

**REPORT TITLE: 7.26 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS REPORT -
QUARTER 1 2021/2022**

ECM INDEXES:

**Subject Index: CORPORATE MANAGEMENT: Reporting
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Planning**

Customer Index: NIL

Property Index: NIL

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a quarterly progress update to Council on the key actions, activities, projects and programs undertaken in Council's Economic Development department for the first quarter of 2020/2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the information contained in this report.

REPORT

(a) Background

Economic Development is one (1) of the five (5) strategic directions of the Glen Innes Severn Community Strategic Plan. This department is part of the Development Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate of Council and is responsible for the delivery of the economic development strategy, programs and initiatives incorporating:

1. Developing business, industry, and investment;
2. Tourism and Events and the Visitor Information Centre;
3. Grants Funding; and
4. The marketing and promotion of **Glen Innes Highlands (GIH)**.

(b) Discussion

This report includes progress updates on actions from the **Economic Development Strategy 2020-2040 and Action Plan 2020-2021 (EDS)** and the **Destination Management Plan 2021-2026 (DMP)**.

This report also includes an overview of grant and funding opportunities.

Top 10 Quarter One (1) Highlights:

1. **GROW Glen Innes THINK TANK (GIITT)** 'Disused and Underutilised Asset' workshop was conducted on Wednesday, 22 September with 19 registered participants;
2. A submission was made to the Australian Government's Regional Telecommunications Review (**Annexure A**);
3. GIH 2021-2022 Marketing Plan is completed and attached to this report (**Annexure B and Annexure C**);
4. **New England Rail Trail (NERT)** is progressing with Council providing updated project plans, activity budgets and activity plans for **Bushfire Local Economic Recovery (BLER)** fund and **Public Works Advisory's (PWA)** review;
5. Council currently has 15 grant applications lodged and pending a decision for a total of \$6,654,379;
6. Council has supported a grant application by Monash University's Climate Change Communication Research Hub.
7. A submission was provided in August to the NSW Government's Regional Housing Taskforce (**Annexure F**);
8. GeoTourism Audit has commenced with a self-assessment scoping study of all the GeoTourism sites and assets in the LGA utilising and building on the DMP.
9. The development of the Coombadjha Soundtrail at Washpool National Park is complete.
10. This Workforce Attraction Strategy has been completed and will now be shared more broadly within Council and the community.

Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan

1. Prosperity

1.1 Diversification of Agriculture

The Agri-Business Development Program has resulted in 12 businesses completing the program and five (5) businesses potentially progressing with pre-development application lodgement discussions with Council.

The Agri-Innovation Action Plan was delivered and will be utilised in a GGITT and for integration into Council's Delivery Program.

Focus will move to investigating the potential of the circular economy and continuing to provide support and seek funding to support the industry.

1.2 Leveraging Growth Opportunities

Growth in Tourism will be aided by the successful funding of the Tourism Itinerary and Packages Platform. An application has been submitted to the Black Summer Bushfire Fund.

Following the successful funding of the New England Rail Trail Stage One (1) - Glen Innes to Ben Lomond, the funding deed is in development.

Several meetings have been coordinated by the BLER Fund Project Officers with PWA, **NSW Department of Transport (TfNSW) and Regional Development NSW (RDNSW)** with Council.

Council has provided updated project plans, activity budgets and activity plans for BLER and PWA's review. The funding deed will need to be signed and sealed by Council.

Renewable Energy opportunities are in the pipeline via the State Government's **Expression of Interest (EOI)** process for the **New England Renewable Energy Zone (NEREZ)**. Council is awaiting engagement from the State Government following its review of the submissions.

Council has supported a grant application by Monash University's Climate Change Communication Research Hub. The grant aims to develop and deliver a local program that will address rural climate change scepticism. GLENRAC is the lead organisation with Council providing in-kind resource assistance.

Progress on asset-based place-making commenced with the GGITT on the subject with suggested projects and ideas including:

- Powerhouse Museum utilising the Essential Energy building and its historic steam engines;
- Glen Innes Railway Station building upgrade to support future businesses with an arts and cultural focus at the bookend of the New England Rail Trail;
- Emmaville Mining History experience development utilising the Emmaville Mining Museum, Ottery Mine and mining-related tours;
- Deepwater village beatification, walking tracks on railway line; river access upgrades and cemetery tours;
- Glencoe amenity upgrades and business park;
- Red Range village and sports ground amenity upgrades and Tommy's Rock stories;
- Glen Innes Airport to include a motor sports complex and aviation tourism opportunities;
- Glen Innes Agricultural Research Station additional events and activity supported to ensure continued use;
- Community hall utilisation across the entire **Local Government Area (LGA)** could be consolidated into one governance/community group;
- Beardy Waters Reserve upgrades and improved access for locals and visitors for nature-based experiences;
- Glen Innes Racecourse utilised for an equestrian centre to take Tamworth overflow; and
- King George Oval utilised for community gardens and interactive walking routes in conjunction with Rocky Ponds Creek park.

1.3 Community Leadership and Advocacy

Council continues to connect local businesses to Business NSW and State and Federal initiatives, support, funding, and incentives through all current communication channels.

Council is also engaging with partners across the housing and healthcare industries to uncover growth opportunities and to improve local strategies and outcomes.

An Investment Attraction Policy will be developed following the delivery of the International Attraction Strategy as part of the Horizons Leadership Program.

2. **People**

2.1 **Local Jobs Program and Workforce Attraction Strategy**

This Workforce Attraction Strategy has been completed and will now be shared more broadly within Council and the community. This is a great resource for businesses to utilise in their future resource planning.

A GGITT was conducted to commence on the delivery of the EDS action to deliver a ‘Local Jobs Program’.

2.2 **Highlands Hub – Education and Jobs Programs and Initiatives**

Grant funding has been secured to deliver programs and workshops for its first year of operation commencing from June/July 2022.

The online Highlands Hub, with its new career and community functionality and capability, will be an enabler for connecting, sharing and fulfilling local jobs, volunteering opportunities and more.

The following table below outlines the features and functionality of the new platform.

Highlands Hub - Homepage	Highlands Hub – Business	Highlands Hub Community	Highlands Hub - Careers	Highlands Hub – Co-Working Space
Join in three (3) easy steps.	Search the Local business directory and establish local supply chains.	Search local community groups, community members and businesses.	Search for your next career move on the local jobs board.	View available office space and meeting rooms.
Help enquiry.	Network and create professional development opportunities.	Share and promote your event and search for professional development opportunities.	Search for professional development and training opportunities.	Book and pay for space.
What you can do.	Boost your Search Engine Optimisation and promote your products and services locally.	Share news, local stories, write articles and keep up to date with things to do.	Promote your talents and connect with local business owners directly.	Help enquiry.

Highlands Hub - Homepage	Highlands Hub – Business	Highlands Hub Community	Highlands Hub - Careers	Highlands Hub – Co-Working Space
Latest news and events reel.	Profile your business, post job ads and search local Jobseekers.	Seek volunteers and put your hand up to volunteer in a community group or event.	Put your hand up to volunteer in a community group or event.	Latest news and events reel.
Local jobs and careers reel.	Find project partners or local suppliers for projects and tenders.	Find project partners or local suppliers for community events and initiatives.	Network with businesses and community and find local projects.	Local jobs and careers reel.
Co-working space information.	Co-working space information.	Co-working space information.	Co-working space information.	Join in three (3) easy steps.
What do you want to do next?	What do you want to do next?	What do you want to do next?	What do you want to do next?	What do you want to do next?

Table 1.4 – Highlands Business, Careers and Community Online Hub features and functionality.

2.3 Digital Connectivity and Remote Readiness

Council continues to liaise with a telco regarding mobile blackspots in key areas within the LGA. An initial estimate has been received for a macro base station at Rangers Valley and further priority areas along the Gwydir Highway.

A submission was made to the Australian Government’s Regional Telecommunications Review (Annexure A). The submission highlighted the problems with the Australian Government’s Black Spot funding program in meeting the needs of regional and remote communities.

3. Place

3.1 Marketing and Promotion – Glen Innes Highlands – Visit, Live, Invest

Within the quarter, the GIH digital campaign was relaunched as a means to further optimise the activity with the reduced budget available and the revised marketing strategy (Annexure B).

A Marketing Plan (Annexure C) has been developed and has delivered the following:

- A GIH television campaign was delivered in September as a result of an affordable NBN National Rugby League package delivering seven (7) 15 second slots preceding the game and during the game;
- E-newsletters, social media, website optimisation and Highlands Business Hub content delivery continued, driving engagement. The Glen Innes Visitor Guide continued through design and content development; and
- The new INVEST video was launched along with the new Gravel Grind Cycling product.

New England High Country (NEHC) activity included the launch of the NEHC Brand and Soundtrails campaign as well as further website optimisation following its re-design and development.

Discussion began in August with the **Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)**, **Destination NSW (DNSW)** and **Destination Country and Outback (DCNO)** to recognise the NEHC as a regional destination, and individual member LGAs on the Visit NSW website.

NEHC Group marketing and promotion for the quarter included:

- Classic cars and club's activity included a combination of print, digital and social through the Practical Motoring and Just Cars brands;
- The NEHC brand campaign launched in July for the first 14-day period. Due to lockdowns and restrictions the group have postponed the next two (2) campaign activity bursts;
- The NEHC Soundtrails campaign content has been approved for launch. The timing of the launch is pending announcement by the Federal Member, Barnaby Joyce; and
- Optimisation to the NEHC website included integration of individual ATDW listings in August and integration of NEHC Soundtrails content in September, in preparation for the launch of the Soundtrails campaign.

Quarterly results for the GIH Visit campaign **served 1,695,818 times** to the target audience **across digital platforms** including Display banners, Google search ads, YouTube video ads and Facebook ads.

The ads recorded **2,072 clicks** which is a promising start to our 'Visit' campaign as it began to start optimising to a more receptive audience and by the end of the third month, our campaign was fully optimised to serve ads to the most engaged audiences.

Please see **Annexure D** for the full campaign report and Table 1.5 for a summary of results.

The following table provides the high-level results of the GIH Digital Campaign.

Channels	Impressions	Clicks	Click Through Rate (CTR)	Industry Average CTR	Cost Per Click (CPC)	Industry Average CPC
Display	1.54M	1.18k	0.08%	0.04 – 0.10%	n/a	n/a
Search	2.77k	302	10.9%	4.68%	\$1.81	\$2.00
Youtube	42.2k	49	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Facebook	495k	3.18k	0.64%	0.90%	\$0.48	\$0.68

Table 1.5 – GIH Campaign Results – VISIT - Q1

Quarterly results for the GIH Live campaign **served 291,241 times** to the target audience **across digital platforms** including Display banners and Facebook ads.

The ads recorded **1,311 clicks** which is a promising start to our ‘Live’ campaign as it began to start optimising to a more receptive audience and by the end of the third month, our campaign was fully optimised to serve ads to the most engaged audiences.

Please see **Annexure E** for the full campaign report and Table 1.6 for a summary of results.

Channels	Impressions	Clicks	Click Through Rate (CTR)	Industry Average ctr	Cost Per Click (CPC)	Industry Average CPC
Display	143k	1.15k	0.081%	0.04 – 0.10%	n/a	n/a
Facebook	148k	161	0.10%	0.90%	\$0.01	\$0.68

Table 1.6 – GIH Campaign Results – LIVE - Q1

3.2 Healthcare and Social Assistance Services

Following the success of the EOI for the “Attract, Connect, Stay” Healthcare Workforce Pilot the first co-design workshop was conducted on 30 September 2021 to establish the governance and management of the program.

Funding secured for the program to 30 September 2021 is \$24,202 which includes: \$15,000 for **New England Joint Organisation (NEJO)**; \$9,798 from Council pending full funding of the position in year one (1) and \$1,000 from an individual. The gap in funding equates to \$25,798. The governance group when formed will be responsible for securing the remaining funding required for the **Healthcare Workforce and Recruitment Connector (HWRC)** role.

Council has commissioned research into a potential framework for Healthcare Service Gaps to enable local access to specialist healthcare services.

3.3 Attracting and Retaining Population

A start-up program and/or initiative will be developed out of the Highland Hub co-working space to provide pathways for high school students and local home businesses to develop and grow their business ideas.

Council has provided local real estate agents with access to the Glen Innes Highlands LIVE promotional video and content to assist with marketing the town to potential movers.

A 'Movers Attraction Strategy' and 'Welcome to Glen Innes Pack' will be developed through a GIITT later in the year. Council is also establishing ideas and potential solutions to create opportunities for our aging population to move into communal retirement whilst also addressing our future housing gaps and future jobs and skills gaps.

A submission was provided in August to the NSW Government's Regional Housing Taskforce (Annexure F).

4. Partnerships

4.1 Local Business Growth and Support

The new Highlands Hub Co-working space alongside the Highlands Digital Hub will drive partnerships and connection as well as access for businesses looking to improve leadership, create growth and achieve employment outcomes as well as reduce local economic leakage.

A new job is being created for the Highlands Hub which will coordinate programs and workshops as well as aim to grow the business conference and events industry and leverage the remote working trend.

Glen Innes is continuing to attract new residents with housing sold to newcomers as well as locals re-establishing themselves in the new homes. This will hopefully generate more custom for local businesses, more local businesses establishing and with the delivery of large projects include the NERT things are looking up post a horrendous period for some businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2 Consultation, Design Thinking and Problem Solving

The GGITT schedule for the year includes:

- Disused and Underutilised Asset Audit – completed in September;
- 100-year Concept Master Plan – November/December;
- Housing Assessment and Future Strategy – December/January;
- Movers Attraction / Welcome to Glen Innes – February/March;
- Investment Attraction Policy – April/May; and
- Liveability – TBA.

Council has 50 residents now registered to be a part of this initiative and encourage more locals to join and contribute ideas in delivering the actions of the EDS.

Destination Management Plan – 2021 – 2026 Actions

1. Improving Customer Experience

1.1 Audit attraction, activity and service signage and implement a signage plan to deliver improvements.

Jenny Rand and Associates have been appointed to conduct the signage audit, however, due to COVID-19 lockdowns the project was placed on hold to continue as soon as restrictions allowed the consultant to travel to Glen Innes. This will have a flow-on delay to the delivery to the signage plan to Council which was planned for November 2021.

1.2 Utilise digital solutions and physical interactions to improve service and connection with place, product, and people.

An application has been submitted to the Black Summer Bushfire Grant for the Tourism Packages and Itinerary Platform.

1.3 Evolve the Visitor Information Centre into a next-generation service centre.

A review of the **Accredited Visitor Information Centres (AVIC)** membership is underway and a report to Council will be provided in April 2022.

The team is continually collaborating on improving the self-service opportunities for visitors through Visitor Centre Signage displays. Should the Tourism Packages and Itinerary Platform be successful in its funding application the opportunity to deliver this action will exponentially improve.

2. Evolving Brand Positioning

2.1 Refresh/adapt/amend/update existing marketing and promotional assets and content to incorporate new positioning – “Where adventure meets nature, culture and history”

The new positioning is being executed in the new Visitor Guide and the brand refresh project will commence later in the year.

2.2 Facilitate the creation of new content and assets that support the new positioning, experiences and products through grant funding and partnerships.

Content and assets created in Quarter 1 for use in the marketing of GIH across owned and paid channels included:

- Three (3) gravel grind, cycling experience videos produced and content and promotional material created and disseminated in August 2021;
- Invest video produced in September 2021;
- Agency briefed for the design and production of GIH region map and town and village maps in August 2021. Final assets expected in October 2021;
- GIH Visitor Guide is in production with, itineraries and articles in development; and,
- The production of the Coombadjha Walk Soundtrail in Washpool National Park was completed in September 2021. Promotional content created for the NEHC website.

Develop and Improve Existing Experience

3.1 Support the upgrading, re-development, and improvement of local assets.

- Ideas to facilitate tourism product development from the GGITT will be discussed with the relevant visitor economy businesses, associations, and attractions;
- Develop priority projects maximising the potential of key attractions, events, and assets;
- The Disused and Underutilised Asset Audit through the GGITT was conducted in September and will lead into the development of the 100-year Concept Master Plan; and
- Cycling has been identified as a priority project by the NEHC Group. Strategic group planning will begin in October.

3.2 Grow the Business Conferences and Events sector

With the funding of the Highlands Business and Community Hub Co-working space and the appointment of a new Highlands Hub Coordinator event products and services will assist building on our Pop-Up event concept.

The GGITT Disused Asset Audit will also open out opportunities to utilise spaces for larger and more complex business and conference sector requirements.

4. Create and Deliver New Experiences

4.1. Embrace Geotourism as a holistic approach to featuring natural and cultural heritage into the relevant customer experiences.

GeoTourism Audit - Council has commenced a self-assessment scoping study of all the GeoTourism sites and assets in the LGA utilising and building on the DMP. This project will enable Council to be assessed by the Geological Survey who will in turn assist in defining our GeoRegion.

Ottery Mine Emmaville - Council is supporting the **Department of Regional Works (DRW)** remediation works which began on 12 July 2021 at the Ottery Arsenic Mine in Emmaville as part of the NSW Government's **Legacy Mines Program (LMP)**.

Everick Heritage has been engaged by the DRW to also provide a Conservation Management Plan and Heritage Interpretation Plan in support of the remediation of the waste rock dumps at the Ottery Arsenic Mine site. The DRW has been granted a Section 60 permit by Heritage NSW. Council is currently supporting Everick Heritage in providing a comprehensive historical base of knowledge on the site.

Council is also supporting the Emmaville Mining Museum by assisting the implementation of any provisions of enhanced displays and storytelling through grant funding and opportunities arising from the project.

National Parks and Wildlife Service - The development of the Coombadjha Soundtrail at Washpool National Park is complete. This project highlights the cultural, historical, and geological assets of the area including its unique flora and fauna.

Grants and Funding

There were no grant applications approved during the first quarter of 2021/2022. Council currently has 15 grant applications lodged and pending a decision for a total of \$6,654,379.

Required reporting was completed for the Australian Government and the NSW Government funded project streams. A report on grant funded project progress for the previous quarter was also compiled during this quarter and sent to Member of Parliament for New England, Barnaby Joyce and Member of Parliament for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall.

Significant project management planning and documentation activities were also conducted by the Manager of Economic Development during this quarter for recently approved funding projects including:

- BLER Fund – Highlands Business and Community Hub & Programs. This project funding will provide valuable business and community services with the added positive outcome of a highly visible building that had been vacant for some time will be tenanted and utilised;
- BLER Fund – New England Rail Trail – Glen Innes to Ben Lomond Section; and
- NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program – Centennial Parklands Skywalk.

The following table provides a summary of grant information for the year to date compared to the past four (4) years:

Description	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Number of Grants Approved	0	20	11	29
Total	\$0	\$25,495,688	\$4,504,252	\$11,005,216
Number of Unsuccessful Grants	2	10	4	6
Total	\$60,000	\$8,389,359	\$1,880,691	\$1,837,753

Table 1 – Grants Financial Year Summary

The following table provides a summary of the grant applications and the value of the grant, currently lodged and pending a decision by the relevant grant funding body:

Grant Description	Value of Grant
Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) Round Four (4) – Emmaville War Memorial Hall	\$155,836
NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) – Council Landfill Program Phase Two (2) – Construction of drainage around landfill site – Glen Innes Landfill	\$15,000
NSW EPA – Council Landfill Program Phase Two (2) – Fencing work around landfill site – Glen Innes Landfill	\$15,000

Grant Description	Value of Grant
NSW EPA – Council Landfill Program Phase Two (2) – Staging Plan updates and Landfill Life Review – Glen Innes Landfill	\$20,000
Fixing Local Roads Round 3 – Upgrade to Gulf Road, Emmaville	\$1,380,000
Regional Events Acceleration Fund – 2022 Australian Celtic Festival	\$140,000
Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant Program – Warwick Twigg Indoor Sports Stadium Development – Solar panels, spectator seating and two (2) outdoor Netball/Basketball courts	\$413,926
Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant Program – Youth and Sport Precinct Upgrades and Connectivity – Skate Park and improved connectivity for access to precinct facilities	\$738,523
Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant Program – Tourism Itinerary and Packages Platform – Web-based system that provides visitors a seamless end-to-end experience for discovery, planning and booking trips to regional Australia	\$901,369
Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant Program – Rural Address Signage and Asset Register – Rural address signs across the LGA and establishment of a rural landholder asset register	\$592,376
Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant Program – Centennial Parklands Facilities Upgrade – New amenities at Centennial Parklands as part of the Centennial Parklands Master Plan. New outdoor event space and seating	\$1,341,616
Greater Cities and Regional Sport Facilities Fund – Warwick Twigg Indoor Sports Stadium – two (2) x outdoor multi-sport courts, spectator seating, solar panels and shared pathways in West Avenue, Taylor Street through to Ferguson Street	\$734,763
State Library NSW Library Priority Grant – funding allocation to be combined with annual State Library NSW Library Subsidy of \$61,500 for Glen Innes Severn Council Library and Learning Centre children's area upgrades	\$25,000
Greater Cities and Regional Sport Facilities Fund – Warwick Twigg Indoor Sports Stadium – two (2) x outdoor multi-sport courts, spectator seating, solar panels and shared pathways in West Avenue, Taylor Street through to Ferguson Street.	\$734,763
State Library NSW Library Priority Grant – funding allocation to be combined with annual State Library NSW Library Subsidy of \$61,500 for Glen Innes Severn Council Library and Learning Centre children's area upgrades.	\$25,000
Mosman Council Community Grant – A Glen Innes Severn Council Library and Learning Centre Aboriginal Community Project.	\$5,000
Empowering and Supporting Local Communities Grants – Round 2 – COVID Communication Strategy	\$21,800
Building Better Regions Fund, Round 5, Community Investment Stream – Creating Capability and Confidence for Community Champions – Partnering with GLENRAC	\$154,170
Total value of grant applications lodged and pending decision	\$6,654,379

Table 2 – Lodged and Pending Applications 2021/2022

The following table provides a summary of the unsuccessful grant applications and the value of the grant, for 2021/2022 year to date:

Grant Description	Value of Grant
Destination NSW Tourism Product Development Fund – Refresh and Renew Fund - Glen Innes Visitor Information Centre Upgrade	\$10,000
Destination NSW Tourism Industry Marketing Support – Grants Program (TIMS-GP)	\$50,000
Total	\$60,000

Table 3 – Grant Applications Unsuccessful 2021/2022

(c) Options

Nil.

IMPLICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

(a) Financial

Nil.

(b) Governance/Policy

Nil.

(c) Legislative/Statutory

Nil.

(d) Risk

Nil.

(e) Social

Nil.

(f) Environmental

Nil.

(g) Economic

Nil.

(h) Asset Management

Nil.

CONSULTATION

(a) External

Nil.

(b) Internal

The information contained in this report has been collected in consultation with various staff members of Council who oversee the respective services that are provided by the Economic Development department.

LINK/S TO THE DELIVERY PROGRAM/OPERATIONAL PLAN (DPOP)

This item links to Council's Delivery Program Community Service Action CS 1.2.5: Investigate ways to promote Glen Innes Highlands as a 'tree change' destination.

This item links to Council's Delivery Program Economic Development Action ED 1.1.1: Undertake a review of the current Economic Development Strategy to ensure Council is capitalising on economic development opportunities in the LGA.

This item links to Council's Delivery Program Economic Development Action ED 3.1.2: Provide incentives to encourage new business to the LGA and assist existing business to expand.

CONCLUSION

The information contained in this report delivers a summary to Council on the key actions, activities, projects and programs undertaken in Council's Economic Development department for the period July until September 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

Annexure A	Submission to Regional Telecommunications Review
Annexure B	2022 GIH Overarching Marketing Strategy
Annexure C	2022 GIH Marketing and Channel Plan
Annexure D	GIH Visit Campaign Report
Annexure E	GIH Live Campaign Report
Annexure F	NSW Regional Housing Taskforce Submission