

# Community and Economy Committee



Business Paper

11 MARCH 2025



MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

P.O Box 122  
MUSWELLBROOK  
6 March, 2025

Cr D. Douglas (Chair)  
Cr L. Dunn (Deputy Chair)  
Cr A. Barry  
Cr J. Drayton  
Cr D. Marshall  
Cr M. Morris  
Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager)  
Ms S. Welchman (Director – Community & Economy)  
Ms K. Manwarring (Manager – Community Services)  
Mr K. Hill (Manager – Events & Tourism)  
Mr I. Skaines (Grants & Community Engagement Advisor)  
Ms K. Kiely (Welcome Experience Officer)

You are hereby requested to attend the Community and Economy Committee to be held in the Meeting Room / Teams, Muswellbrook Library, 126 Bridge Street, Muswellbrook on **11 March 2025** commencing at **5:30 pm.**

Shaelee Welchman  
**DIRECTOR – COMMUNITY & ECONOMY**



# Order of Business

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## 1 Acknowledgement of Country

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

Council would like to respectfully acknowledge the local Aboriginal people who are the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which this meeting takes place

## 2 Apologies

## 3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Not applicable





#### 4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

#### 5 Business Arising

Nil



## 6 Business

### 6.1 Community & Economy Committee - Terms of Reference

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Responsible Officer:</b>      | General Manager   |
| <b>Author:</b>                   | Director - Community & Economy  |
| <b>Community Strategic Plan:</b> | 6 - <i>Community Leadership</i><br><br>Collaborative and responsive leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the community |
| <b>Delivery Program Goal:</b>    | 6.2.1 - Maintain a strong focus on financial discipline to enable Council to properly respond to the needs of the communities it serves.              |
| <b>Operational Plan Action:</b>  | Not applicable  |
| <b>Attachments:</b>              | 1. <b>Community and Economy Committee Draft Terms of Reference 1 [6.1.1 - 6 pages]</b>  |

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#### PURPOSE

To consider the Terms of Reference for the Community and Economy Committee.

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The Community and Economy Committee endorses the Draft Terms of Reference for submission to Council.

**Moved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Seconded:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### REPORT

A review of the Committee Structure was undertaken in conjunction with the Councillor induction program in 2024. Those changes included the creation of the Community and Economy Committee, and requires the Terms of Reference to be reviewed. A draft Terms of Reference is attached for consideration by the Committee.

# Community and Economy Committee

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## Terms of Reference

27 February 2025

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## 1. Objective

*The objectives of the Community and Economy Committee (the Committee) are to:*

- *Provide an enhanced level of oversight and engagement on community and economy projects, services, and activities*
- *Enable Councillors and senior staff to consider issues, trends, and opportunities relating to community and economy services and activities*
- *Ensure Council's community and economy services and activities are aligned with the Community Strategic Plan goals and Council's priorities, as articulated in the Delivery Program.*

*In fulfilling its objectives, the ability of the Committee to maintain strategic and objective judgement is vital.*

*The Committee will report to Council and provide advice and recommendations on matters relevant to Community and Economy.*

## 2. Scope

The Committee will report to Council and provide advice and recommendations on matters relevant to Community and Economy. Muswellbrook Shire Council authorises the Committee, within the scope of its role and responsibilities, to:

- Monitor and review the projects and activities conducted as part of Council's Economic Development, Tourism and Events, and Community Services functions and strategies;
- Provide input into the development and delivery of events and activities;
- Consider seeking and awarding sponsorship applications;
- Provide community feedback and input into customer experience, communications, and engagement activities to improve community satisfaction;
- Provide input into Council's grant, advocacy, and investment attraction activities to diversify the economy and attract jobs;
- Provide input into Council's community development, social, and indigenous activities;
- Provide input on the allocation and prioritisation of project funding; and
- Provide a forum to discuss social and economic trends industrial changes, challenges and opportunities that impact the Shire.

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### 3. Authority

Muswellbrook Shire Council authorises the Committee, within the scope of its role and responsibilities, to:

- Request information required to inform decision making (subject to their legal obligations to protect information and with prior consultation with the General Manager);
- Request information from officers (with approval of the General Manager) in accordance with the Councillor Request Management Procedure;
- The Committee may request these persons to present information at Committee meetings to assist in understanding any matter under consideration; and
- Obtain external legal or other professional advice, as considered necessary, to meet its responsibilities (in accordance with Council Budget and procurement arrangements and subject to prior consultation with the General Manager).

### 4. Composition and Tenure

Members of the Committee are elected by Council.

#### **Members (voting)**

The members of the Committee shall be Councillors and are listed below.

- Cr De-anne Douglas (Chair)
- Cr Louise Dunn (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Amanda Barry
- Cr Jeff Drayton
- Cr Darryl Marshall
- Cr Max Morris

All members of the Committee are entitled to one vote and, in the event of an equal vote, the Chair has a casting vote.

#### **Attendees (non-voting)**

The following Council officers will act as liaison officers to the Committee:

- General Manager
- Director Community and Economy
- Manager Community Services
- Manager Economy and Tourism
- Grants and Community Engagement Advisor

#### **Invitees (non-voting)**

Other officers may attend by invitation as requested by the Committee or the General Manager.

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## 5. Responsibilities of Members

Members of the Committee are expected to:

- Make decisions in line with the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Contribute the time needed to review and understand the papers provided.
- Apply sound objectivity and judgement.
- Express opinions frankly and respectfully and ask questions to obtain a greater understanding of the issues.
- Act, and be seen to act, properly and in accordance with the requirements of the law and Council's Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice.
- Act in good faith and fidelity in the interests of Council and the community.

## 6. Reporting

Following each meeting, the minutes will be reported to the next Council Meeting and the Chair will be required to provide a brief summary.

## 7. Meetings

- The Committee will meet on the second Tuesday of every odd month commencing at 5.30pm.
- Meetings of the Committee must be advertised, recorded, and published to Council's website.
- The need for any additional meetings will be decided by the Chair of the Committee, though other Committee members or Council Staff may make requests to the Chair for additional meetings.
- The Committee shall comply with Council's adopted Code of Meeting Practice and Code of Conduct.
- Meetings of the Committee are open to the public to attend.

## 8. Attendance at Meetings and Quorums

A quorum will consist of four (4) Committee members. Meetings will be held in Person. Councillors may attend and participate in meetings of the committee by audio-visual link with the approval of the Chair of the committee.

## 9. Voting

The Committee is expected to make decisions by consensus, however, if voting becomes necessary, then the details of the vote are to be recorded in the minutes. Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to one vote only with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

## 10. Secretariat

The General Manager will ensure that appropriate secretariat support is provided to the Committee. The Secretariat will ensure the agenda for each meeting and supporting papers are circulated at least 5 days before the meeting and will ensure minutes of the meeting are prepared and maintained.

Minutes shall be approved by the Chair and circulated to all Committee members within one week of the meeting and filed in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

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## 11. Conflicts Of Interest

Members of Council committees must comply with the applicable provisions of Council's Code of Conduct in carrying out their functions as Council officials. It is the personal responsibility of Council officials to comply with the standards in the Code of Conduct and regularly review their personal circumstances with this in mind.

Committee members must declare any conflict of interest at the start of each meeting or before discussion of a relevant agenda item or topic. Details of any conflict of interest should be appropriately minuted.

Where members or invitees at Committee meetings are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest, it may be appropriate they be excused from Committee deliberations on the issue where the conflict of interest may exist. The final arbiter of such a decision is the Chair of the Committee.

## 12. Induction

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

## 13. Review of Committee Terms of Reference

At least once every two years the Committee will review this Committee's Terms of Reference and make recommendations on any changes to Council for its determination.

Any changes to the Committee Terms of Reference must be approved by Council.





## 6.2 Art Gallery Cafe - Hospitality Training Centre

**Responsible Officer:** Director - Community & Economy

**Author:** Manager – Economy & Tourism

**Community Strategic Plan:** 1 - Economic Prosperity

*A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.*

**Delivery Program Goal:** 1.1.1 - Facilitate the expansion of and establishment of new industries and business.

**Operational Plan Action:** 1.1.1.4 - Collaboratively progress investment, infrastructure and industry opportunities for the Region.

**Attachments:** Nil

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to inform Council of the approach by AGL to support the operation of the Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery Cafe to provide a hospitality training and work experience placement and to progress discussions with AGL to fund the operation of the facility.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council approves the General Manager to discuss operating the Gallery Cafe as a hospitality training Centre with AGL, and negotiate the terms of the agreement for Council's consideration.

**Moved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Seconded:** \_\_\_\_\_

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Art Gallery Café, operated by Council from 2020 to 2022, has remained vacant since mid-2022 despite efforts to attract a commercial operator. In late 2024, the Mayor held discussions with Muswellbrook High School and AGL about the potential of turning the Café into a hospitality training centre to benefit local students and the community, offering off-site commercial work experience to enhance their training.

AGL expressed interest in supporting the establishment of the Café as a training hub for hospitality skills, aimed at meeting the needs of students and the broader community.

A business case has been developed, assessing various options, with the Council-managed model emerging as the preferred option, with a proposal for a five-year partnership with AGL to help sustain the initiative. If agreed upon, the program could be operational within six months.



## PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Council at its meeting of 24 May 2022 resolved to:

*14.4 Council seeks tenders of expressions of interest for the lease and management of the current gallery café by external operators to councils existing function.*

Council has called for expressions of interest twice for an operator of the Gallery Cafe. Whilst there has been some interest, no commercial operator has taken the space. The outcomes of the last expression of interest process were presented to Council in May 2024.

## BACKGROUND

The Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, established in 1976, has been a cornerstone of the Upper Hunter Region's cultural landscape. In 2020, the Council introduced The Gallery Café, enhancing its role as a community hub. The cafe was operated by a hospitality function within Council.

In 2021, Council resolved to seek expressions of interest for the operation of the cafe. Council has sought public expressions of interest twice for the operation of the space, with no commercial operator taking the opportunity. The Gallery Cafe has been vacant since mid 2022.

## CONSULTATION

Consultation has occurred with the General Manager, Director Community and Economy, Manager Economy and Tourism, Chief Financial Officer, Manager Community Services, Training and Professional Development Officer, and Muswellbrook High School Representatives.

## REPORT

Council operated the Cafe from 2020 to 2022, during COVID, as a cafe operation, and the facility has been vacant since mid 2022 despite seeking a commercial operator via two public expressions of interest processes.

In late 2024, the Mayor held initial conversations with the Principal of Muswellbrook High School. There are currently thirty (30) Year 11 and Year 12 VET Hospitality students undertaking a hospitality course. As part of this course, students must complete 70 hours of work experience, the majority of which is undertaken in-house through catering for school functions. However off-site work experience in a commercial setting would be beneficial and give the students valuable experience.

Separately, the Mayor discussed with the Chief Operating Officer of AGL about the opportunity to provide hospitality training at the Gallery Cafe. AGL expressed an interest to support the Cafe to become a hospitality training centre to meet the needs of high school students and the community.

The objectives of establishing the Gallery Cafe as a hospitality training centre are to:

- Provide access to hospitality courses locally as none currently exist;
- Support disadvantaged sectors of the community to access training;
- Improve the local hospitality offering;
- Provide practical hospitality work experience for students;
- Retain and skill youth locally and provide alternative employment pathways;
- Provide a social benefit for the community through a Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE) model; and
- Enhance the customer experience and increase patronage of the Art Gallery.

To progress conversations with AGL, a business case was prepared evaluating a range of options to achieve these objectives. It was determined that Council, managing the operation of the cafe



and provision of the hospitality training centre, is the preferred option over outsourcing the delivery of courses and cafe operations.

The benefits to the in-house Council model are:

- Ability to establish as an RTO or to engage a provider as required;
- Existing relationships with the high school and TAFE;
- Ability to leverage other government grants and training opportunities;
- Consistent operation of the cafe;
- Ability to adapt to changing community needs;
- Long term financial sustainability;
- Limited previous interest of a commercial operator; and
- Ability to provide a social enterprise to support community needs.

The negatives of this model are:

- Higher establishment costs;
- Risk of ongoing financial viability;
- Negativity of other operators;
- Additional compliance and reporting requirements;
- Council funding initial stock requirements; and
- Constrained by additional procurement, recruitment, and financial considerations.

To deliver this service to the community, it is estimated that the cost is \$320,000 per annum. Council would be seeking to partner with AGL for five years to deliver measurable benefit to the community. Pending agreement by AGL, this model could be established within 6 months.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Initial funding will be required to restock the cafe and need to be allocated for setup stock costs.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

### STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Nil

### RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Having the available funding and resources to meet the expectations of the community.

### COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

Discussion with Muswellbrook High School's Business Manager, Hospitality Assessor, and Careers Advisor, VET Coordinator, & SBAT Coordinator.



### 6.3 Sponsorship - Cattle Dog Muster

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Responsible Officer:      | Director - Community & Economy   |
| Author:                   | Director - Community & Economy   |
| Community Strategic Plan: | 4 - <i>Cultural Vitality</i><br><br>Effective and efficient infrastructure that is appropriate to the needs of our community |
| Delivery Program Goal:    | 4.3.1 - Develop and implement a program of Shire events to engage more locals and attract more visitors                      |
| Operational Plan Action:  | 4.3.1.1 - Work in partnership to deliver events which support the community and attract visitors to the Shire.               |
| Attachments:              | 1. 2025 Muster Sponsorship Prospectus Jan [6.3.1 - 17 pages]   |

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#### PURPOSE

To provide for Council's consideration an application for Sponsorship from the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the Cattle Dog Muster being held at the Muswellbrook Showground on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

Council approves the sponsorship of \$7,500 to the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the Cattle Dog Muster Bluey and Bingo Live Experience and Meet and Greet subject to both parties entering into and meeting the requirements of Council's Sponsorship Agreement.

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Cattle Dog Muster is held every second year at the Muswellbrook Showground. This is the third year of the event which attracts around 7,000 locals and visitors. With a country vibe and family friendly feel, the event includes a range of Cattle Dog competitions, displays, herding trials, plus pet cattle dog activities, live country music, a kid's zone, food and market stalls, plus Bluey and Bingo special guest appearances.

Council has previously provided financial and in-kind support for this event. The sponsorship prospectus is attached, and it is recommended that the total extent of Council contribution to the event is \$7,500 for the Bluey and Bingo Live Experience and Meet and Greet.

#### PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

That Council supports the Cattle Dog Muster in principle and considers monetary and in-kind support in the preparation of the 2023/24 Budget.

#### BACKGROUND

The Cattle Dog Muster is an event organised by the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry, showcasing Cattle Dog competitions, displays, herding trials, plus pet Cattle Dog activities, live country music, a kid's zone, food and market stalls, plus Bluey and Bingo special



guest appearances.

This is the third time the event is being run. Council has provided financial and in-kind support to the Chamber for this event and, in 2024, the TV and Movie Nostalgia Festival to the value of \$15,000.

### **CONSULTATION**

Consultation has occurred with the General Manager, Grants and Engagement Advisor and Coordinator Tourism and Events.

### **REPORT**

As the birthplace of the cattle dog, this event is aligned with the Shire's desire to host unique and relevant events that improve our lifestyle offer for locals and attract people to the Shire. In its third year, the event has grown since its inception and organisers hope that attendance from locals, interstate and overseas continues to grow.

The Chamber's goal is for the Community Family Fun Day to remain a free event. However, there is a cost associated with booking the meet and greets with Bluey and Bingo which is managed through an online booking system.

In return for sponsorship, Council would receive:

- Business signage and banners on actual attraction;
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page;
- Sponsor's logos and acknowledgement in events printed Program Booklet; and
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around the Venue.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Funding is available in the Sponsorship GL 1075.1880.568 to allocate to the event.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

### **STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Sponsorship is dependent on agreement to the terms of Council's Sponsorship Agreement.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS**

Events are important to the community as demonstrated in Council's Community Satisfaction Survey.







## 2023 Great Cattle Dog Muster a resounding success

The 2023 Great Cattle Dog Muster was a resounding success with more than 7,000 visitors attending the Community Family Fun Day.

The event was staged by the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry with support from Dogs NSW.

In addition to many locals attending, visitors also travelled from across the State, around Australia, and from overseas.

The event is the only one of its type held in Australia, and the Chamber aims to make it a Signature Event for both Muswellbrook and the Upper Hunter. With the cattle dog having its origins in the Upper Hunter, this makes the event very attractive for cattle dog lovers to attend.

The Community Family Fun Day saw a wide range of Cattle Dog Competitions, Displays, Herding Trials, plus a host of Pet Cattle Dog activities.

With a country vibe and festival feel, the day also included live country music, a children's Kids Zone, lots of food and market stalls, plus Bluey and Bingo making a special guest appearance.

Also on display was a Cattle Dog History Exhibit, and an Upper Hunter Showcase, showcasing many of the Upper Hunter's food, wine, produce, and attractions.

With the event attracting so many visitors from outside the region, it injected significant tourism and economic benefits into the local community.



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## Images from the 2022 and 2023 Great Cattle Dog Muster





# The Great Cattle Dog Muster

Community Family Fun Day



**Muswellbrook Showground**  
**Saturday 6th September 2025**

## Great Cattle Dog Muster set to return in 2025

Given the success of the 2022 and 2023 events, plans are now underway for a return of the Muster in 2025.

Following the 2025 Muster, it is then planned to stage the event every two years.

With less than 12 months to the 2025 event, we are now canvassing sponsors, with a priority to give our 2023 partners first option to secure their sponsorship.



**"With support of Sponsors we can continue  
to stage the Muster as a Free Community Event"**

An event of this scale is expensive to stage, but the Chamber's goal is to maintain the Community Family Fun Day as a FREE event for everyone to enjoy.

This can only be made possible through the support of sponsors and our event partners.

We invite you to review the Sponsorship Prospectus and take up the offer to support this significant signature event that benefits both the community and businesses in Muswellbrook and the Upper Hunter.

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## 2025 Event Sponsorship

Top tier sponsorship of the 2025 Great Cattle Muster event. Available to multiple sponsors.



Gold Sponsor \$35,000\*



Silver Sponsor \$12,000\*

### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Sponsor's logos displayed on all event flyers and promotional material.
- Sponsor's logos and signage around event venue.
- Sponsor's logos on event Website and Facebook page.
- Acknowledgement via Public Address System.
- Sponsor's logos and acknowledgement in events printed Program Booklet.
- Sponsor's logos on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around venue.

\*Plus GST





## **‘Main Stage’ Live Country Music Sponsor**

**\$5,000** Plus GST



### **Sponsor Acknowledgement:**

- Business signage and banners on actual attraction.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logos and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.



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## Bluey & Bingo Live Experience and Meet and Greet Sponsor

**\$7,500** Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners on actual attraction.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Sponsor's logos and acknowledgement in events printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.



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## 'Kids Zone' Children's Entertainment Sponsor

\$4,500 Plus GST **Allocated**



### Jumping Castles - Slides - Facepainters - Magicians

#### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners in Activity Area.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logos and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.







## Cattle Dog Championship Shows Sponsor

**\$5,000** Plus GST

Option: Two Sponsors at \$2,500 Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners in Activity Area.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logo and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.



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## Cattle Dog Sports Events Sponsor

**\$5,000** Plus GST

Option: Two Sponsors at \$2,500 Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners in Activity Area.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logo and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.



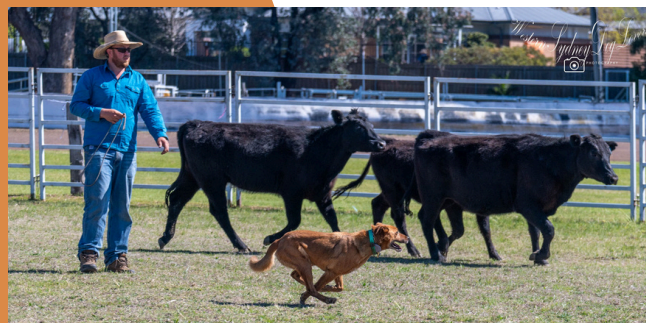




## Working Cattle Dog Events Sponsor

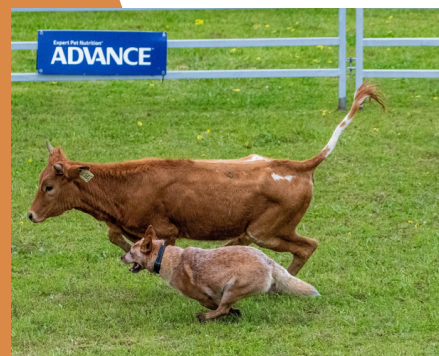
**\$5,000** Plus GST **Allocated**

Option: Two Sponsors at \$2,500 Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners in Activity Area.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logo and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.



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## Pet Cattle Dog Events Sponsor

**\$5,000** Plus GST **Allocated**

Option: Two Sponsors at \$2,500 Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners in Activity Area.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logo and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.

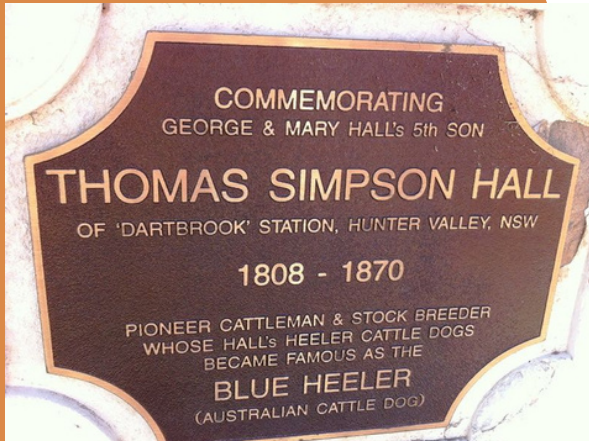


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## Cattle Dog History Exhibit Sponsor

**\$2,500** Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners in Activity Area.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logo and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.

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## Upper Hunter Showcase Sponsor

**\$6,000** Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Business signage and banners in Activity Area.
- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logo and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.



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## Volunteers Sponsor

**\$1,500** Plus GST



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Listing on event Website and Facebook page.
- Logo and acknowledgement in printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.



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## Event Supporter

\$500 Plus GST

An important element of sponsorship that provides essential and valuable support for the event.



### Sponsor Acknowledgement:

- Listing on event Website.
- Acknowledgement in events printed Program Booklet.
- Listing on sponsor 'Sponsor Thank You' placards around Venue.





## Sponsorship Inquiries

Please direct all inquiries to:

Wayne Toms - MCCI Member Services Manager &  
Muster Event Coordinator  
Phone: 0438 517 311  
Email: [info@muswellbrookchamber.com.au](mailto:info@muswellbrookchamber.com.au)

- Sponsorship values shown are exclusive of GST -

[www.greatcattledogmuster.com.au](http://www.greatcattledogmuster.com.au)



**This event is proudly brought to you by the.....**



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## 6.4 Welcome Experience Update

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Responsible Officer:      | Director - Community & Economy  |
| Author:                   | Community Connector Coordinator   |
| Community Strategic Plan: | <i>1 - Economic Prosperity</i><br><br><i>A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.</i><br><br>An inclusive and interconnected community where everyone enjoys full participation |
| Delivery Program Goal:    | <i>Not Applicable</i>   |
| Operational Plan Action:  | Not applicable  |
| Attachments:              | Nil   |

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### PURPOSE

To provide an update on the Welcome Experience programme.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Welcome Experience has expanded to Singleton Council and Upper Hunter Shire Council, with added support for veterinarians and paid RFS employees under the Essential Workers Attraction Programme. The Make the Move campaign has been updated for Sydney visibility and translated into multiple languages.

Additional funding is enhancing local service delivery. The government-funded concierge-style service has helped many essential workers to settle and contribute to the economy and fabric of the Shire, with a strong impact in the health sector.

### Key Initiatives:

- Coordinator and Project Support Officer roles filled.
- Request for inclusion in the Local Emergency Management Committee.
- Quarterly Reference Group launch.
- Strong media coverage, including ABC Upper Hunter and Newcastle Herald.

A welcome event on 3 April at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre will celebrate the expansion. A monthly newsletter is also in development for essential workers and stakeholders.

### PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil



## BACKGROUND

The Welcome Experience is a free government service designed to support essential workers and their families who are either considering applying for, or have already accepted, a job in regional NSW. It is currently operating across 55 LGAs in the state.

Local Connectors are available to assist with various aspects of settling in, from practical matters like finding housing and choosing childcare, to exploring job opportunities for partners.

Eligible participants include government and non-government employees in the following sectors: Health (Private and Public), NSW Ambulance, NSW Police, Department of Communities and Justice, Corrective Services NSW, Education (Private and Public), Fire and Rescue NSW, RFS, and Veterinary Services.

## CONSULTATION

Director of Economy and Community

Manager, Economy and Tourism

## REPORT

The expansion phase of The Welcome Experience (TWE) in our region is well underway, with the inclusion of Singleton Council and Upper Hunter Shire Council. Since the last Council update, in late December 2024, Minister Moriarty announced that TWE's expansion would also support veterinarians and paid RFS employees as part of the \$25.1 million Essential Workers Attraction Program initiative, designed to strengthen essential regional workforces. This initiative also includes the *Make the Move* advertising campaign which has recently been reworked to appear at Redfern Station in Sydney and various bus stop locations in the Inner West. The campaign has also been translated into several languages.

As part of this expansion, we have secured an additional \$10,000 on top of the original \$660,580 funding to support local service delivery.

Since its inception, the concierge-style service has had 690 cases in our region (470 of these cases were either ineligible or had chosen not to move or selected another location), with 45 now settled here for over three months. These cases represent 143 individuals in total who are investing in and contributing to the local economy. While some participants have left after a year, due to contract completion or returning overseas, the program continues to have a strong impact locally.

### Ongoing and Future Activities:

Progress on expanding The Welcome Experience (TWE) faced some initial delays due to the timing of local council elections, onboarding processes, and the end-of-year holiday period. During this time, we focused on recruitment, successfully appointing a Coordinator and, more recently, a Project Support Officer to enhance service delivery. With all roles now filled, we have greater capacity to drive the expansion into neighbouring LGAs.

We have requested to be included in the Local Emergency Management Committee as a way of supporting senior staff in key government agencies with their requirement needs. In addition, we are finalising the list of key stakeholders for the quarterly Reference Group, with our first meeting set to take place soon.

TWE has received strong and consistent media coverage, with live interviews on ABC Upper Hunter, PowerFM, and print coverage in the Hunter River Times, as well as a double page spread in the Newcastle Herald highlighting the expansion.

To celebrate this milestone and formally welcome essential workers who have made our region





home, TWE will host a special evening at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre on Thursday, 3 April. Invitations have been sent to local, state, and federal ministers, as well as local dignitaries and key stakeholders. The event will have a strong local focus, featuring welcome champagne served by clients of Warrior Disability Services, custom key rings produced by Stem Lab, and live music from the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music, among other highlights.

Additionally, we are developing a monthly online newsletter tailored for essential workers. This will be shared with all agencies involved in TWE, as well as real estate agents, who are often the first point of contact for those considering a move to the region.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **1. *Financial Implications – Operational***

Within the funding grant budget.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

### **STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Risks are being managed as per the Risk Management Plan.

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS**

DPIRD

Interagency Meetings – Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter

Reference Group

Business Chambers across the 3 LGAs

LEMC

Key government agencies and private as outlined above.



## 6.5 STEM Program Update

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Responsible Officer:      | Director - Community & Economy   |
| Author:                   | Innovation Co-ordinator  |
| Community Strategic Plan: | 1 - Economic Prosperity<br><br><i>A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.</i> |
| Delivery Program Goal:    | 1.1.1 - Facilitate the expansion of and establishment of new industries and business.  |
| Operational Plan Action:  | 1.2.1.1 - Deliver programs and activities in the Hunter Innovation Precinct as an exemplar economic diversification initiative for the region.                   |
| Attachments:              | Nil  |

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### PURPOSE

To provide an update on the STEM Program.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update to the Community and Economy Committee on the progress and future direction of the STEM Program in Muswellbrook. Since its launch, the program has gained significant traction, expanding access to STEM education through the **STEM Innovation Lab** and **STEM2GO** initiatives.

The **STEM Innovation Lab** has continued to experience strong demand from primary and secondary schools, particularly with the added support for transportation costs. This has expanded participation beyond the Muswellbrook LGA to include Singleton and Upper Hunter. The lab has delivered school-term programs and school holiday workshops, engaging students in robotics, astrophotography, aeronautics, and engineering-based challenges. A proactive campaign is underway to further increase school engagement and reach an additional 300 students before June 30, 2025.

The STEM2GO program is designed to promote STEM engagement among youth in disadvantaged communities, beginning with a five-week after-school program at Wollombi Precinct. The initiative aligns with the Community Strategic Plan Goal 7 and Council's Operational Plan Goal 2, reinforcing social inclusion and equitable access to STEM learning.

With continued growth and demonstrated impact, ongoing support and a suitable budget allocation are essential to sustaining and expanding these programs. Additional funding will enable further outreach, the introduction of new activities, and increased participation, particularly among underrepresented groups. The Committee's support will ensure that



Muswellbrook remains at the forefront of regional STEM education and workforce development.

### PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

NIL

### BACKGROUND

#### 1. STEM Program

Muswellbrook is a 'living laboratory' of transition initiatives – including renewable energy, storage and distribution, advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, and bioenergy technology.

Coupled with STEM education and labour force reskilling, we are embracing opportunities to create jobs. With our partners in government, industry and private enterprise, we are investing in our existing and future workforce through STEM education.

Primary and secondary schools have access to a purpose-built STEM Innovation Lab in the Hunter Innovation Precinct. It provides students with the tools and mentorship to develop STEM 'soft' skills like problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communication.

We are preparing our young people to meet the needs of a rapidly changing employment market. Meeting immediate skills gaps and future industry demands and providing opportunities that are not traditionally available in regional areas.

#### 2. STEM2GO

Muswellbrook Shire Council is committed to fostering community development and promoting social equity and inclusion across the Shire. This aligns with the Community Strategic Plan Goal 7, which aims to build social inclusion and improve the delivery of social services. The Wollombi Road residential area has a history of socio-economic and geographic disadvantage, and the community continues to express a desire for change. In response, Council has drafted the Wollombi Road Residential Precinct Master Plan, which offers a roadmap for revitalising this neighbourhood, focusing on sustainable development and social improvements.

As part of this effort, the 5-week STEM program at the Wollombi Precinct serves as a key initiative to encourage local youth, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to engage in STEM education. By providing accessible and hands-on activities such as paper stomp rockets, vortex cannons, and pizza box solar ovens, the program will enable participants to develop essential skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, while having fun and fostering creativity.

This initiative directly supports the Council's Operational Plan Goal 2, which envisions an inclusive and interconnected community, where everyone can enjoy full participation. The STEM program will not only provide young people with the opportunity to build confidence in their abilities but also inspire them to explore further education and career pathways in STEM fields. It will also help to strengthen the sense of belonging and connection among youth in Muswellbrook, contributing to the overall social fabric of the community.

Through these efforts, the Shire aims to offer equal access to opportunities and ensure that all members, especially youth, can fully participate in and contribute to the community's growth and success.



## CONSULTATION

Director of Economy and Community

Manager of Economy and Tourism

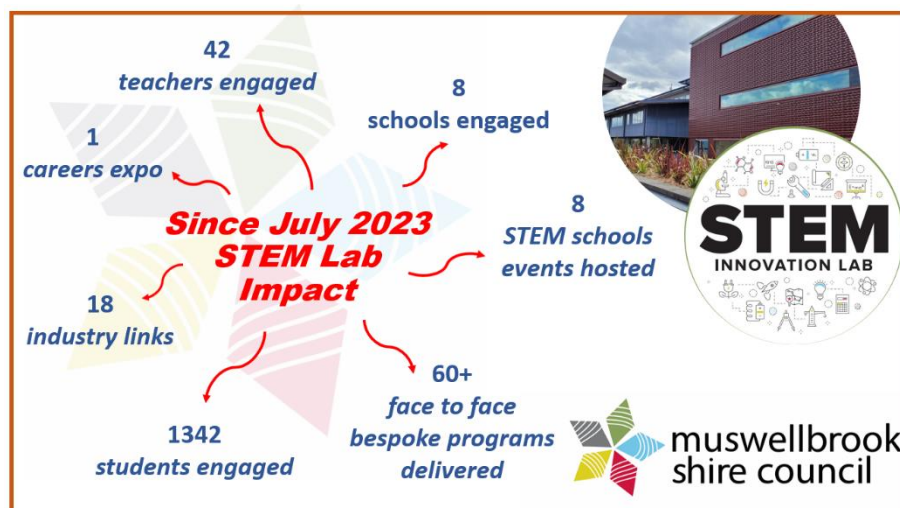
Innovation Coordinator

Workplace Health and Safety - Officers

## REPORT

Since its official opening in July 2023, the STEM Innovation Lab continues to experience increased demand from Primary Schools and continued engagement with Muswellbrook High School. With our added ability to assist with the cost of bus hire, the program has reached beyond our LGA and includes Singleton and Upper Hunter LGAs. So far, schools from Denman and Muswellbrook have been able access our programs more easily. This service has removed one of the key barriers preventing schools from attending the STEM Innovation Lab.

The STEM Innovation Lab has also hosted a series of School Holiday Workshops in the School Holidays, including LEGO Robotics and Astrophotography, and will continue to build on these programs in the future. The Muswellbrook Home School Group and Poly Farmer Foundation are also great patrons and users of the STEM Innovation Lab. Their participation in Council's bespoke STEM Programs continues to grow.



During the October 1 2024 – December 2024 period, 3 different STEM Programs have been delivered to 62 Students (25 Female, 22 ATSI, 10 Teachers).

STEM Programs include;

- Aeronautics (Tello Drones)
- Simple Machine (Race & Chase)
- Forces (Bridgestone Challenge)

The STEM Innovation Lab will be delivering a new program in the Summer School Holidays (3rd Quarter 2024 – 2025) featuring 3D Printing and Design (CAD/CAM).

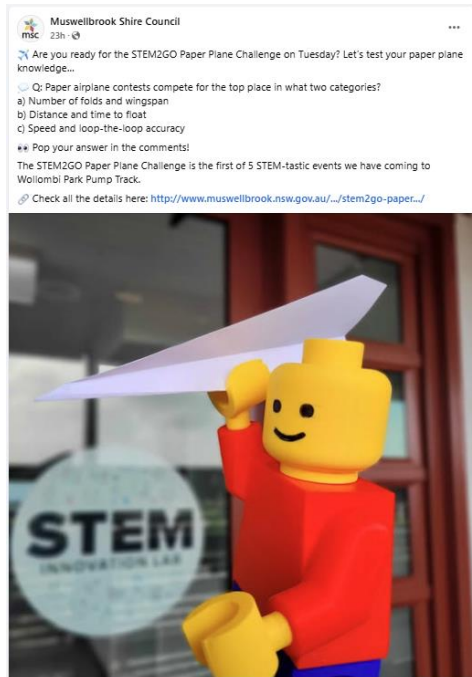
At this stage, a big push is required to reach the additional 300 Students before June 30 2025. We are working on a proactive campaign to promote and generate interest at our local schools. This includes face to face meetings with principals and staff as well as promotional material on upcoming programs to include in school newsletters.

It is hoped that this will generate a renewed interest in school participation in our exciting and



valuable bespoke STEM Programs.

The STEM2GO program is an after school, youth engagement program in STEM. The program consists of 5 hands on stem activities, on a weekly basis. The first activity will be held at Wollombi Park (Pump Track) on Tuesday 4 March 2025 and will consist of a STEM-tastic Paper Plane Challenge, where youth will construct and test their paper planes to fly the furthest or stay aloft for the longest time.



# STEM2GO

After school, youth engagement in STEM

Children under the age of 13 require adult supervision

Wollombi Park Pump Track Wollombi Rd Muswellbrook

muswellbrook shire council

## STEM2GO

5 weeks of STEM-tastic Fun

Tuesdays at 3.45-4.45pm:

|            |                       |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 4th March  | Paper plane challenge |
| 11th March | Vortex cannon         |
| 18th March | Balloon powered cars  |
| 25th March | Paper table challenge |
| 1st April  | Straw skyscrapers     |

Water and fresh fruit station provided

Wollombi Park Pump Track Wollombi Rd Muswellbrook

Experiment  
Create  
Collaborate  
Dream Big  
Discover  
Build Bigger

More Information  
stem@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au  
www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/stem-innovation-lab/

The STEM Innovation Lab is excited about the opportunities available to it in 2025 and we are certain that we will surpass the target of 450 students before 30 June 2025 and we look forward to expanding our STEM2GO program into other areas around the LGA.



### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Council has allocated funds in the 2024/25 Budget for the ongoing delivery of programmes delivered by the STEM Innovation Lab. Proposed programmes are within budget allocations.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

### **STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Compliance with Local Government Act, 1993

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

When a council runs community events, risk management is essential to ensure public safety, legal compliance, and the protection of council assets. The key Risk Management Implications include, but are not limited to;

1. Public Safety & Duty of Care
2. Legal & Compliance Risks
3. Insurance & Liability
4. Reputational Risk

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS**

Polly Farmer Foundation

Upper Hunter Home School Community



## 6.6 MELT Quarterly Report

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Responsible Officer:      | Director - Community & Economy   |
| Author:                   | Manager - Events & Tourism   |
| Community Strategic Plan: | 6 - <i>Community Leadership</i><br><br><i>A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.</i> |
| Delivery Program:         | 1.1.1 - Facilitate the expansion of and establishment of new industries and business.  |
| Operational Plan:         | 1.2.1.1 - Deliver programs and activities in the Hunter Innovation Precinct as an exemplar economic diversification initiative for the region.                           |
| Attachments:              | 1. <b>Quarterly Report The Melt Measures and Reporting October to D [6.6.1 - 2 pages]</b>  |

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### PURPOSE

To inform the Committee of the programs and activities undertaken by The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre for Quarter 2 2024-25 October to December 2024.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Muswellbrook Shire Council is investing in The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre to support economic diversification and resilience as the regional and local economy evolves.

The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre undertakes a number of programs and activities to encourage innovation in the local manufacturing sector.

Muswellbrook Shire Council, The Melt, and Allegro Energy were announced as the Winner - HMA Collaboration Partnership Award for the project to develop Allegro Energy's revolutionary new micro-emulsion based Redox Flow Battery.

### REPORT

#### The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre Update: Quarter 2 2024-25 – Oct to Dec 2024

#### **Cleantech Accelerator and Pilot Enabler Program**

There are two components to The Melt Cleantech Accelerator and Pilot Enabler Program, namely ENGAGE and NOVA.

#### The Melt ENGAGE – part of the Cleantech Accelerator and Pilot Enabler Program

- 2023 cohort engagement continues. Maintaining contact as these early-stage startups evolve to establish if there are ongoing opportunities for The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre.





- 2024 Program activities:
  - Program was hosted 22-24 May.
  - 19 founders from 15 startups joined the program.
  - Pleasingly, 12 were from regional NSW. Plus, 5 from Sydney, 1 from Victoria and 1 from New Zealand.
  - Cohort engagement continues.
- 2025 Program activities:
  - Program planning has commenced.
  - Expect to run 3-day program on 28-30 May 2025.

#### The Melt NOVA – part of the Cleantech Accelerator and Pilot Enabler Program

- Content development continues for Sales Training component.
- Productioneering support being delivered to Refilled and Allegro.
- We have completed the business cases for Aquacultr and are still assisting them in various negotiations to find their first customer.
- Aquacultr has had previous discussions with AGL and a local indigenous group about the potential for creating a fish farm onsite. Also making introductions to local poultry farmers to review opportunities.
- Allegro LCA continued.
- Endua LCA continued.
- In addition, we have 4 other companies that we are in LCA discussion with.
- Refilled presented proposal to AGL for consideration of potential installation on site at Bayswater - at commercial consideration stage.
- The Melt NOVA has identified 2 new potential participants and is in negotiations with them.
- We have achieved our original estimates of the numbers of participants in The Melt NOVA (pilot/scaleup) program i.e. 9 and have invested \$4m dollars more than we forecast as well.

#### MSC Innovation Program

- Continue to explore the potential to create an internal innovation workshop and program. Initial support from senior MSC executive, but needs further investigation and internal review.

#### **Hosted tours and events**

- Maker Projects meeting with Eliza Carlson and Amanda Walker from BHP regarding support. Included tour of The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre and STEM Innovation Lab facilities where program will be hosted.
- Hosted University of Newcastle representatives. Re-activation of the TEC Centre.
- Hosted meeting with representatives of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, a Future Made in Australia and the “Australia Bringing New Energy” campaign. Case study on The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre. Heavily involved in promotional activities.
- Learning for Good, Chris North tour of facility.
- Entrepreneur Grant Hetherington tour of facility. Developing a beach towel peg designed to fit standard pool fencing. Product analysis, testing, and review. Business advice re marketing and sales strategies offered.
- Danish consulate and business representatives. Overview of The Melt processes and tour of





Donald Horne facility.

- Hunter Innovation Festival Muswellbrook Roadshow - “Harnessing the Power of Innovation”. Attended by 35 people, including Sen Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for A Future Made in Australia and Assistant Minister for Trade.
- Muswellbrook Council breakfast - developing a future road map.
- Meeting with Jenna Hall to discuss the MSC Cattle Dog Film Festival. 3D printing options to reproduce a now unavailable cast item. Included tour.
- Associate Professor Sam Spur and Dr Hugo Moline from The University of Newcastle Architecture faculty. Site tour and meet and greet. They are working with MSC on a project for the utilisation of the TEC and future Town Square. Looking to integrate the Donald Horne Building and utilise The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre for the creation of architectural models.

### Community and industry engagement

- Continued development of the Glencore “Operational Technology” training content and QA validation within The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre test lab.
- Ongoing participation in the Hunter Innovation Festival Action Summit Clean Energy Transition working group with a select number of influential community members. Promoting The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre and the active processes that MSC are undergoing to promote Circular Economy, Advanced Manufacturing, and Clean Energy in the region.
- Shaun Barker local startup founder. Continued development of his electrical safety product called Lock Block. A product to connect with an electrical lockout switch commonly used in the mining sector. Adds an essential dimension of safety to the end use environment. CAD design iterations prepared by: Brett Thomas - Title: Partner, Director and COO Period: Q2 2024-25 – Oct to Dec 2024 multiple prototypes developed. Entering final manufacturing phase. Had to use a Melbourne based company for specialist bulk 3D printing as there is no capability for this within Muswellbrook Shire currently. First batch of 20 trial units deployed at Mangoola. If successful, will produce 200 units.
- Quarterly meeting with all stakeholders from DCCEEW regarding the Clean Technology Ecosystem Grant.
- Discussions continued between The Melt startup called Refilled and AGL for potential installation of the Refiller plumbed in drink dispenser which removes the need for single use plastic bottles and cans on site at Bayswater - very positive – proposal under consideration by AGL.
- Russell Flynn local startup founder. Continued development of his venturi mining maintenance vacuum pressure tool called Flynnair. It is an adapter for hydraulic oil (works with any fluid) retention during service functions. CAD design iterations and multiple prototypes developed. Slowly edging closer to final design for manufacture phase. Working within Russel’s time and capacity constraints.
- Australian Hydrogen Council: ongoing discussions for potentially running a Hydrogen specific accelerator program in Muswellbrook in 2025.
- Allegro Energy. Redox Flow Battery development. Continue to manufacture multiple parts using 3D printers and CNC machine for their 800kwh pilot product in The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre. This project is being highly publicised and has the attention of senior state and federal politicians. Pilot will be installed at Eraring Power Station in Q1 2025.
- Hunter Manufacturing Awards. Completed the manufacture of 19 award category trophies



using CNC machined aluminium and composite plus copper 3D printer materials in The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre.

- Announced as Winner - HMA Collaboration Partnership Award for the project with MSC, The Melt, and Allegro Energy to develop their revolutionary new micro-emulsion based Redox Flow Battery.
- Net Zero Economy Agency: The Melt featured in a case study and has been included on their new website, on TV, radio, popup installations at Charlestown Square and the Hunter Innovation Festival and Roadshow event around the region. The promotion is for their new campaign titled "Australia Bringing New Energy". Muswellbrook's activity has been heavily promoted locally and nationally.
- Ongoing MSC and The Melt Operations fortnightly reviews.
- NextGen Hydro startup. Assisting the local founders Brandon Edwards and Dan Perfrement to develop their idea for a Hydro electrical generator product. Developing two prototype versions for preliminary consideration. CAD model creation of two viable options. Working within their time and capacity constraints, as both founders have other ongoing business interests.
- Business development continued with Circular Solar Solutions (CSS): The Melt has assisted CSS with the successful grant application for CRC-P Rnd15. This initialises a significant product development project for the delamination and recycling of EOL solar panels. A number of components will be engineered and prototyped at The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre in 2025. A presentation was made to MSC on the project, with the view to further economic development opportunities.
- Attended Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry meetings.
- Vesi Water startup. The Melt continues to assist them to create some prototyping components.
- Meeting with Chad Griffiths, assistant to Dan Repacholi, Minister for the Hunter, at Parliament House in Canberra to discuss activities, insights, and progress in Muswellbrook.
- Beacon Automation. GM Bruce Richards on site meeting to discuss the revised design for the product. Design, draw and 3D print new part revision.
- Glencore. Design, draw and 3D print a set of moulds for injection moulding to encapsulate the Sub D9 sockets after being soldered to the data cable.
- Maker Projects grant submission. Concept is to target 160 local high school students to participate in fully funded making project activities within the STEM Innovation Lab and The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre over a 2- year period. BHP has offered to provide additional funding support if successful.
- PlasmaLeap. 3D printing plasma electrode supports.
- Meeting in Sydney with the NSW Government to discuss manufacturing micro credential opportunities to be hosted in Muswellbrook.
- Meeting with Graham Irwin about potential for The Melt to host micro credentials in Muswellbrook.
- Hunter Innovation Festival Art Challenge - further discussions with Muswellbrook Art Gallery about engagement in 2025.
- Presented at the Hunter Innovation Festival Conference and Showcase.
- Hosted the Hunter Innovation Festival Muswellbrook Roadshow - "Harnessing the Power of



Innovation”.

- Attended the Future-proofing NSW Manufacturing - Boosting Business Innovation event at UTS Tech Lab in Sydney.
- Allegro BBI grant strategy meeting.
- Hunter Climate Innovation and Investment Summit meeting with Greenhouse.
- UNSW c10x startup accelerator meeting.
- CB Tech visit to Mayfield.
- The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre WHS meeting with MSC representatives.
- Attended the Upper Hunter Country Tourism Industry Networking Event.
- Panel speaker at the Business Hunter - Net Zero Economy Agency - Embrace Society Event.
- Guest at the NZEA Bringing New Energy Campaign - Photography Exhibition at UoN Callaghan Campus.
- Attended the Future-proofing NSW Manufacturing - Boosting Business Innovation event at UTS Tech Lab in Sydney.
- Meeting with UNSW to discuss potential collaboration activities Prepared by: Brett Thomas  
Title: Partner, Director and COO Period: Q2 2024-25 – Oct to Dec 2024.
- Invited to meet startups and scaleups participating in the Ocean Impact Organisation’s annual harbour cruise to celebrate the conclusion of INNOVOCEAN week.
- Attended the NSW Government Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Event 2024 in Sydney.
- Participated in the Hunter Health Innovation Taskforce meeting.
- Australian Coal Mining magazine published article focused on The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre programs and activities.
- Attended Industry Innovation Project 2025 - Partner Information Session webinar.
- NSW Government Cleantech Ecosystem Development Grant - Milestone 2 report submitted.
- Meeting with Paul Forde - BDM at Accelerated Construction. Planning for demonstration workshop of the Universal Robot in 2025. Paul Fetch - Area Sales Manager. SMC has also offered to assist with the demonstration of Universal Robots and will be able to provide End of Arm tooling for demonstration purposes.
- Attended the Minerals Council Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue at the Singleton Civic Centre.
- Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery. Meeting with Elissa Emerson. Design and create a new picture hanging hook system to suit the needs of the gallery.
- Meeting with Harold Phipps, Seco.
- Meeting with Masayuki Mase, Universal Robots.
- Attended the Cobots and AI: Driving Intelligent Automation, Universal Robots event webinar.
- Attended the YTAG Kurri Primary school.
- Meeting with Jenna Hall to discuss the MSC Cattle Dog Film Festival. 3D printing options to reproduce a now unavailable cast item.
- Attended the Accelerating Change in Manufacturing webinar.
- NSW Government tender - Net Zero Manufacturing Initiative - Phase 2 Stakeholder



Engagement application submitted.

- Solar and Storage Live Queensland Conference - meeting to discuss being a Pitch Fest Judge and speaker at their QLD event in March 2025.
- Andrew Houlihan. Twin City Engineering. CNC machining services. Injection molding services including die manufacture. Also has off-road motorcycle rally services, eg navigation set-ups and full rally bike preparation. Tour of his facilities in Albury. Has the ability to provide small batch run injection molding, including die machining. Production runs on CNC machining. Electrical Discharge Machining including electrical erosion.



| The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre - Measures and Monitoring                                 |   |   |  |  |   |   |  |     |  |                        |                |                   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|-----|--|------------------------|----------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Objective: Utilisation of The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre through Measures and Monitoring |   |   |  |  |   |   |  |     |  |                        |                |                   |   |  |
| Date: October to December 2024   |   |   |  |  |   |   |  |     |  |                        |                |                   |   |  |
| Measure  | What to Measure   | Why   |  |  |   |   |  |     |  | How to Measure         | Regularit<br>y | Who to<br>Contact | User Guide  |  |
| MEMBERSHIP<br>S  | Number of memberships   | Membership system not yet commissioned by MSC - awaiting insturctions<br>Membership form has been created in consultation with MSC in preparation for system launch   |  |  |   |   |  |     |  | Membership form        | Annually       |                   |   |  |
|  | Demographic profile of membership                                 | Diverse visitation: students (primary/secondary/tertiary), researchers, academics, industry, government, startups, scelups, SME, large corporates, retired community members - see Attendees spreadsheet for visitation statistics                                    |  |  |   |   |  |     |  | Membership form        | Annually       |                   | Understand users and grants - youth, females, nationality |  |
|  | Membership location   | N/A   |  |  |   |   |  |     |  | Membership form        | Annually       |                   | Understand where users are located and which LGA          |  |
|  | Industry Type   | Education, Academia, Manufacturing, Agriculture, Mining, Advisory, Consulting, Professional Services - see Attendees spreadsheet for visitation statistics  |  |  |   |   |  |     |  | Membership form        | Annually       |                   |   |  |
|  | Number of member visits   | Number of visitors in Q2 FY 2024-25 (ending 31 December 2024) was 53 - see Attendees spreadsheet for visitation statistics  |  |  |   |   |  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  | Number of discovery meetings held                                 | 14  |  |  |   |   |  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
| PROGRAMS<br>AND EVENTS   | Number of programs/events delivered                               | 0   | 1  | 3  | 0   | 0   | 11   |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  | Types of program/event delivered and to who                       | <b>For Startups:</b><br>The Melt ENGAGE May 2024 (ie Q4) - 19 (startup founders from 15 startups in the cohort)<br><br>Preparations have commenced for The Melt ENGAGE May 2025 (ie Q4 FY2024-25) - 19 (expecting startup founders from 15-20 startups in the cohort) | <b>For Scaleups:</b><br>The Melt NOVA - Cleantech Pilot Enabler (ongoing program) also includes addition content modules: LCA, Business Case Development, Sales Expertise and Productioneering | <b>For Industry:</b><br>- Glencore Operational Technologies micro-credentials and QA training delivery<br>- Hunter Innovation Festival Muswellbrook Roadshow<br>- Net Zero Economy Agency (NZEa)<br>"Australia Bringing New Energy" campaign | <b>For Students:</b><br>Maker Projects Grant announcement was expected in December 2024. Proposal to fully fund 160 local high school students to make projects in the STEM innovation Lab and The Melt Modern Manufacturing Centre. BHP committed to provide support if successful. However, there is a strong possibility that they will provide support if it can be hosted without the grant funding. TBC | <b>For MSC:</b><br>Proposal for an internal innovation program to be run for MSC staff at later date.<br><br>Undergoing internal review by MSC. | Community Tours:<br>Tours for:<br>- academia: 2<br>- industry: 4<br>- politicians: 2<br>- startups/scaleups: 2<br>- general community members: 1 |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  | Participants per program and/or event                             | Ongoing activities with several of the cohort from 2024   | Currently 9 (scaleups in program)<br><br>In discussion for another 2 scaleups  | Glencore - 12<br>Hunter Innovation Festival Roadshow - 35<br>NZEa - Audience reach is unknown but with broad distribution through TV, radio, print, website and popups in shopping centres it is expected to be very high                    | N/A   | N/A   | 53   |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  | Presenters/partners per program and/or event                      |   | 6  | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   | 7 organisations brought tour parties including Hare and Forbes, Glencore, UoN, Danish Consulate, HunterlIF, MSC, BHP                             |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  | Delivery supporters per program and/or event                      |   | 4 (service providers engaged to assist with pilot development activiteis)  | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   | N/A  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  | Participant satisfaction of the outcome of programs               |   | 5 out of 5   | No survey conducted but very positive response. No negative feedback received  | N/A   | N/A   | No survey conducted but very positive response. No negative feedback received  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  | Participants in business model creation module                    |   | 9  | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   | N/A  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   | MHVO Program Licensing Modules                            |  |
|  | Participants in product management module                         |   | 9  | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   | N/A  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   | MHVO Program Licensing Modules                            |  |
|  | Participants in raising capital module                            |   | 9  | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   | N/A  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   | MHVO Program Licensing Modules                            |  |
|  | Participants in pitch coaching module                             |   | 9  | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   | N/A  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   | MHVO Program Licensing Modules                            |  |
|  | Participants in financial modelling module                        |   | 9  | N/A  | N/A   | N/A   | N/A  |     |  | Tracked in spreadsheet | Quarterly      |                   | MHVO Program Licensing Modules                            |  |
|  | Program compliments or extends the STEM Innovation Lab curriculum | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  | Yes - it would  | N/A   | Yes  |     |  | Melt                   | Quarterly      |                   |   |  |
|  |   | Promotion of programs - Number of engagements with community, corporate and government  |  | 10   | 20  | N/A   | N/A  | N/A |  |                        | Melt           | quarterly         |   |  |
|  |   | Promotion of programs - Reach and engagement of social media channels including Facebook and LinkedIn   | Organic reach is still percolating on LinkedIn due to the volume of activity at the time of the program (100,000 direct + additional organic distribution)                                     | At least 10000 direct + additional organic distribution  | Exact numbers are unknown but at least 100,000 direct + additional organic distribution   | N/A   | N/A  | N/A |  |                        | Melt           | quarterly         |   |  |

|            |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |      |           |  |  |
|------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|------|-----------|--|--|
| ENGAGEMENT | Promotion of programs - Number of mainstream digital media channels, website traffic, radio, TV, print media | 4 Startup media outlets<br>NSW Gov<br>Investment NSW<br>The Melt networks  | 2 Startup media outlets<br>NSW Gov "Climate and Energy Action" website<br>The Melt networks                            | Exact distribution is unknown due to media affiliations 2NUR, PowerFM, ABC Radio Interviews<br>TV<br>Print media - various newspapers, magazines<br>HunterIF website<br>HMA website<br>Net Zero Economy Agency website<br>Popups in shopping centre at various event locations around the Hunter (5 sites) and Gladston Coal Basin and Charlestown Square during Oct/Nov/Dec<br>The Melt website<br>Greenhouse website<br>NSW Gov Clean Energy website<br>A Future Made in Australia website | N/A  | N/A  | N/A   |   |   | Melt | quarterly |  |  |
|            | Prototype iterations   | Russel Flynn (The Melt ENGAGE alumni) - FlynnAir: Further iterations of prototype occurred in Q2 FY2024-25. Continue to mentor and support Russel (in his timeframe) | Shaun Barker - Lock Block: 18 x prototype iterations (up from 16 as reported in Q1 FY2024-25)                          | Brandon Edwards and Dan Perfrement (The Melt ENGAGE Alumni) - Next Gen Hydro: working towards first prototype  | Bruce Richards - Beacon Automation: Bovine Patch (vial) 1 x prototype iterations | Glencore Operational Technologies Lab: training hub for upskilling and QA of employees knowledge continued | Vesi Water (The Melt ENGAGE Alumni):<br>Allegro Energy (The Melt NOVA Alumni)<br>PlasmaLeap (The Melt NOVA Alumni)  |   |   | Melt | Annually  |  |  |
| OUTCOMES   | Number of products to market - status comments   | Prototype circulated to trial users<br>Russel has time and budget constraints that impact his ability to move at a higher pace                                       | Design completed<br>Prototype design for manufacture stage<br>Ongoing mentoring and coaching<br>Referral to IP lawyers | Progressing in design phase<br>Folunders have time constraints that impact ability to move at a higher pace  | Further design iterations completed and product in market                        | First 4 (of 42 proposed) modules of content delivered in trial setting                                     | 3D printing of components for their prototype<br>3D printing and CNC machining of components for their 800kwh flow battery prototype which is on schedule to be delivered to Origin Energy's Eraring Power Station in Q3 FY 2024-25<br><br>Announced as Winner - HMA Collaboration Partnership Award for the project with MSC, The Melt and Allegro Energy to develop their revolutionary new micro-emulsion based Redox Flow Battery |   |   | Melt | Annually  |  |  |
|            | Number of new business created   | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | N/A  | 1   | 1 | 1 | Melt | Annually  |  |  |
|            | Number of new jobs created   | 1  | 1  | 2  | N/A Existing business  | TBD  | 1   | 6 | 1 | Melt | Annually  |  |  |



## 6.7 Post Event Report - New Years Eve 2024

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Responsible Officer:      | Director - Community & Economy   |
| Author:                   | Events & Tourism Co-Ordinator  |
| Community Strategic Plan: | 4 - <i>Cultural Vitality</i><br><br>A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging |
| Delivery Program Goal:    | 4.3.1 - Develop and implement a program of Shire events to engage more locals and attract more visitors                            |
| Operational Plan Action:  | 4.3.1.1 - Work in partnership to deliver events which support the community and attract visitors to the Shire.                     |
| Attachments:              | Nil  |

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a post event report on the New Year's Eve celebration held on December 31 2024.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Year's Eve celebration was an unmitigated success, highlighting a family friendly event that attracted a renowned DJ, and a spectacular fireworks display. There was strong family attendance, and positive feedback was received. The NYE event has confirmed its place as a key community event for Muswellbrook and the entire Shire.

### PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil

### BACKGROUND

Muswellbrook Shire celebrated the arrival of 2025 with a spectacular New Year's Eve celebration at the Muswellbrook Showground on Tuesday, December 31, 2024.

From 5:30 pm until 9:00 pm, residents and visitors gathered for a family-friendly celebration. The event featured live music, amusements, food vendors, and a dazzling fireworks display. With an estimated 4,000 people attending, highlights included a performance from Tamworth-based band Savage Groove, followed by a set from renowned DJ Tigerlily. The festivities culminated in a 10-minute fireworks display, illuminating the night sky at 8:50 pm.

The event was not only the Shire's annual celebration of the new year, but also demonstrated Muswellbrook Shire Council's commitment to providing family friendly events. Children's entertainment included jumping castles, an obstacle course, a giant maze, and zorb balls.



Additionally, attendees were able to enjoy face painting and roving entertainment, including 2 fire & LED shows.

### **CONSULTATION**

The planning process involved extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including residents, community groups, and sponsors.

### **REPORT**

#### **Event Impact**

Muswellbrook Shire Council's New Year's Eve Celebration responded to a community engagement survey, which identified a need for more activities catering to the 18-30-year-old demographic. By offering diverse entertainment options that resonated with this group, the event helped strengthen social connections and fostered a sense of community among the Shire's younger residents. The inclusion of Muswellbrook Shire's WIRES and Scouts groups to facilitate a community BBQ and recycling initiatives reflected Council's commitment to actively involve local community groups in all events to support their initiatives, fundraising efforts, and increase awareness of their contributions to the Muswellbrook Shire community. On a social level, the event allowed families, friends, and neighbours to come together in a safe, alcohol-free environment.

#### **Marketing and Media Exposure**

Prior to the event, extensive marketing efforts ensured that the New Year's Eve celebration was widely promoted across Council's social media channels, significantly increasing awareness of both the event and its major sponsor, Idemitsu.

In addition to online marketing, event posters and flyers were distributed throughout Muswellbrook Shire, with strategic placement at local businesses, community centres, and high-traffic areas. Local radio stations also played a key role in promoting the event through paid advertisements and a one-on-one interview with head lining artist DJ Tigerlily.

This multi-channel approach ensured that the event received consistent exposure and that sponsors gained significant visibility throughout the lead-up to the event and beyond.

#### **Community Engagement**

Community engagement was a central focus of the event, which was designed with families and individuals of all ages in mind, ensuring that everyone could participate in the festivities. This was reflected in the variety of activities and food & beverage options available, all targeted to cater for the broad demographic the event attracts.

Social media engagement reflected a strong sense of ownership and pride among residents and families, with overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the children's entertainment, catering options, and headline artist. Beyond the event activations, it also provided an opportunity for the community to come together and connect, fostering a sense of belonging and shared experience.

The decision to keep the NYE celebration alcohol-free reinforced Council's commitment to offering a balanced schedule of annual events that create inclusive environments for residents, families, and young children who prefer to attend alcohol-free gatherings. Attendee feedback confirmed broad support for the decision, with Council being commended for offering the community an opportunity to enjoy the celebration without potential alcohol-related security concerns.





**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The New Year's Eve celebration is a budget item in Community and Vitality Events. Part sponsorship is also sought.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

**STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The event was delivered in accordance with the event risk management plan.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS**

Nil

**6.8 Post Event Report - Denman Wine Food & Film Affair 2024**

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Responsible Officer:</b>      | Director - Community & Economy   |
| <b>Author:</b>                   | Events & Tourism Co-Ordinator  |
| <b>Community Strategic Plan:</b> | 4 - <i>Cultural Vitality</i><br><br>A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging |
| <b>Delivery Program Goal:</b>    | 4.3.1 - Develop and implement a program of Shire events to engage more locals and attract more visitors                            |
| <b>Operational Plan Action:</b>  | 4.3.1.1 - Work in partnership to deliver events which support the community and attract visitors to the Shire.                     |
| <b>Attachments:</b>              | Nil  |

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a post event report on the Denman Wine, Food and Film Affair held on 2 November 2024.

**OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

Council:

1. Notes the content of this report.
2. Supports the delivery of the Denman Wine, Food and Film Affair, in partnership with the Denman Chamber of Commerce, to be held on 1 November 2025.

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Denman Wine Food & Film Affair 2024 was a resounding success, highlighting the region's culinary and creative strengths while fostering community engagement. With strong attendance, positive feedback, and valuable lessons for future improvements, the event has solidified its place as a key cultural and economic driver for Denman and the Upper Hunter.

**PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS**

Nil



## BACKGROUND

First launched by the Denman Chamber of Commerce in 2003, the Denman Wine & Food Affair made its highly anticipated return in 2024, in partnership with Muswellbrook Shire Council, funded by Transport for New South Wales' Open Streets grant. Incorporating the Blue Heeler Film Festival, the event evolved into the Denman Wine Food & Film Affair, solidifying both its reputation as the Hunter's premier street party and as a celebration of the Upper Hunter's finest wines and cuisine.

Held in Ogilvie and Paxton Streets, with Denman Memorial Park dedicated as a kids' zone, the 2024 event continued its tradition of showcasing the Shire's exceptional wine producers, regional breweries, and distilleries. Community engagement initiatives included a dedicated area to accommodate attendees from local aged care facilities. Delivery of key operational support elements, including car parking management, merchandise sales, and waste recycling by the Denman Lions Club, the Men's Shed, and View Club continued the event's tradition of active community involvement. In collaboration with the Denman Chamber of Commerce, a full brand redesign and a mix of new and traditional activations were introduced to preserve both the event's identity and to facilitate its continued growth. This collaborative approach reflected the partnership's commitment to introduce a revitalised strategic event planning framework aimed at increasing attendance and ensuring the event's long-term success.

The 2025 event featured a diverse selection of food and beverage options from over 50 vendors complemented by three entertainment stages featuring a blend of local talent and headline artists, including Imogen Hall, Mitch Tambo, Regian, Nathan Lamont, and Travis Collins. New activations included a dynamic street flash mob performance and continuous screenings of the Blue Heeler Film Festival films in the Denman Memorial Hall alongside the event's traditional woodchopping competition.

Council's strategy to maximise tourism and economic benefits from the Wine, Food & Film Affair, through expansion of the current one-day model to a full weekend experience, reached its first milestone in 2024 with the launch of the event's official opening night. Delivered in conjunction with the Blue Heeler Film Festival Red Carpet Awards at Two Rivers Wines on the Friday night, its successful implementation was achieved without requiring Council to provide additional financial or resourcing support. A second event growth achievement for 2024 was the inclusion of a free sunrise hilltop yoga event at Two Rivers Wines. This activation had strong initial pick-up by 42 attendees, and post event booking requests will ensure this popular new addition to the weekend will return in 2025.

## CONSULTATION

The Denman Chamber of Commerce, as event partner, was involved extensively in all aspects of planning and delivery. Consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, including emergency services, main street business owners, residents, community groups, and aged care facilities, were carried out through letterbox drops, individual meetings, and inclusion in Council's fortnightly event planning meetings. All licenced premises in Denman were consulted on the event's Alcohol management, security, and licencing arrangements.

## REPORT

### **Successes: Attendance & Economic impact**

The event attracted record attendance, with an estimated 11,000 attendees.

Feedback received from the Denman Chamber of Commerce reported significant increases in Ogilvie Street business retail sales compared to usual weekend trading.

Accommodation service providers confirmed that they were fully booked.



Approximate sales figures obtained from local wineries represented at the event confirmed an average of 1250 glass of wine were purchased at each stand, resulting in an average revenue of \$11 250 per vendor.

Both local hotels reported approximate trading figures on event day, with revenue calculated at \$60,000.

The Denman Devils Football Club bar sales achieved approximately \$10,000.

### **Marketing and Promotion**

Council's 8-month, multi-channel marketing strategy, in collaboration with the Denman Chamber of Commerce's Discover Denman social media accounts, was highly successful in boosting event awareness. It reached a much larger audience than previous events and played a key role in driving record attendance.

### **Areas for Improvement**

Blue Heeler Short Film Screenings: While, overall, the attendance numbers were strong at the Memorial Hall screenings across the day, viewer feedback indicated that timed, scheduled film screening sessions, as opposed to the continuous screening model, would increase attendance at this activation.

Waste Management: The contracted service provider failed to deliver waste bins on time, and fixed street bins had not been emptied prior to the event as scheduled. To manage the large volume of food and packaging waste generated and to utilise the fixed street bins, council's event staff completed an initial manual emptying followed by monitoring and further manually emptying the street bins throughout the day to ensure waste management services were available.

### **Key Takeaways**

The Partnership between the Denman Chamber of Commerce and Muswellbrook Shire Council, was highly effective in supporting enhanced event planning and delivery and facilitated a range of event expansion initiatives.

Community support for the continued delivery of this event is unanimous and marketing efforts were effective, with strong digital engagement leading to higher attendance.

The event planning strategy should continue its successful approach of introducing new activations and programming each year to keep the experience fresh. By balancing traditional elements with new vendors, activations, and entertainment, the event can avoid repetition, sustain attendance, and ensure long-term viability.

Consideration should be given to engaging a permanent contracted event waste management service provider for all council events to ensure service delivery and mitigate potential reputation risks to avoid any negative impact on the event's overall success.

### **Social Implications**

Beyond economic benefits, the event reinforced the importance of regional identity and local community engagement through both consultation and active participation.

Provides a unique and free platform for local business and producers to leverage new markets and increase brand visibility.

Promoted the shire as a tourism destination.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Denman Wine, Food and Film Festival received funding from Transport for NSW Open Streets Program and Voluntary Planning Agreement funding.





**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

**STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Event delivered in accordance with the risk management plan.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS**

Nil



## 6.9 Community Services

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Responsible Officer:      | Director - Community & Economy   |
| Author:                   | Manager Community Services   |
| Community Strategic Plan: | 2 - <i>Social Equity and Inclusion</i><br><br>An inclusive and interconnected community where everyone enjoys full participation |
| Delivery Program Goal:    | 5.2.1 - Facilitate and implement improved all abilities access and inclusion across the Shire.                                   |
| Operational Plan Action:  | Not applicable   |
| Attachments:              | Nil  |

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### PURPOSE

To provide an update on Community Services.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in the report be noted.

Moved: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

### REPORT

#### Community Services

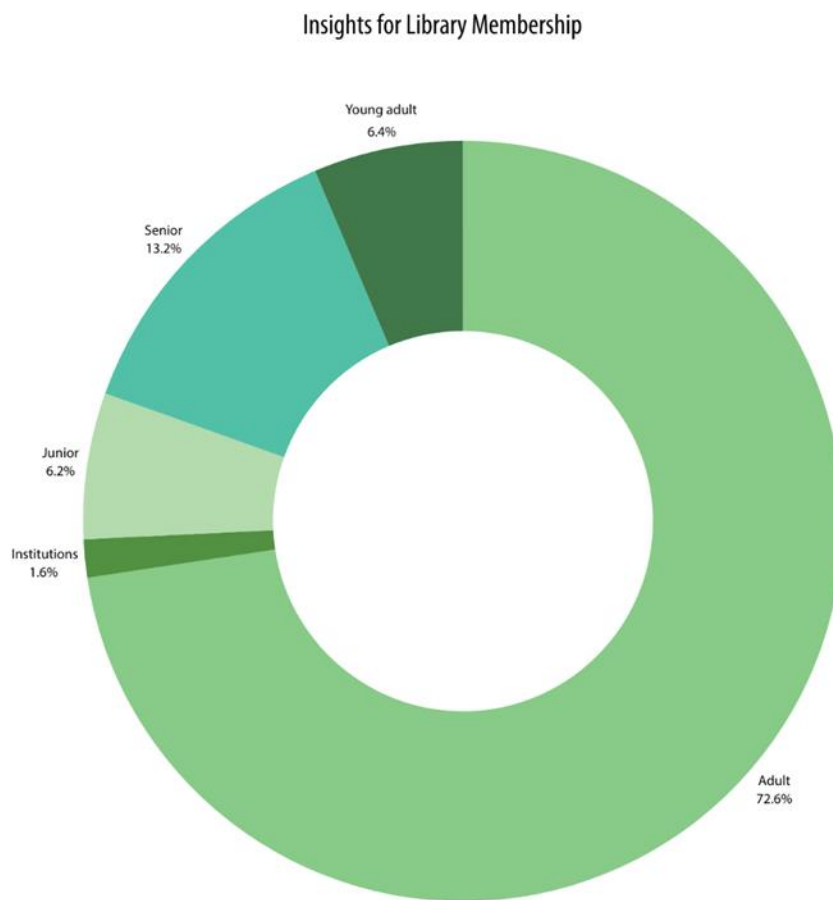
##### **Muswellbrook Libraries:**

##### Membership and Loans

Library services are showing increased growth in membership and loans during the first half of 2024/25 with **306 new registrations**. Many new members are utilising Library spaces and online collections.

The updated DRAFT Library Membership Policy is currently on public exhibition, with key changes to reduce barriers to Library membership by enabling alternate Library membership registration methods for community members without fixed addresses and streamlined digital Library registration.

Loans for physical and digital collections continue to grow. The Library is currently in the process of onboarding a new digital streaming platform for Library member use, which will feature TV, Movie, and Music streaming. This service will launch in March.



Providing opportunities that increases community literacy, both physical and digital

Library services have delivered 275 face-to-face programs to the community since July with new outreach opportunities planned for 2025. These programs target all age groups within the Community and leverage off Library collections and partnerships. To date, Library programs have been attended by 3,783 community members.

The launch of the loanable Curiosity kit collection in late 2024 has provided additional resources for the team to utilise during School Holiday and after school programming with positive feedback received regarding kits. The current Kit collection is focused on the 0-13 years ages however planning is underway for additional kits targeted at additional age groups.

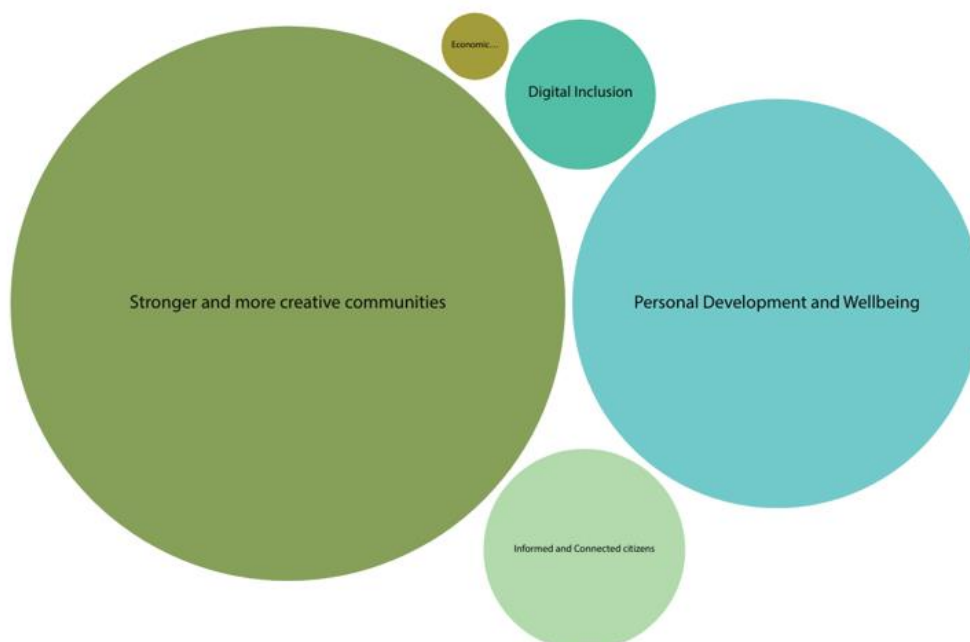


**Pictured: Emergency Services Story Time**



Pictured: Author Talk with Penelope Janu

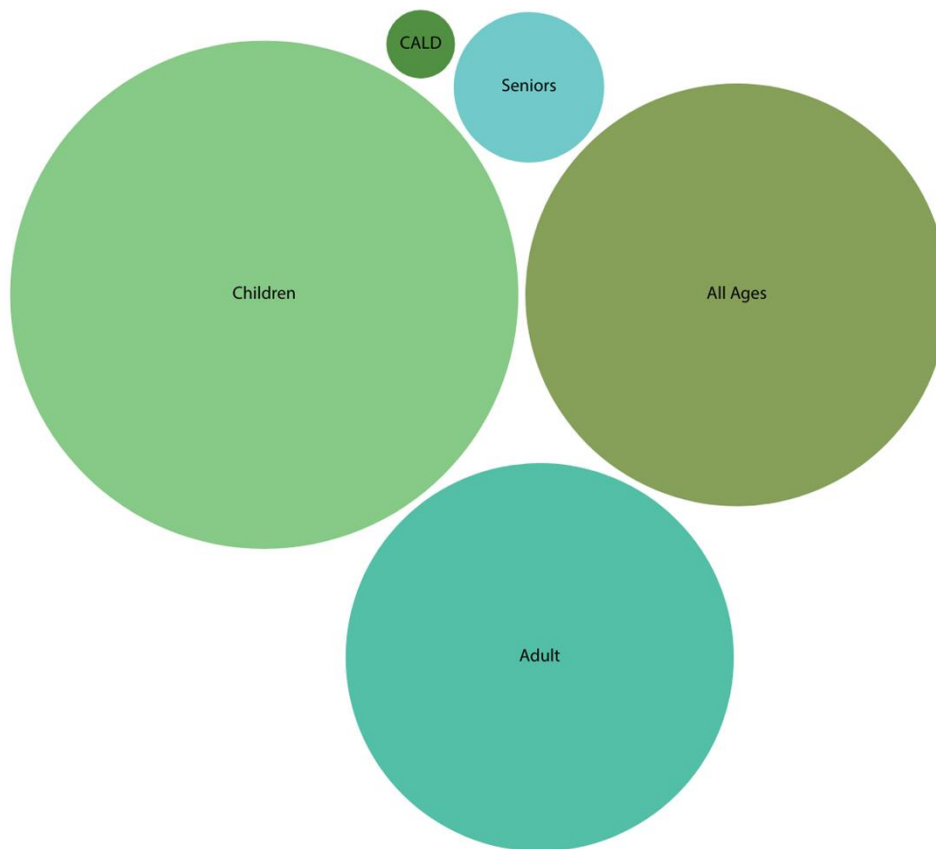
### Outcome Insights for Library Programs







### Attendance Insights for Library Programs by Demographic



#### NSWPLA Update:

The NSWPLA CEZone meeting was held recently with the Head Librarian in attendance. The Committee discussed a range of collaborative activities to promote and support the Library services within the zone, including shared resourcing, professional development, and promotions. Further information and reports will be discussed surrounding these topics at the next meeting scheduled for June 5 (TBC) at Singleton Library. Councillor representatives will receive an invitation to attend this meeting.

#### **Community Development:**

##### Seniors Week Brochure 2025 - Time to Shine!

The NSW Seniors Festival 2025 (March 3-16) celebrates older Australians with free and low-cost activities across NSW. Enjoy social events in the Upper Hunter Shire and Muswellbrook Shire, like Trivia and Grandparents' Morning Tea, fitness sessions including Aquarobics and Chair Yoga, and creative workshops such as Art & Sip and Robotics, or enjoy outdoor experiences like Cinema Under the Stars and Gardening Sessions. Whether you're looking to stay active, learn a new skill, or connect with others, this festival is all about celebration, learning, and connection.

Follow the link to the 2025 Seniors Week Brochure [2025 NSW Seniors Festival Brochure - PRINT.pdf](#)



### Youth Week 2025

Planning is currently underway for the 2025 Youth Week event at the Muswellbrook Library.

### NSW Youth Week 2025 – Express. Empower. Engage!

From April 10 to April 20, 2025, NSW Youth Week is a celebration of young people, aged 12-25, giving them a platform to express their ideas, showcase talents, and connect with their communities. Stay tuned for upcoming events.

### **Muswellbrook Fitness & Aquatic Centres:**

#### **Programs**

- Learn to Swim Program has resumed with 300 participants enrolled. Intensive LTS was held over the January break with 35 participants, the program was offered at both Centres, the demand was for a program to be delivered in Muswellbrook.
- Aqua Aerobics, morning and evening classes are held; both sessions have consistent numbers.
- Boxing Classes, two evening classes are held, this has been a popular program, with numbers growing.

The Aquatic Centre Manager is in planning stages to provide Swim Fit Coaching to members of the community; further information to be provided as the program develops.

#### **Summer Holiday Activities**

- Australia Day Family Fun Day at both swimming centres.
- Power FM Pool Party.
- Giant Inflatables days.

There has been several School Carnivals held at the Muswellbrook and Denman Centres during February, as well as an Inter swimming Meet returning to the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre.

Denman Outdoor Pool swimming season will come to an end in March, the pool will be winterised and closed for the year. The Muswellbrook Outdoor Pool will remain open again for winter as a small cohort of swimmers like to swim outdoors during winter.

### **Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre**

#### **Public Programs**

#### Summer Launch: Explorer Adventure – 18 January 2025

The Summer Launch: Explorer Adventure at the gallery took place on Saturday, 18 January 2025, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM, offering a day of creativity and exploration for the whole family. This free annual event featured a range of interactive activities, including an Exploration Map, where participants embarked on an adventure using compasses and stamps, as well as hands-on workshops such as nature sculptures, DIY field journals, and explorer portraits with artist Peter Lewis. Additional entertainment included face painting, balloon animals, and a sausage sizzle, creating an engaging and fun-filled start to the new year.

#### International Women's Day Events

#### **Morning Tea – 7 March 2025**

Muswellbrook Shire Council will host a morning tea in celebration of International Women's Day 2025, embracing the theme "Accelerate Action – For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment." This year's theme highlights the need for action to advance equal rights, power, and opportunities, striving for a feminist future where no one is left behind. The event will feature guest speakers Patricia Casey and Lezlie Tilley, both exhibiting artists, who will share insights on



their artistic practices and experiences. Blue Flame Indian Restaurant will provide catering, with light refreshments and mocktails available for attendees.

#### Stitching the Landscape Workshop with Patricia Casey – 8 March 2025

As part of the upcoming program, exhibiting artist Patricia Casey will lead a hands-on workshop exploring the intersection of landscape, watercolour, and embroidery. Once considered a traditional craft, embroidery is now being reimagined as a form of contemporary art. Participants will experiment with watercolour, gouache, and hand stitching, learning how sewn marks can convey meaning and transform imagery into a personalised artwork. Patricia will provide guidance on basic stitching techniques, composition, and design, encouraging participants to express their own narratives through creative mark-making.

### **Activities**

#### Muswellbrook Art Prize

45 finalists for the 2025 Muswellbrook Art Prize have been selected from an impressive 837 submissions, reflecting the national significance of the prize – <http://artgalleria.com/view-room/42264>. This year also marked an increase in Ceramics entries, which have doubled over the past five years. With 137 submissions in the category, this surge suggests a growing appreciation for the medium among artists.

The finalists' exhibition will be on display from March 27 to May 24, 2025, with the winners announced on March 29 by guest adjudicator Anne Ryan, Curator of Australian Art at the Art Gallery of NSW. The winning works will become part of the Muswellbrook Shire Art Collection, ensuring continued public access to outstanding contemporary art. This prestigious prize is made possible through the support of Muswellbrook Shire Council and Bengalla Mining.

#### Opportunity for Artists and Musicians

Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, in collaboration with the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music and Arts Upper Hunter, are seeking expression of interest applications from visual artists, sound artists, and musicians for a project exploring the intersection of art and sound. Submissions close 10 March 2025 – <https://artgallery.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/eoi-art-music.../>.

### **Exhibitions**

- Women's Work II: from the Muswellbrook Collections – 11 January to 15 March 2025.
- Summer Studio: Max Watters and Todd Fuller – 24 October to 15 March 2025.
- Swallow the Rain: Patricia Casey – 11 January to 24 May 2025.
- Our Place: 100 Years of Martindale Public School – 24 October to 15 March 2025.



## 7 Closed Committee

### 7.1 Industry Presentations

*This report is CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2)(d) of the Local Government Act 1993, as it relates to commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed: (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or (ii) confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the council, or (iii) reveal a trade secret.*

## 8 Date of Next Meeting

13, May 2025

## 9 Closure