



12 June 2017

The General Manager
Lithgow City Council
PO Box 19
LITHGOW NSW 2790

Re: Internal Reference IPR17-21

On behalf of the HDP, I wish to thank Council and Councillors for their presentation of the draft Community Strategic Plan and draft Delivery Program on Tuesday, 30th May. It is important there is ongoing consultation and dialogue with local communities and especially, allowing communities to input into the process, raising issues requiring attention and offering suggestions and ideas.

The Hartley Valley has historically been a key contributor in shaping the advancement of the wider Lithgow LGA. Its rural lifestyle, its heritage value and the growing influx of families moving into the area adds to the socio-economic-environmental mix of the region. Today, we have almost 2000 people within Hartley and its immediate surrounds – around 10% of the Lithgow LGA population.

Given this, it is disappointing to see that Hartley Valley did not feature in the draft plans outlined by Council. We appreciate there are many and varied needs across the LGA and funds are limited. However, in looking ahead, it is important that growing areas like the Hartley Valley are not pushed to the back of the queue. Equally, community organisations like the HDP need to take a stronger role in informing Council and ensuring their understanding of local community needs. In this regard, we are delighted to see HDP members playing key roles in various Council Sub-Committees.

Specific Suggestions

a) Bus Shelters

Despite the increasing flow of families moving to the area and with this, children of school age, there are no safe bus stop areas along the GWH for pick up or set down. With school buses using the GWH taking children to schools in Lithgow and the Blue Mountains, Council should approach RMS with proposals for locating designated safe bus stop / shelter areas.

There is a bus shelter on the GWH near the junctions of Ambermere Road and Coxs River Road. The location is poor and unsafe. During the 8.30am to 9am period the pick-up/drop off zone is congested – children being dropped off near the bus shelter and vehicles turning onto the GWH from both Ambermere Road and Coxs River Road. The safety factor is far worse now than prior to the GWH upgrade. We would request that Council take this matter up with RMS, an option being to re-position the bus stop to a safer location.

As for new bus shelter facilities, possible locations include the GWH/Baaners Lane junction and at the top of River Lett Hill where the concrete barrier finishes. For each location, RMS has been informed in the past but little action has ensued. While more investigations are required and definitive costings need to be prepared, this type of safety first infrastructure needs to happen.

b) Bicycle / Walking Track

With its magical surrounds and vista, Hartley Valley would be an ideal location for siting a bicycle / walking track - the possibilities are various. With the spectra of promoting eco-tourism and outdoor activities, a track leading from say Berghoffers Pass to the Historic Village would seem appealing. Moving along Hartley Vale Road, turning into Fields Road, then onto Mid Hartley Road and to the GWH is one possibility. Other possibilities may include bicycle paths to Hartley Vale, the Lockyer's Track to Mt York or between Ambermere and the Hartley Saddlery. Obviously further investigations are required. But the conclusion is that opportunities exist to enhance outdoor, healthy activities for locals and those visiting.

c) Telecoms and Television Coverage

One area that Council should promote a lot more as part of its 2030 Community Strategy is around technology. We know about NBN and their plans for fixed wireless to service the Hartley Valley. The delay in bringing such technology to the area has and continues to cause issues for many who simply cannot connect to ADSL or have to rely on portable dongles with limited speed and capacity. A well-connected community is fundamental and we support Council in their endeavours to ensure the LGA is well serviced by latest telecommunications.

One area of concern deals with TV coverage. Residents in the Hartley Valley rely on streaming from various sources – the NT (VAST network), free to air Wollongong or through other services. It seems accessing ‘local Central West’ content is rather limited. So as part of the 2030 vision, we suggest Council should put this issue on their agenda and try to find solutions, including funding sources, which enable the LGA to access ‘local news and stations’.

The HDPA has always shown its willingness to support and work closely with Council on a range of matters. The above matters are no different and we would be delighted to assist Council where we can. We are happy to meet with Council or alternatively, feel free to contact me on 0418 424 452 should you require any further details.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond.

Yours sincerely

Renzo Benedet
President
Hartley District Progress Association