

LEEP ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Lithgow Emerging
Economy Plan
(LEEP)

November 2024

This Engagement Plan identifies LEEP transition stakeholders and outlines a program to guide effective engagement with key stakeholders and the broader community in support of the delivery of the LEEP Action Plan.



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 Engagement Plan

November 2024

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Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan (LEEP)

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MAYOR'S FOREWORD

As we transition towards net zero, the next decade will see significant change in Australia's energy sector. For Lithgow, a region with an economy traditionally reliant on coal and coal-fired electricity production, the impact of this transition will be substantial.



The Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan Transition Report explores opportunities to reinvent and reinvigorate the Lithgow LGA's economy by developing new opportunities and attracting new investment to expand industries and businesses. This is a task that will require coordinated action from all three tiers of government, affected industries, and the Lithgow community.

Engagement is at the very heart of LEEP, as the transformation our community will experience will impact almost everyone in it. Participatory processes will shape the vision and implementation of the LEEP, which will evolve in line with community input and feedback.

An engaged community that has the knowledge and the ability to provide input to the LEEP implementation, will lead to better outcomes for everyone. This Engagement Plan has been designed with this in mind, containing mechanisms for capturing community expertise and insights, while building community resourcing and capacity.

This document identifies the LEEP stakeholders and outlines the activities and mechanisms that will be used to engage with each stakeholder group. It aligns with the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum model, while committing to inclusive participation across our community.

Engagement is something that will continue to evolve and we commit to continual improvement of our processes.

I am excited to undertake this journey with our LEEP Community as together we shape a prosperous and sustainable future for Lithgow.

Cr Cassandra Coleman
Mayor of Lithgow



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ABOUT LEEP

The next decade will see significant change in Australia's energy sector. The Australian Government has committed to reduce Australia's emissions by 43 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and to achieve net zero by 2050, in line with worldwide action to keep global warming as close to 1.5 degrees Celsius as possible as part of its Net Zero Plan. The NSW Government has been similarly ambitious, committing to reach net zero by 2030 Net Zero Plan Stage 1 2020-2030.

Nationally, development of renewable energy infrastructure is accelerating to progressively replace coal-fired power generation. The impact of the energy transition on Lithgow will be significant. Together, coal mining and electricity supply, including the local businesses that service them, contribute almost 43 per cent economy to the Lithgow economy and employ more than 16% of our workforce.

NSW Government commissioned the Lithgow Emerging Economy Transition Plan to help Lithgow plan a successful energy transition to become a modern, resilient economy with new job opportunities. Council has endorsed the Plan.

A copy of the Lithgow Emerging Economy Transition Plan can be found at the LEEP website: leep.lithgow.com/transition-plan.

The LEEP Report sets out the priorities and activities most likely to place the Lithgow economy in the best possible position to meet the challenges of the future due to the pending closures and scale-down of coal mining and coal-fired power in the LGA.

The LEEP Report was built-up from an assessment of the existing economy and likely future scenarios analysis. It includes a detailed assessment of the relative strengths and opportunities available to the economy

and included consultation with key local economic actors and the wider community – including industry, workforce unions, the knowledge sector and government at all levels. It has also included detailed economic analysis and research into lessons learned from communities around the world which have undergone transitions.

Developing new opportunities to balance the economic contribution that coal mining and coal-fired power generation brings to Lithgow is a challenging, yet exciting task that will require coordinated action from all three tiers of government. Work needs to begin now. The transition will require ambition, leadership and significant effort to attract new investment to expand industries and businesses, and create diverse, skilled jobs, including for young people and workers currently in the coal and energy sectors.

The program of work required to bring the vision of the Lithgow Emerging Economy Transition Plan to life is known as the Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan – LEEP.

Many of the LEEP Report actions are recommended for immediate implementation. This is because it will take some seven to ten years for the community to adequately prepare for the anticipated economic disruption.

In November 2023, Lithgow City Council endorsed an Interim LEEP Action Plan to ensure it was playing its part in the meaningful progress of the LEEP Report. An updated version of this Action Plan is available on the LEEP website.

One of the key recommendations of the Interim LEEP Action Plan was the formation of a governance vehicle for the LEEP implementation. Council has established a Future Jobs and Investment Committee to undertake that task until the establishment of the NSW Government's proposed Future Jobs and Investment Authority. Information about the Future Jobs and Investment Committee – including meeting minutes – can be found on the LEEP website: leep.lithgow.com.

Other working groups and networks being established include:

- Emerging Economy Committee (from January 2025)
- Transport and Logistics Working Group
- Land-use Planning and Industrial Precincts Working Group
- Adaptive Skills Network
- Engagement and Communications Network (from January 2025)
- The 'Heart of Lithgow' Place Network (from July 2025)
- Health and Ageing Network (from July 2025)



These groups have been identified and prioritised as an effective method to engage and activate key transition stakeholders in an effective and efficient way.

Additionally, 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.

Those who are affected by the LEEP are known as our transition stakeholders. This document identifies and outlines a program for engaging with the key LEEP transition stakeholders in support of the delivery of the LEEP Action Plan.

Below: Lake Wallace

Left: The old Wallerawang Power Station



THE LITHGOW LGA

Lithgow LGA is in a pivotal location in Australia's energy and transport system, the link between the fast-growing Western Sydney to our east and the broad Central West and Orana to the west. We are well positioned to take advantage of regional economic opportunities such as the new airport in Western Sydney, inland rail and the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. The area's rich natural, historical and cultural heritage, including seven National Parks and more than 400 declared Aboriginal sites, also provide opportunities for growth in tourism.



Right: The Main Street of Portland

Centre: The Lithgow rail yards

Far right: Zig Zag Railway viaduct views (image by Logan Spice Photography)



The majority of the LGA's resident population is located in the town of Lithgow, followed by Portland and Wallerawang. According to the 2011 Census, there were 20,161 people resident within the region. This figure increased to 21,090 in 2016, declined slightly to 20,842 in 2021, and is currently estimated at 20,724 (Profile ID, October 2024).

Lithgow's current employment is concentrated in Health Care and Social Assistance (14.2%), Mining (11.1%), and Public Administration and Safety (10.7%). A large proportion of the workforce in Lithgow reside and work in the LGA (76%). Lithgow workers have strong linkages with the Blue Mountains and Bathurst LGAs, with approximately 13% of the workforce travelling from those areas into Lithgow, while almost the same number of residents travel out to jobs in those LGAs.

The LEEP Report highlights that Lithgow has endowments that support new forms of energy production, transport and energy distribution infrastructure, and a solid base of the right sort of human capital and know-how to support growth opportunities in a range of industries.

The *Future Jobs and Investment Authority Issues Paper* (Department of Regional NSW, 2024) identifies Lithgow's place within the Central West coal mining region, which is home to 46,608 people and has a total economic output of \$11.5 billion: *'The Central West is a dynamic and well-connected region, which benefits from a skilled and diverse workforce, robust infrastructure, and rich natural resources. With its history of power generation, the Central West region is positioned as a potential hub for renewable energy industries, including pumped hydro, battery energy storage systems (BESS), solar energy. The Central West is experiencing growth across several industries, including advanced manufacturing, agrifood, defence, ag-tech, resources, logistics, tourism and health, and is primed for sustainable economic development and continued growth.'*

LEEP ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

At the core of LEEP and any successful economic transitions management is collaboration.

Although the State Government has primary responsibility for structural economic adjustments, it requires participation from actors and resources that reach beyond it, including:

- impacted coal mining and power generation businesses and unions working collaboratively to manage the impact on workers through whole-of-family support and adjustment programs, and worker transfer schemes, and on local supply chains,
- schools, the VET sector, universities, industry, business and government collaborating on building the regional workforce's adaptive capacity, training the workforce of the future and re-skilling and redeployment of workers in transitioning sectors,
- government, at all levels, attracting investment and supporting new industry growth with well-planned and sequenced infrastructure, and
- industry, knowledge providers and government collaboratively building a region-wide culture of innovation, investment, business acceleration and scaling.

LEEP requires broad 'buy-in' from local actors who share its ownership and ensure that sufficient resources, capabilities, and skills are coming together to undertake shared actions.

In the words of an often-quoted editorial about a town's future prosperity, it comes down to leadership:

'It's up to me...' you do not have to be elected to be a leader. You have to care to decide to do something and to enlist like-minded people in the doing... a spark of leadership by committed local people...

James Gannon (Ed.)
Des Moines Register, 1989

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.

OUR ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles for LEEP engagement are set out in the following table.

Guiding Principles

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Timeliness | We will work to ensure that stakeholders are engaged at the earliest possible stage. We will keep stakeholders informed and involved throughout the process. Sufficient time will be provided for participation by interested or affected stakeholders. |
| Respect | We will foster an environment of respect for ideas and commentary by contributors. We will facilitate a constructive civil dialogue that seeks to understand stakeholders' issues and aspirations, explore if and how differences can be addressed and needs met, and if this is not possible, clearly explain why. |
| Transparency | We will be honest and transparent in engagement processes. We will be clear on how inputs from the community will be considered and communicate how contributions have influenced decision-making. |
| Inclusiveness | We will seek to engage with the broadest section of those interested in or affected by the economic transition. We will adopt strategies to encourage and facilitate engagement with members of communities for whom barriers to participation exist (e.g. children, young people, Aboriginal people, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, older people, etc). |
| Continual Improvement | <p>We will undertake regular assessment of the effectiveness of the engagement and identify strengths and weaknesses in how efficiently and effectively the LEEP is being delivered.</p> <p>The outcomes of this assessment will be then used to refine the engagement plan to better serve stakeholders and the community.</p> |

LEEP ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

Lithgow Emerging Economy Transition Plan – initial consultation

The table below presents a list of the key stakeholders consulted during the development of the LEEP Transition Plan (2022-2023). This is not an exhaustive list of all stakeholders involved but provides an understanding of the extensive consultation undertaken.

- Lithgow District Chamber of Commerce
- Centennial Coal
- Energy Australia
- Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)
- Lithgow Community Power Project
- University of Western Sydney
- Lithgow Community Private Hospital
- NSW Health Nepean Blue Mountains Health District
- Nepean Blue Mountains Public Health Network / Wentworth Healthcare
- Treeview Estates retirement village
- Three Tree Lodge residential aged care
- Respect Cooina residential aged care
- University of Notre Dame (Healthcare)
- Thales
- Greenspot
- Ferrero Australia
- Nu-Rock
- Uni-lock
- MRA Consulting
- University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
- Lithgow Railway Workshop
- Transport for NSW
- Lithgow Visitor Information Centre
- Foundations Portland
- Gang Gang Gallery
- Regional NSW
- Lithgow City Council
- Hunter Jobs Alliance
- Queensland Dept of Tourism, Innovation and Sport

Right: Gardens of Stone National Park

Far right: Capertee Valley



Lithgow Emerging Economy Transition Plan – public exhibition

The LEEP Report was publicly exhibited on the LEEP website in June-July 2023, and presented at a public meeting on 22 June 2023. There were 14 submissions received about the LEEP Transition Plan document, providing valuable feedback which is being used to inform the LEEP Action Plan. The feedback indicated 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:

01

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.

02

Innovation and Economic Diversification

Support for development, alongside a call for economic diversification beyond coal-based industries, particularly into renewable energy sectors.

03

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.

04

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.

05

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.

06

Education 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.

07

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.

08

Aged Care and Employment Opportunities

Recognition of aged care as a significant employer, with potential for expanding high-quality, affordable services.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR



Lithgow is primed for opportunity

'The Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan document is addressing some important issues that will affect our community. I was particularly interested in the aged care aspect. I notice that that is a big employer, and feel that Lithgow is a very compassionate and inclusive community – this could be built upon.'

'Advanced manufacturing will be needed to for the renewable energy transition, production and recycling of batteries, recycling of solar PV panels and recycling of wind turbines. Lithgow could be well suited to attract and expand these industries, forming part of a larger, truly circular economy in Australia...'

'The opportunity offered by smart public spaces to use technology to improve the quality of life of Lithgow's communities... Excellent work is being done in this area by local government across the state, and it would be advisable to factor this into any placemaking activity in the region.'

'Lithgow has a huge railway area why not make a freight hub. ... Upgrade the forests, parks and lookouts in LGA. Encourage business. Show what's in Lithgow...'

'Enable a transition pathway for individuals with locally produced ideas and innovation or invention that can invigorate manufacturing and products of all kinds...'

'Health and aging are potential economic drivers for the region, they are also currently under considerable pressure to deliver services. This is an area that requires attention in the short term if people are to age well in the region, and the full economic potential of the market is to be realised.'



Education and targeted diversification are vital

'Skills and educational facilities are No 1... Educational infrastructure (non-school) in the LGA is poorly placed and has not progressed for many years. My view is that the skills base (and educational pathways) are perhaps the most important issues facing Lithgow's future. There needs to be a resurgence of educational facilities...'

'The biggest risk for us as a community is that as coal diminishes, where are those 300, 600, 800 jobs that were there, that have tapered away? We're not ready for that. We need to diversity early.'

'The goal is to make the city more skilled.'

'We will also want to reinforce education and TAFE, maybe expand those opportunities for our education base.'

'Upskilling the community to achieve a smarter, more resilient city.'

'Economic transition opportunities for diversification. Different types of businesses here so we can get skilled labour.'

'While we agree with the industries identified as potentially driving economic transition, we also suggest that horticulture and distribution/online fulfilment are considered as potential niche industries which would benefit from Lithgow's position as a transport hub and could attract investment and human capital to the region.'

'I do not subscribe to merely diversifying the economy for the sake of it. To really counter-balance the role of coal and allied industries, diversification must focus on sectors which can and will become leading players. Having 'anchor' industries and players is what is required.'



The time to act is NOW

'Tangible project results are needed sooner than the '0-5 years planning stage'. Chamber suggests that the LEEP project adopt a 0-3 year planning span to add some urgency.'

'I would contain everything in a 10-year cycle which will take us to 2033. If we are to start planning now (from early 2024), then I do believe the initial period should be reduced to 3 years.'

'To ensure that momentum on this important project is maintained, we recommend that considerable progress is required against all actions within three years.'



We need clear direction, governance and community involvement

'The plan lacks a clear pathway of governance, accountability and deliverable timelines... Rather – in this respect – it is a report calling for more study and reports. Lithgow does not have that kind of time. We need to proactively steer this transformation, or it will steer us...'

'The LEEP Documentation is primarily and 'Opportunity Map'. It is not a 'Plan' as the name implies. There are many ideas thrown into the document some of which would be great for the town and some of which will be very negative...'

'The ability of council to truly engage with community is essential to success... if the community does not support the way forward then it will fail.'

'Although I thought it to be a good vision it certainly didn't seem to be a plan. Who are the manufacturers you wish to entice? Who will introduce STEAM and who will train people for these jobs?'



We care about our environment

'Lithgow should protect and restore conservation values, especially rehabilitating damaged natural systems and landscapes (eg Newnes Plateau).'

'[There's a] reliance on nature-based tourism at the expense of the environment to provide economic returns, the area needs to be well-prepared in order to manage for this scenario, which it currently is not...'

'It would make good sense to offer adventure facilities on the grounds of the State Mine Heritage Park, instead of in the Lost City, in order to minimise impact on nature.'

'We need to pay more attention to the environment and attracting visitors to the area for quality tourism such as bird watching... Huge money is spent worldwide on birdwatching. Lithgow is on the important migration route of many bird species.'

'I believe in climate change and saving the environment but not at the cost of losing our natural wildlife and land.'



We respect and value our indigenous community and heritage

'I support the preservation of all Aboriginal heritage sites and the right of local Wiradjuri people to manage the sites, which includes the right to deny visitors access if the sites are considered sacred.'

'Positioned in the midst of the Wiradjuri Aboriginal Nation, the Gundungurra Nation and the Darug Nation, the Lithgow region is ideally positioned to be the home for an indigenous cultural institution, for example a gallery or museum which could be leveraged as a hub for indigenous led field tours and experiences.'

**WHAT
WE'VE
HEARD
SO FAR**



IDENTIFYING OUR STAKEHOLDERS

The economic transition over the next 10 to 15 years in the Lithgow region is likely to have a significant impact on everyone in our community. It is recognised, therefore, that to some extent everyone and every business in our community is a LEEP stakeholder.

We also know that transitions management is 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 efficiently and effectively.



Stakeholders by potential impact

Whilst all people and businesses in the Lithgow region are likely to be impacted by the transitions management process to some extent, individual impacts will differ.

Some stakeholders will be on the front line of the impact of the energy transition.

- Centennial Coal and Energy Australia are presently very closely aligned in the mining and use of thermal coal for power generation within the region. Both companies are investigating the feasibility of renewable energy projects and other uses of their assets in preparation for the future transition.
- The workers of these companies and their families will be directly impacted as the future closure or scale-down of operations result in job losses. These workers are predominantly represented by the Mining and Energy Union.
- Local suppliers to these companies and their workforces will be affected and need to develop alternative revenue streams.

Other businesses will also be directly impacted by the de-carbonisation of the economy. There will be a need to work closely and collaboratively with these businesses and workforces but, typically, at a more technical and project delivery level.

- Existing businesses provide important economic and employment contributions and it is vital to maintain their commitment to the LGA and support them to optimise opportunities in the emerging economy.
- Potential investors, developers and businesses need to be engaged to promote the opportunities within the LGA and ensure community benefit.



Above: Lithgow City Council

Left: Donkey Mountain, Gardens of Stone National Park

- New businesses and projects will provide new and different opportunities during construction and operation for existing, emerging and external workers and suppliers, requiring new skills, training and services.
- Near neighbours to proposed developments may be impacted. These issues will be addressed by planning approval processes.
- The concurrent development of projects in the LGA may result in cumulative positive and negative impacts that will need to be addressed at a community-wide level.

Communities, businesses and workers will be impacted by the overall changes in regional demand and other tertiary impacts. Those tertiary impacts will extend across the broader economy and community as demand for education, healthcare, transport, housing and a range of other more distributed opportunities and disruptions occur over time.



Stakeholders by resources and capacity

There are some organisations such as the Commonwealth and State governments, and Lithgow City Council which bring critical land-use planning, regulatory, financial, and other necessary resources to the transitions management task. Each of the Commonwealth and State governments and Lithgow City Council have committed to bring resources to the regional transition effort. These resources include the Net Zero Economy Authority, the Central West Jobs and Investment Authority, and Interim Lithgow Jobs and Investment Committee each with their own levels of funding contribution.

Whilst Centennial Coal and Energy Australia will continue operating for some years, at the time of closure or scaling down, these companies and the Mining and Energy Union should typically undertake a range of activities to mitigate the impacts. This includes very practical things, like joint commitments to retraining, worker transfer schemes, integrated family support, and other essential services which can vastly reduce the immediate incidence and impact of large-scale closures. Additionally, these companies usually hold valuable and transferable resources such as water, land, and infrastructure some of which can be re-deployed.

The knowledge sector is also an important contributor to supporting the energy transition and economic diversification. The knowledge sector brings education, training and re-skilling, distinct and necessary research, access to research funding, and technical knowledge without which a leading practice transition is unlikely to occur.

The transitions management task will also need to draw upon resources and capabilities for individual tasks or aspects of the transitions management process. This includes educators at every level and stage of learning. It includes other economic actors and workforces (including businesses not yet in the region), land developers, utility and infrastructure providers and others who will be relied upon in the regenerative and economic development aspects of the transitions management planning.

Finally, there will be, at every level, individuals and organisations working towards achieving the best possible outcome for the Lithgow region. Some of these people and organisations will be contributing simply by continuing to do what they do well and evolving and changing in response to market conditions.

The knowledge sector brings education, training and re-skilling, distinct and necessary research, access to research funding, and technical knowledge without which a leading practice transition is unlikely to occur.

LEEP STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES

After carefully considering responsibilities and capacities for managing transitions management as well as the IAP2 Guideline, we have grouped key transitions actors into several segment pieces to ensure a fitting level of engagement for each stakeholder. This ranges from co-design and empowerment through to collaboration, involvement and consultation. All the segments are required for a successful transitions management.



The LEEP Community

Everyone, and every organisation and business in the region.

LEEP Actors

Members of the LEEP Community who wish to be more deeply involved in the transition process.

LEEP Key Collaborators

Organisations and individuals who have technical expertise and insights to contribute to the design and delivery of LEEP projects focused on effecting community-wide change, such as workforce planning, land use planning, investment attraction, and education and skills development.

LEEP Delivery Partners

All levels of government, the knowledge sector, and directly impacted industry and their workforce unions.

OUR ENGAGEMENT

In creating this Engagement Plan, we considered a range of engagement activities for each stakeholder group, which will be tailored to address the impacts they may experience, their issues and ideas, preferences for engagement and their role in and ability to contribute to the transition category. Particularly, we considered the nature of the transitions management impact on each category and the potential resources, capabilities and outcomes hoped to be achieved from people and organisations within each category.

To involve our stakeholders in the LEEP transitions management process, the LEEP team proposes to deliver a series of engagement events and activities:

- A regularly updated website – www.leep.lithgow.com, housing the LEEP Action Plan, reports, minutes of working group meetings, e-newsletters, progress updates, FAQs
- Regular e-newsletters sent to the LEEP stakeholder database
- Social media posts
- Print advertising
- Information displays and presentations
- Enquiry and complaints handling
- Consultation opportunities / surveys
- Resourcing and capacity building opportunities, such as transitions management and community empowerment short courses
- Regular LEEP speaker events
- Annual Community Workshop

- Working Groups and Networks in key transition areas such as Adaptive Skills, Planning and Industry Precincts, Transport and Logistics, the 'Heart of Lithgow' Placemakers Network, Health and Ageing Network, Engagement and Communications and the Economic Development Committee
- Regular meetings of the Future Jobs and Investment Committee; and with other key transition stakeholders


Each of these activities is designed to allow LEEP stakeholders to play a meaningful part in the LEEP initiative and have an active role in determining the future of the LGA. For example, the regular LEEP **speaker events** and annual workshop provide the community a chance to deeply engage and give input to the program. The LEEP working and networking groups, provide an opportunity for key collaborators to shape and share transformational initiatives.

Collectively, this engagement program will provide information about the LEEP program and the transitions management task in Lithgow.

Each of these activities is designed to allow LEEP stakeholders to play a meaningful part in the LEEP initiative and have an active role in determining the future of the LGA.

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Engagement activities have been informed by the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum to set out the broad level of participation invited from each stakeholder group. This considers the engagement objectives for each group, available timeframes and resources, and stakeholder concerns and interests regarding decisions to be made.

| INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION  | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| | Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower |
| Public Participation Goal | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| Promise to the Public | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |

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STAKEHOLDER GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

THE LEEP COMMUNITY

- Lithgow LGA – everyone and every business in the region.



DESCRIPTION

Recipients of all LEEP information, and potential participants in other LEEP engagement groups and activities.

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL – INFORM / CONSULT

Community members will be affected differently by the energy transition and economic diversification and/or have a different level of interest or capacity to be involved. Impact and interest may also change over time.

To support the community's ability to engage meaningfully and in a timely manner, communication materials will address key concepts such as:

- the national energy transition, its impact on Lithgow and the need for economic diversification,
- renewable energy technologies and the future energy mix,
- project development and planning processes, including opportunities for community consultation and engagement, and
- plans for LEEP and progress updates.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The LEEP Community will be informed and consulted through the following engagement methods:

- A regularly updated website – www.leep.lithgow.com, housing the LEEP Action Plan, reports, minutes of working group meetings, e-newsletters, progress updates, FAQs
- Regular e-newsletters sent to the LEEP stakeholder database (opt in via website)
- Social media posts
- Print advertising
- Information displays and presentations
- Enquiry and complaints handling
- Consultation opportunities / surveys
- Resourcing and capacity building opportunities, such as transitions management and community empowerment short courses

It is likely that the wider community will also become further informed by aspects of the LEEP by the participation of business, workforce unions, community groups, education providers and others in LEEP activities.

Efforts will be made to ensure communication and consultation is accessible where barriers to participation may exist (for example children and young people, First Nations people, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, older people, etc).

LEEP ACTORS

- Community members who wish to be more deeply involved in the transitions management process.



DESCRIPTION

LEEP Actors are any community member who either feels impacted and wants to know something more about the transition management activities, or who want to be more involved or engaged in the LEEP process itself. These may be any individual, organisation or business from across the community.

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL – INFORM / CONSULT / INVOLVE

It is considered that LEEP Actors will be actively involved in LEEP activities, and potentially become ambassadors for LEEP, positively promoting the Lithgow LGA and LEEP program within the community; and feeding community sentiment back to the LEEP team to ensure the LEEP program is in tune with the community's vision and needs.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

In addition to the wider communication and engagement mechanisms in place for the wider LEEP Community, LEEP Actors would be key participants in various engagement events such as the regular LEEP **speaker events**.

LEEP Actors will be invited to annual Community Workshop, which will support the development of the community's ideas about Lithgow's future, provide an opportunity for cross-pollination of ideas and transitions management opportunities to flourish, and ensure the LEEP program remains aligned with the community's vision.

LEEP Actors are any community member who either feels impacted and wants to know something more about the transition management activities, or who want to be more involved or engaged in the LEEP process itself.

LEEP KEY COLLABORATORS

- Commonwealth Government – various departments and agencies
- NSW Government – various departments and agencies
- Lithgow City Council – various departments
- Existing large businesses and employers, eg Greenspot, Thales, Ferrero, APA, Foundations Portland, Lithgow Community Private Hospital, NSW Health
- Lithgow Chamber of Commerce and other business chambers
- Knowledge and education sector – WSU, Notre Dame University, Charles Sturt University, NSW TAFE, Mitchell, Conservatorium of Music, Other VET providers, primary and high school leadership teams.
- First Nations organisations
- Economic progress, community and environmental associations
- Target workforce cohorts and professional organisations
- Lithgow City Councillors



DESCRIPTION

Organisations, groups and individuals who have technical expertise and insights to contribute to the design and delivery of LEEP projects focused on effecting community-wide change, such as workforce planning, land use planning, investment attraction, and education and skills development.

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL – INVOLVE / COLLABORATE

Input to and co-design of LEEP projects and programs.

Shared accountability for delivery of projects and programs, particularly through the following working groups and networks:

- *Adaptive Skills Network*: to make recommendations for the prioritisation of initiatives which support the re-deployment, re-skilling, and adaptive capacity of the workforce in the Lithgow LGA.
- *Planning and Industry Precincts*: to make recommendations for the prioritisation of initiatives which support alternative land uses of coal mining and coal-fired power generation sites in the Lithgow LGA, and make 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*: to explore opportunities for optimising infrastructure, particularly road and rail transport connections, investigate logistics opportunities such as exploring Lithgow's role in the East Coast Hydrogen Refuelling Network and opportunities with NSW Government for an 'East Coast to Western NSW Hydrogen Highway Initiative'.
- *Economic Development Committee (from January 2025)*: an avenue for collaboration between the LEEP team and Lithgow City Councillors.
- *Engagement and Communications Network (from January 2025)*: 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 explore opportunities to develop a Lithgow Health, Ageing and Innovation Precinct Masterplan, audit potential occupied and vacant buildings suitable for accommodating public services operations, and explore commercial investment attraction for life sciences manufacturing and services, new and expanded retirement villages, integrated ageing in new housing developments and residential aged care services.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Regular meetings to collaboratively advance specific initiatives in support of delivering the LEEP Action Plan.

Codesign of / or participation in training opportunities, including more advanced resourcing and capacity building short courses.

LEEP DELIVERY PARTNERS

- Commonwealth Government (Net Zero Economy Authority)
- State Government (Future Jobs and Investment Authorities Team)
- Lithgow City Council
- The Mining and Energy Union
- Centennial Coal
- Energy Australia



DESCRIPTION

The organisations most directly involved in the energy transition, particularly the impacts on workforce and supply chains.

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL – COLLABORATE

- Co-design of activities.
- Shared accountability for LEEP transition outcomes.

To provide a forum (Committee) to discuss the collaborative implementation and delivery of LEEP transition actions and outcomes.

The LEEP is a shared accountability framework that requires these key transitions management actors. The Committee's goals are to explore consequences and opportunities associated to changes to coal mining and coal-fired power generation and alternative land uses of these sites, and the prioritisation of initiatives which support facilitated investment in alternative industries and the re-deployment, re-skilling, and adaptive capacity of the workforce in the Lithgow LGA. The functions of the Committee are closely aligned with the anticipated functions of the State Government's proposed Central West Jobs and Investment Authority to permit a seamless transfer to that Authority when it is formed.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Regular one-on-one and collaborative meetings with the Net Zero Economy Authority the proposed Future Jobs and Investment Authority, and responsible Ministers and senior advisors to provide regular briefings and updates.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

By measuring engagement with the project website, community feedback, media releases, social media, email updates, newsletters, consultation and interaction throughout the project process, the project team can monitor, review and instigate changes to project/communication plans as required.

This Engagement Plan will be reviewed regularly to assess the effectiveness of the engagement, with outcomes used to refine the engagement plan to better serve stakeholders and the community and implementation activities as relevant.



The LEEP Engagement Plan strives to achieve the best practice principles of the International Association for Public Participation (Australasia). IAP2 is the peak body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector in Australia.

LEEP's objectives support the UN Sustainable Development Goals – especially those of promoting quality education; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry innovation and infrastructure; sustainable cities and communities; and responsible consumption and production.



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