

Coober Pedy Community Plan

The Coober Pedy Community Plan is our community's "blueprint" for the future. It recognises the uniqueness of our world and the wonderful opportunities to improve our way of life by working together towards common goals.

The Plan gives clear directions and achievable strategies to address many of the issues that are inhibiting the development of our local economy and community at large and is a result of extensive consultation and research.

It is a joint initiative of the District Council of Coober Pedy and the Northern Regional Development Board.



COOPER PEDY –A GEM OF A PLACE!

Coober Pedy, known nationally and internationally as the “Opal Capital of the World” is a vibrant and multicultural town of 3,500 people. It is located in the far north of the state, 850km north of Adelaide and 700km south of Alice Springs, on the Stuart Highway between Adelaide and Alice Springs.

For thousands of years Aboriginal people walked across this area. Because of the desert environment, these people were nomadic hunters and gatherers. Opal was first found in February 1915 and by 1917 opal miners came to settle and try their luck. After the Great War (1914-1918), returned soldiers also drifted to the fields to seek their fortune.



Coober Pedy was named by the local Progress and Miners Association in 1920 from the Aboriginal words “Kupa Piti”, meaning white man's hole or waterhole. During the great depression of the late 1930's and 1940's, opal prices plummeted and production almost came to a standstill.

Typical of Coober Pedy's history of boom and bust, an Aboriginal woman named Tottie Bryant made a sensational opal find at the Eight-Mile field in 1946, starting a new rush to the fields.



During the 1960's, the mining industry expanded rapidly due to the many European migrants who came to seek their fortunes. The 1960's and 1970's saw opal mining develop into a multi-million dollar industry with Coober Pedy developing into a modern mining town.

In 1980, with a population of over 3,000 people and an ever increasing reliance on the Coober Pedy Progress and Miners Association Inc., a formal approach was made to the Minister of Local Government to establish a Select Committee to investigate the provision of Local Government in Coober Pedy. The outcome of the report submitted by the Select Committee was the creation of the Coober Pedy Act of 1981. The Act is tailored to the needs of a unique, isolated outback town experiencing problems of administration that are not normally encountered in other long-established Local Government areas. The first Council election was held in January 1987.

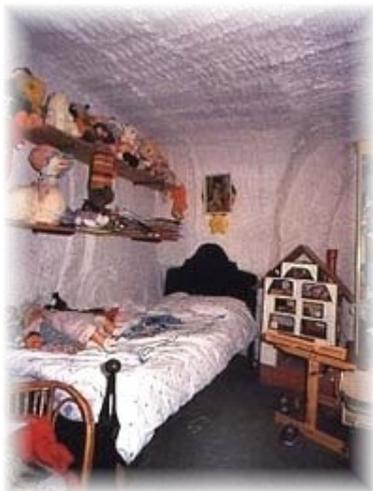
The introduction of Local Government in Coober Pedy at first caused considerable controversy in the town, but people understood that the more formal town administration established facilities that could not, in the past, have been provided.

The continued development of Coober Pedy can be attributed to the maintenance of its opal mining industry and the increasingly important role of tourism. Its recognition as a major regional centre for the Outback of South Australia has seen its importance to the delivery of Government services grow.



Coober Pedy is a cosmopolitan town with a floating population and along with the Mintabie opal fields near Marla further north, produces 90% of the worlds opal. Over 30 separate fields dot the area extending from 30km north of town (The Shellpatch) to The Craters, 10km south-east and "Rose's Folly", 15km west. There are mounds of overburden everywhere that have come from shafts sunk deep into the sandstone ground.

Many of the town's residents live underground in "dug-outs". Early dugouts began as mines, however in later years, large and comfortable purpose-built underground homes where constructed. Fully furnished and decorated they are an ideal way of living and coping with the extremes of temperature in the desert, with the natural insulation keeping temperatures constant. Some are lit by cutting holes out through individual channels and connecting glass panels into the holes. Some dugouts have sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars.



In the 21st Century, Coober Pedy is a vibrant town ready to maximise its proven position as a leader in the opal industry, a provider of regional services and a "must visit place" for national and international tourism.

Like all rural and regional communities our town has its problems, but we feel confident that by working together and being focused on achieving the outcomes of the Community Plan we will maximise on our many competitive advantages and achieve our community vision...

**A COHESIVE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY
PROUD OF ITS UNIQUENESS, SUPPORTED BY A
THRIVING LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMY.**

GOAL 1

A PROACTIVE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITY ACHIEVING RECOGNITION AND THE DELIVERY OF HIGH QUALITY AND INTEGRATED SERVICES

The Coober Pedy community is a “collage” of different nationalities and backgrounds, which along with the large indigenous population have been fundamental in the development of Coober Pedy.

Whilst cultural diversity is as a major strength for our community, it is recognised we need to strive to work together and to be more united if we are to achieve the outcomes of the Community Plan.

The provision of good quality education, health and other community services are paramount to the overall well-being of the community.



The utilisation of the Regional Health Service Steering Committee to address health gap issues in a strategic manner and a proactive approach to the provision of incentives to encourage relocation of professionals are two initiatives in the Plan.

The development of future leaders and the support and encouragement of our volunteers, critical for the ongoing development of the community, is addressed in the Plan.

Empowerment and support of our youth through the implementation of long term programs, more effective education provision, increased recreation alternatives and the accessing of funds for a “Youth Project Officer” will address an issue of growing social importance.

A more visual and collaborative District Council, working with key service providers, will play a greater role in advocacy for the community service needs of the community and will ensure Coober Pedy retains and grows its importance as a major regional centre for the delivery of community services in outback South Australia.

The following objectives and strategies have been identified to assist us in achieving this important goal.



OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

1.01 Develop a cohesive working relationship between community groups

- ~ Establish a joint working group comprising Umoona Community Council and Council to establish a collaborative approach to the provision of common services and resolution of common issues
- ~ Undertake an education and communication strategy on the benefits of multiculturalism

1.02 Achieve equality of access to health services

- ~ Council to actively facilitate the provision and assist the coordination of health services with Government agencies
- ~ Actively participate as a member of the Regional Health Service Steering Committee to ensure local input into the future planning of coordinated health service delivery in Coober Pedy
- ~ In collaboration with health service providers address the issues highlighted in the "Health Needs Assessment Draft Report" prepared by the Regional Health Service
- ~ Implement the Coober Pedy Hospital and Health Service Inc. Strategic Plan to address health care issues in partnership with the Regional Health Service and Council
- ~ Pursue the appointment of a Public and Environmental Health Officer
- ~ Provide incentives for the attraction of an additional general practitioner
- ~ Analyse potential health service financial grants and provide assistance in the preparation of applications
- ~ Advocate the inclusion of Nursing staff into the Government housing program
- ~ Pursue seven day community health services including domiciliary care and other allied services

1.03 Increase the number of community leaders and volunteers through targeted support

- ~ Develop the leadership skills of the District's youth in collaboration with education providers
- ~ In partnership with community service organisations undertake targeted encouragement to increase volunteer membership

- ~ Develop a leadership program for existing community leaders
- ~ Encourage a diversity of community members to seek election to Council

1.04 Enhance multicultural community spirit, cooperation and pride

- ~ Increased emphasis on promoting the success stories within Coober Pedy
- ~ Develop specific community and volunteer awards across a range of community, environmental and business areas
- ~ Increase promotion and support for Australia Day activities
- ~ Provide or source funding for a number of community based projects
- ~ Increase communication across the community using multiple languages
- ~ Develop a community information package to assist new or prospective members of our community
- ~ Establish half yearly gatherings of new residents to assist their transition into our community

1.05 Embrace and preserve our Aboriginal heritage

- ~ Implement "integrated" projects that embrace and preserve local indigenous culture and heritage
- ~ Utilise indigenous names for specific locations across the town and surrounding areas
- ~ Encourage training in cultural awareness for all public and private sector staff

1.06 Maximise the recreational options of the community

- ~ Maximise the use of Council owned facilities
- ~ Undertake consultation with the community to identify recreation needs and service gaps
- ~ Analyse the current status of the "Triangle" area with a view to maximising its benefit to the community

1.07 Provide services and guidance to our youth

- ~ Establish close interaction with local police to provide leadership and guidance for youth
- ~ Actively support and assist in the implementation of a school holiday program
- ~ Source funding for long term youth programs, which assist in personal development
- ~ Investigate funding options for a Youth Development Officer with specific emphasis on recreation development, coordination and management
- ~ Council to foster the utilisation of "Community Clubs" facilities for youth activities as part of holiday programs
- ~ Support the "Coober Pedy Youth (Education) Strategy" being developed by Department of Education Training and Employment
- ~ Achieve increased funding to initiate projects and recommendations from the "Engaging Students in Education through Community Empowerment Report" (Sept 2001)

1.08 Council to undertake a strategic and collaborative role in the provision of community services

- ~ Council to strengthen existing relationship with existing community services groups e.g. Crime Prevention Committee
- ~ Council to assist in achieving increased grant allocations to value add to existing services
- ~ Advocate for a 24 hour police presence
- ~ Provide housing and lifestyle incentives that will encourage relocation and retention of professionals
- ~ Implement the "Coober Pedy Alcohol Strategy Report"(November 2000) in partnership with all stakeholders

1.09 Improve the standard and availability of community transport

- ~ Investigate community transport options including community bus or other private services
- ~ Participate in regional transport studies in association with the Outback Areas Community Development Trust

1.10 Establish community awareness and involvement in Council's decision making process

- ~ Establish regular discussion forums between the community and Council on major issues affecting the future of the town
- ~ Undertake regular communication with the community and key stakeholders on the progress of implementing the Strategic Plan
- ~ Utilise a Council website as an ongoing communication mechanism with the community
- ~ Develop a regular Council newsletter that has a strong community focus
- ~ Continue the existing process of regular input by community at Council meetings

1.11 Strategically position the Council area as a major regional centre with all Federal, State and Regional spheres of influence

- ~ Develop strong partnerships with Local, State and Federal Government organisations
- ~ Actively seek to provide media coverage for regional events and highlight successes within the region
- ~ Include the concept of an identifiable outback region in the marketing and promotion of Coober Pedy
- ~ Ensure strong area representation on key public and private sector committees and panels to promote Coober Pedy as the Outback regional centre

Goal Outcomes

- ✓ Closer co-operation and cohesion between community groups
- ✓ Improved community services including health and education
- ✓ Preservation and enhancement of community spirit and heritage
- ✓ A strategic, consultative and collaborative District Council
- ✓ A positive impact on current social issues affecting our youth

GOAL 2 ENHANCE COOBER PEDY'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE AND CO-ORDINATED APPROACH

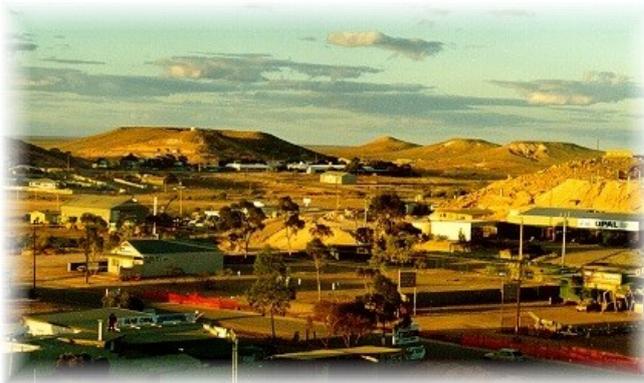
Coober Pedy's diverse landscape attracts visitors from around the world. It is recognised however, that the community has a responsibility to preserve and improve the natural environment.

The effective management of waste and greater emphasis on greening has been identified as important to the community.



The protection of significant areas of indigenous flora and fauna and the sourcing of funding to assist in this process are important strategies of the Plan.

The built environment of Coober Pedy is indeed unique. This uniqueness needs to be protected by preserving the heritage, character and identity of the town and surrounding district.



The ongoing support and encouragement of community groups involved to be involved in environmental programs will assist in achieving the Community Plan outcomes.

The following objectives and strategies will assist us in achieving our goal of ecological sustainable management of our natural resources.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

2.01 Develop an integrated approach to waste management

- ~ Develop a "whole of town" waste management strategy that includes recycling
- ~ Investigate the extension of the town's sewerage system

2.02 Improve the standard of landscaping and greening

- ~ Examine alternative implementation options to complete the "Main Street" program
- ~ Establish a higher standard of landscaping, shade and greening of the "Main Street" without detrimentally affecting its uniqueness
- ~ Develop and maintain a "tree planting" program for the town and environs
- ~ Encourage and support community greening initiatives
- ~ Utilise CDEP to undertake specific greening and re-vegetation projects

2.03 Utilise the various environmental programs and funding opportunities to assist the implement of strategies

- ~ Target relevant Government agencies and industries to assist in supporting environmental initiatives
- ~ Develop an Environmental Management Plan to support funding submissions
- ~ Support the establishment of local environmental improvement groups

2.04 Protect our natural flora and fauna

- ~ Identify significant areas for preservation
- ~ Investigate funding opportunities to undertake preservation and restoration of targeted areas
- ~ Regenerate native vegetation on selected Council owned land

2.05 Preserve the heritage, character and identity of the District

- ~ Prepare a local heritage list for selected dwellings and other areas of local significance
- ~ Actively support local community groups in the maintenance of heritage items and places of interest

Goal Outcomes

- ✓ Increased emphasis and priority on managing the environment
- ✓ Better planned and integrated waste management
- ✓ Preservation of natural and built environment and heritage

GOAL 3

EXPANSION OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ITS TOURISM, MINING AND REGIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Coober Pedy has a dynamic local economy traditionally based on opal mining but now also incorporates a significant tourism component.

Coober Pedy has many competitive advantages over other towns in the Region:

- A strong regional, national and international profile/image
- A range of established tourism products and supporting infrastructure
- An established Opal Industry that continues to provide a strong backbone to the economy
- Its position as a major centre provides the catalyst for future growth both in the private and public sector

The challenge for the private sector of Coober Pedy is to maximise these competitive advantages to grow wealth and employment opportunities.

Close linkages between the development of the opal industry and tourism are important. If planned effectively, both areas could leverage growth through better collaboration.



Coober Pedy's growing importance as the "Outback" regional centre for the provision of community services will need to be reinforced.

Potential for new mining ventures such as at Hawkes Nest and Ingomar, 80 km's south of Coober Pedy, will result in opportunities for servicing the mining and mineral processing industries that should not be missed.

To further expand the local economy, a cohesive approach to infrastructure provision, including the extension and upgrade of the airport, the construction of a Visitor Information Centre and continued upgrade of the town's water supply will need to occur.

All stakeholders including the District Council, the Opal Mining Associations and the Retail Business and Tourism Association will need to develop a strong collaborative approach to the implementation of the economic development goal of this Plan.

In order to achieve our goal of economic development in Coober Pedy we have identified the following objectives and strategies:

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

3.01 Maximise local employment and training opportunities through Federal and State funded labour market programs

- ~ Create a partnership with Iwara Kutju Inc. to increase training and long term employment opportunities whilst increasing
- ~ community wealth
- ~ Promote the benefits of traineeships across the business sector and provide assistance in the uptake of Government traineeship programs
- ~ Increase the number of traineeships/apprenticeships within the Council workforce

3.02 Promote and facilitate the development of the opal industry

- ~ Maximise the available funding for further exploratory drilling and the establishment of new opal fields
- ~ Establish an Opal Expo linked to the annual Opal Festival focusing on production, value-adding, national and international
- ~ marketing and promotions
- ~ Further develop fine jewellery manufacturing at Coober Pedy
- ~ Establish a peak industry body in the town including an Executive Officer
- ~ Investigate the potential uses of common opal or "potch"
- ~ Ensure Coober Pedy remains a Centre of Excellence for education, training and skill development for the opal industry
- ~ Reinforce the importance of the National Opal Symposium to the industry
- ~ Ensure Industry and Council representation at the National Opal Symposium
- ~ Coordinate a strategic and cooperative approach to the resolution of Native Title issues
- ~ Re-establish close relationships with key Government agencies and their officers to further the development of the opal industry
- ~ Ensure nationally accredited courses include Coober Pedy as the essential training site
- ~ Initiate opal industry training and development scholarships and study awards
- ~ Initiate an opal mining retailing, marketing and promotional course

3.03 Maximise the economic impact of Tourism to the Region

- ~ Develop tourism products that have a "hands on" link to mining, and the opal industry generally, that will encourage visitors to stay longer
- ~ Develop and promote Coober Pedy as the centre of Indigenous arts and crafts linked into the Pitjantjatjara lands
- ~ Develop and implement a tourism promotion campaign linked to the comprehensive town marketing strategy
- ~ Utilise the "Year of the Outback" to promote Coober Pedy as the major regional centre of the outback and as the opal capital of the world
- ~ Access tourism infrastructure funding allocated by South Australian Tourism Commission
- ~ Develop an interactive "Gem Tour" including mining, cut and polish of opal and setting in jewellery over a 3 day period
- ~ Establish fly/drive outback tours utilising Coober Pedy as the regional centre
- ~ Source funding and build a Visitor Information Centre to become a flagship for the business sector
- ~ Maximise the exposure and marketing of the "Coober Pedy Race Weekend"
- ~ Investigate ways of maximising the overall impact to tourism and business of the annual "Opal Festival"
- ~ Position the local tourism industry to influence the regional tourism agenda with South Australian Tourism Commission and other State and Federal agencies
- ~ Re-establish scheduled air links with Alice Springs and Ayers Rock
- ~ Undertake a registration of interest for regular private air charter flights between Coober Pedy and Ayers Rock linked to tourism packages
- ~ Ensure ongoing liaison with the regular passenger transport provider to maintain and enhance air transport
- ~ Develop a integrated Tourism Strategy with smaller towns in the region
- ~ Assess opportunities to further utilise the "Breakaways" reserve as a tourism icon including implementation of "Stage 3 of the Plan of Management Nov 1996"
- ~ Actively promote local tourism at regional, state and international forums

- ~ Link accommodation, events, tourism attractions and local businesses to Council's web page
- ~ Provide opportunities to educate the community on the importance of tourism to the local economy
- ~ Develop town beautification and maintenance programs to improve the visual appearance and amenity
- ~ Actively participate as a member of Flinders Ranges and Outback Areas Regional Marketing Group
- ~ Attract relevant conferences and conventions to Coober Pedy
- ~ Complete the redevelopment of the "Main Street"
- ~ Upgrade the standard of entranceways into the town from the Stuart Highway
- ~ Examining funding options to provide executive support and project management for the Business and Tourism Association
- ~ Develop a town marketing and promotion strategy involving business, Government agencies and the District Council to target
 - ~ identified markets
- ~ Promote the need to deliver hospitality and tourism courses at Coober Pedy

3.04 Provide efficient and cost effective power and water for industry

- ~ Develop a longer term Plan to further increase the availability of water and manage the extensive asset base including the pipeline
- ~ Investigate cost effective alternative power generation options
- ~ Develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the efficient and sustainable utilisation of power assets and to address future asset management requirements
- ~ Develop and implement a water conservation campaign
- ~ Treat and recycle wastewater
- ~ Ensure appropriate land use policies for the establishment of alternative energy sources

3.05 Maximise the economic development opportunities created through mining and mineral processing in northern South Australia

- ~ Establish Coober Pedy as a major service centre for mining and minerals processing
- ~ Encourage the development of the SASE Pig-Iron project in close proximity to Coober Pedy
- ~ Monitor the need for a mining services zone within Coober Pedy

3.06 Improve the level of retail shopping choices within Coober Pedy

- ~ Undertake an analysis of local shopping trends and gaps
- ~ Develop a buy local promotion campaign

3.07 Ensure Coober Pedy's strategic advantage as a regional provider of Government and private sector services is maintained and increased

- ~ Continue supporting the retention of a dedicated Economic Development Officer for Coober Pedy
- ~ Strengthen the existing partnership with the Northern Regional Development Board to support a broad range of economic and business initiatives
- ~ Establish and develop an agreed agenda with the Flinders Region Area Consultative Committee
- ~ Establish a half yearly business group forum to discuss and provide direction on key issues
- ~ Develop a Master (development) Plan for the town

3.08 Provide a high standard of physical infrastructure to support economic development

- ~ Develop a 5 year priority based road program linked to the District Council's Financial Plan
- ~ Seek financial support for the upgrade of the airport
- ~ Seek financial support for the construction of a new Airport Terminal
- ~ Undertake an analysis of infrastructure needs to support business and tourism

- ~ Seek external funding to assist in the development of infrastructure
- ~ Link Business and Tourism infrastructure requirements into a 5 year Financial Plan
- ~ Facilitate an improvement of communications infrastructure

3.09 Increase educational visits to Coober Pedy

- ~ Explore the potential for the use of Coober Pedy's multicultural society as a model for multicultural development
- ~ Examine opportunities for attracting national and international tertiary student study visits

Goal Outcomes

- ✓ A more vibrant and dynamic local economy
- ✓ Increased and more diverse employment opportunities
- ✓ A growing Regional provider of services
- ✓ Increased standard of infrastructure to support the business sector



WHERE TOO FROM HERE?

The Coober Pedy Community Plan provides a catalyst for ongoing change. Its implementation will need to be undertaken in partnership with all stakeholders however the District Council of Coober Pedy is committed to being one of the driving forces behind the success of the Plan.

Not all strategies can be achieved at once, we will as a community need to prioritise within resources available. A detailed Implementation Plan for the Coober Pedy Community Plan will be developed and be incorporated as an integral part of the Councils own Strategic Management Plan.



This Community Plan has been developed with the help of Collins Anderson Management.

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