



District Council of Cooper Pedy Newsletter

Welcome to the Opal Capital of the World

September 2020

Message from the Administrator

Welcome to the September edition of Council's newsletter. I trust that you find this newsletter interesting and informative.

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Administrator
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Have your say

Council is about to release its draft Annual Business Plan (ABP) and Budget for 2020/21 and invites you to comment on what Council intends to do in the next 9 months. Council will be reviewing and approving a draft ABP and budget on 22 September and releasing it for consultation the following day. There will be a presentation of the ABP and budget on 6 October 2020.

This year the ABP is a much more comprehensive document and provides a lot of information about Council services and activities.

You can make comment on the ABP and budget in three ways. At the Council meeting on 13 October 2020 there will be time set aside for the public to make presentations to Council. There will be an area on Council's website where you can directly make comments, or you can write or email your comments to Council. All comments will be considered by Council.

What is your fair share of the rates?

That is the question Council is asking you.

Council is concerned that the current system of rating is overly complex and unfair and is seeking to move to a simpler and fairer system. Before it makes any decision on the new system it wants to get the opinion of the community.

To help with this conversation, Council is developing four options for consideration. The four options all raise the same amount of revenue but have different ways of spreading the cost between different property types. One option is to maintain the status quo which is a fixed charge of \$427.50 and a differential rate for commercial properties that is three times that of residential properties. Another option spreads the rates burden evenly across all ratepayers. Another raises more income from a fixed charge, and another has a lower rate for residential properties but a higher rate for commercial properties. Which one would you prefer?

The consultation is being run in parallel with the consultation on the ABP and budget. A report on the options will be available on 23 September 2020. Come along to an information session on 6 October 2020 to hear a presentation and ask questions on the different options. After this you can tell us what you think about each of the options.

Council will make a decision on the new rating system in late October 2020 and they will be the basis on which the 2020/21 rates will be charged.

Rates Notices

Council's 2020/21 budget process was delayed because of the need to improve financial management systems and review rating options. We expect the 2020/21 budget to be adopted in late October or early November 2020 and the rates notices to be sent out in November. It is expected the due dates for payment will be December 2020, February, April and June 2021.

Native Title

Native title in Cooper Pedy was recognised in 2011. Soon after, negotiations commenced to enter into an indigenous land use agreement

between the native title holders and the State Government. This type of agreement generally permits certain uses and can involve compensation for these uses. The Council was involved in these negotiations. In recent years these negotiations have stalled. This has caused significant frustration in the town as it was thought this stalemate was inhibiting the development of the town.

The Council recently took legal advice in respect of this issue. This advice was provided at a recent Council meeting. It revealed that the lack of an indigenous land use agreement was not the problem it was perceived to be. Most native title issues can be resolved under the native title legislation and do not require the negotiation of an indigenous land use agreement.

In light of this advice, the Council will review its position in respect of the need for an indigenous land use agreement.

Closure of Service Road

Council has received a request for a service road off Russell Street to be exclusively used by way of ownership by one of the adjoining property owners. Two other properties abut the service road and have an equal entitlement to access the service road.

The legal instrument to assess the interest in the service road to enable exclusive use by way of ownership is described in the *Roads Opening and Closing Act*. The unanimous agreement by the adjoining property owners to the closure of the service road is required prior to Council considering its sale.

The adjoining property owners have objected to the request, therefore the road will remain open.





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Traffic Control in Paxton Street and Cameron Avenue

Council has been monitoring the speed of traffic in Paxton Street and Cameron Avenue, and found that there is sufficient evidence that speeding in Paxton Street warrants traffic controls in the form of speed humps. Council has also determined there is a need to improve safety in Cameron Avenue. Correspondence from the school principal supports the proposal. The local residents abutting the street and residents of surrounding streets where traffic may be reinverted are being formally consulted. Other residents from the township are encouraged to comment on the proposal. Copies of the report are available from the Council office, on the Council website and Council Facebook page. Residents are encouraged to discuss the proposal with Colin Pitman on Ph. 0418848279 or email cpittman@cpccouncil.sa.gov.au

REX

Air services to Cooper Pedy from Adelaide have been subsidised by the Federal and State Governments since about the time the pandemic commenced. This has ensured three return flights a week. The funding was scheduled to conclude at the end of September. Both Governments have agreed to extend it to the end of December. The Council has advocated strongly for this funding.

Reverse Osmosis System Renewal

Council uses two reverse osmosis systems to remove salt from water extracted from the Great Artesian Basin to make it drinkable. With the cooperation of the community in using water frugally, the risk of depleting water stocks during renewal has enabled staff to successfully reconstruct the reverse osmosis systems in 5 days. The work was undertaken by a highly skilled team of trained technicians. The renewal was necessary due to the age of the plant (estimated to be 30 years

old), a lack of spare parts and difficulty in repairing the tubes containing the membranes. The savings achieved by using local, skilled staff is estimated to be in excess of \$700,000.



Old reverse osmosis system



New reverse osmosis system

Water Equity

Water in Cooper Pedy costs almost three times what most other water consumers pay in South Australia. This is totally unacceptable from an equity perspective.

The Council, through its MLA, Eddie Hughes, tabled a petition in the State Parliament in November last year calling

on the State Government to immediately introduce water pricing equity. No response has been received. This is very disappointing and frustrating.

Water pricing equity could be achieved by the introduction of a subsidy from the State Government similar to the subsidy provided for electricity. They are both essential services.

The Administrator met with the new Local Government Minister earlier this month and again raised this issue.

If the State Government does not respond favourably to the Council's request, the Council has the following options open to it:

- accept the State Government's decision;
- accept the State Government's decision and endeavour to provide water pricing equity by increasing municipal rates to subsidise the cost of water - this would require the approval of voters at a poll;
- relinquish responsibility for water supply by returning the Council's licence to the State Government - in this case the water supply system could be leased or sold to the State Government or the Council could provide this service to the State Government as a contractor.

If a response from the State Government is not received by 30 November, the Council will determine its position from the options identified above. This will be twelve months after the petition was tabled in the State Parliament.

Community Grants

Energy Developments Limited (EDL) kindly made \$15,000 available to the 2020 Community Grants scheme. The number of applications for grant assistance totalled approximately \$40,000 (\$25,000 more than the fund





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had available). Therefore, Council has agreed to "top up" the fund with a portion of the Commonwealth's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund.

More information will be provided about this at the Council Meeting on 22 September 2020.

CP30

The CP30 process commenced in July last year. The process involved the citizens articulating what they want the future Coober Pedy to look like. Unfortunately, the pandemic has delayed progress but the process has recommenced recently.

In November a gathering of the three levels of government will occur in Coober Pedy to consider the work undertaken by our citizens. The starting point will be the *State of the Town* report. This is a report which articulates how the town is travelling.

New Westpac ATM

Westpac has installed a new ATM at its branch in Coober Pedy. We extend our gratitude to Carolyn Musarella, State Operations Manager, for her efforts in arranging this.



Australia Day

Citizen of the Year Awards

Each year, communities across South Australia celebrate the achievements and contributions of outstanding members of their communities through the Australia Day Citizen of the Year Awards. Award recipients inspire us to get involved in our communities and contribute to our neighborhoods.

The Australia Day Citizen of the Year Awards gives the opportunity to recognise someone who makes a difference in their community across 4 major categories:

Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award: the most outstanding Citizen for the local government authority.

Australia Day Young Citizen Award: the most outstanding Young Citizen for the local government authority.

The Community Event of the Year Award: the person or group who has staged the most outstanding community event during the year.

Award for Active Citizenship: a person or group delivering outstanding work or for an event or cause, staged in the community during the past year.

Nominations will open on 1 October 2020 and run until 5 pm on **20 November 2020**. To nominate someone, visit: <https://www.citizenoftheyear.com.au/nominate/> or come into the Council offices and pick up a nomination form.

Tourism Industry Restart Conference

Tourism businesses in South Australia have survived the toughest year to date and now is the time for industry to come together and reconnect. Join the Tourism Industry Council of South Australia (TiCSA) on **Monday, 2 November** for a state-wide tourism event not to be missed!

TiCSA understands that you may not have the time and resources to travel far, which is why they are bringing the hybrid Tourism Industry Restart Conference to a location near you.

Combining in-person networking with digital components, the full-day program will foster industry collaboration and innovation to ensure sustainable growth for the future. With a diverse line-up of engaging and informative speakers, you are guaranteed to leave feeling empowered and inspired.

Top five reasons to attend:

1. A unique way to learn and connect with your tourism community;
2. Accessible across ten locations;
3. Affordable thanks to the support from the State Government;
4. COVID-friendly as your safety is our priority; and
5. An eco-cautious format with all resources online.

Conference details:

When: Monday, 2 November 2020 from 9:30am

Investment: \$55 (incl GST) per delegate

Where: ten locations across South Australia *including Coober Pedy!!!*

Please note: Coober Pedy has limited seats available so book early to avoid missing out.

To book, visit: <https://ticsa.com.au/events/events-calendar/#!event/2020/11/1/tourism-industry-restart-conference-1> then click on **Register Now** and be sure to select "Flinders Ranges and Outback 2 - District Council of Coober Pedy - Council Chambers" when you get to Venue.





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*** COMMUNITY NEWS ***

Cooper Pedy Vinnies

Vinnies is always a fun place to visit. During Covid it is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9am to 3pm.



Manager Rose, really knows Cooper Pedy and what shoppers like. 'You wouldn't believe how many kitchens Vinnies have helped set up,' says Rose.

Stock regularly comes up from Adelaide, and good quality and clean donations are always welcome. Unfortunately Vinnies doesn't take electrical items.

Besides the shop, Vinnies does important work in the community offering support when needed. Recently Red Cross and Vinnies sent items to an Oodnadatta family who lost their house in a fire.

Dusty Radio

Dusty Radio had its AGM on Saturday 3 September 2020 (rescheduled from the previous week). Chairperson (Jill Maden), Secretary (Pearl Driver) and Treasurer (Natalie Beelitz) stood down and the following nominees were duly elected: Chairperson - Pearl Driver; Secretary - Melissa Brave; Treasurer - Razz Jones.

A podcast training course was delivered to Dusty volunteers from 3-5 September 2020 with the aim of enabling them to start developing a series of podcasts about Cooper Pedy's history. These podcasts will involve recording stories from locals, so if you've got a story to tell or are interested in getting involved with the podcast project, please contact Penny Gale at: radiodusty@gmail.com.

Clean Up Australia Day

A Clean Up Australia day was held on Sunday 13 September 2020. A ute-load of rubbish including plastic, a tyre and other debris was removed from the blower carpark by 4 local volunteers. It was pleasing to note that the rubbish collected was just general rubbish and no one particular group is to blame. Organiser, Janet Walton said "And I guess at the end of the day, the bonus is just raising community awareness and having people drive down the highway and seeing people caring for the town and environment ... even if this results in only one person/car load not throwing their rubbish out the window, I take it as a success."



Service Contact

Numbers

Administration Office
(08) 8672 4600

Mini Gems Children's Centre
(08) 8672 4623

Library
(08) 8672 4635

Electricity, Water, Works Depot
(08) 86724 626

On Call Numbers

Aerodrome
0400 108 230

Dog Control
0408 693 672

Electricity
0417 814 617

Water
0417 811 470

Works
0417 813 571

