



# District Council of Cooper Pedy Newsletter

*Welcome to the Opal Capital of the World*

August 2019

Dear Citizen,

The last month has been one of the busiest months on record for the town from a tourism perspective. Well done to everyone for catering for the needs of our visitors.

On behalf of all citizens I congratulate all involved with the organisation of the Cooper Pedy Races and Gymkhana. It was a wonderful few days of activities. It provided a great opportunity for the community to come together. Again if it was not for our volunteers these events would not occur.

Details of the EDL Community Grants are provided elsewhere in this newsletter. Again on behalf of the community can I sincerely thank EDL for its generous contribution to the wellbeing of the Cooper Pedy community.

The State Ombudsman, Wayne Lines, visited Cooper Pedy last month at the invitation of the Council. He attended the Town Meeting which provided an opportunity for citizens to learn about how South Australia's public integrity system works and how to use it. I have expressed our gratitude to the Ombudsman for his commitment in travelling to Cooper Pedy.

A number of citizen polls will be conducted in October.

At this stage there will be four questions. They will require either a yes or no answer. A document setting out the for and against arguments will be provided with the voting papers. The polls will be conducted by the State Electoral Commission. Polling day is 21 October 2019.

The first question that will be asked will be about whether citizens in future wish to approve municipal rate increases greater than the movement in the consumer price index.

The second and third questions will be regarding whether citizens support the sale of our electricity and water assets to the State Government if

acceptable financial arrangements can be agreed.

The final question will be whether citizens support the continuation of administration of the Council until the next general election in 2022.

The preliminary financial result for 2018/19 is now available and while a significant deficit has again been recorded the result is a significant improvement on the previous year and continues a downward trend in the Council's annual operating deficits. The deficit is approximately \$1.6 million (normalised which means it has been adjusted for one off transactions) which is an improvement of approximately \$800k on the previous year.

The Council's Annual Business Plan - commonly known as the budget - was adopted last Tuesday. It has been prepared on a status quo basis as there are a number of questions that need to be determined by others - the citizens and the State Government.

It provides for:

- an operating deficit (normalised) of \$1.4 million - down from \$1.6 million (normalised);
- net assets of \$24.2 million - up from \$21.1 million; and
- a rate and water charges increase of 1.3% which is the movement in the consumer price index.

It is important that the Council's Audit Committee's view on the Annual Business Plan is brought to your attention.

The Committee is of the view that this Plan will not deliver financial sustainability. This is the only conclusion that the Audit Committee could arrive at as the Annual Business Plan is only a one year plan and as yet the Audit Committee has not been presented with the Long Term Financial Plan. This has been delayed due to requiring a response from the State Government regarding the divestment of assets and the community's attitude to the sale of its

assets. At this stage it is scheduled for completion by the end of November.

The Committee is also concerned about the quality of the financial information being provided to it. The quality of the financial systems were extremely poor. There has been significant improvement in the systems but they are still not what they should be. Hence, the Audit Committee's view is legitimate.

As you know I have proposed to the State Government that they take over our electricity and water businesses.

Unfortunately, the response to date has been disappointing. As a consequence, I propose to increase water supply prices to ensure the cost of water production is fully recovered along with an acceptable rate of return on the community's investment unless I hear something more definitive from the State Government. At this stage prices will increase from 1 October. Income will increase by \$600k in a full year or about 30%.

My current view on the level of municipal rates is that they are about right. Consequently, \$800k will need to come from being more efficient, and failing this service reductions, if we are to balance our budget.

Unfortunately, the recruitment of a CEO has not progressed as we would have liked. The interview panel's preferred candidate declined an offer of employment at the last minute. As a consequence, the search goes on.

I hope to see you at the Town Meeting on Tuesday 27th August 2019.

Until next time.

Tim Jackson  
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**Next Town Meeting  
27th August 2019  
7:00pm @ the Golf Club**



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## Vet Service to Cooper Pedy

A replacement Vet for Redgum Vets has been found. They are from Wallaroo called Seaside Vet, Dr John Carles. Their first visit will be the 23rd September. The vet will occupy the council facility next to the sewerage plant at the northern end of Hutchison St.

## Rates

The Council propose that municipal, water and sewerage rates increase by 1.3% for 2019/20 financial year.

The water consumption charge will be reviewed by council unless a favourable decision is made by the Government in response to Councils request for a water rate subsidy similar to the remainder of rural South Australia. The rural rate subsidy would mean that the price for water would be the same as Adelaide prices.

## Youth Shed

The Council continue to use the Youth Shed for a very popular Child and Family Support program and are keen for interested parents and children to participate in the programs delivered. A schedule will be produced shortly with session times and days. Council has offered AFSS a lease agreement, and continuing discussions.

## Cinema Licence

Council has offered by way of a draft licence the Outback Air Cinema incorporated exclusive use of the cinema (drive in). The licence, if approved by Council, will give the committee some autonomy over the use of the cinema site. The negotiations on the detail of the licence are ongoing.

## Homelessness Program

Homelessness is caused by many issues in people's lives. The agency actively participating in this program

is Uniting Country SA. There is an event for the community being held at the rotunda on Thursday 22nd of August supported by other community agencies and organisations to celebrate homelessness week and the need to reduce homelessness. Food and drinks will be provided.

achieved in the last month in the recovery of rates and for outstanding debts in water, power and sewerage. Those ratepayers who are behind in paying their rates are urged to consult with staff to make arrangements for payment.

## Tafe SA

The Council have been briefed on the future of TAFE in Cooper Pedy. Assurance has been given that strategies have put in place to rationalise and efficiently use the College for other more diverse uses. This will ensure the viability of the site, and will go some way in supporting the continuance of TAFE training in Cooper Pedy.

## Debtors

Considerable success has been

**Community Grants**  
Congratulations to the 2018/19 EDL Community Grant Applicants! (listed below)

EDL is able to bring direct benefit to the community in recognition of the support to the Cooper Pedy Renewable Hybrid Project (CPRHP) of \$15,000 for Community Grants.

We would like to thank all the applicants who applied for the 2018/19 grants and look forward to seeing the projects completed!

## Community Grants 2018/19 Successful applicants

CP Retail, Business & Tourism Association	Modular staging for community events	\$2,000.00
OSHC	Artificial Turf at OSHC	\$1,500.00
Outback Open Air Cinema	Ice-cream display freezer	\$2,255.04
Shooters Club	25m to 50m Moveable Pistol Target	\$2,137.66
Opal Symposium Committee	20/20 10th National Opal Symposium Advertising	\$2,137.65
Kupi Kupi Gliding Club Inc.	1 plasma cutter	\$900.00
Kupi Kupi Gliding Club Inc.	40 foot container	\$2,137.66
Historical Society	Purchase of a desktop PC & Accessories	\$1,931.99
Total		\$15,000

### Next Vet Visit

Seaside Vet Wallaroo

**23rd September 2019**

For bookings please email: [info@seasidevet.com.au](mailto:info@seasidevet.com.au)

