



# DESTINATION PAGODA

- a world-class tourism and conservation reserve on Lithgow's doorstep
- a win for workers, community and environment

## Introduction to the Economic Report



PHOTOS: Sunset, western escarpment  
of Newnes Plateau IAN BROWN  
Temperate rainforest IAN BROWN



*Baal Bone Creek* IAN BROWN

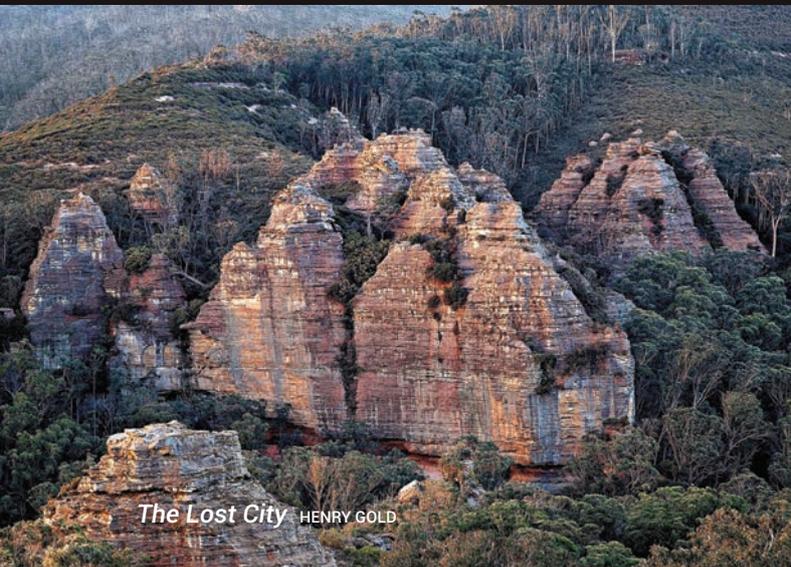
**Establishing  
*Destination Pagoda*  
is the ideal way  
to celebrate a return  
to normal after recent  
COVID-19 disruptions to  
travel, permitting  
travellers from Sydney  
to engage with nature  
that is bouncing back  
from last summer's fires.**

**D**estination Pagoda, the visitor management plan for a 39,000 hectare Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, can attract 155,000 visitors in the first year, growing to 420,000 in ten years.

By then, a new reserve will generate an estimated \$24.3 million per year for the Lithgow economy in dining, accommodation, retail and transport expenditure, and a total of \$40.3 million through direct, industry and consumption effects, contributing to 258 local FTE jobs<sup>1</sup>.

Lithgow, being on the edge the Gardens of Stone region and just 140 kilometres from Sydney, is ideally situated to benefit from promotion of this new reserve.

The economic analysis by Destination Research reveals that the area's iconic pagoda rock formations, Aboriginal rock art and unique flora

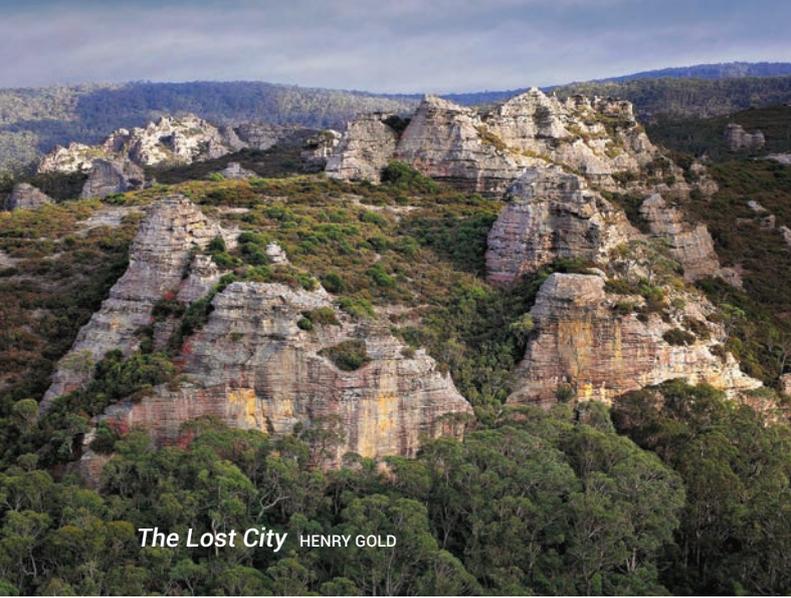


*The Lost City* HENRY GOLD



*Enjoying the Gardens of Stone* IAN BROWN

**Destination Pagoda will help ensure Lithgow receives the economic bounce it sorely needs.**



*The Lost City* HENRY GOLD

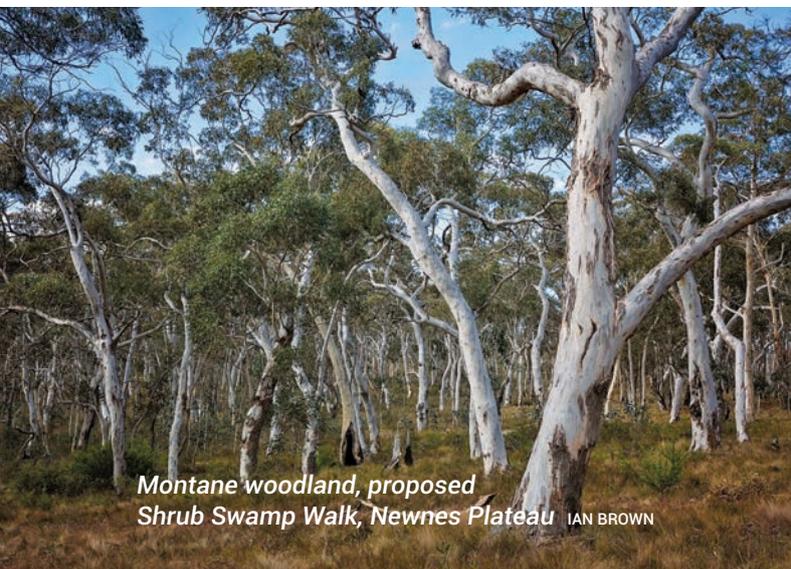


*Carne Creek gorge* IAN BROWN

has strong potential to attract an increasingly large segment of nature-based tourists to the Lithgow region. This benefit depends on the area being given effective protection and management as a State Conservation Area to optimise the visitor experience.

The **Blue Mountains** has seen a **76% increase** in visitation in the past 10 years, putting pressures on local towns and communities. New iconic natural attractions with well-designed facilities near Lithgow, catering for a mix of different visitors, would add to existing day and overnight itineraries for this expanding, nature-based visitor market.

**For full benefit to flow to the Lithgow Region**, suitable facilities need to be in place to meet the requirements of defined visitor groups. These include roads, shelters, toilets, walking tracks, lookouts, signage and promotion.



*Montane woodland, proposed Shrub Swamp Walk, Newnes Plateau* IAN BROWN

*Scenery on the proposed Pagoda Valley Walk, Newnes Plateau* IAN BROWN

**Important Aboriginal heritage and historic features can also be protected and celebrated.**



Carne Creek gorge IAN BROWN

## Investing in Lithgow's future

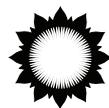
Developing *Destination Pagoda* requires moderate government investment of an estimated \$31.6 million over the first 10 years (\$22.2 million in present value terms, assuming a 7% discount rate), and \$800,000 annually for ongoing management.

This can be funded from a combination of sources:

- Centennial Coal's swamp offset funds of up to \$14 million currently (earmarked for conservation);
- transfer of state forest expenditures to NPWS;
- Commonwealth and NSW government funds to strengthen Lithgow's regional economy.

"Turning Lithgow into a hub for visitors to the Blue Mountains region, bringing more people to the area that stay for longer periods of time."

(Lithgow Community Plan 2030)



## DESTINATION PAGODA

a grand new tourism attraction for Lithgow

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Download the complete Economic Report for *Destination Pagoda* at [www.gardensofstone.org.au](http://www.gardensofstone.org.au)



<sup>1</sup> Dr Jo Mackellar, May 2020, Economic Research Report – Destination Pagoda, executive summary.