition to Net Zero, and a maker-space and mobile STEAM laboratory and technology library.

On behalf of Lithgow City Council, I thank the Lithgow community and our key strategic partners: the Commonwealth and NSW governments, the local university sector, the Mining and Energy Union, Centennial Coal, and Energy Australia.

Working together, we will secure a strong future for the Lithgow region.

Cr Cassandra Coleman
Mayor of Lithgow

Functions of the Future Jobs and Investment Committee

The function of the Committee is to advise the community's key transitions management actors (The Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Net Zero Economy Agency, the State Government, Council, the local university sector, Centennial Coal, Energy Australia and the Mining and Energy Union) on:

- the consequences and opportunities associated with changes to coal mining and coal-fired power generation in the Lithgow LGA particularly in relation to the impact on employment and economic activity.
- the prioritisation of initiatives which support alternative land uses of coal mining and coal-fired power generation sites.
- the prioritisation of initiatives which support the economic resilience of the Lithgow LGA by facilitated investment in alternative industries.
- the prioritisation of initiatives which support the re-deployment, re-skilling, and adaptive capacity of the workforce in the Lithgow LGA.
- the priority of such other initiatives which may contribute to the successful transition of the Lithgow LGA, and
- to provide a forum to discuss the collaborative implementation of actions.

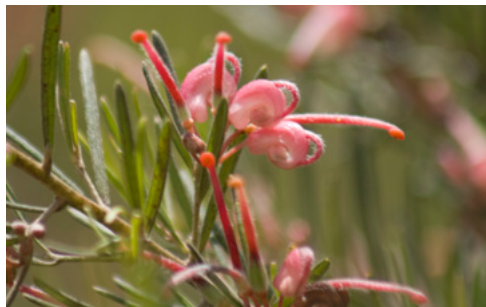
GOVERNANCE

LEEP’s primary focus is on facilitating the delivery of the short, medium and long-term actions contained in the LEEP Report. Our year-to-year work is contained in our annual Action Plan.

Council provides to LEEP operational funding each year. These funds meet the day-to-day expenses of implementing the LEEP Action Plan and the delivery of its core reporting and other functions.

The Future Jobs and Investment Committee is the governing body for the LEEP implementation, supported by other working groups, including:

- **Adaptive Skills Network** – makes recommendations for the prioritisation of initiatives which support the re-deployment, re-skilling, and adaptive capacity of the workforce in the Lithgow LGA.
- **Land Use Planning and Industry Precincts Working Group** – makes recommendations for the prioritisation of initiatives which support alternative land uses of coal mining and coal-fired power generation sites in the Lithgow LGA. Makes recommendations in relation to land use planning, precinct planning, industry clusters and associated infrastructure and services which may contribute to the successful transition of the Lithgow LGA.



- **Transport and Logistics Working Group** – Progress consultations with the NSW Government’s Transport Working Group and Council on opportunities for green hydrogen and rail fleet electrification, rail fleet conversion and manufacturing, and logistics, including consideration of infrastructure and land-use needs.
- **Engagement and Communications Network** (from January 2025) – an avenue for LEEP Delivery Partners to collaborate on communication and engagement initiatives.
- **The ‘Heart of Lithgow’ Place-makers Network** (from July 2025) – an active group focused on community-led projects that let residents and small businesses help shape and improve Lithgow’s shared spaces (staged approach). The Network will encourage local ideas, support public space projects, and build a sense of ownership in public areas.
- **Health and Ageing Network** (from July 2025) – to investigate, support and foster growth in the health and ageing sector by developing a precinct plan to catalyse and consolidate an industry around innovation in health and ageing in Lithgow.

These working groups have been identified and prioritised as an effective method to engage and activate key transition stakeholders (key transitions management collaborators and transitions management delivery partners) in an effective and efficient way.

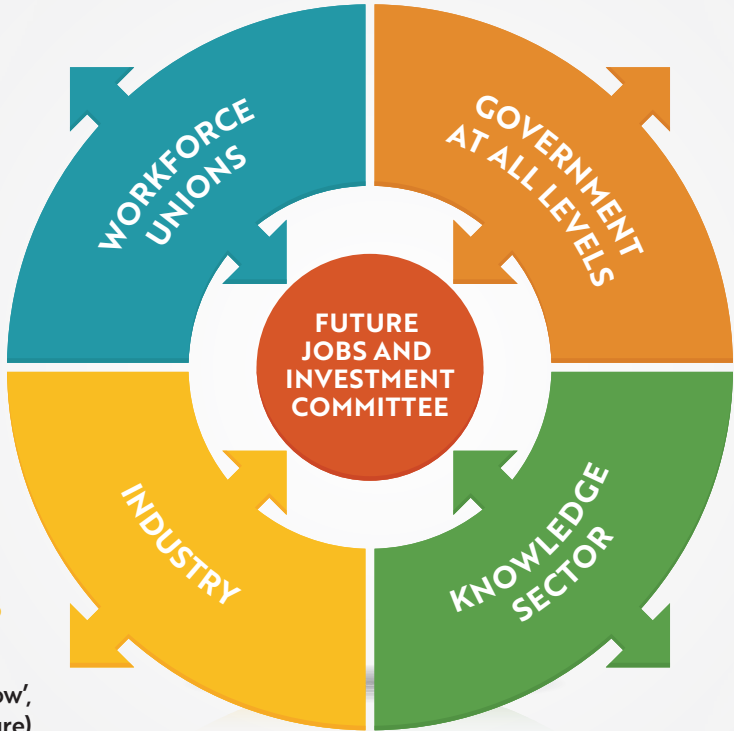
LEEP GOVERNANCE MODEL

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Preparing Workforces for Change
- Delivery of Impacted Workforce and Whole-of-Family Support Programs

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Strategic and Financial Resourcing
- Land Use Planning
- Workforce Planning
- Infrastructure Planning
- Investment Attraction



KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Repurposing Assets (Land, Water, 'Know-How', built/other Infrastructure)
- Identifying Investment Opportunities
- Supporting Supply Chains
- Commercialising Innovation

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Leading Practice
- Training a Resilient Future Workforce
- Innovation

ENGAGEMENT

Because the LEEP affects the entire Lithgow LGA, wider community engagement and involvement is vital to ensure the community has opportunity to input to the LEEP program of work. This will be achieved through an annual community workshop, as well as regular engagement events and consultation opportunities.

We know that transitions are likely to be more successful where there is close cooperation between all levels of government, impacted industry and workforces, knowledge providers, and the community. Engagement for LEEP is therefore about fostering a shared vision, collaboration, recruiting local, willing actors, identifying opportunities for co-action of initiatives, and using existing resources cooperatively to implement priority actions effectively.

We have outlined our engagement approach in the LEEP Engagement Plan, which is available on the LEEP website.



Engagement for LEEP is therefore about fostering a shared vision, collaboration, recruiting local, willing actors, identifying opportunities for co-action of initiatives.



Image by Logan Spice Photography

Community consultation – what we’ve heard so far...

Feedback received so far indicates a collective desire for a balanced approach to development that prioritises community involvement, environmental sustainability, economic diversification, and robust governance in Lithgow’s future planning:

1. **Community and Inclusivity** – Emphasis on the compassionate and welcoming nature of Lithgow’s community, with a focus on engaging residents in decision-making processes that are transparent and inclusive.
2. **Innovation and Economic Diversification** – Support for development, alongside a call for economic diversification beyond coal-based industries, particularly into renewable energy sectors.
3. **Urgency in Implementation** – A call for quicker action in the initial phases of the LEEP project, stressing that plans must translate into tangible results in a timely manner.
4. **Sustainability and Environmental Concerns** – Strong advocacy for preserving the environment, including the protection of natural habitats and Aboriginal heritage sites, alongside suggestions for eco-friendly tourism and conservation initiatives.
5. **Governance and Accountability** – Criticism of the lack of defined governance structures and clear accountability in planning processes. Calls for action within a 3 year, rather than a 5- or 10-year timeframe.
6. **Educational Infrastructure and Skills Development** – Acknowledgment of deficiencies in educational pathways and the need for skill development to align with emerging industries, especially in renewable energy.
7. **Tourism and Recreation** – Emphasis on leveraging natural beauty for tourism, including birdwatching, sports recreation and eco-tourism, while ensuring that tourism does not harm the environment.
8. **Aged Care and Employment Opportunities** – Recognition of aged care as a significant employer, with potential for expanding high-quality, affordable services.

Above: The Zig Zag Railway

This Action Plan 2025-2026 has been developed with this feedback in mind. You can give additional feedback via the LEEP website – www.leep.lithgow.com.

OUR ECONOMY AND EMERGING ECONOMY

The Lithgow LGA is the gateway from Sydney to the Central West and Orana region of New South Wales. Home to 21,500 people in 2020, and an estimated 20,724 today, Lithgow sits about 140km west of Sydney and includes the strategic centre of Lithgow, the towns of Portland and Wallerawang, communities across the Lithgow LGA, and large areas of National Parks and State Forests, including the Wollemi and Marrangaroo national parks, and Newnes State Forest.



Right: Portland Foundations silo murals by artist Guido Van Helten

Centre: Dry Canyon, Wollemi National Park



Since the late 1860s, Lithgow has been a centre for coal mining and, subsequently, coal-fired power generation, and has a long and rich history as a centre for industrial innovation and development. Mining and electricity generation remain pivotal to the local economy and identity, alongside public administration, health care and social services, and advanced manufacturing.

The Lithgow region supplies the equivalent of 15 per cent of New South Wales's power demand and is an important supplier of coal, mining expertise and manufactured product.

The local coal industry provides well-paid jobs and a significant contribution to the area's GRP, and although on current estimates local mine reserves have a 20-year horizon, the future of the industry is driven by costs, regulation, international commitments, and market needs.

Coal mining and coal-fired power generation represent a cornerstone industrial activity for the City of Lithgow, one that shaped the community itself. People are understandably apprehensive for the future of the City.

In the context of the global energy transition and a more diversified energy mix, Lithgow has potential to become a leading example of successful economic transformation, and capture advantages from new energy technologies. An inspiring vision for Lithgow's future leverages the city's unique competitive advantages including natural resource endowments, pivotal location, transport and energy distribution infrastructure, a solid base of the right sort of human capital and know-how to support growth opportunities in a range of industries. Some of these advantages are already leveraging a pipeline of investment in new energy technology, tourism and manufacturing.

OUR ECONOMY

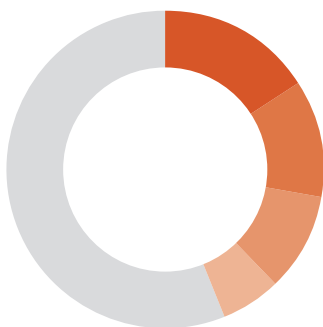
Current assets



- 01 Airlie Mine**
Centennial Coal (operational)
- 02 Springvale Mine**
Centennial Coal (operational)
- 03 Clarence Mine**
Centennial Coal (operational)
- 04 Baal Bone Mine**
Glencore (care & maintenance)
- 05 Invincible Mine**
Castlreagh Coal (care & maintenance)
- 06 Angus Place Mine**
Centennial Coal (care & maintenance)



- 07 Mount Piper Power Station**
- 08 Old Wallerawang Power Station redevelopment**



Other key industry sectors

- Public administration and safety
- Health care and social assistance
- Manufacturing
- Accommodation and food services

Lithgow has been a centre for coal mining and, subsequently, coal-fired power generation, and has a long and rich history as a centre for industrial innovation and development. Mining and electricity generation remain pivotal to the local economy.

OUR EMERGING ECONOMY

Potential assets



09 Wind Turbines
2.5GW



10 Wallerawang 9 Battery
500MW/1,000MWh energy storage

11 Great Western Battery
500MW/1,000MWh energy storage

12 Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Scheme
335MW energy storage

Infrastructure

- **Great Western Highway Upgrade**
- **New 330kV Transmission Line**
Linking the Mount Piper substation to the Wallerawang substation
- **Clarence to Wallerawang Pipeline Project**
Connecting Clarence Colliery to a new water treatment plant at Wallerawang



Portland Foundations
9ha redevelopment

Old Wallerawang Power Station redevelopment
449ha redevelopment

Marrangaroo Urban release area
340ha development (growth)

Gardens of Stone State Conservation area
\$50M development



Growth of other key industry sectors

- Public administration and safety
- Health care and social assistance
- Manufacturing
- Accommodation and food services

In the context of the global energy transition and a more diversified energy mix, Lithgow has potential to become a leading example of successful economic diversification, and capture advantages from new energy technologies.

OUR PLAN

The LEEP Report 2023 informs the NSW Government and other key stakeholders on the priorities and activities most likely to place the local economy in the best position for the future. It sets out 68 actions of which 40 are identified for delivery in the near future.

The Report was built up from an analysis of the existing economy, relative strengths and opportunities, and consultation with key economic actors including industry, workforce unions, the knowledge sector and government at all levels.

The Report underwent a period of community consultation which included engagement with individuals, community groups, peak organisations, employers, industry groups, unions, Traditional Owners, professional bodies, education and training providers and others. Their stories, knowledge and expertise have resulted in the vision, priorities and guiding principles set out in the Transition Plan.

To deliver on the feedback that we've received to date, we identify the following priorities for the LEEP Action Plan:

- A coordinated approach between all levels of government in partnership with industry, workers, the knowledge sector, and communities.
- Maximising opportunities for well-paid, good quality jobs across the region that create a lifestyle that people value and encourages existing and new residents to live, learn and work in Lithgow.

- Investing in Lithgow's future workforce with a deepening and broadening of skills, innovation, and creativity. Enhancing the adaptive capacity of the workforce by improving access to high quality STEAM learning and supporting strong STEAM learning outcomes in our local schools.
- Building on regional strengths and facilitating regional industry clusters to support opportunities for economic diversification while positioning Lithgow as a leader in new and emerging industries.
- Maintaining and enhancing the liveability of the region including increased investment in tourism, health, aged care, childcare, and artistic, cultural, recreation and leisure opportunities.
- Supporting and accelerating start-ups and small businesses within the region by providing access to shared networks and resources including in prototyping and other innovative processes, access to capital, and shared marketing of our region.

For more information about the prioritisation of actions, please see the *Action Plan Prioritisation Paper* on the LEEP website – www.leep.lithgow.com/transition-plan.

The LEEP Report was built up from an analysis of the existing economy, relative strengths and opportunities, and consultation with key economic actors.

OUR PLAN BY KEY FOCUS AREAS

PART A

Governance



PART B

Engagement



PART C

Precincts, Strategic Planning and Investment Attraction



PART D

An Innovative, Agile and Skilled Workforce



PART A

GOVERNANCE



Leading practice and community feedback points to the need for a coordinated approach between all levels of government in partnership with industry, workers, the knowledge sector, and communities to drive investment and jobs.



Some of this important co-ordinating work identified by the LEEP Transition Plan has already been completed by the establishment of the Future Jobs and Investment Committee and associated working groups.

Additional coordinating work is underway in the establishment of participatory and feedback mechanisms for ensuring the LEEP goals remain aligned with the community's vision.

The LEEP Report identifies several further strategic and governance initiatives which will strengthen a coordinated approach, build upon our underlying relative advantages in infrastructure and as a pivotal location in Australia's energy and transport system.

Key actions for driving these underlying frameworks are set out in the following table.

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action
1	Following release of the NSW Government's response to its Future Jobs and Investment Authority White Paper, review the governance vehicle for collaboratively managing the regional transitions management initiative including actions arising from this Action Plan.	7.6 (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Collaborate with NSW Resources (FJIA) on its proposed Central West Jobs and Investment Authority Team to ensure the governance structure reflects leading practice. (b) Provide secretariat support to the interim governance vehicle in its functions. (c) Finalise Annual Action Plan.
2	Continue to support the establishment of formal mechanisms for collaboration between the LEEP partners, key actors and others for the regional transitions management initiative.	7.6 (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Continue to build the database of all transition management partners, key actors, and committed stakeholders. (b) Seek to enter memoranda of understanding with each of the LEEP partners and others. (c) Develop additional working and networking groups for Engagement and Communications Network (from January 2025), the 'Heart of Lithgow' Place Network (from July 2025), Health and Ageing Network (from July 2025).
3	Public reporting and accountability framework (monitoring)	7.6 (1)(h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Develop metrics for assessing the effectiveness and progress of the transitions management initiatives and, where possible, establish a baseline for the metrics. (b) Prepare a regular report on the key progress of the transitions management initiative to all LEEP partners and key actors. For Council, this should include reports to Council's Economic Development Committee. (c) Prepare annual reports on the activities of the interim governance vehicle and the transitions management initiatives.

PART B

ENGAGEMENT

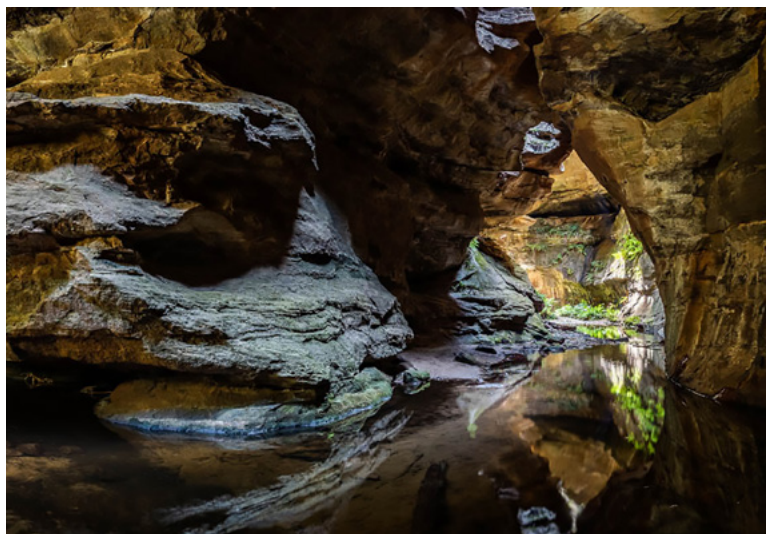


Leading practice points to the importance of a shared place-based vision in any economic and social change process. Part of the important work of the LEEP implementation is to ensure that this Plan is, first and foremost the community’s plan, and embraces the support of as many of the region’s people as possible.

Leading practice also points to respecting and recognising the importance of industries that are less significant in the economy and their workforces and the enormous contributions those industries continue to make to an evolving community identity and heritage.

First Peoples communities have a special and significant task in overseeing the protection and healing of Country throughout a transition process.

Below: Dry Canyon, Wollemi National Park



Engagement is critical to LEEP because we want to harness the expertise and insights of the community and organisations to help shape a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future for Lithgow. As such, our engagement is focused on:

- ensuring that those directly and indirectly impacted by the Lithgow economic transition have a fair opportunity to engage and shape the LEEP process, and
- maximising collaboration with people and organisations who have interest and capacity to contribute to the LEEP tasks.

Importantly, any plan must endeavour to leave no one behind – improving outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability, including health and wellbeing, and community and economic participation.

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action
4	Develop an engagement plan for on-going consultation with individuals, community groups, peak organisations, employers, industry groups, unions, Traditional Owners, professional bodies, education and training providers and others. Ensure that the consultation provides for periodic refresh and continuous improvement of the vision statement.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Finalise an engagement plan consistent with the IAP2 framework. (b) Host regular collaboration network functions each year. (c) Provide regular e-Newsletters and share Working Group Meeting minutes on the LEEP website for transparency. (d) Position Lithgow as a thought leader by hosting a Coal Communities in Transition Conference, inviting transitions management actors from the four future jobs and investment authority regions and others.
5	Develop a protocol for engaging with First Peoples communities to recognise the task they have in overseeing the protection and healing of Country throughout the transition process; while ensuring the education, economic and lifestyle inclusion of the region's First Peoples.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Prepare a survey of potential engagement options from, amongst other sources, teachings from the Latrobe Valley Authority experience. (b) Collaborate with First Peoples communities in the LGA to create a shared engagement protocol authorised by the interim governance vehicle, Council, the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council, and local First Nations organisations.
6	Develop a community portal for sharing success stories achieved by transition actors across the region.	7.1 (l)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Establish social media channels to share information locally (Facebook) and outside the LGA (LinkedIn, YouTube). These are to complement regular e-newsletters, events, annual reports, the website, and printed materials (posters, flyers) to share LEEP activities, stories and updates. (b) Create an explainer video about the LEEP program to broaden reach and simplify messaging. Follow up with videos from key actors sharing updates.

PART C

PRECINCTS, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INVESTMENT ATTRACTION



Given the size of the economic contribution from mining and energy production, aggressive but realistic growth will be required to offset any future impacts on economic activity.

Economic development efforts are prioritised to attract investment into industries that can absorb capital and grow at an inorganic rate to offset any decline in contribution from coal mining and coal-fired power generation. Not all industries have capacity for rapid growth.

For example, it takes time to attract and deploy capital across industries with low asset concentrations, because many transactions are required across the industry to deploy capital. Services industries (with low asset intensity) also take time to attract, train and deploy human capital at scale.

The LEEP Report identifies new energy generation and storage, manufacturing, public safety and administration, health care and social assistance, and tourism as industries which should be prioritised for economic development efforts. The key actions for these economic development efforts are set out in the following table.



Economic development efforts are prioritised to attract investment into industries that can absorb capital and grow at an inorganic rate.

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action
7	Progress consultations with the NSW Government's Transport Working Group and Council on opportunities for green hydrogen and rail fleet electrification, rail fleet conversion and manufacturing, and logistics, including consideration of infrastructure and land-use needs.	7.4 (6) 7.2 (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Collaborate with the coal mining, power generation, and gas network providers and other key stakeholders in the development of an options report for accelerating and scaling opportunities associated with green hydrogen, rail fleet electrification, rail and heavy transport intermodals, fleet conversion and manufacturing, and allied industries. in the LGA. (b) Collaborate with the NSW Regional Economic Development Team, Transport Working Group and other key stakeholders to progress economically viable options. (c) Explore options for increased infrastructure investment to support transport and logistics, for example, GWH and Bells Line Expressway improvement works. Collaborate with the NSW RNEW Program Team on the development of the 10-year investment pipeline and strategic plan for rail infrastructure in regional NSW and the Central West Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans.. (d) Progress hub masterplans to support outcomes from (a), (b) and (c) of this Plan. (e) Where applicable, progress site approvals and works necessary to bring identified sites to market. (f) Lodge grant applications under relevant programs to support the outcome in (e). Support community grant submissions for aligned projects.

8	Progress a defence and precision manufacturing hub.	7.1 (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Collaborate with the local defence manufacturing sector, government and other key stakeholders to accelerate and scale opportunities associated with defence manufacturing. (b) Collaborate with the NSW Regional Economic Development Team and other key stakeholders to progress economically viable options. (c) Progress hub masterplans to support outcomes from (a) and (b) of this Plan. (d) Where applicable, progress site approvals and works necessary to bring identified sites to market. (e) Lodge grant applications under the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund (or successor program), the Commonwealth's Regional Precincts Partnerships Program (or successor program) to support the outcome in (d).
9	Progress an adventure and eco-tourism hub.	7.2 (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Collaborate with the local tourism sector, government and other key stakeholders to accelerate and scale opportunities associated with adventure and eco-tourism. (b) Collaborate with the NSW Regional Economic Development Team and other key stakeholders to progress economically viable options. (c) Progress hub masterplans to support outcomes from (a) and (b) of this Plan. (d) Where applicable, progress site approvals and works necessary to bring identified sites to market. (e) Lodge grant applications under the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund (or successor program), the Commonwealth's Regional Precincts Partnerships Program (or successor program) to support the outcome in (d).
10	Progress a health, ageing and innovation hub.	7.3 (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Develop a Lithgow Health, Ageing and Innovation Precinct Masterplan to investigate, support and foster growth in the health and ageing sector and, particularly, delivery of expanded and ongoing services outlined in the NBMLHD Health Services Plan 2023-2028. (b) Develop an infrastructure plan, including consideration of staff accommodation for VMOs and nursing staff, students and interns. (c) Undertake regular advocacy and engagement with NSW Health in delivery of outcomes (a) and (b).

11	Review existing employment land zonings and potential candidate sites to ensure suitability of supply in consideration of likely demand, serviceability, infrastructure re-use, co-location and supply chain value capture, environmental and community factors and constraints.	7.1 (2)	(a) Collaborate with Council's People and Places Department to finalise an Employment Land Strategy which includes short-, medium and long-term strategies to bring economically viable employment lands online throughout the Lithgow region..
12	Incorporate key actions of the City's Integrated Water Management Plan, focusing on projects to support water-intensive industries in Lithgow.	7.7 (4)	(a) Collaborate with Council's Water, Waste, and Wastewater Department to develop an expression of interest and prospectus around commercial opportunities arising from the proposed Clarence to Wallerawang water pipeline. (b) Collaborate with Council's Water, Waste, and Wastewater Department on tasks advancing the Clarence to Wallerawang water pipeline, as requested.
13	Engage the planning process to contribute economic development assessments for larger local planning applications.	N/A	(a) Provide written submissions assessing the economic impacts of significant planning applications.
14	Undertake precinct planning to repurpose the region's redundant mining and coal-based energy land and infrastructure to develop regional capabilities in renewable energy, circular economy processing, and clean manufacturing.	N/A	(a) Prepare and exhibit an expression of interest for a re-use strategic masterplan for a redundant mine or power station site. (b) Prepare procurement scope and documentation for a strategic re-use masterplan for a successful EOI bidder. (c) Collaborate with landowners to project manage the preparation of a re-use strategic masterplan.
15	Engage with Council's technical working group on waste management strategy.	N/A	(a) Attend scheduled meetings and provide advice as required.

PART D

AN INNOVATIVE, AGILE AND SKILLED WORKFORCE



A region’s people are its greatest resource. This maxim is becoming even more critical as regions increasingly rely on a highly skilled workforce to attract capital and build economic resilience.

Equipping our young people to ride the wave of the unpredictable changes they will experience over their working lives also relies fundamentally on giving the next generation of workers opportunities to develop the flexible, technical, real-world skills that are in demand from employers.

One concrete, evidence-based response within the control of regional leaders and communities is investment in accessible STEAM-focused technical education.

Creating opportunities for our young people to learn formal STEAM skills – and related creative, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills – is a practical investment in meeting employer needs, increasing attractiveness as a place to do business, and guiding young people to rewarding careers.

Workforce adaptability is also central to a region’s overall economic adaptive capacity and resilience – that is, the ability for a region to effectively respond to structural shifts in a region’s economy. Investment in STEAM learning is one of the best investments that can be made in that regard.



One concrete, evidence-based response within the control of regional leaders and communities is investment in accessible STEAM-focused technical education.

No.	Action	LEEP No.	Sub-Action
16	Establish pilot regional STEM Academy to foster STEAM and adaptive skills in the Lithgow LGA.	7.4 (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Undertake Science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) teaching support directly to primary and secondary schools in the Lithgow LGA. (b) Support local teaching staff to upskill and capacity build through skills extension and mentoring (c) Establish a pilot multi-purpose STEAM learning classroom at the Adaptive Skills Hub.
17	Develop shared protocols with each key industry business in the coal mining and coal-fired power sector with respect to managing significant workforce risks including notification, redundancy, redeployment, whole-of-family support and other leading practice initiatives.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Explore entering an MOU with Centennial Coal, Energy. (b) Explore entering an MOU with Energy Australia. (c) Explore entering an MOU with the Mining and Energy Union.
18	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to develop a regional workforce adaptive capacity plan.	7.4 (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Develop a regional workforce adaptive capacity plan.
19	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to develop a long-term regional education and training pathways plan.	7.4 (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Develop a long-term regional education and training pathways plan.

20	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to develop a workforce rapid response plan in the event of an unplanned closure of a major industry participant.	7.5 (1)	(a) Develop a regional workforce rapid response plan.
21	Collaborate with a range of stakeholders to conduct a regional manufacturing and industry, skills and training audit.	7.4 (2)	(a) Undertake a regional manufacturing an industry, skills and training audit.
22	Develop a capacity building and transitions management training plan across Council and community to build transitions management literacy and capacity to engage transitions management.	N/A	(a) Identify key participant cohorts and commensurate capacity building and transitions management training requirements. (b) Develop (or where applicable review and adjust existing content) and deliver short course and place-based training to meet the needs identified in (a).
23	Strengthen long-term professional capacity in the Council organisation by implementing a cadetship, internship and graduate program.	N/A	(a) Collaborate with Council's Human Resources Team to develop a cadetship, internship and graduate program which prioritises professional areas which have been difficult to adequately recruit to.
24	Support the location of a Regional University Study Hub in Lithgow to facilitate place-based higher education from a range of university providers.	N/A	(a) Collaborate with the university sector, local community actors and others to support the location of a Regional University Study Hub in Lithgow.
25	Engage with the Commonwealth Government and NSW Government to support workforce adaptive capacity in the Lithgow LGA.	7.4	(a) Lodge grant applications under the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund, the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund (or successor program), or other grant opportunities to support actions and outcome set out in Part D of this Plan.

HOW WE ARE FINANCED

LEEP will receive \$1.188m of operating funding from Council to meet the day-to-day running costs of LEEP and the delivery of its core reporting and other responsibilities as well as its planned operational activities for the year. This represents around one quarter of the estimated operational funds and around five percent of the project funding required for economic transitions management.

In our Federative system of government, the NSW Government has primary responsibility for delivering regional economic transition programs. The NSW Minns Government has “committed to supporting coal-producing communities in regional NSW to ensure they continue to grow and thrive as the demand for coal declines over time.” The NSW Government first committed to support coal-producing regions, like Lithgow, on 21 April 2021 when the then Treasurer, alongside the then Deputy Premier, said: “Hundreds of millions of dollars will be invested in [coal mining communities] over coming years to ensure jobs and investment in our vital regional areas”.

In relation to Lithgow, the NSW Minister for Natural Resources, the Hon Courtney Houssos, has said: “There is no doubt that we have a lot of work to do in the Central West because, specifically in relation to their mines, you would be aware that they have no access to export ports ... [t]here is a particular challenge in terms of the local employment needs for that particular region. Our future jobs and investment authority for the Central West will be clearly focused around those challenges”.

Despite all these commitments over the last four years, no substantive funding has flowed to Lithgow from successive NSW governments. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that the NSW Government will at some point walk the transitions management path with the Lithgow community.

The Commonwealth Government has provided the LEEP initiative \$830,000 to implement a STEAM uplift and support program in all the schools of the Lithgow Local Government Area. This funding, which has been matched with \$250,000 of Council funding, will pilot a program designed to improve the adaptive capacity and critical emerging industry skills of our community’s future workforce. \$373,000 of that funding is anticipated to be expended in the 2025 -2026 financial year.

Council continues to apply for NSW Government and Commonwealth Government grants to undertake the priority actions of the NSW Government’s LEEP Report.

BUDGET – LEEP

Income	Actuals/Budget 2024/2025	Budget 2025/2026
SRV Transitions Management	\$1,141,400.00	\$1,187,926.74
Transfer from LEEP Reserve	\$291,054.00	\$7,911.00
Total Income	\$1,432,454.00	\$1,195,837.74
Expenditure		
Salaries and on-costs	\$449,749.70	\$490,049.48
Lease fees	\$34,000.00	\$35,700.00
Travel and accommodation	\$4,704.30	\$5,088.26
Employment Land Development	\$430,000.00	\$440,000.00
Residential Land Development	\$48,000.00	\$25,000.00
Strategic Land Use Planning	\$105,000.00	–
LEEP engagement and communications	\$50,000.00	\$65,000.00
Cadetship, Internship & Graduate Program	\$11,000.00	\$90,000.00
Capacity building and transitions management training	\$40,000.00	\$45,000.00
Halloween subsidy and branding strategy	\$260,000.00	–
Total Expenditure	\$1,432,454.00	\$1,195,837.74
Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00
Transfer to LEEP Reserve	\$-	\$-

BUDGET – Adaptive Skills Hub (LEEP)

Income	Actuals/Budget 2024/2025	Budget 2025/2026
Commonwealth Funding (Adaptive Skills Hub)	\$830,000.00	
Transfers from LEEP Reserve to Adaptive Skills Hub Project	\$250,000.00	\$-
	\$-	\$372,788.32
Total Income	\$1,080,000.00	\$372,788.32
Expenditure		
Salaries and on-costs	\$220,961.68	\$251,983.02
Adaptive Skills Hub (STEAM Project)	\$274,000.00	\$32,805.30
Adaptive Skills Hub (STEAM Project - teaching)	\$82,000.00	\$88,000.00
Adaptive Skills Hub (workforce planning)	\$130,250.00	\$-
Total Expenditure	\$707,211.68	\$ 372,788.32
Balance	\$372,788.32	\$0.00





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