



District Council of Cooper Pedy Newsletter

Welcome to the Opal Capital of the World

January 2020

Dear Citizen,

Happy New Year

On behalf of the Council can I wish you and your family a happy and prosperous new year. The year ahead should see significant progress on a number of fronts hopefully in partnership with our stakeholders.

Australia Day and the Cooper Pedy Awards

Australia Day celebrations were reintroduced this year by Council. A Citizenship Ceremony was held in the morning where two members of the local Sri Lankan community become Australian citizens. In the afternoon a pool party and barbecue were held at the pool. The event was well attended and provided a fitting venue to announce the winners of our community awards.

The Cooper Pedy Awards were reintroduced to recognise the significant contributions that individuals and organisations make to the Cooper Pedy community. Details are included elsewhere in this newsletter. On behalf of the community can I congratulate all nominees and winners and thank the people who took the time to nominate individuals and organisations.

Water Pricing Equity

Council still has not received a response from Minister Speirs to its request that the State Government acknowledge the inequity that exists in relation to water pricing in Cooper Pedy when compared with the rest of the State. You may recall that Council has asked for an interim subsidy which would allow us to deliver water to you at Adelaide prices. The lack of a response from the Minister is extremely disappointing, particularly in respect of acknowledging the inequity.

Water Assets and Business

The findings of the detailed investigation by SA Water of the Council's water system should be available in early March. The negotiations then begin!

The options for negotiation are:

- Council continues to own and operate the system with a subsidy provided by the State Government to ensure water pricing equity;
- Council continues to own the system but SA Water operate it with a subsidy provided by the State Government;
- SA Water owns the system but Council operates it with a subsidy from the State Government; and
- SA Water owns and operates the system with a subsidy from the State Government.

Long Term Financial Plan

The draft ten year financial plan has the Council returning to a balanced budget by 2021/22. This is a significant turnaround from the \$2.4 million deficit in 2017/18, the year immediately preceding the term of the Administrator. This deficit was the largest in proportion to its annual budget of any Council in South Australia.

The level of debt is proposed to increase significantly to renew community assets. This is vital. A community must periodically replace its assets. Over the last decade, Council has expended very little on its assets. The plan includes significant capital expenditure of approximately \$20 million over the ten years of the plan. Most of this will be spent on road pavements and the water system. To fund this, it will be necessary to increase debt levels significantly, albeit they will be within agreed Local Government prudential limits for most of the plan and most importantly for the last three years of the plan. Debt

will peak at approximately \$18 million dropping to approximately \$15 million at the end of the ten year period. You are encouraged to inform yourself of what is being proposed.

Time Commitment and Cost of the Administrator

As flagged previously there is now scope to reduce the time commitment and therefore the cost of the Administrator. This is due to progress being made in getting the Council back into shape and the recent appointment of an ongoing CEO. My original estimate was that I could reduce to half-time about mid-year, however I now believe this will be possible earlier. As a consequence, I have sought the approval of the Minister to reduce my time to half time in the next month. Obviously, this will reduce the cost to the community by half. I have also indicated to the State Government that I am prepared to perform the role until 2022 if needed.

Council and Town Meetings

From February, Council meetings will be held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Town meetings will be held on the Thursday after the first Council meeting of the month. It is my intention that these town meetings in future are less about the Council and more about other issues in the town.

Until next time,

Tim Jackson
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**Next Town Meeting
13th February 2020
7:00pm at the Golf Club**



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Australia Day Celebrations

On Sunday 26 January 2020, Council held a Pool Party at the Cooper Pedy Area School swimming pool to celebrate Australia Day. The event included a Welcome to Country by Ian Crombie, Aboriginal music and dance by David and Mark Crombie, a free sausage sizzle, a cake stall and music by Paul Howard, Australia Day Awards, a speech from Australia Day Ambassador, Michael O'Connor (who had flown in from the UK the day before then taken the overnight bus to Cooper Pedy to be with us) and beautiful balloon sculptures by Michael Ahmazing.

An estimated 200 citizens and visitors attended the celebrations. Tim Jackson, the Administrator, managed proceedings, the highlight of which was the Australia Day Awards. Thanks were given to everyone who nominated citizens and acknowledgements given of the huge amount of time and effort volunteers contribute to the community every year, without which many of the social events and economic developments of the town could not happen.

The following nominations were received for the Australia Day Awards:

Community Event of the Year

- Opal Festival 2019 (managed by Cooper Pedy Retail, Business & Tourism Association)

Young Citizen of the Year

- Attila Foelai

Citizen of the Year

- Chevahn Hoad
- Matt Key
- Kath Mitchell
- Nick Moulas

The nominations were judged by a panel consisting of Mayor Les Hoad*, Tim Jackson and two former Citizen of the Year winners, Dawn Jones and Trish Turner. Australia Day Council Ambassador, Michael O'Connell, presented the winners with their awards as follows:

- Community Event of the Year: **Opal Festival 2019**
- Young Citizen of the Year: **Attila Foelai**
- Citizen of the Year: **Chevahn Hoad**

* It should be noted that Les Hoad abstained from the final judging of the Citizen of the Year.

An additional Lifetime Achievement Award was also granted to:

- Nick Moulas

Balloon sculpturer, Michael Ahmazing, then entertained the children with his fabulous inflatable creations. And for those of you who particularly enjoyed his performance, you'll be pleased to hear, Michael will be back for the Cooper Pedy Opal Festival in June 2020.

Thanks were given to everyone involved in putting on the event, including:

- Kylie Hay for donating 280 sausages;
- The Town Store for donating 100 sausages and the onions;
- The IGA for donating all the bread and the vegetarian sausages;
- To Paul Howard for providing the cake stall and the music;
- To Rusty, Dino, Sally and Trish for manning the BBQs and drink stall;
- Donna, the pool manager, and all her staff kept swimmers safe;
- To the staff of the Council Works Department for setting everything up;
- To the Breakaways Co-Management Board for providing the Eskies;
- To Gai Di Donna and the Catacomb Church for providing the trestle tables;
- The CP Retail, Business and Tourism Association for lending us the PA system;
- To Trish Turner and the Youth Shed for the use of their refrigerators and BBQ utensils;
- To Tim Jackson and Sophie Reynolds for bringing back this event after a few years' absence;
- And to Jill Maden for taking over the organization of the event from Sophie at the last minute and bringing everything together on the day;



Left to right: Awards presented by Tim Jackson and Australia Day Ambassador Michael O'Connor Community Event of the Year: Opal Festival 2019 George Russell, Deb Clee, Kath Mitchell, Citizen of the Year: Chevahn Hoad, Young Citizen of the Year: Attila Foelai