



District Council of Cooper Pedy Newsletter

Welcome to the Opal Capital of the World

November/December 2020

Australia Day 2021

Australia Day Awards Nominations have now closed.

Winners will be announced at the Australia Day function at the Swimming Pool on 26 January 2021.

Further details about this event will be advertised closer to the day.

Cooper Pedy is on the Monopoly board!

The new Monopoly Community Relief edition features numerous Australian locations with Cooper Pedy being one of them.

Proceeds from sales of the game will help those in need. Search for "Monopoly Community Relief Edition" online to get more information.

** COMMUNITY NEWS **

Generous donation to school
A thank you to the Opal Inn Social Club for its recent donation of \$3,000 to Cooper Pedy Area School in lieu of the annual Children's Christmas Party.

Unfortunately with COVID the Opal Inn is unable to host its annual Children's Christmas Party this year. Instead the Opal Inn Social Club decided to donate the money to the very appreciative school.

The Children's Opal Inn Christmas Party started in 1981 and is a luncheon party in late November for all the children of the town. Father Christmas comes and there are presents for the children.

Hopefully the party will resume next year. For enquires for 2021 you can ask Lia Pantellis or Carrie Adamo.

Photo: Shayne, Maurice and Robert



Opening Hours Council Admin Building

Monday - Friday
9:00am - 5:00pm
Please note the till is closed at 4:30pm.

Works Department

Monday - Friday

7:30am - 4:00pm

Depot Yard Sales

Tuesday and Thursday

8:00am to 12:00pm

Waste Depot Opening Hours

Monday & Wednesday

12:30pm - 4:00pm

Saturday

9:00am - 1:00pm

Closed Public Holidays

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

Xmas Period

The Council and Depot will close at 5pm Wednesday 23 December and re-open at 9am on Thursday 7 January 2021.

Garbage collection will continue as normal, except for public holidays in which case collection will occur the following day.

The library will close on 24 December and re-open 11 January 2021.



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Message from the Administrator

As we approach the end of the calendar year, allow me to extend to you on behalf of the Council, the compliments of the season. I hope you have an enjoyable and safe festive season. The year for most of us, has been the most challenging in our lives. Can I congratulate you on how well you have approached it. Hopefully, 2021 will return to normal.

The first Cooper Pedy Roundtable took place on Friday 6 November in Cooper Pedy. The Roundtable is designed to bring the three levels of government together to monitor how the town is traveling and to advance initiatives to enhance it. The Roundtable was attended by State member, Eddie Hughes, Federal member, Rowan Ramsay and myself. A number of citizens who have been involved in the CP30 process also attended. As it was the first meeting, a lot of the time was spent discussing how the Roundtable would operate and backgrounding Eddie and Rowan. The State of the Town Report provided attendees with a picture of the strengths and weakness of the town. A draft ten year plan for the town - CP30 - was discussed but not finalised. Eddie and Rowan agreed to meet every six months to advance the agenda set by the town's citizens.

On Monday 7 November 2020, the CEO and Administrator met with the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Mining and Energy to discuss numerous matters in respect of

Cooper Pedy. Unfortunately, the Water Minister was unable to attend at the last minute. A subsequent meeting will be held in March.

Water pricing was obviously one of the main topics of discussion at the meeting with the Ministers. As a result, the Council considered the matter again at its December meeting. It was evident from the meeting that the State Government will not consider providing a water subsidy unless the cost of providing the service is tested in the marketplace. Consequently, the Council decided to call for expressions of interest from private sector providers to build, fund, own and transfer the Council's water services (potable and waste water). Should there be interest, tenders would be called. The Council also decided to call on the State Government to release all or part of the SA Water report to assist with the process. This is a very significant step and one that needs to be handled very carefully.

The Auditor-General's inquiry into the Council's finances in 2018 was not flattering. Not only was the Council in an extremely poor financial position but its financial reporting was hopelessly behind and its financial record keeping totally inadequate. It is pleasing to be able to inform you that for the first time in six years the Council's financial reporting has been finalised prior to legislated deadline - 30 November. The independent auditor has issued an unmodified opinion in respect of the financial statements for 2019/20 in their entirety. This is the first time this has happened for six years. There are still issues with

some of the Council's internal controls which necessitated the auditor issuing a modified opinion in respect of the controls. The underlying financial result is an operating deficit of \$848k which is a significant improvement on the \$2.7 million deficit recorded in the year before the Administrator was appointed.

The Regional Times continues to print a series of questions regarding the Council's finances for 2019/20. On 7 August the Council provided twelve answers to questions along with an offer of greater dialogue with the Times on financial issues in the future. No response has been received to this offer. Consequently, it was decided to allow the finalisation of the audited financial statements for the year being to occur and to use this as the response to the Times' questions. As outlined in the previous paragraph, the Council has delivered a significant improvement in its year on year financial performance and one which is significantly better than its budgeted result. These results should allay the Regional Times' concerns about the state of the Council's finances in 2019/20.

It was great that the town again celebrated NAIDOC Week after a break and I was pleased that the Council could be involved.

During November the first meeting between the District Council and the Umoona Council took place since I was appointed. I understand this has not happened for a number of years. It was agreed that we should continue to talk about better cooperation.





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Australia Day is fast approaching. It is a day to celebrate living in this great country. The Council will again be organising an event to celebrate this and to recognise citizens and organisations who make significant contributions to the town.

Council's Annual Financial Statements Update

Council's 2019/20 Annual Financial Statements have received the tick of approval from Council's auditors (Bentleys) and the independent Audit Committee. The statements were adopted by Council at the meeting on Tuesday 24 November 2020.

Key features of the financial statements include:

- Second year in a row that the auditors have given a clear audit opinion, in other words, the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with accounting standards. Between 2014 and 2019 Council's financial statements were 'qualified' by the auditors because the statements did not comply with accounting standards.
- The operating surplus for the year was a surplus of \$833k.
- The 'underlying' result, which is a more accurate measure of the financial health of the Council, was a deficit of \$848k which is \$544k better than budgeted. In 2018/19, the underlying deficit was \$2.5 million and the year before that, \$2.7 million.

This is the first time since 2013/14 that the financial statements have been prepared and audited by the statutory deadline of 30 November.

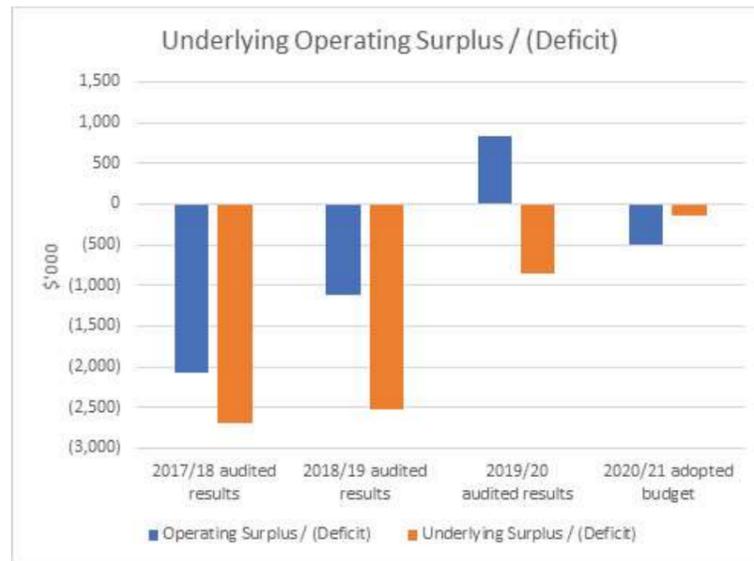
This is the third set of annual financial statements prepared and audited in the last 10 months. The 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial statements were adopted by Council in May 2020.

The financial statements were considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2020. That meeting was attended by David Francis and Matthew Brunato from Bentleys who were able to answer questions about the financial statements and to present their report on Audit Findings.

The Chair of the Audit Committee made a presentation on the statements at a recent Council

meeting, and endorsed Council's approach to returning to an underlying surplus.

Despite receiving an unmodified audit opinion, the auditors have identified a number of concerns about Council's internal control environment and have issued a qualified audit opinion on the internal controls. A detailed list of internal control limitations was identified by the auditors in their audit findings report. Whilst the list is long, it is worth noting that in previous years the auditors were not able to produce a list of internal control inadequacies. Significant work has been directed towards improving internal controls, but there have not been the resources available to document and review Council's *Internal Control Framework*. Bentleys Report on Audit findings is available on Council's website under the section Council Minutes 24 November 2020 (Attachment 2).



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The financial statements incorporate a number of changes as a result of changes to accounting standards and the refinement of accounting policies. The most significant change relates to Council's contract with electricity provider EDL. The new *Accounting Standard AASB16 Accounting for Leases* requires Council to recognise the present value of the future fixed lease payments as a liability of \$90.7 million and as an asset of \$90.7 million.

Target Renewable Energy Generation Guarantee - Year 3

In the 2019/2020 finance year, Electricity Generation Company, EDL, achieved 105% of their renewable energy targets. This is a terrific outcome for the environment and Council congratulates EDL on their achievements.

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC stands for NationalAborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. NAIDOC week, which took place between 8 - 15 November 2020, was an opportunity to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAIDOC Week was celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week was a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

NAIDOC week, which took place between 8 - 15 November 2020,



was an opportunity to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAIDOC week celebrations in Cooper Pedy went well despite the windy and hot weather. Numerous community organisations joined together to organise the events. Tuesday's flag raising was a success with Julie O'Toole, Maureen Williams and Jonathan Fatt-Clifton raising the flags with Cooper Pedy Area School students and community members in attendance. The flag raising was followed by a walk to the Rotunda for food and NAIDOC Week activities. Friday saw the Youth Shed and carpark being used for a community BBQ, childrens activities and the display of Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park information. Friday night at the Drive-in was the premier of a short video by Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park on connection to country, which has since been posted to the Kanku-Breakaways CP Facebook page, followed by the movie "In my blood it runs". The final NAIDOC event was a NAIDOC Youth Ball.

Thank you to all the organisations and individuals involved in putting together the events. Forward planning for next years NAIDOC events has already begun so keep an eye out for your opportunity to be involved.

