



District Council of Coober Pedy Newsletter

Welcome to the Opal Capital of the World

April 2019

Dear Citizen,

I am extremely committed to the engagement of citizens in the things that matter in the town and encouraging us to all work together.

The first Town Meeting in March was extremely well attended. Thank you to all who attended. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a forum for the discussion of town issues - not just Council issues! Suggestions are welcomed. Let me know your thoughts.

The next Town Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 23 April at 7.00pm. The venue will be the Italian Club. We will rotate the venue in future.

Council meetings have also been well attended. The interaction with those present during the meeting has been invaluable.

The first meeting of people interested in being involved in the development of a new plan for Coober Pedy was held recently. The next step is to form into three groups - economic, environmental and social - to progress things. If you are interested in being involved give me a call.

The role of a Council is set out in the Local Government Act. The legislation is very broad. Almost all Councils limit their role to municipal things. Due to our remoteness our Council currently performs a number of functions that other Councils do not perform. This definitely needs review.

At the last Council meeting I outlined the options being developed in respect of our long

term finances. We are developing four options - a significant rate increase option, a significant service reduction option, a combination of a rate increase and a service reduction option and an option which involves changes in rates and water charges which almost neutralise one another and the divestment of the electricity and water business businesses. I will talk about these options at the next Town Meeting. At this stage I favour the latter option.

When deciding on the best option the paramount consideration needs to be the capacity to pay of our citizens. The proportion of your income set aside for municipal rates should be no more than is the case elsewhere in South Australia.

Unfortunately, the finances for this year ending 30 June 2019 are not looking good. We are forecasting an operating loss of \$1.4 million after budgeting for a surplus on \$0.6 million. This result mirrors our poor budgeting over the last ten years and reinforces that we have a structural yearly deficit of approximately \$1 million.

I have either met with or have had a telephone conversation with our Federal and State Members regarding water pricing. They both support equitable treatment of Coober Pedy water consumers. Although water is a State matter we think it is worth raising it as part of the Federal Election. Consequently we will also approach all candidates for the Federal electorate of Grey along with all South Australian Senate Candidates seeking their support and asking them to pursue this issue for us if elected.

In the last week I engaged a firm

to assist me with the recruitment of a CEO. The opportunity will be advertised in the coming weeks.

This Council has incurred significant legal costs over recent years. In future these costs will be disclosed on a monthly basis in the Council agenda.

It is imperative that the community has accurate and timely information. The Council is endeavouring to improve the flow of information in the town by such things as this newsletter, Town Meetings, interactive Council meeting etc. You can help by asking questions when you become aware of issues which require more or better information. Drop us a line with your question. This will not only provide benefit for you but also for many others in the community who may have the same question.

Until next time,
Tim Jackson
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Important Dates to Remember

Town meetings 2019

4th Tuesday of every month
Starting at 7:00pm
23rd April
28th May
25th June
23rd July
27th August
24th September
22nd October
26th November

Council Meetings

Held every 2nd & 3rd Tuesday of the Month at the Council Chambers 7:00pm Start.



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Fracking Proposal

Coober Pedy community voted resoundingly against the fracking simulation in the Arckaringa basin but the government have approved SAPEX a subsidiary Tristar to drill a series of Fracking bores potentially as close as 50 kilometres from Coober Pedy. Coober Pedy Council backed the popular vote by opposing strongly the simulation proposal. But the government have approved the environmental report paying scant regard to the potential for creating an increased risk of earthquakes risk damage to the underground living in Coober Pedy, the effects on the aquifer stability and environmental damage to the mound springs on top of a fault line to the north east of the drilling area. No conditions have been placed on the drilling to record the effects of the trial on the pressure along the fault line, in the basin aquifer or above or below the fracking zone. Council will be discussing this issue at the town meeting.

Employment Program

Complete Personnel in conjunction with Coober Pedy Council are intending to offer an employment program for unemployed people in the town. We are informed that there are at least 40 people eligible for New Start programs. Some of those beneficiaries will be offered an opportunity to work to remain eligible for ongoing Centrelink benefits. The program will assist Council with the maintenance of the olive grove including pruning, tree guards and other tree maintenance in the township area.

Water Leaks and other Water matters

The community have participated well in identifying water leaks in the district. The water losses have reduced remarkably to well under

10%. Your contribution has been appreciated and we urge you to continue to report leaks.

There has been a lot of effort put into fine tuning the reverse osmosis plants recently with an 18% improvement in production for Reverse osmosis plant 1 and removal and replacement of pipe manifolds in Reverse osmosis plant 2. Members of the community are encouraged to make an appointment to view the plant by phoning the council office.

A volunteer effort particularly by the Mayor Elect has identified valve problems and he has been instrumental in locating many of the buried valves not shown on plans and loosening them up or identifying their condition. Thanks Les.

Volunteers in the Visitor Information Centre

Volunteering plays a valuable role in sustaining healthy, resilient communities and contributes significantly to the quality and vibrancy of our society. If you have a good knowledge of the area, have an outgoing style and wish to participate and gain or develop new skills, knowledge and experience please contact Sophie on 8672 4600.

Waste Water use on the Oval

Under a licence agreement with the Regulator, Council are trialling the use of waste water in the underdrains on the Coober Pedy oval. Subject to approval surface water irrigation of the oval will commence shortly.

Airport Works

Tenders have been called and let for \$15000 of line marking and \$470,000 of vermin proof and

animal proof fencing of the airport.

RV Friendly Town

Submissions have been sought from the community on the options of siting of Recreational Vehicle facilities in the township. RV vehicles have self-contained toilet and shower facilities. The placement of facilities for RV friendly vehicles could be a very contentious issue as its placement could have effects on the viability of the township, the existing caravan facilities, and the current use of crown land and litter and planning controls. So submit council your comments to assist in the Council planning for this issue.

Drive In Licence

Council in conjunction with the Drive In committee are preparing a long term licence agreement. The committee is a dedicated group offering a unique service to the community and visitors to the township. This a long overdue agreements to give the committee and council clarity around the activities that the committee can undertake.

Access to Council Information

Council are endeavouring to distribute information to all of the community, for example: Agendas, Minutes and Newsletters. Access to these documents can be through the DCCP Website, Email Subscription and Facebook. For those that do not have access to the internet we send a Postal Box delivery of the Newsletter (please note if you have got marked NO JUNK MAIL on your box, you may not be receiving these), printed copies of the Agenda, Minutes and Newsletter are also available at the Council Administration desk for viewing.