



# Parques Shire Destination Management Plan

2024 - 2030

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## Disclaimer

The information contained in this plan is intended only to inform and should not be relied upon for future business investment or other decisions. It is expected any specific recommended actions should be analysed and appropriate due diligence undertaken prior to making any investment decisions.

Recommended actions contained in the Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan 2024 to 2030 have been made based on assumptions, methodology and information provided from many sources. The authors, and Parkes Shire Council, accept no responsibility or liability for any errors, omissions or resultant consequences including any loss or damage arising from reliance on the information contained in this plan.

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# Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan

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## List of Acronyms

CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DMP	Destination Management Plan
DNSW	Destination New South Wales
DNCW	Destination Network Central West
HARS	Historical Aircraft Restoration Society Inc.
LGA	Local Government Area
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service
LTO	Local Tourism Operator
NSW	New South Wales
PSC	Parkes Shire Council
PSDMP	Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan
SAP	Special Activation Precinct
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
YE	Year End



## Acknowledgement of Country

Parkes Shire is in the land of the Wiradjuri nation – the largest Aboriginal territory at the time of European settlement, encompassing the Central West slopes and plains.

Wiradjuri Country extends from Coonabarabran in the north, straddling the Great Dividing Range down to the Murray River and out to western NSW, encompassing around one fifth of NSW. The people of Wiradjuri Country are known as ‘people of three rivers’, due to the three rivers that border their lands: the Wambool (Macquarie River), Galari (Lachlan River) and Marrambidya (Murrumbidgee River).

In the spirit of reconciliation, Parkes Shire Council acknowledges and the Wiradjuri people as the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future and we extend our respect to all Indigenous Australians in Parkes Shire.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and rivers. We also recognise the resilience, strength, and pride of the Wiradjuri community.



## 1. Introduction

The Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan (PSDMP) has been developed as a roadmap to guide the collaborative work of Parkes Shire Council (PSC) and local stakeholders to grow and develop the Parkes Shire visitor economy to 2030.

The PSDMP aims to recognise the opportunities and challenges associated with the Parkes Newell Highway Bypass, providing a strategic and unified direction for the development of the visitor economy as we steer towards a prosperous future.

Importantly, the Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan has been informed by research and engagement with representatives of industry, community and government and considers the:

- **Influence of major infrastructure projects** that are being developed within the Parkes Shire and their influence on the visitor economy - the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Newell Highway Bypass and Inland Rail.
- **Significance of important attractions and events** that have helped to position Parkes Shire as a distinct inland regional destination in NSW - The Dish, the Parkes Elvis Festival, and the potential of the Trundle ABBA Festival.
- **Ongoing work of Council to plan and create new recreation and place-based projects** that will further establish the Parkes Shire as a great place to live and visit.

The destination management planning process was initially undertaken by Urban Enterprise. Dr Meredith Wray (Wray Sustainable Tourism Research & Planning) was engaged to finalise the plan during October to December 2023.

The DMP process is outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Parkes Shire Destination Management Planning Process



<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for DMP engagement activities (Rounds 1 and 2)



The Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan has been designed as a living document to:

- Sustainably grow and further develop the Parkes Shire visitor economy.
- Best position the Parkes Shire within the Central West region.
- Establish a shared vision for the future of the visitor economy across the Parkes Shire.
- Identify realistic and catalyst opportunities to develop, grow and promote the range and quality of tourism product and visitor experiences across the region that appeal to key visitor markets.
- Encourage a productive, and integrated working relationship between Council and industry stakeholders.
- Further activate local businesses and support them to flourish.
- Adapt to changes in visitor travel patterns and behaviours arising from the Newell Highway Bypass.
- Adapt to changing conditions, issues and opportunities as they arise.
- Recognise the role of Parkes Shire Council as leading the sustainable tourism growth and development of the local visitor economy through the provision of financial and human resources, and as the custodian and manager of key assets, developing infrastructure and facilities.



## 2. About the Parkes Shire

Parkes Shire is in the Central West region of New South Wales. It is intersected by the Newell Highway which services road travellers from Melbourne to Brisbane and is a 3.5-hour drive from Canberra and a 5-hour drive from Sydney (see Figure 2).

The Shire encompasses an area of approximately 6,000 square kilometres of land and is home to approximately 14,300 people. Over 70 percent of the population live within Parkes, the primary servicing town for the region<sup>2</sup>. Parkes has a population profile that is 'book-ended' by a large number of young people under 20 and people over 60 years of age. The towns of Bogan Gate, Trundle and Tullamore have higher proportions of older residents. Peak Hill has a significantly high percentage of First Nations people.<sup>3</sup>

Parkes Shire neighbours the Cabonne, Forbes, Lachlan and Narromine Local Government Areas and benefits from its connections to other regional centres such as Bathurst, Condobolin, Cowra, Dubbo, Forbes, and Orange. Parkes and Forbes are located less than 30 kilometres apart via the Newell Highway and are known as twin towns. The Parkes Regional Airport provides daily passenger flights to Sydney and services the communities of Parkes, Forbes, and Lachlan Shires.

The location of Parkes is unique in that it is at the crossroads of the national rail network, which links to all capital cities in Australia. Nowhere else in Australia do so many national railways converge and redistribute to the farthest reaches of our continent.

Parkes Shire is currently at a transformational point in its development<sup>4</sup> with the construction of national scale infrastructure and development projects including the \$9.4 billion Inland Rail Project, \$168 million Newell Highway Upgrade, \$260 million Parkes Special Activation Precinct project, \$270 million Northparkes Mines Expansion, and NSW government approval of a new nickel and cobalt mine west of Parkes<sup>5</sup>. These projects will establish Parkes as a major centre for national transport logistics, including rail, road and airfreight, as well as a world leader in circular economy and sustainability-based industry. As this new economic activity begins to emerge, Parkes will further develop its role as an important regional centre with its population predicted to grow by up to 19 percent over the next two decades<sup>6</sup>. The town's growth will be further fuelled by the labour force needed to build a hub for these projects and the need for affordable housing. For example, the Inland Rail Project is expected to create more than 3,000 jobs in Parkes<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://profile.id.com.au/parkes>

<sup>3</sup> Parkes Shire Liveability Strategy

<sup>4</sup> Parkes Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020

<sup>5</sup> Parkes Shire Council 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review Submission

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-24/nsw-towns-housing-crisis-cowra-parkes-government-infrastructure/100201526>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/regional-business-and-economy-nsw/special-activation-precincts/parkes-activation-precinct>





Figure 2: Parkes Shire Map





### 3. Strategic Context

The Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan has been developed to align with the directions of the Central West NSW Destination Management Plan and NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030.

Figure 3: Visitor Economy Strategic Context



Parkes Shire is one of 12 local government areas that comprise the Central West NSW destination network region. The other LGAs within the region are Bathurst Regional, Blayney Shire, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes Shire, Lachlan Shire, Lithgow City, Mid-Western Regional, Oberon, Orange City, and Weddin Shire Council. Its location within a one and a half hour radius of other Central West destinations, Orange, Dubbo, Forbes and Condobolin is important to consider as part of any future collaboration opportunities.

The Central West Destination Management Plan 2022 to 2030 identifies five strategic objectives that are designed to coordinate the region's tourism industry and grow the Central West NSW visitor economy to be fit for the future and align with the NSW Government's 2030 strategic pillars.

The NSW Government's Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) 2030 acknowledges regional NSW as key to the future of the NSW visitor economy. The NSW statewide target for 2030 is \$65 billion in total visitor expenditure. Regional NSW will contribute \$25 billion in overnight visitor expenditure to this target. Tourism is identified as one of seven 'engine industries' expected to drive regional NSW economies over the next 18 years and is identified as one of 50 new priorities to drive long-term stimulus impact<sup>8</sup>.

The VES 2030 identifies five Strategic Pillars that have been established to guide visitor economy growth to 2030:

- Road to Recovery
- Build the Brand
- Showcase our Strengths
- Focus on World Class Events
- Facilitate Growth

The PSDMP also considers important Council strategies and plans that relate to the potential growth and development of the Parkes Shire visitor economy (see Appendix 2).

<sup>8</sup> NSW 2020 Economic Blueprint



## 4. About the Parkes Shire Visitor Economy

The following table highlights the 2019 (pre-COVID) visitor economy achievements versus the Year End (YE) 2022 results that shows a 30% increase in total domestic visitor expenditure and 27% increase in overnight domestic visitors.

Table 1: Parkes Shire Domestic Visitation 2019 and 2022 (YE Dec)

Table 1: Parkes Shire Domestic Visitation 2019 and 2022 (YE Dec) <sup>9</sup>		
	2019	2022
Total domestic visitors	383,000	356,000
Total visitor expenditure	\$87m	\$113m
Overnight domestic Visitors	173,000	219,000
Overnight domestic visitor expenditure	\$55m	\$95m
Daytrip visitors	N/A	137,000
Daytrip visitor expenditure	N/A	\$18m

Parkes Shire accounts for 6% of all domestic visitors and 5% of domestic overnight visitors to the Central West NSW region as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Central West Domestic Visitation by LGA

Table 2: Central West Domestic Visitation by LGA <sup>10</sup>					
Local Government Area	Total Share %	Domestic	Domestic Share %	Overnight	Domestic Daytrip Share %
Bathurst Regional (LGA)	22		13		9
Cowra (LGA)	4		3		N/A
Mid-Western (LGA)	19		17		N/A
Orange	33		22		11
<b>Parkes</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>2</b>
Blue Mountains	10		8		N/A
Lithgow (LGA)	7		6		N/A
Oberon (LGA)	3		N/A		N/A

<sup>9</sup> Note: International visitor data is not statistically reliable for Parkes SLA.

<sup>10</sup> The Value of Tourism to the Central West NSW 2022



The main reasons of travel to Central NSW destinations (Bathurst Regional, Cowra, Mid-Western, Orange and Parkes) are as follows:

*Table 3: Main Reasons for Travel to Central NSW Destinations*

<b>Table 3: Main Reasons for Travel to Central NSW Destinations</b>	
Main reason for travel	%
Holiday	43
Visiting Friends & Relatives	30
Business	22
Other	5

The visitor economy provides a source of employment for Parkes Shire residents. The table below highlights the percentage of Parkes Shire residents employed within tourism-related industries, including Accommodation and Food Services (6.9%) and Retail Trade (8.2%).

*Table 4: Main Industries of Employment - Parkes Shire Residents*

<b>Table 4: Main Industries of Employment – Parkes Shire Residents<sup>11</sup></b>	
Industry	% 2021/22
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	13.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	11.9
Mining	11.0
Retail Trade	8.2
Public Administration and Safety	8.2
Education and Training	7.9
Transport, Postal and Warehouse	7.3
Construction	7.2
Accommodation and Food Services	6.9
Manufacturing	2.9

<sup>11</sup> <https://economy.id.com.au/parkes/employment-by-industry>



## 5. Growing the Parkes Shire Visitor Economy

Enhancing Parkes Shire and its towns and villages as must-stop destinations in the Central West and appealing year-round, is important to increasing domestic visitor expenditure, overnight stays and daytrips to the area.

There is an immediate need to consider opportunities and strategies to grow and develop tourism in a new way given the construction of the Newell Highway Bypass.

Parkes Shire Council has an important role in leading and working with local stakeholders to guide the development, management and marketing of tourism and events to create greater awareness of the area and to encourage visitation year-round to grow the local visitor economy.

Continued engagement between Council and industry stakeholders is also necessary to drive the Parkes Shire visitor economy forward. This includes consideration of how Council can engage with the Chamber of Commerce and other important local and regional stakeholders including Destination Central West, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and CSIRO.

Visitation to the Parkes Shire has recovered well following the COVID-19 health pandemic and currently contributes an estimated \$113 million to the local economy. The Parkes Shire visitor economy can, however, be considered relatively small compared to other Central West destinations (Orange \$578 million and Bathurst \$383 million)<sup>12</sup>. The aim of this DMP is to further increase domestic visitor expenditure.

Research and engagement activities to inform this DMP identified the following main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges to the future growth and development of the Parkes Shire visitor economy.

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<sup>12</sup> The Value of Tourism to the Central West NSW 2022a



Table 5: Parkes Shire Visitor Economy SWOT Analysis

Table 5: Parkes Shire Visitor Economy SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Accommodation occupancy currently experiencing growth due to major infrastructure development in the area	Current Destination brand doesn't effectively reflect the Parkes Shire destination story and identity
Central location in network of Central West regional towns and stop-over destination for visitors on the Melbourne and Brisbane touring route and from inland NSW	Need to consider accommodation occupancy levels post construction of major infrastructure projects to continue good occupancy rates
The national and international significance of the Parkes Observatory	National Park facilities at Goobang National Park need improvement
The enduring reputation and appeal of the Parkes Elvis Festival	Limited local business engagement in visitor economy initiatives
Capacity of the Council to successfully deliver major events	Workforce challenges post-COVID-19
Significant government investment in major infrastructure projects - Newell Highway Bypass, Parkes Special Activation Precinct and Inland Rail	Lack of astro-tourism product and experiences linked to the significance of The Dish and moon-landing
Council commitment to enhance the Shire as a great place to live through place-making strategies and new infrastructure development and projects	Immediate need for improved gateway and wayfinding signage given the development of the Newell Highway Bypass that is due for completion in 2024 and construction of the Parkes SAP
Quality accommodation across the Shire	



Table 5: Parkes Shire Visitor Economy SWOT Analysis (cont.)

Opportunities	Threats
Create new visitor experiences aligned to destination strengths - astro-tourism, celebrity events, nature-based tourism, destination events	Changing economic conditions impacting event attendance, tourism visitation and business investment
Attract business travel and meetings linked to the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and Inland Rail projects	Ongoing threat from natural disasters - drought, floods and bushfires for residents and visitors
Further develop the Parkes Shire as an RV and EV friendly destination	Newell Highway Bypass may alter visitor flow
Collaborate with neighbouring LGAs and Central West region on destination marketing initiatives - e.g. cycle trails, public art trails	
Create new and vibrant public art installations across the Shire	
Attract new visitors to the Parkes Shire - e.g. younger generations, families, Generation X nomads	
Strengthen retail and entertainment in Parkes, like Dubbo and Orange	
Use shops for pop-ups and source grants to beautify empty shops	
Position Peak Hill as the gateway to nature-based tourism experiences	
Cultural experiences provided by the proposed development of the Parkes Regional Entertainment and Cultural Centre	
Village trail itineraries that connect villages and offer opportunities for product development	



## 6. Vision and Visitor Markets

### Vision

The following vision was created from findings of the destination management planning process:

*By 2030 the Parkes Shire will be a must-stop destination for visitors and business travellers to the Central West that is home to important astro-tourism experiences, major events and festivals, nature-based experiences and emerging contemporary visitor experiences.*

### Main Visitor Markets

Based on findings of the destination management planning process, the focus for Parkes Shire destination marketing initiatives should be on growing overnight visitation with the intention of attracting repeat and new visitors and encouraging them to stop, stay and explore the area.

Table 6: Parkes Shires Primary, Secondary and Emerging Visitor Markets

Table 6: Parkes Shires Primary, Secondary and Emerging Visitor Markets	
Visitor	Profile
Primary Visitor Markets	<p>Domestic overnight visitors travelling between Melbourne and Brisbane, within regional NSW and those visiting for festivals including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families</li><li>• Grey Nomads</li><li>• Other Aussie Road Trippers - Gen X Nomads, Millennials and Gen Zers</li></ul>
Secondary Visitor Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visiting friends and relatives of a growing and culturally diverse resident population</li><li>• Domestic daytrip visitors from the Central West region targeting families and Australians 45+ years</li></ul>
Emerging Visitor Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Business travellers:</b> connected to the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and Inland Rail infrastructure development projects.</li><li>• <b>Regional Sports:</b> participating and watching regionally significant sports events.</li><li>• <b>Education:</b> in cooperation with agencies working to promote the Parkes Shire as an excellent place for educational experiences.</li><li>• <b>Nature-based:</b> visitors interested in bird watching, cycling and walking.</li></ul>

**Note:** Consumer research undertaken by Amazon in 2002 found that millennials (born 1981 to 1996) are the most road-trip happy generation, with nine in ten (89%) saying they love going on road trips. This compared with gen Xers (Born 1965-1980) at 83%, baby boomers (Born 1955-1964) at 81% and gen Zers (Born 1997-2012) at 77%<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.capricorn.coop/caphub/industry/2022/amazons-aussie-road-trip-research>





## 7. Infrastructure Development Considerations

Growing the Parkes Shire Visitor Economy will require strategies to leverage opportunities associated with national and state significant infrastructure development projects in the Shire – the Newell Highway Bypass, the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and Inland Rail.

From a visitor economy perspective, careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of these projects for visitors to the area including consideration of any changes associated with visitor access and travel patterns; a changed gateway entrance to Parkes; viability of the location of the Visitor Information Centre at the Henry Parkes Centre; potential opportunities for new product development; and potential for new visitor markets (e.g. business travellers, business events) that may emerge from these major projects.

It is also important that Parkes Shire Council continues to adopt a strategic and whole-of-destination approach to continue to plan for and develop the Parkes Shire as a great place to live, visit and do business.

The following sections provide an overview of these projects relevant to the growth and development of the Parkes Shire visitor economy.

### 7.1. Newell Highway Bypass

The Newell Highway Bypass is a critical infrastructure project that will change visitor access to Parkes. The bypass, which is expected to be completed in late 2024, will relocate the Newell Highway two kilometres west of its current position, which cuts through Parkes. The bypass will not directly impact other towns and villages along the highway, including Peak Hill, Alectown, and Tichborne; however, it has the potential to affect where travellers choose to stop and stay.

The Newell Highway currently runs through the town of Parkes via Bogan Street. The upgrade will involve relocating the highway about two kilometres west, between Maguire Road to the north and Barkers Road to the south - a total length of 10.5 kilometres. The bypass would remove up to 1200 trucks per day from local streets and improve safety for motorists<sup>14</sup>. As such, the bypass will relieve pressure on Parkes CBD, and, in combination with the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP) and other attractions west of town, will also significantly alter the character and importance of the Western entry corridor into Parkes.

As part of the destination management planning process Urban Enterprise were engaged to prepare a Parkes Shire Bypass Strategy as a sub-report to the DMP. Based on their analysis of secondary and primary research conducted as part of this study, the following outlines potential impacts of the Bypass on the economy of Parkes:

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/parkes-bypass>



- Overall, case studies of similar towns bypassed show, the role of Parkes township as an overnight stopover destination and the many large scale construction projects underway may have short-term impacts on visitor expenditure within Parkes Shire.
- It is estimated that there may be a loss of 10% (\$7.2 million expenditure) within Parkes Shire as a result of the Bypass construction.
- The bypass will result in reduced traffic to CBD businesses, as 753,000 vehicles will be redirected from the CBD per annum. Economic activity may therefore be redirected to near the bypass (e.g. service stations) which could result in a risk of increased CBD vacancies, which is already a serious issue within the Shire.
- 31% of visitor trade is identified as at risk based on the proportion of the market not pre planning to stop in Parkes.
- 81% of businesses who responded to the industry survey identified that they would receive some negative impacts from the Bypass.
- Accommodation businesses surveyed estimated a loss of 31% of revenue, whilst retail businesses estimated a loss of 16%.
- Development pressure may occur around the interchange which could alter the growth pattern of the Parkes township community<sup>15</sup>.

Conversely, the Bypass Strategy identified a range of opportunities arising from the Bypass development that have implications for the town of Parkes as an appealing regional destination. The Bypass:

- Offers potential to build Parkes Shire and township as a visitor destination, rather than a just a stopover point as it currently is perceived to be.
- Provides easy access to the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, which will be a key driver of employment following its establishment.
- Removes heavy traffic from the Parkes town centre. Currently, 42% of traffic on the Newell highway is heavy vehicle traffic. This will provide opportunity to improve the Parkes town centre by making it a more pedestrian and cyclist friendly CBD.
- Encourages active transport improvements through the implementation of improved public amenities (i.e. street trees, street furniture, art and gathering places).

Proposed strategies identified in the Bypass Strategy to mitigate impacts and take advantage of opportunities include:

- Encouraging visitors to enter Parkes township from the gateway treatments, wayfinding, landscaping corridors and the establishment of a visitor stopover precinct.
- Enhancing and activating Clarinda Street to become a vibrant food, retail and entertainment precinct.
- Providing support to affected businesses to mitigate impacts of the Bypass.

To prepare for changes and ameliorate any negative consequences associated with the development of the Newell Highway Bypass and Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Parkes Shire Council engaged consultants, King and Campbell, to prepare a Parkes Western Entry

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<sup>15</sup> Parkes Shire Bypass Strategy



Gateway Masterplan that was finalised in October 2023. The Plan explores the merits of land-use changes along the road corridor as well as opportunities for improvements to the entry experience, including land use change, road, active transport and landscape improvements, wayfinding signage and tourism infrastructure and drainage improvements.

The preparation of the Masterplan is important as it provides a well-considered strategic plan to guide the development of an appealing new Gateway to the town. The vision is:

*To create an inviting, vibrant and memorable town entry from the proposed new Newell Highway Bypass, connecting the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and other major developments and centres further west of the Highway to the Parkes urban area in an enticing manner, that makes turning off the Highway worth it.*

It should also be recognised that Parkes Shire Council is currently exploring the future use of Spicer Caravan Park through a Redevelopment Business Case. This report will evaluate the future uses of the caravan park, ensuring Parkes has appropriate short and long-term accommodation options for visitors.

## 7.2. Parkes Special Activation Precinct

**The Parkes Special Activation Precinct and Inland Rail are significant development projects for Parkes that will consolidate its status as a key freight and logistics hub for NSW and Australia.**

Special Activation Precincts are dedicated areas within regional New South Wales which have been identified by the NSW Government to become thriving business hubs. They build on each region's competitive advantages to create jobs, drive investment and business opportunities and fuel regional economic development<sup>16</sup>.

Located 3km west of the Parkes township, the Special Activation Precinct will be a new and thriving enterprise hub, that will take advantage of its location at the only junction of Australia's two rail spines, the new \$10 billion Inland Rail connecting Brisbane to Melbourne that will intersect with the east-west rail line in Parkes and the Trans-Australian Railway<sup>17</sup>. Pacific National has committed \$35 million to start developing the Parkes Logistics Terminal adjacent to the Inland Rail<sup>18</sup>.

The 4,821ha Precinct builds on the previous work of Parkes Shire Council in developing the Parkes National Logistics Hub. From here, suppliers can access up to 80 per cent of Australia's population within 12 hours by road or rail. This allows the delivery of local products across

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<sup>16</sup> Parkes Special Activation Precinct Delivery Plan September 2023

<sup>17</sup> Parkes Special Activation Masterplan June 2020

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/regional-business-and-economy-nsw/special-activation-precincts/parkes-activation-precinct>



Australia and around the world. The Parkes precinct will build on already-planned private and government investments, creating up to 3,000 jobs across a range of industries.

The vision for the precinct is:

*The Parkes Special Activation Precinct will be a hub of sustainability and enterprise that will enhance the local and regional community. Located at the epicentre of transport and logistics, the precinct will be a thriving inland port to national and global markets.*

The Precinct has been planned to:

- **Stimulate economic development and employment** and be a hub of sustainability and enterprise that will enhance the local and regional community.
- **Be Australia's first United Nations Industrial Development Organisation eco-industrial park**, and the nation's leading circular economy precinct.
- **Become an inland port**, transferring export ready goods to every major city and freight centre in Australia.
- **Provide opportunities for new industries** in agriculture, freight and logistics, manufacturing, energy and resource recovery and transport.
- **Be a true eco-industrial park**, setting new benchmarks for efficient management and environmental performance standards in energy, waste, water, climate resilience and emissions.
- **Incorporate Aboriginal planning and design principles** ensuring the Precinct has a 'sense of place', history and spirit when we pass it onto the next generation.
- **Provide a flexible land use zone** allowing a wide range of employment and industrial uses in the area around the inland rail port – making the most of this opportunity.

**Of relevance to the Parkes visitor economy, the precinct has been planned to support the town centre and local business** with the complementary land uses permitted in the Precinct that are intended to promote economic growth for the region whilst not competing with the Parkes town centre.

**Opportunities associated with the Commercial Gateway Sub-precinct may provide product development opportunities that cater to the needs of visitors and travellers to the area.** This precinct has been designed to provide a transition between the industry uses of the Special Activation Precinct and the township of Parkes. The sub-precinct is located prominently alongside the proposed Newell Highway bypass of Parkes, it also offers business opportunities to service local and travelling populations. Objectives of the sub-precinct are to:

- Provide a transition between the heavier industrial uses in other areas of the Precinct and the existing Parkes township.
- Create the appropriate environment for businesses with more of a public interface.
- Provide an attractive and welcoming entry to the Precinct.
- Identify a gateway area to the Precinct off the Newell Highway that allows businesses to be located prominently.



- Service local, Precinct and travelling populations with provision for a highway service centre, a truck depot and truck stop, and a motel or hotel.
- Provide an entrance for development that requires vehicle visibility and promotion, within a high amenity sub-precinct with good public realm connection, landscaping and cultural heritage features.

Figure 4 highlights the location of this sub-precinct which is adjacent to the Newell Highway Bypass.



Figure 4: Map of the Parkes Township



### 7.3. Inland Rail Project

The Inland Rail project will enhance the National Land Transport Network by creating a rail linkage between Melbourne and Brisbane, connecting Queensland and the southern and western States.<sup>19</sup>

Spanning more than 1,600km, Inland Rail is Australia's largest freight rail project and one of the world's most significant rail infrastructure projects. It will connect Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, enhancing national freight and supply chain capabilities and connecting existing freight routes through rail, roads and ports. This project will deliver faster and more reliable freight across Australia and beyond to global markets. It will also mean safer, less congested roads and fewer carbon emissions. The project will also better connect businesses, manufacturers and producers to national and global markets and create new opportunities for Australian industries and regional communities during construction and beyond.<sup>20</sup>

Inland Rail is taking a staged approach to the project. The route comprises 12 sections, some already operational, some under construction, and others in the planning phase. The sections between Beveridge, Victoria and Parkes, NSW, are prioritised for completion by 2027.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 5: Map of Australia's existing freight lines, Darwin to Adelaide Railway, Sydney to Perth Trans-Australian Railway and the upcoming Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail.



<sup>19</sup> The Case for Inland Rail – Summary of the 2015 Business Case

<sup>20</sup> <https://inlandrail.artc.com.au/what-is-inland-rail/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://inlandrail.com.au/what-is-inland-rail/>



## 8. Visitor Experience Development

Given the development of the Newell Highway Bypass, it is important that the Parkes Shire is positioned as an attractive stop-over destination and give new and enticing reasons and experiences for visitors to stop, stay and explore.

The DMP focus on visitor experience development and activation across Parkes Shire aligns with the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy Strategic Pillar - 'Showcase Our Strengths' through focusing on existing strengths and developing new opportunities to ensure place making, destination marketing, events and visitor experiences drive visitation.

The Community and Industry Survey undertaken as part of the DMP process, as outlined in Appendix 1, also identified support for the development of new attractions and experiences (76%), increasing annual visitation (76%) and development of more local events (67%).

Experiences in Parkes Shire can be considered foundational or growth experiences. Foundational experiences drive the most significant number of visitors to the Shire and have the greatest potential to drive future visitation. Growth experiences are categorised as delivering some visitation from outside the Shire with further visitation potential if they continue to be supported.

The Foundational and Growth visitor experience themes for Parkes Shire are presented in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Foundational and Growth Visitor Experience Themes



In addition to the above experience themes, destination events may generate visitation to Parkes Shire and can be considered an emerging theme. Destination events are defined as events that drive economic development through a significant leisure, sporting or business event attracting visitation from primarily out of the Shire.

**The following sections further explain the significance of these events and experiences for the growth and development of the Parkes Shire visitor economy to 2030.**

## **8.1. Foundational Visitor Experiences**

The on-going recognition by Parkes Shire Council to coordinate the Parkes Elvis Festival and more recently the Trundle ABBA Festival as drivers for destination awareness and visitation to the Shire is significant. Parkes Shire is also home to the celebrated 'Dish' that is managed by the CSIRO.

The unique and 'celebrity' appeal of these events and attractions provides Parkes Shire with an important competitive advantage over other regional destinations.

There is, however, potential to further enhance existing and develop new aligned product and experiences and establish new destination marketing strategies to leverage the strengths of these assets to appeal to new and repeat visitors to further build destination appeal and awareness in the areas of Elvis, ABBA and astro-tourism experiences.

### **Celebrity Events and Aligned Experiences**

#### *Parkes Elvis Festival*

There is no doubt that the Parkes Elvis Festival is a significant hallmark event that has greatly helped to position Parkes as a distinct destination in NSW and Australia. Held since 1994, the Festival is recognised as one of the top three Festivals and Events in Australia. It attracts approximately 25,000 visitors annually and is estimated to have a global reach of 599 million<sup>22</sup>.

The NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 identifies the Elvis Festival as one of Country NSW's hero events and is supported by Destination New South Wales through state significant event development funding to 2025.

Estimations from the 2023 event stipulate that the event attracted 24,000 visitors and contributed \$15 million to Parkes Shire's local economy.

The 2024 Festival Visitor Post-Event Survey found:

- 43% of attendees were from Regional NSW, 19% were from Sydney, and 37% were from other states and territories.
- 92% of attendees were aged 45 years and over.
- 76% had been to the event before.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.parkeselvisfestival.com.au/about/festival-history/>





- 87% travelled to Parkes in a private vehicle.
- 80% said they were likely to or definitely will attend the event in 2025.

There are further opportunities to leverage the popularity of the Elvis reputation in Parkes through the curation of year-round Elvis experiences in and around the Parkes CBD including activation of a Parkes Elvis Central VIC in the CBD, revisiting the King's Castle experience, and developing the Gates of Graceland precinct.

### *Trundle ABBA Festival*

Building on the reputation of the Parkes Elvis Festival, the Trundle ABBA Festival was launched in 2012 by locals Ruth and Gary Crowley as a way of making Trundle a destination rather than a drive-through town. Trundle is located 65 kilometres from the Parkes township and is Australia's only and original ABBA Festival where all things ABBA are celebrated.

As well as providing economic benefits to the area, the Trundle ABBA Festival has been a morale boost and a source of nostalgic fun for the community of about 400 people. Importantly, the festival has grown from an attendance of 200 people in 2012 to a peak crowd of 4,000 in 2018 and leverages visitors who have also enjoyed the Parkes Elvis Festival.

The festival was, however, cancelled during 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in 2022 due to floods. Recognising the significance of the Festival to the Shire, Parkes Shire Council took over the coordination of the event for its re-launch in October 2023 and will plan and deliver the 2024 event.

There is an opportunity to develop the Trundle ABBA Festival through synergies with the Parkes Elvis festival coordination in terms of event management expertise; shared resource opportunities and cooperative marketing strategies coordinated by Council.

### *King's Castle*

The 'King's Castle' Elvis exhibit at the Henry Parkes Centre is also an attractor but requires some new thinking on how to present the memorabilia in a vibrant and appealing way.

Stakeholder engagement undertaken to inform the Henry Parkes Centre Masterplan (2016) identified that Greg Page, the owner of the Elvis exhibit, considered that the current exhibition space is limited and inhibits visitor flows. He would like to see the 'Elvis Experience' broadened and higher visitor numbers to reach 20,000 people.

### *Visitor Information Centre Relocation*

During the Parkes Elvis Festival, a dedicated event information hub, Elvis Central, is located in the Parkes CBD. Elvis Central is the official festival merchandise and souvenir outlet at 203 Clarinda Street. During this time, the Parkes Information Centre remains open for visitors outside the CBD.



Given the construction of the Newell Highway Bypass, consideration could be given to relocating visitor information services to the Elvis Central building or an alternative CBD location and creating a year-round destination experience in town.

## The Dish and Astro-Tourism Experiences

The concept of astro-tourism has expanded over the years, from dictionary definitions of 'activities by tourists paying to travel into space for recreation' to 'tourism using the natural resource of unpolluted night skies for astronomical, cultural, or environmental activities'. Dark skies are becoming a scarce resource as night lighting and atmospheric pollution increase. astro-tourism opens new opportunities of bridging science and tourism, motivating alliances for starry nights, science, culture, and nature<sup>23</sup>.

### *The Dish*

For Australians the story of 'The Dish' (as it's colloquially named) is cemented in the back of our minds through the celebrated film *The Dish*, released 21 years ago – telling the story (through a fictional narrative) of the important role played by the telescope during the historic Apollo 11 Moon landing in 1969<sup>24</sup>.

For astronomers, the Parkes Telescope is the most successful scientific instrument ever built in Australia and is unsurpassed in terms of the number of astronomers, both national and international, who have used the instrument, the number of research papers that have flowed from their research, and the sheer longevity of its operation (now over sixty years) that launched Australia into the world of 'big science' from the 1950s<sup>25</sup>.

For visitors, the giant dish is co-located with a café and the CSIRO Visitor Discovery Centre which features displays, hands on exhibits, a 3D theatre, retail store and children's space-themed playground. Visitation to The Dish has grown from 68,427 visitors in 2014 to a peak of 133,098 visitors in 2019 with the 50-year celebration of the 1969 moon landing. The Dish attracted approximately 100,000 visitors in 2023 with January, April and July the Dish's busiest months<sup>26</sup>. 60% of visitors come from QLD and 30% are from NSW. It is also the CSIRO's largest visitor facing site in Australia with the aim of engaging people in regional areas with science.

Visitor research undertaken to inform this DMP indicated that 51% of visitors visited or planned to visit the Dish during their trip to Parkes. Specifically, those who were day tripping to Parkes wanted to visit the Dish the most. This highlights the significance of the Dish as a visitor

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<sup>23</sup> Fayos-Solà, E., Marín, C., Rashidi, M.R. (2016). Astrotourism. In: Jafari, J., Xiao, H. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. Springer, Cham

<sup>24</sup> <https://spaceaustralia.com/feature/60-years-science-wonder-happy-birthday-dish>

<sup>25</sup> Robertson, P. (2011). *An Australian Icon – Planning and Construction of the Parkes Telescope*, University of Melbourne

<sup>26</sup> Parkes Dish visitor statistics 2014 to 2022 (YE December)



attraction and the potential to leverage further astro-tourism experience development opportunities that are linked to Parkes<sup>27</sup>.

To foster, encourage and promote astronomy in the region, the Central West Astronomical Society (CWAS) holds its annual festival of astronomy, or AstroFest, in July. The Festival brings world-renowned astronomers (professional and amateur) to the Central West so they may share their enthusiasm and love of astronomy. The two-day program comprises a one-day conference in Parkes and a daytime program of astronomy viewings and talks at the CSIRO Parkes Observatory Visitors Centre<sup>28</sup>.

In 2023, CSIRO upgraded the playground area and installed accessible paths and amenities. Plans are also underway to create two new visitor walks around The Dish. The first is an indigenous walk that will share local indigenous stories of the skies and native foods of the indigenous forest. The second is a walk around the other side of the Telescope to show historical pieces of scientific and telescope equipment. The CSIRO are exploring opportunities to create a significant astro visitor experience (e.g. planetarium and exhibition space) at the site and are keen to work collaboratively with Council and Destination New South Wales on this project. It is also important to recognise that visitor access to The Dish will remain a five-kilometre detour off the Newell Highway with the Newell Highway Bypass taking traffic around Parkes two kilometres south from The Dish turnoff.

There are opportunities to better connect The Dish to Parkes through creation of an astro-tourism experience in Parkes that is developed in collaboration with the CSIRO.

## 8.2. Growth Visitor Experiences

### Heritage and Cultural Experiences

Careful consideration is needed to present the heritage and cultural stories and artefacts of the Parkes Shire in a contemporary way including Bushman's Hill and Memorial Hill. This includes determining the best use of the Henry Parkes Visitor Centre including its attractions and visitor information centre given it will no longer be located on the Newell Highway thoroughfare.

#### *The Henry Parkes Centre*

The Henry Parkes Centre currently comprises the Parkes Visitor Information Centre and four heritage and cultural museums - The King's Castle Elvis Exhibit, Parkes Motor Museum, Moat Cottage Replica, Henry Parkes Museum and Antique Machinery Collection.

Visitor Information Centres provide reliable information on attractions, activities and events in the region. The Henry Parkes Centre is the only credited Visitor Information Centre within the Shire as is an important tool in dissemination information to travellers.

<sup>27</sup> Parkes Shire Visitor Survey, Urban Enterprise, 2023

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cwas.org.au/astrofest/>



The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) has attracted around 26,000 visitors per year over the five years 2015 to 2019. During the COVID-19 years (2020 and 2021) visitation declined by approximately 20% per year. The year ending 2022 has however reflected healthy growth to achieve 29,000 visitors. Visitors to the VIC are mainly from NSW (46%), Victoria (15%), local residents (15%), and Queensland (13%). Visitors are mainly families and those aged over 51 years<sup>29</sup>. Around 21% percent of visitors to the VIC pay to visit King's Castle and Vintage Car exhibits. It should be noted that the Parkes Historical Society manage ticket sales for access to the Henry Parkes Museum. This data was not available to inform this plan, but it can be assumed that visitor numbers are similar or less than those visiting the King's Castle and Vintage Car exhibits.

A Masterplan developed for the site in 2016 by Source Architects identified a number of proposals that outline a long term staged development of the Henry Parkes Centre including alterations to existing facilities, new landscape, wayfinding and signage works and potential new facilities to enhance the patron experience.

It should also be acknowledged that Council have recently engaged consultants to undertake a feasibility study for a proposed Parkes Regional Entertainment and Cultural Centre. If this Centre was approved consideration would also need to be given to the viability of the Centre for visitor information service delivery.

Given the construction of the Newell Highway Bypass, and concerns that incidental visitation to the Centre and its attractions may be impacted, it is recommended that a new Masterplan should be developed for the site that considers: if this site is the best option for a new King's Castle experience; location of the vintage car display so it is more visible; if there is a need for a dedicated visitor information centre in this location; the creation of an astro-tourism experience and the location and contemporary presentation of Henry Parkes Museum and its artefacts.

### *Parkes Aviation Museum*

The Parkes Aviation Museum that is curated by Historical Aircraft Restoration Society Inc. The Museum is co-located with the Parkes Regional Airport, highlighting the history of aviation in both Parkes and Australia. (HARS) is also planning investment and expansion of its historical aviation museum at Parkes airport. HARS also host an Aviation Museum in Albion Park that is home to a former Qantas Boeing 747-438 aircraft.

Support for grant funding opportunities for the expansion of the Parkes Aviation Museum should be explored in cooperation with HARS Inc.

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<sup>29</sup> Henry Parkes Centre, Visitors by State YE 2022



### *Silo Art Trail*

Ever since the first silo art was created in 2015, more than fifty large-scale artworks have been installed to beautify silos across the country including Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. There are currently six silo art locations in New South Wales: Weethalle, Grenfell, Portland, Dunedoo, Barraba and Merriwa.

The Silo Art Movement is considered to be more than a visual spectacle; it is a dynamic force of transformation and rejuvenation. In its majestic strokes and grandeur lie the seeds of renewal for many towns and communities that once teetered on the brink of obscurity. It is not just art; it is a resurrection, a new dawn that ushers in hope, economic vitality, and social resurgence. Every mural, every painted silo is a testament to the unwavering spirit of Regional Australia. The movement transcends the boundaries of art, becoming a robust engine that drives tourism, invigorates local economies, and rekindles the social fabric of communities<sup>30</sup>.

Silo art projects are a collaboration between the silo owner, regional communities, artists and local councils. At present, three silos within the Shire have been approved by their owner, GrainCorp for the installation of a permanent mural project. Bogan Gate and Tullamore are the two closest towns to silos with current owner approval, whilst, opportunities for temporary installations and further planning may be considered for other silos across the Shire.

There is an opportunity to create a significant silo art trail around the Parkes Shire given the strategic location of silos across the Shire.

### **Nature-Based Tourism Experiences**

Nature-based tourism is defined as leisure travel undertaken largely or solely for the purpose of enjoying natural attractions and engaging in a variety of nature-based activities. It includes a range of visitor experiences also associated with adventure, ecotourism, recreational activities, visiting natural attractions, health and wellbeing<sup>31</sup>. There are opportunities to promote nature-based tourism experiences provided by Goobang National Park, cycling trails, Bumberry Dam, Bogan Weir, Peak Hill Nature Walk and Trundle Black Range and new recreation experiences being developed in Parkes – the Akuna Wetlands, Kelly Reserve Splash Park and Lake Endeavour.

The following identifies nature-based tourism projects recently developed or underway within Parkes Shire that will provide new and easily accessible nature-based cycle and recreation experience opportunities for residents and visitors.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.australiansiloarttrail.com/new-south-wales-silo-art-locations>

<sup>31</sup> Ecotourism Australia Nature Based Tourism in Australia Manifesto



### *Peak Hill Gold Mine*

The Peak Hill gold mine was re-developed in 2002 as a Tourist Mine attraction located 400 metres from the Peak Hill town centre near the Newell Highway. In September 2007, Parkes Shire Council signed an agreement with lease-holder Alkane Exploration committing to keep the project running, through Council operating the tourist arm of the mine.

The Mine site provides a walking experience requiring a low to moderate fitness level to complete most of the trails. Alternatively, for those only wishing to access the main viewing platform, visitors can take a short, flat return walk along the low wall of the main open cut to experience the spectacular views across to the high wall. The site attracted around 5,000 visitors for the year 2022/ 2023.

### *Cycle Trails*

Parkes Shire has over 1000kms of gravel trails for visitors to explore, with pre-mapped day and multi-day cycle routes ranging from 20 to 120km. These day and multi-day routes included the 55km 'Dish Loop' to the famous CSIRO Parkes Observatory, the 68km Bogan loop, 60km Cookamidgera-Mandagery loop and the 200km 'Parkes to Trundle' section, which visits the historic villages of Peak Hill and Trundle.

Several new cycle trails, gravel routes and tours have also been launched within the broader Central West Region including the 345km 'Lachlan Valley Cycle Trail' which links the tourism of Forbes, Cowra, Eugowra, Gooloogong, Parkes and Canowindra and the 360km 'Orange and Villages Bike Trail' that is made up of a six-day cycling journey to wineries, cafes, farm-gates and restaurants across the Orange region<sup>32</sup>.

### *The Parkes Wetlands*

The Parkes Wetlands project will redevelop Parkes' former Sewage Treatment Plant maturation ponds into wetlands. The wetlands will create a crucial habitat for a range of native animals, affording birds, reptiles, mammals and invertebrates an important refuge, particularly during dry periods and prolonged drought. Planned future projects at the site include walking tracks, double-story bird hides, an amenities block, car parking, interpretive signage, cultural art and sculpture, over-water viewing platforms, and an outdoor learning space.

The transformation of this unused site into a fully integrated cultural, educational, recreational and eco-tourism space will, over time, create a high-impact birdwatching experience for locals and visitors, and provide a unique opportunity for travellers seeking ecotourism experiences. The project may also facilitate regional collaboration and investment in nature-based tourism across the Central West, such as the potential to develop a birdwatching trail linking the Parkes Wetlands to Gum Swamp in Forbes, Lake Cowal, and Lake Cargelligo.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.visitcentralnsw.com.au/pedal-power-take-a-cycling-holiday-in-central-nsw>



### *Kelly Reserve Splash Park*

The Kelly Reserve Splash Park is a free water play space at Kelly Reserve in Parkes. Council was awarded \$500,000 in funding from the NSW Government to create the Splash Park that will enhance the Kelly Reserve precinct as a social hub and gathering space, providing an entertaining and engaging space for the community and visitors to Parkes. The play space has been designed using the topography of the Lachlan catchment, and the rivers, lakes, dams, weirs and bores as inspiration. Interpretive signage tells the story of water and explains the physics and engineering that surround natural and engineered water flow. The project was completed in mid 2024 and was co-funded by Northparkes Mines and the NSW government.

### *Lake Endeavour*

Lake Endeavour will become the first developed natural water location for recreational use in the Parkes Shire, enabling locals and visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of the lake. The NSW Government's Places to Swim program will deliver safety upgrades as well as the installation of new recreational infrastructure to encourage people to get active in, on and around Lake Endeavour - from swimming, kayaking and paddle boarding, to fishing, walking and relaxing by the water. The recreational use of Lake Endeavour has been a long-held desire of the Parkes community and is expected to be completed in 2024.<sup>33</sup>

Cycle tourism opportunities and recreation experiences provided by the new developments at Akuna Wetlands, Kelly Reserve Splash Park and Lake Endeavour as well as potential developments highlighted in this Destination Management Plan need to be highlighted as part of the diversity of experiences spreading across the existing cycling networks through Parkes, Peak Hill, Trundle, Bogan Gate, Cookamidgera and Aleetown.

The following outlines other important nature-based tourism experiences that provide opportunities for visitor experience development requiring collaboration with NPWS and other agencies.

### *Goobang National Park*

The Goobang National Park has been the traditional nature-based tourism experience offering for the Parkes Shire. Situated near Parkes and Dubbo, and between Peak Hill, Parkes and Molong, the Park offers scenic views, bush walking, bush camping, picnic areas, mountain biking trails, and 4WD touring. The cultural heritage of Goobang National Park is also significant. Named a National Park in 1995, Goobang traditionally belonged to the Wiradjuri people, who preferred the flatlands of the Herveys and Curumbenya Ranges. Ancient campsites and relics can be found at the park today, and along with them survive mythologies about the significance of the region. The Wanda Wandong Woodland Trail and Burrabadine Peak Walking Track offer short and moderate hiking opportunities around the park.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.parkes.nsw.gov.au/Council/News-media-and-projects/Projects-and-works/Activation-of-Lake-Endeavour>



It should be noted that Peak Hill borders the base of Goobang National Park and has the potential to be positioned as the gateway to the Park and will remain a township on the Newell Highway. The town will, however, require entrepreneurial investment into product development such as food and beverage and accommodation to further activate it as an appealing place to stop.

### *Snake Rock Aboriginal Area*

Snake Rock Aboriginal Area is a small park of 61 hectares that is located west of Peak Hill on the semi-arid plains of central west New South Wales in Wiradjuri Country. This park is significant to Wiradjuri People and managed jointly between the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the National Parks and Wildlife Service under a memorandum of understanding. It derives its name from the Aboriginal artwork depicting a snake or river on the massive sandstone rock formation that dominates the park. The Park protects other Aboriginal heritage sites and regionally significant vegetation in what is otherwise a cleared agricultural landscape.

A Plan of Management was prepared and represents an important achievement in the ongoing relationship between NPWS and the local Aboriginal community. The plan contains a range of actions to protect the natural and cultural values of the park, including actions to support the local Aboriginal community in connecting to Country and actions to protect and improve the habitat of native plants and animals, including threatened species. The plan also allows for low key recreation but, in order to provide adequate protection for this Aboriginal area, the plan puts in place a management approach which only allows people to visit the park with permission from the Peak Hill–Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and NPWS<sup>34</sup>.

Opportunities to showcase and enhance visitor experiences of Goobang National Park and Snake Rock Aboriginal Park should be explored through engagement with key stakeholders – Peak Hill-Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Peak Hill could be developed as the gateway to nature-based experiences including Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/snake-rock-aboriginal-area-plan-of-management>





Based on the previous discussion, the following table outlines the main visitor experience development objectives to guide visitor experience development for the Parkes Shire to 2030.

Table 7: Experience Development Framework - 2030 Objectives

Table 7: Experience Development Framework - 2030 Objectives		
<b>Celebrity Events and Aligned Experiences</b>		
Primary Visitor Experiences	Parkes Elvis Festival	Continue to deliver a successful annual festival in alignment with the Parkes Shire Major Events and Festival Strategy
	ABBA Festival Trundle	Deliver the ABBA Festival in alignment with the Parkes Shire Major Events and Festival Strategy
	Parkes CBD	Cement the Parkes township as a must-stop destination in the Central West by creating year-round visitor experiences that leverage its celebrity status
	King's Castle Elvis Exhibit	Present a vibrant and enticing new visitor experience of the King's Castle collection to attract new and repeat visitors to Parkes
	Parkes Shire Silo Art Trail	Create a silo art loop experience within Parkes Shire to attract visitors to explore the Shire's towns and villages and connect to silo art trails across the Central West
<b>The Dish &amp; Astro-Tourism Experiences</b>		
	The Dish	Improve the connection of The Dish /CSIRO visitor experience to Parkes township
	Astro-Tourism experiences	Create new and vibrant astro-tourism experiences that better connect visitors to significance of The Parkes Observatory in the moon landing and The Dish movie
<b>Nature-Based Experiences</b>		
Secondary Visitor Experiences	Cycling	Improve promotion of cycling tourism opportunities in Parkes Shire and its surrounds
	Recreation	Continue to develop recreation and eco experiences for use by residents and visitors
	Peak Hill	Work with stakeholders to establish Peak Hill as the gateway to Goobang National Park
<b>Heritage &amp; Cultural Experiences</b>		
	Henry Parkes Centre	Review the HPC Masterplan (2016) to present a new contemporary visitor precinct
	HARS Parkes Aviation Museum	Support HARS to apply for relevant grant funding opportunities to support its plans for expansion of the museum
<b>Destination Events</b>		
Emerging Visitor Experiences	Events that attract visitors external to the Shire	Determine Council support for destination and business events that have the potential to attract considerable visitation from outside the Shire as part of the new Parkes Shire Event Strategy

It is also important that future visitor experience development adopts a whole of destination approach that considers visitor access, experience connectivity, visibility and appeal across the Parkes Shire. Consideration of attractions and experiences in neighbouring LGAs should also be recognised to identify visitor flows and cooperative marketing opportunities.



## 9. Destination Marketing

There is an immediate need for a review of the Parkes Shire destination brand and positioning story.

The current brand was developed in 2015 through the Parkes Brand Identity Guidelines. Parkes Shire currently uses a unified 'PARKES It all Adds Up' brand which was formulated from discovery workshops that identified the shared qualities of the diverse nature of Parkes are 'all positive'.

This brand is quite dated and not particularly engaging or consumer focused. It also fails to make a connection to any of the Shire's iconic assets, such as The Dish, Elvis Festival or ABBA Festival. This is a missed opportunity for the brand, as an iconic asset or event on a logo could have driven awareness to Parkes Shire through its recognition.

Interestingly, the Parkes Shire Council corporate brand addresses the weaknesses of the Parkes Shire destination brand, as it makes a clear connection to the region's iconic asset, the Dish. It is strongly recommended that a brand review process is undertaken in 2024 to create a new appealing consumer-facing brand.





## 10. Destination Management

To ensure the effective implementation of this plan, it is important the roles and responsibilities of Parkes Shire Council and other key visitor economy stakeholder organisations are clearly understood and communicated.

It is recommended that:

- Parkes Shire Council continues to be positioned as the umbrella authority to coordinate the implementation of this plan and provides support to implement the strategies and actions in the Parkes Shire Destination Management Plan to 2030.
- The terms of reference of Council's Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee is reviewed to ensure effective business engagement and to provide strategic advice to assist Council to implement the priorities and actions in this plan.
- Other key stakeholder organisations and agencies identified in this plan are encouraged to provide on-going support to assist with the implementation of this plan.

Monitoring of the implementation of this plan is also important to ensure its vision and priorities are achieved and to provide new information which can be used to inform planning and decision making for the Parkes Shire visitor economy to 2030.



## 11. Strategic Priorities

Five strategic priorities have been established to guide work of Council and industry stakeholders to grow the Parkes Shire visitor economy over the next five years.

*Table 8: Strategic Priorities*

Table 8: Strategic Priorities		
Priority 1	Destination Management	Strengthen Council destination management arrangements for tourism and events to foster collaboration with local and regional stakeholders to ensure a sustainable, capable, and resilient visitor economy.
Priority 2	Destination Development	Adopt a whole-of-destination approach to continue to plan and develop infrastructure and facilities to enhance the appeal and amenity of Parkes Shire as a must-stop destination for visitors and business travellers to the Central West.
Priority 3	Event Development	Continue to deliver and grow outstanding destination events to drive destination awareness and visitation to the Parkes Shire.
Priority 4	Destination Experience Development	Enhance existing visitor attractions and develop new 'bucket-list' visitor experiences aligned to the positioning strengths of Parkes Shire.
Priority 5	Destination Marketing	Create a new destination brand identity and positioning story for the Parkes Shire and review destination marketing and visitor information service strategies to ensure a coordinated approach to promote the Parkes Shire as a vibrant must-stop destination.

Appendix 3 shows alignment of these objectives to the Central West DMP and NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030.



## 12. Destination Action Plan

The following Destination Action Plan provides detail against each priority and associated actions for Council, industry and community stakeholders to implement cooperatively over the next six years to 2030.

The actions in this Plan have been assigned a priority time frame:

- SHORT = commencing Year One
- MEDIUM = commencing Years Two-Three
- LONG = commencing Years Four-Six

### 12.1. Priority One: Destination Management

Strengthen Council destination management arrangements for tourism and events to foster collaboration with local and regional stakeholders to ensure a sustainable, capable, and resilient visitor economy.

Actions	Time Frame
1.1 Integrate the PSDMP into Council delivery program and annual operational plan.	Short
1.2 Work cooperatively with relevant Council Departments and Committees to ensure the vision, priorities and actions of the PSDMP are communicated and the visitor economy is an important consideration of Council's strategies and plans.	Short
1.3 Engage with local businesses to present the PSDMP vision, priorities and encourage an open-for-business attitude in preparation for the completion of the Newell Highway Bypass.	Short
1.4 Review the Terms of Reference for Council's Destination and Major Events Advisory Committee to meet four times per year and advise on the implementation of the PSDMP. Representatives should be selected based on their knowledge and expertise in tourism. The Chair of the Committee should be from the business community. Councillors should be observers to Committee meetings.	Short
1.5 Present briefings on the implementation progress of the PSDMP to Council at least twice annually.	On-going
1.6 Encourage and support tourism operators to participate in industry development initiatives provided by Council and key tourism stakeholders e.g. destination marketing, sustainable business and event development.	On-going
1.7 Provide professional development opportunities for Council staff involved in destination and visitor economy to advance their strategic tourism knowledge and leadership capacity, i.e tourism and strategic land-use planning, destination research, event planning and evaluation, strategic marketing, digital marketing, crisis management planning and recovery.	On-going
1.8 Continue to work with key stakeholders to consider and plan for potential risks that may impact the local visitor including health pandemics, natural disasters, threats to natural and economic environments, and ensure visitor safety and security is assessed and integrated into current and future Council plans and policies.	On-going



## 12.2. Priority Two: Destination Development

Adopt a whole-of-destination approach to continue to plan and develop infrastructure and facilities to enhance the appeal and amenity of Parkes Shire as a must-stop destination for visitors and business travellers to the Central West.

Actions	Time Frame
<b>2.1</b> Continue to plan and deliver placemaking initiatives to establish Parkes Shire as a great place to live, visit and do business.	On-going
<b>2.2</b> Continue to advocate and support the enhancement and development of infrastructure projects which will help drive visitor economy growth to the area such as recreation spaces, playgrounds, walking and cycle tracks, campground amenities, and consideration of accessibility for visitors with support needs.	On-going
<b>2.3</b> Continue to improve the visual appeal, character and amenity of Parkes Shire towns and villages through the implementation of the Council strategies and plans, beautification and streetscape works, creation of new and enhancement of existing gateway entrances.	On-going
<b>2.4</b> Create new and innovative gateway, wayfinding and visitor information in key locations to welcome and encourage visitors to stop, stay and explore the Parkes Shire that are aligned to a new Parkes Shire brand (see Action 5.1).	Short
<b>2.5</b> Create new wayfinding signage to better connect The Dish to Parkes CBD in response to the opening of the Newell Highway Bypass.	Medium
<b>2.6</b> Continue to explore options for the redevelopment of the Spicer Caravan Park and a complementary caravan park to capture bypass traffic.	Medium
<b>2.7</b> Consider the viability of relocating visitor information services into the Parkes CBD in response to the opening of the Newell Highway Bypass.	Medium
<b>2.8</b> Identify suitable sites for free camping across the Shire, develop RV parking facilities near towns and villages, and continue to work with the Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia to promote Parkes Shire as an RV friendly destination.	Medium
<b>2.9</b> Work with the NRMA and other stakeholders to establish fast EV charging stations in key locations across the shire that are easily accessible for residents and visitors.	Medium
<b>2.10</b> Upgrade public amenities to include accessible toilets and baby change facilities.	On-going



### 12.3. Priority Three: Event Development

Continue to deliver and grow outstanding major and destination events to drive destination awareness and visitation to the Parkes Shire.

Actions	Time Frame
<b>3.1</b> Finalise the Parkes Shire Major Events and Festivals Strategy to guide the role of Council in supporting major, destination, community, sporting and business events.	Short
<b>3.2</b> Develop and deliver a robust Community Events Financial Assistance Program to guide Council's continued support of a strong community events calendar in the Parkes Shire.	Short



## 12.4. Priority Four: Destination Experience Development

Enhance existing visitor attractions and develop new 'bucket-list' visitor experiences aligned to the positioning strengths of Parkes Shire.

Actions	Time Frame
<b>4.1</b> Explore opportunities to leverage the popularity of the Elvis reputation in Parkes through the curation of year-round Elvis experiences in and around the Parkes CBD.	Short
<b>4.2</b> Review the Henry Parkes Centre Masterplan in collaboration with centre stakeholders to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The re-location of visitor information services to the Parkes CBD (see also Action 2.6)</li> <li>• Moving the Parkes Motor Museum to a more visible and larger location</li> <li>• Opportunities to create a refreshed and contemporary visitor experience for the Henry Parkes Museum &amp; Moat Cottage</li> <li>• If this site is the best option for a refreshed King's Castle experience and Gates of Graceland park</li> <li>• Creating a new astro-tourism experience in collaboration with the CSIRO</li> <li>• Re-brand the name of the Centre following decisions around exhibits and their locations.</li> </ul>	Medium
<b>4.3</b> Work with businesses to create a program of curated 'celebrity' memorabilia and displays (Elvis, ABBA, The Dish movie) to activate the 'celebrity' status of Parkes and Trundle townships year-round.	Medium
<b>4.4</b> Create new and vibrant 'celebrity' public art installations in Parkes and Trundle townships (Elvis, ABBA, The Dish).	Medium
<b>4.5</b> Work with GrainCorp and community groups to create a significant silo art loop around the Parkes Shire that highlights the unique character and charm of each town and village	Medium
<b>4.6</b> Work with the CSIRO to explore opportunities to better connect The Dish to Parkes through new wayfinding signage and creation of new and contemporary astro-tourism experiences in Parkes that celebrate the important role of the Parkes Telescope in the 1969 Moon Landing and The Dish movie.	Medium
<b>4.7</b> Work with the CSIRO and other stakeholders (DNSW, DNCW) to support significant visitor experience development opportunities.	Long
<b>4.8</b> Work with HARS Inc. to identify grant opportunities for the expansion of the Parkes Aviation Museum.	Medium
<b>4.9</b> Work with NPWS and the Peak Hill-Bogan River Aboriginal Advisory Committee to better promote and enhance visitor experiences for	Long





	Goobang National Park and Snake Rock Aboriginal Park and explore interest of establishing Peak Hill as the gateway to these Parks.	
<b>4.10</b>	Continue to engage with accommodation providers to encourage the refurbishment of their properties so Parkes Shire continues to have a reputation for quality accommodation options.	On-going
<b>4.11</b>	Continue to provide support to businesses and investors for the development of new products and experiences (e.g. food and drink, retail and tour) to appeal to visitors.	On-going
<b>4.12</b>	Identify government grant funding for infrastructure and tourism product, experience and event development for public and private sector projects across the Parkes Shire.	On-going



## 12.5. Priority Five: Destination Marketing

Create a new destination brand identity and review destination marketing and visitor information service collateral to ensure a coordinated approach to promote the Parkes Shire as a vibrant must-stop destination.

Actions	Time Frame
<b>5.1</b> Review the destination brand to establish a new consumer-facing brand that articulates engaging brand identities and positioning stories for each town and village that aligns to the Shire's positioning strengths. <i>(note this should be a visitor-facing brand not a Council brand).</i>	Short
<b>5.2</b> Engage with local business to communicate findings and encourage adoption of a new Parkes Shire brand.	Medium
<b>5.3</b> Review and enhance destination marketing and visitor information collateral (print and digital) to ensure an engaging and consistent approach that is based on the findings of the brand review process and aligned to the positioning experience strengths (Action 5.1).	Medium
<b>5.4</b> Prepare a 3-year Destination Marketing Plan that identifies actions to target primary, secondary and emerging visitor markets.	Medium
<b>5.5</b> Collaborate with DNCW, neighbouring LGAs and Local Tourism Operators on regional destination marketing initiatives to drive visitation to Central West destinations (e.g. Newell Highway Promotions Committee, Central West cycle trails, Lachlan Valley Art trail, Silo Art Trail NSW).	On-going



## 13. Appendices

### APPENDIX I: – Stakeholder Engagement Activities

ROUND ONE – November/December 2022

**Council Staff Workshop** – with relevant Council units

#### **Stakeholder Meetings**

Central West Joint Organisation

Destination Central West NSW

Transport for NSW

NSW Forestry Corporation

Crownlands Orange

Central West Regional Development

**Industry Workshops (3)** – with key local operators

Community and Business Survey – 34 responses

Visitor Survey – 870 responses (140 in-region & 730 online)

ROUND TWO – November 2023

**Council Committee Meetings (2)**



## APPENDIX 2: Council Strategies and Plans Relevant to the Growth and Development of the Visitor Economy

- Dalton Street Masterplan 2016/17
- Henry Parkes Centre Masterplan, April 2016
- Parkes CBD Vibrancy Strategy 2016
- Parkes Regional Entertainment Centre & Cultural Centre Feasibility Study, October 2023
- Parkes Shire Bypass Strategy
- Parkes Shire Community Strategic Plan 2035+
- Parkes Shire Delivery Program 2022/23 to 2024/25
- Parkes Shire Liveability Strategy, Draft October 2023
- Parkes Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement, 2020
- Parkes Western Entry Masterplan, March 2023



### APPENDIX 3: Alignment Parkes Shire DMP to VES 2030 and Central West DMP

	VES 2030 Strategic Pillars	Central West DMP Strategic Objectives	Parkes Shire DMP Strategic Priorities
Road to Recovery	A comprehensive program of marketing and industry development will ensure NSW recovers quickly from the impacts of COVID-19, bushfires, drought and floods and elevates its status as the premier visitor economy in the Asia Pacific.	Support the Central West NSW visitor economy to recover and be sustainable, capable and resilient.	Strengthen Council destination management arrangements for tourism and events to foster collaboration with local and regional stakeholders to ensure a sustainable, capable, and resilient visitor economy.
Build the Brand	Compelling new brands will be developed for Sydney and NSW to provide a strong foundation for differentiation, consumer messaging, local pride and competitiveness to turbocharge recovery and accelerate future.	Position and promote Central West NSW and its destinations to align to the Feel NSW brand.	Create a new destination brand identity and positioning story for the Parkes Shire and review destination marketing and visitor information service strategies to ensure a coordinated approach to promote the Parkes Shire as a vibrant must-stop destination.
Showcase Our Strengths	NSW is a state of breathtaking diversity and bucket list visitor attractions and experiences. We will focus on existing strengths and develop new opportunities to ensure place making, destination marketing, events and visitor experiences drive visitation.	Facilitate and enable the development or enhancement of world-class visitor experiences and accommodation.	Enhance existing visitor attractions and develop new 'bucket-list' visitor experiences aligned to the positioning strengths of Parkes Shire.
Invest in World Class Events	An accelerated investment in signature sporting and cultural events as well as business events will help position Sydney and NSW as the events capital of the Asia Pacific, drive visitation and enhance the social wellbeing of NSW residents.	Facilitate and enable the development or enhancement of world-class events.	Continue to deliver and grow outstanding destination events to drive destination awareness and visitation to the Parkes Shire.
Facilitate Growth	Investing in infrastructure, job creation, industry resilience and sustainability, future planning, and better ways to do business will ensure the continued growth and future prosperity of the NSW visitor economy.	Provide an enabling environment to attract investment in the Central West NSW visitor economy.	Adopt a whole-of-destination approach to continue to plan and develop infrastructure and facilities to enhance the appeal and amenity of Parkes Shire as a must-stop destination for visitors and business travellers to the Central West.

