

**FREE***Coober Pedy***REGIONAL TIMES**

Outback Communities Newspaper Established 1982

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**Newspaper****REGIONAL TIMES**

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<https://cooberpedytimes.com>

# COOBER PEDY RATEPAYER ROB DEMPSTER ASSESSES 7 YEARS OF ADMINISTRATION: "WHERE IS THE MONEY?"

As ratepayers of the District Council of Coober Pedy (DCCP), we are not only entitled to transparency and responsible governance, we are legally owed it. Yet the current Council, bogged down in long-standing debt, has prioritised grandiose, non-essential projects over a period of several years while failing to justify rising rates, disappearing funds, and diminished basic services.

Rob Dempster, a property owner and committed resident, raised serious concerns at a recent Community Alliance Meeting that resonated with many locals. A primary concern: Why has a financially distressed Council entertained putting valuable time and energy into a \$7.5 million drive-in redevelopment, while the town struggles to maintain essential infrastructure, contain costs, and deliver basic services?

"We have smoke and mirrors on a sinking ship, says Rob Dempster". The Council's history of poor financial management is no secret. The town has been under external administration since early 2019, and deficits have mounted over several years. Yet instead of focusing on stabilisation and service delivery, Council energy appears to be directed toward a "shovel-ready" drive-in theatre proposal, developed in partnership with outside consultants and designers, with no disclosed costings for their services or for ongoing maintenance!

As Mr. Dempster bluntly puts it: "You're in debt. You've got less than 2,000 people in the community. Your financial gearing is like the Titanic, it's sunk."

Council has claimed the project would be grant-funded and won't impact rates, but this is cold comfort when Council's own website admits it lacks the financial position to fund it and when co-contributions may be sought from other bodies (or, by default, ratepayers if no one steps forward). And even this hinges on an incomplete project outline that omits service costs, operational plans, and water expenses—vital in an arid town like ours.

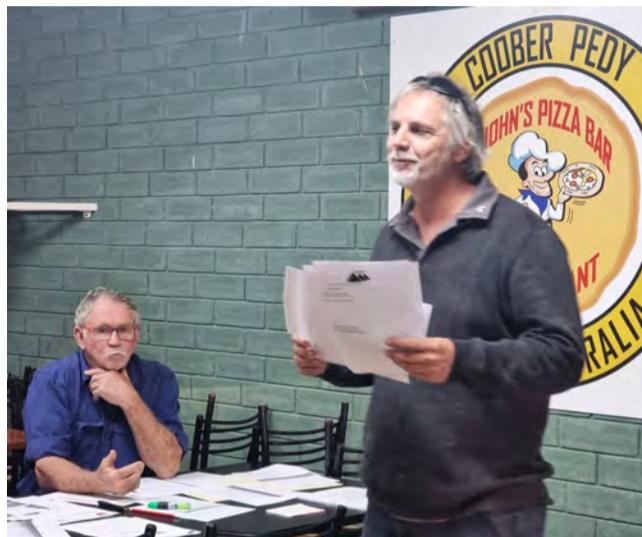
"I see a pattern of hidden waste and misplaced priorities", said Dempster whose concern is not limited to one project. His voice joins a growing frustration in the community about a broader pattern: a Council with an appetite for extravagant spending, but without accountability for past expenditure or the ability to explain how increased rates are being used.

## Rob Dempster has more questions:

"Where is the detailed accounting of Council's current financial position?"  
 "Why are rates rising while services deteriorate?"  
 "Who decides which projects receive time, staff, and attention?"  
 "and how is this prioritised?"

The time and motion cost of Council staff involvement in the drive-in redevelopment/consultations, external engagements, design reviews, is just one example of the hidden operational waste the public rarely sees. When roads are left un-repaired, water prices rise, and services are patchy, it's fair to ask: Is this where council's energy is going?

"While I look at duty of care, I cannot help but see potential breaches", said Dempster. "The Council's role is not to speculate with ratepayer funds or pursue legacy projects, it is to manage essential services with transparency and fiscal discipline. Council is meant to be practicing Austerity measures, but no one has mentioned this in a long while!"



Community Alliance Chairperson John Di Donna with Rob Dempster Ratepayer Resident (left) about to take the floor

The complete absence of public consultation on a highly controversial endeavor by former Administrator Geoff Sheridan where he ignored community backlash to push through a "refurbishment" of the old abandoned tennis and basketball courts, is being called an abuse of process.

Sheridan at the time was trying to help neighbouring mining company achieve a social license in the town and claimed that he didn't need to consult because there would be no impact on the community. The Administrator then attributed the annual maintenance debt to the Coober Pedy Ratepayers!

[The Coober Pedy Community Alliance has been asked to continue addressing this issue, now being labelled an "abuse".]

"The proposed drive-in redevelopment may sound appealing in isolation, but in the context of a broke Council, rising rates, and diminishing public trust, it stands as a symbol of everything broken in our local governance", added Dempster.

Mr. Dempster and many others are asking fair, necessary questions. Until the Council can fully account for its current financial position, justify its spending priorities, and restore core services to acceptable levels, no further aspirational projects should proceed.

This is not just about a drive-in. This is about the long-term sustainability of Coober Pedy and the rights of its residents to be heard, respected, and protected from fiscal mismanagement.

Mr. Dempster brushed on a few conduct items that take into consideration Coober Pedy's population being a mixture of multicultural, indigenous and western society, with not everyone attaining a level of accountancy or other university level in order to comprehend council's balance sheets, agenda's, business plans, budgets and other information.

This information is poured out onto the community by an inaccessible team of professionals whose income stream is derived from Coober Pedy funds, but does not go towards stimulating the local economy.

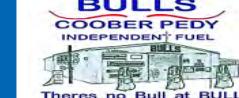
Australian Consumer Law prohibits businesses, including councils, from engaging in conduct that is misleading or deceptive, or likely to mislead or deceive, in trade or commerce.

Among the items discussed were the rate rises, and the potential for failing to disclose important information, and creating a misleading impression about the price, value, or quality of goods or services.


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**Phone: 86 725 036**


**BULLS COOBER PEDY INDEPENDENT FUEL**  
 There's no Bull at BULLS

Friday 6 June, 2025

This could include taking unfair advantage of vulnerable consumer's trust or exploiting a situation where consumers are at a disadvantage. For advice about whether the ACCC can investigate and take action against councils for unconscionable conduct, ring this number 1300 302 502

It is illegal for councils to make false or misleading representations about goods or services when supplying, offering to supply, or promoting them.

Unfair trade practices generally refer to practices that are detrimental to consumers or businesses and go against fair trading principles.

This can include practices like making false claims about the price or value of goods or services, or charging for a service that will not be provided.

The ACCC and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) are responsible for enforcing the ACL. If you have concerns about a council's conduct in specific areas, contact the ACCC 1300 302 502 or the Office for Public Integrity (OPI) 1300 782 489.

**Unconscionable conduct** under the Australian Consumer Law refers to trading practices that are harsh or oppressive and go against good conscience, according to the Australian Consumer Law.

A recent Agenda largely dealing with the outcome of Community Consultation on the Drive-in Proposal, was presented as a 650 page document with hundreds of pages of complex information. Most of it was baffling and unable to be digested. The daunting information did not appear relevant. It most certainly would have been overlooked by the majority of ratepayers.

It is a requirement of the relevant Act that the public content provided by Councils must be understood by the audience to which it is presented.

With Coober Pedy's mixed cultural community English is not everyone's first language. This thoughtless technical aspect has attracted polite community disapproval in the past, however the complexity of Council documents is unrelenting with a good part of the community not bothering to participate.

**Non-digital ratepayers** do not have easy access to documentation. Many of the ratepayers have limited computer literacy and technical skills. The absence of a full print (simplified) financial prospectus, risks breaching both the Local Government Act 1999 (SA) and principles of financial stewardship.

**Mr. Dempster concluded with:** "The overdraft presented is increasing, the plant and infrastructure is depreciating, rates have increased and services are failing, with NO contingency plans apparent!



## SERVING THE OPAL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD SINCE 1982

## ABOUT US

The annual rainfall in the area is around 144.2 millimetres (5.68 in)

The CPRT newspaper first became DIGITAL/ONLINE in 2006 as well as hardcopy. Although online is now the main trend, hard copies are still printed locally.

**Editor - Margaret Mackay**  
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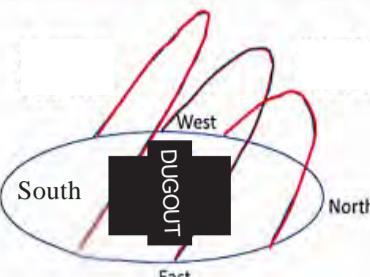
Send an email to be included on emailing list

### 7 DAYS WEATHER at COOBER PEDY Oodnadatta Tarcoola Andamooka Roxby Downs

	MON Jun 9	TUE Jun 10	WED Jun 11	THU Jun 12	FRI Jun 13	SAT Jun 14	SUN Jun 15
Summary							
Maximum	16°C	16°C	19°C	17°C	18°C	21°C	20°C
Minimum	9°C	7°C	6°C	8°C	7°C	8°C	9°C
Chance Of Rain	30%	5%	5%	20%	5%	5%	5%
Rain Amount	< 1mm	< 1mm	< 1mm	< 1mm	< 1mm	< 1mm	< 1mm
UV Index	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Frost Risk	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Wind Speed	19 km/h	23 km/h	12 km/h	15 km/h	13 km/h	23 km/h	28 km/h
Wind Direction	WSW	SW	SW	SW	N	W	WSW

Winter 2025 June solstice  
21 Jun 12:42 pm

Spring 2025 Sept equinox  
23 Sep 4:19 am



Bi Monthly

## Local Scribes

Bi Monthly

**MARGARET MACKAY** News Reporter, Resident and Coober Pedy Ratepayer has been the Editor of CPRT since 2005 and a volunteer contributor since the mid 1990s, covering general news stories, photography, advertising and the coordinating of community contributions.



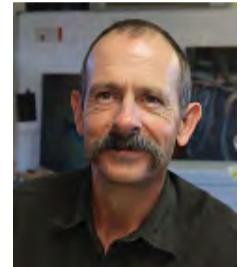
Margaret Mackay  
Editor

**Sgt Angus Lovelock** joins the Coober Pedy Police Station after gaining local experience on the APY Lands, and also 2 years at Marla in the Far North, West Coast and Penong. Sgt Lovelock is previously from Adelaide where he began his career in policing 12 years ago.



Sgt Angus Lovelock,  
Police Reports.

**MIKE GILLAM** is a freelance writer/photographer who divides his time between his Art Gallery in Alice Springs and his Dugout in Coober Pedy. Mike also writes essays for the Alice Springs News.



Mike Gillam Coober Pedy/Alice Springs

**JOHN DI DONNA** was raised in the South Australian Outback and is a long term resident of Coober Pedy. As a business person John is a regular, commuter along the Far North and Flinders highways and byways, covering the entire Far North & East and Outback of South Australia.



John Di Donna  
Opinion & Commentary

\*Over 40 Nationalities bonded by the OPAL Industry



## The Opal Capital of the World

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\*Spacious underground living

\*Beautiful Opal Gemstones

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\*Coober Pedy - situated on the LARGEST OPAL FORMATION in the world

### Coober Pedy Regional Times Newspaper"

CPRT became a FREE Newspaper in 2006 and increased its distribution to 5,000 hard copies + and at the same time provided a **Free Online Digital Newspaper**, to accommodate the new digital era. Distribution covers a vast area including nearby communities and towns, social media, website and mailing list.

### Next Publishing Dates

Friday 20 Jun 2025  
Friday 11 Jul 2025  
Friday 24 July 2025

... the prime value of journalism is that it imposes transparency, and thus accountability, on those who wield the greatest governmental and corporate power. ~ Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras and Jeremy Scahill

### Four pillars of Democracy are

**LEGISLATIVE** : The body which makes laws for the state.

**EXECUTIVE** : Executes and enforces laws.

**JUDICIARY** : Works to protect laws.

**PRESS/MEDIA** : The 4th estate of democracy.

It informs the public

**'Media releases'** may be submitted however there is no obligation on the newspaper to publish any part of it. Media releases are generally one sided so comments may, (or may not) be extracted and used in a related article. **CPRT does not** provide free space for political or business advertising.

**Letters to Editor** should be sent by email where possible and must be relevant to the community. Potentially defamatory comments will be edited or deleted. Letters to Editor need to be signed, but a pen name can be published.

### 1.) GROUPS & SPONSORSHIP

You or your group may wish to send a News Article. Aim for a 300 - 500 word story in plain text and a suitable photo/s.

**2.) If seeking an Editorial - "Advertorial" or "Special Feature", please enquire about the cost first.**

**3.) Advertisers** may be entitled to editorials

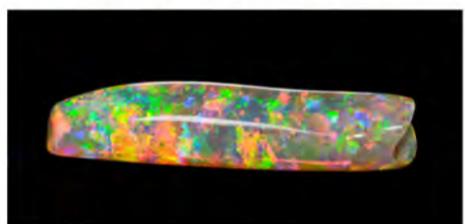
**4.) Sponsorship** for clubs or community programs is by arrangement.



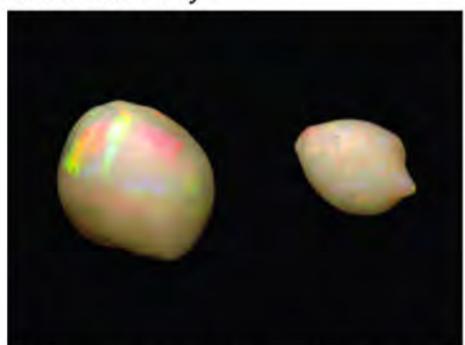
The closing of the Opal Cutting Course at TAFE in favour of courses for the Prominent Hill Mine was a callous act by the State Government, that left many remote students without access to local industry training and associated careers.

The TAFE Opal Studies course in Coober Pedy, was the only one of its kind in the world.

**Coober Pedy**  
 Opal Capital of the World



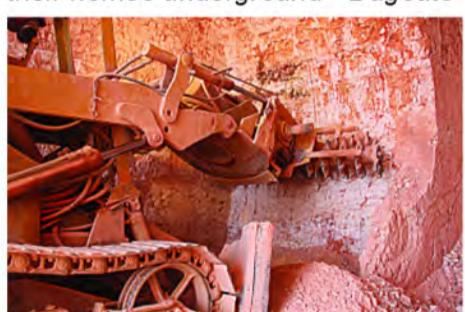
The Virgin Rainbow was discovered in Coober Pedy



65 Million year old opalised pearls found at the 12 Mile in Coober Pedy



The Coober Pedy resident build their homes underground - Dugouts



A tunnelling machine carves out the hard sandstone



Cut stones 2 Mile Field Coober Pedy

## Before mining for opals in South Australia YOU MUST

- 1) hold a current Precious Stones Prospecting Permit (PSPP)
- 2) pay a fee when applying for the permit and for the registration of claims and other relevant documents.

## Q: How do I obtain a Precious Stones Prospecting Permit (PSPP)?

A: You must apply personally at any office of the Opal Mining Registrar, either in Andamooka, Coober Pedy or Adelaide Office at 11 Weymouth Street Level 4 Customer Service.

How to obtain a permit and the basic requirements to prospect and mine for opal are outlined in: MG32: Opal prospecting and mining (PDF 3.5 MB)

<https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/MRGMG32.pdf>

Frequently asked questions about opal mining in South Australia.

[https://energymining.sa.gov.au/minerals/mining/opal\\_mining/frequently\\_asked\\_questions](https://energymining.sa.gov.au/minerals/mining/opal_mining/frequently_asked_questions) (Copy and paste links)



Painted Lady

# OPAL INDUSTRY NEWS

## Active Claims as at May 2025

Andamooka 162; Coober Pedy 464;  
 Mintabie 10; Stuart Creek 1



## Opal Mining Act 1995

Part 9—Miscellaneous 89—Disposal of waste  
 (1) relevant area means—

- (a) an area pegged out for a precious stones claim;
- (2) A person must not deposit, or allow to be deposited, soil, overburden or other material from a relevant area, or extend an open cut, beyond the boundaries of a relevant area, without the written authority of an authorised person.

## Maximum penalty: \$10 000.





## Two teens charged over sports club break-in at Coober Pedy

02 Jun 2025 1:29pm

Two teenagers were arrested after allegedly breaking into a local sports club at Coober Pedy on 1 June, during the afternoon.

About 2.50pm on Sunday 1 June, a window was broken at a sports club on Robins Boulevard, Coober Pedy. Two suspects entered the premises and stole a carton of pre-mixed drinks.

Following investigations, police attended an address and arrested two youths, aged 13 and 17, both from Coober Pedy. A carton of pre-mixed drinks was also seized by police.

The teens were charged with aggravated serious criminal trespass and bailed to appear in the Coober Pedy Youth Court on 30 July.

**22/05/2025** – A parked vehicle was illegally interfered with on Holly Crescent overnight. Thankfully no property was stolen and no damage caused during the incident.



**01/06/2025** – Two people have been arrested after a break-in to a business premises on Robbins Blvd where a small amount of property was stolen. They have been charged with aggravated serious criminal trespass and will face court at a later date.

**04/06/2025** – A motorcycle rider has been injured after a single vehicle crash on William Creek Road. They were taken to Alice Springs Hospital by the Royal Flying Doctors Service and are in a stable condition.

### DUGOUT FIRE AT COOBER PEDY

**07/06/25 7:17PM** Coober Pedy CFS and the SAAS were despatched to a dugout fire on Kami Road, at German Gully Coober Pedy



## Shed fire at Pimba - 8 June 2025

8 June 2025 5:45 AM



Four trucks carrying approximately 16 firefighters attended a shed fire at 2:10 am on Olympic Dam Highway at Pimba in the state's Far North.

The property owner discovered the fire after hearing a loud bang, while there were also multiple phone calls to Triple Zero from people at a nearby roadhouse.

Upon arrival CFS volunteers found the large shed to be fully engulfed in flames, with industry firefighters from Woomera already on scene.

The shed was destroyed by the fire, with damage estimated to exceed \$100,000.

SA Police and SA Ambulance Service attended to support CFS firefighters.

Fire Cause has been contacted and firefighters remain on site to tidy up and monitor the scene.

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**\$50.99 EACH**



**24 PACK**  
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## Q & A with Administrator at Council Friday 30th May 2025

**COOBER PEDY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

**Saturday, 31 May 2025, at 4pm**

### REPORT

**Chair: John Di Donna**  
**Vice Chair: George Rosewarne**  
**Member Teena Rosewarne JP**  
**M. Mackay CPRT Media Officer**

#### 1.) Drive-In Consultation - Discussion 2.) Requests for Petition - Draft and Discussion

#### 3.) Future of Coober Pedy Water Supply - Discussion

4.) Requests from community to report road damages, buffel grass and vandalism of Government road signage. The Community Alliance has made contact with the Dept of Infrastructure and Transport to report damages and received job numbers and follow up advice.

#### 5 Meeting with Administrator - Report, Discussion

**Q:** Return to democratic governance, options, information sessions, consultation?

**A:** Working on hybrid council model to suit our circumstances. Smaller council with Administrator.

**Q:** Would you support Coober Pedy's desire to be respected as an Opal Mining - working town. Majority of residents would like to consider that the Centrelink and welfare services align more with training, volunteering, or contribution-based programs? (This would improve skilled employment for support industries. opportunities)

**A:** Vague.

**Q:** Would the Administrator support formally, heritage listing key elements of Coober Pedy's historic infrastructure and encourage the retention of authenticity in a future development clause. (building code)?

**A:** Not at this stage. Something for new council to consider.

**Q:** Would the administrator support a community-led framework that defines how and when 'any company' may be invited to contribute to town planning, community investment, or infrastructure; ensuring their involvement aligns with local priorities and respects the town's autonomy and multicultural history?

**A:** Not at this stage. Something for a new council to consider.

**Q:** Progress re: Water?

**A:** We are looking at SA Water to take the water, and Power Networks for the Electricity. Hoping to finalise in the next 6 months. Alliance discussed back up plan if the SA Water Focus failed.

**Q:** Expressions of Interest?

**A:** Vague.

**Q:** Facilitator contract: When does facilitator contract/funding with Council as Consultant finish? Is it 30th June?

**A:** The council can give him a month's notice at any time.

**Q:** Continued Funding Plea: Has facilitator's "support for continued funding" plea dated 5th March 2025 been funded/granted or not?

**A:** Didn't know.

**Q:** What is the amount for?

**A:** Amount is for facilitator wages.



At the Community Alliance meeting local residents discussed ways to encourage greater transparency and communication from town management



Community Alliance Chairperson John Di Donna working through the Agenda and fielding commentary from the Residents/Ratepayers



Community Alliance Mtg 31-5-2025



Thank you to the staff and management at John's Pizza Bar for your wonderful support on the day.



Community Alliance Mtg 31-5-2025

**NEXT  
Coober Pedy  
Community  
Alliance  
meeting will be  
on Saturday  
28th June 4pm  
at Italian Club**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Re: Evasive Response from Council CEO

As a ratepayer in Coober Pedy, I am deeply concerned by the recent response from Council CEO Garry Herdegen to the open letter sent by the Coober Pedy Community Alliance. The letter raised simple, fair questions about how our public money has been spent, including legal fees, facilitator costs, and infrastructure delays.

What we received in return was a dismissive letter that implied the answers were none of our business. When asked how much has been spent suing a local ratepayer over six years, the CEO claimed the information wasn't available, despite Council employing accountants and undergoing regular audits. This is public money. We have a right to know.

Questions about payments to the Together Group facilitator, including pizza nights, were brushed off. We've all been in the Pizza Bar at times when \$100s worth of pizza's have been picked up by someone from the group.

A trip to Adelaide by the close knit Together Group, apparently unrelated to Council yet attended by the CEO was similarly glossed over. On the appointment of the Governor General as an "honorary resident," Council said it had no idea. Is this accountability?

Even basic infrastructure issues like toilet blocks and road maintenance were dodged or blamed on other agencies. If Council can't fix a sidewalk or provide a toilet block after years of planning or after receiving the funding, how can we trust them with bigger matters?

Council is not a private club. It operates with public funds and is answerable to the community. If the CEO is unwilling to be transparent and treat residents with respect, then perhaps he has already been here too long.

Sincerely,  
Concerned Coober Pedy Ratepayer

**The mess pictured below has been outside the LOCKED public toilets in the playground for the past week.**



Tourists are attracted to this colourful "Recreation Space" with its public toilet visible from Hutchison Street. When they stop, they are dismayed to discover the toilet is locked. The Council apparently got grant money to replace the vulnerable self-cleaning toilet with more practical stainless steel toilets that can be hosed out, but the administrators continue to do nothing.

Councils are not required to provide public toilets but, if they do have public toilets, they are required to maintain them. Locking is not maintaining.

Two months ago, the Council was informed that the playground was infested with caltrops, a noxious weed with dangerous thorny seeds that penetrate shoes, tyres and paws. They did nothing. A volunteer spent hours over 3 days, removing the caltrops. The volunteer also put up signs to warn people to wear shoes in the playground. (SB Ratepayer)

# FACILITATOR PLANS WILL NOT PROVIDE DIRECT BENEFITS TO THE COOBER PEDY COMMUNITY

Dear Editor,

### Is it not a ratepayer's right to straight answers?

As an ordinary resident and ratepayer of Coober Pedy, I was disappointed but not surprised by the latest CEO's response to the Coober Pedy Community Alliance's open letter.

The questions we asked were fair: How much has been spent on a six-year legal campaign against one resident? What's been paid to external consultants like the Together Group facilitator?

What's the deal with the toilet blocks we were promised? When will basic road maintenance be addressed?

Instead of answers, we got a wall of vague replies, finger-pointing, and bureaucratic delay. If Mr. Herdegen doesn't even know how much public money has been spent, what exactly is his role and why are we paying him so much?

### To the Editor,

We recently bought a home in Coober Pedy, hoping to invest in a small town with character, opportunity, and community spirit. Instead we find a disturbing pattern of dysfunction in the local council, and a wall of silence when residents new or old ask basic questions about how our rates are being spent.

After reading the Coober Pedy Community Alliance's open letter and the CEO's response, I was shocked. The Alliance raised clear questions, on behalf of its members:

Q: What amount has Council spent suing one of its own residents? [Why is this a secret? Has it been added to our rates?] This is a small community. Unbelievable. My advice to the community is to stop the FIFO practice asap. Offload the state government bullies.

Q: Why are we paying an outside consultant, to do what with a Together Group? Q: Where is the transparency around projects like toilet blocks and road repairs? The answers we read are vague, unworthy of the CEO's consideration, or palmed off to someone else. What is his salary again?

We have committed financially to this town, and now discover we have inherited a legal bill of council's making that has no amount attached to it, rising rates with dubious charges, stalled infrastructure, and a housing "plan" no one seems to have approved or believes they need here, not to mention a controversial Ceo and a "facilitator", (What is a facilitator needed for?) That is something we never came across before! How does all that save money?

When we were looking for a home, there were definitely a lot to choose from. And plenty for the home carpenter at good prices.

We are told Coober Pedy has been under State Government administration for years, and things have become chaotic. If this level of laziness, reckless spending, evasiveness and unaccountability is considered acceptable, then no wonder people have had enough of this bombastic dictatorship they call administration.

The residents here long-term or new deserve a council leadership that treats the public with respect, not as a nuisance. If this CEO cannot provide clear answers to basic questions, maybe he's not the right person for the job.

Thank you, (Name Supplied to Editor)

What stands out is repetitious tone of contempt in the response as if asking how our rates are spent is an inconvenience. Council is not a private business where they can wheel and deal for their own comforts and control.

We've seen too many half-explained deals, unfulfilled plans, and now a housing proposal that no one recalls being consulted on. The 44+ housing complex will create a captive rental market for an out of town developer and leave locals with empty rental properties.

The plans outlined will not provide a direct benefit or service to the community! \$7.5m funding for a council owned/managed building is hardly targeting community benefit.

If the CEO can't or won't provide clear answers to the people he works for, then the Government needs to bring forward an election for Coober Pedy. It is very clear to me that the facilitator and the CEO is making our Opal Mining Town, Coober Pedy comfortable for the public service and other pursuits.

Yours sincerely Ratepayer. (name supplied)

## WHAT IS A CONSULTANT?

We asked Google

### What is the responsibility of a consultant?

Consultants (often referred to as management consultants) help organisations manage change and solve problems so they operate more efficiently and therefore profitably. Consultants offer advice and expertise to client organisations to help them improve their business performance.

### Who can call themselves a consultant?

Anyone who wishes can call themselves an independent consultant; there's no formal certification or licensing required to adopt the title. However, successfully making a living as an independent consultant typically requires a strong foundation of credibility built on substantial past experience.

### What qualifies you as a consultant?

The requirements to become a consultant vary by industry, and there is no standard consultant job description. Some fields require more specialisation than others. In general, you need a combination of experience and education that establishes you as an authority in the client's industry.

### Can I just call myself a consultant?

There's no legal requirements for calling yourself a consultant, making the question of qualifications somewhat unclear. It comes down to what each organisation needs from you, and whether or not you are able to deliver on it.

### Do consultants get paid?

In general, the field of consulting is thought to be lucrative, with many consultants earning a large salary. Of course, it is highly dependent on the specific field, number of customers, geographic location, and many other factors.

### Do you need a qualification to be a consultant?

A good degree pass in a subject like business studies or business management, evidence of analytical, planning and communication skills, relevant work experience from placements, internships or temporary jobs.

## CEO RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

RE: Response to Open Letter to CEO received 24 April 2025

Dear Mr Di Donna,

*Regarding your questions re cost of litigation against Mr Naumovic, when Council has staffing resources available to search and collate all the relevant information over the past 6 years from our record system we will endeavour to provide the information. Please find Councils response to your members questions*

1. How much has the council spent on the facilitator, Michael Edgecombe to date, including Pizza nights and miscellaneous costs? Last financial year and to date? *The Council pays the facilitator as per set amount in contract. No further miscellaneous costs have been paid nor requested.*

2. The facilitator and yourself visited Adelaide on behalf of the council, presumably. How much did the council pay for this excursion, and what was the outcome? Will there be a report presented to the community?

*This was organised by Coober Pedy Together not Council. No cost to Council, the CEO was working from Adelaide at the time and was invited to join and attended. The meeting with the governor was to provide information on any current issues relevant to Coober Pedy so that she is well informed and where she can assist. The time and dates aligned with other meetings the CEO was already attending in Adelaide.*

3. Who elected the Governor General, as an Honorary resident of Coober Pedy? What was the process, and what does it mean?

*Council is not aware of nor been involved in any process.*

4. Is the Council considering renewing the contract of TG Facilitator for another year? If so, and as public money is involved what is the purpose, and will there be a fair public procurement process?

*The Councils' draft budget is currently out for consultation. As always there is a proposed allocation in the budget for Community and Economic Development. As part of councils Service Review all council services and contracts are under review.*

5. What are the profit and loss figures for hosting the Adelaide Fringe via the Together Group, including payment to facilitator Michael Edgecombe?

*This was not organised through Council therefore we cannot provide figures. Any payments to Micheal Edgecombe by Council were in-line with his standard contract as facilitator for Coober Pedy Together.*

6. What views does the council have on implementing a housing and social support model for essential workers, as per the surprise Coober Pedy Plan 2024-2028, published on the Together Group website?

*Council will continue to as it has done in the past advocate and encourage for appropriate housing in Coober Pedy. Council has responded to the far north regional Plan as per The Council Meeting held April 2025, resolutions #731*

1. That Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is to provide a submission on the proposed Draft Far North Regional Plan to Planning and Land Use Services noting Council's general acceptance of the Plan apart from one primary concern listed below plus any other matter the CEO believes needs to be included in the submission. Primary Concern

*The need to reduce the number of vacant houses or houses in complete state of disrepair should be the primary focus of the plan for increasing the population and accommodation availability in Coober Pedy rather than the development of new sites.*

2. That Council's Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate and resolve the matter of the discrepancy in SA Housing Trust property data raised in the report titled "Far North regional Plan" and dated 23 April 2025 and reporting the outcome to Council via the Outstanding Actions Report received by Council monthly.)

*Council is aware of a proposal to implement housing and social support model for essential workers however, all proposed developments must be submitted to PlanSA for planning assessment by the State Planning Commission, which will consider zoning regulations and processes that flex with the complexity of the proposal.*

7. Can you inform us of the assessment process for the alleged need for this particular type of housing?

*Council has undertaken no formal investigation on housing needs in Coober Pedy. It is aware that a developer has a proposal for a development with the State Planning Commission. This proposal is a commercial decision of the developer that they see as an opportunity.*

*Council's planning assessments are undertaken by the State Planning Commission which is the principal planning and development assessment body in South Australia. If a proposed development achieves planning and building rules approvals with Planning SA, Council is responsible for granting final approvals for developments that occur within its area.*

8. The council allocated funding for two new toilet blocks in 2023. When will they be installed and operating?

*The funding was unable to cover 2 toilet blocks which was not achievable with available grant funds. Council requested the funds be consolidated to a single toilet block in the playground. Awaiting approval, a tender process for this project is underway. Expecting a mid-September 2025 completion date if funding extension is approved.*

9. McArdle Freight and visiting truck drivers have requested that the large hole in the sidewalk area of Flat Hill Road be filled and repaired for several months, but no one at the works department has bothered to return their calls or investigate the issue. What does it take for the council to respond to local maintenance problems where business/ratepayer's livelihood and integrity of services is at stake?

*Council had already reported this issue to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT).*

*Flat Hill road does not come under the care and control of Coober Pedy Council. Flat hill road is a truck route from the highway to Oodnadatta (Via Kempe Road). Flat Hill road, a small section of Seventeen Mile Road and Kempe Road are maintained by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT). etc...*

Garry Herdegen, Chief Executive Officer  
DCCP, PO Box 425, Coober Pedy, SA 5723

## ALLIANCE RESPONSE TO CEO G. HERDEGEN

### INCL REVISED QUESTIONS & REASONS

Dear Mr. Herdegen,

Thank you for your response dated 30 May 2025 to the Alliance's Open Letter of 24 May.

We tabled your responses to our members and community members on Saturday, the 31st May and fielded commentary. A few of our members felt that you did not understand the questions; so to give you the benefit of the doubt, we have revised the questions.

**DCCP VS George Naumovic Whistleblower:** You claim the Council will "endeavour to provide the information when resources become available." **Has the council not, already undergone an annual audit?** If so, then information is not optional or obscure; it is already calculated and therefore a public entitlement.

From our estimations, we are of the opinion that your provable costs were in the vicinity of \$1.5M, however as DCCP also used ratepayer paid staff which included a stream of CEO's; Executive Assistants, Finance Dept Staff and Administrators to help prosecute Mr. Naumovic, we believe the amount the DCCP spent overall was around \$2M+ over a period of 6 years.

We therefore find it difficult to believe that you do not have the totals of Law firm costs and claims that directly relate to your litigation against Mr. Naumovic, seeing as council would have already totaled up their costs in order to submit them to the courts!

DCCP public servants have bankrupted Mr. Naumovic (unrepresented in court) for approx. 140K. Mr Naumovic says he has had around 50 court appearances. Our inquiries found similar such occasions in court on average cost around \$20K per session, with the costly items being, the law firms involved.

If DCCP was only awarded \$140K, then it seems as though they were only awarded around 10% of the asking figures. Q: **"Why was this not done under insurance?"**

**REVISED QUESTIONS RE NAUMOVIC:** Mr. Herdegen, will you please provide us with the current amount of public money (ratepayer's per capita funding) that the DCCP spent pursuing to bankruptcy, Coober Pedy resident, ratepayer, Councilor, and Whistleblower Mr. George Naumovic?

**Please also answer questions below:**

IF Mr. Naumovic appealed which he is entitled to do, DCCP still paid to defend his appeal.

**Q: Why?**

It is public knowledge that Mr Naumovic asked for Whistle-blower protection and as a public officer was required under the ICAC Act to take documents to ICAC Former Administrator Tim Jackson told the community in a Council meeting that he and Mr. Naumovic would go to ICAC together to report the revelations that had been exposed to wide section of the public, during a "server glitch".

**Q: If another person comes forward in possession of the documents and simply takes them to ICAC, how will the state government and the DCCP public servants react?**

The community want to see the documents. We understand there is a Court ruling that allows Freedom of Information on those documents. Q: **Will you cooperate with the public should an FOI be submitted, or will you step down from your position?**

Coober Pedy residents have been aware from the beginning that the documents were ordered to be destroyed by Tim Jackson who was new to the town. The general community is quite familiar with the events under the email headers which had taken place under a previous CEO. Some individuals were involved as the events took place.

It is unclear why the DCCP continues to spend obscene amounts of public money alleging that they are protecting the documents.

**Q: These are public records, why were they not simply left on file?**

**REVISED QUESTION 1:** How much has the council spent on the facilitator, Michael Edgecombe to date, including Pizza nights and miscellaneous costs for last financial year and to date? AND will the information be available before our next meeting on 28th June?

**REASONS:** Several of your responses suggest the Council is either unaware of or disinterested in tracking public expenditure, particularly:

- On facilitator costs (Q1, Q5), your response lacks any detail or costing
- On the Adelaide visit (Q2), you deflect responsibility by saying it was organised by "Coober Pedy Together," despite acknowledging your attendance as CEO. There is no explanation of outcomes or benefits to the community. Furthermore, the Principal Administrator is a full-time advocate for Coober Pedy.
- **Q: Why is the CEO and a facilitator duplicating the services?**

**REVISED QUESTION 2** – What is the full disclosure of costing 1st July 2024 – CURRENT on the facilitator (Michael Edgecombe) payments, including any related expenses attached to a different directive, covered by the Council?

**QUESTIONS 3** Who elected the Governor General, as an Honorary resident of Coober Pedy? What was the process, and what does it mean?

**Your Response** "Council is not aware of nor been involved in any process", is dismissive and shows lack of interest in community concerns. We understand the Together Group trying to lift their profile in so called important places, however, our Alliance members and others do not recognise the Council's Together Group as representing the Coober Pedy Community and reject the notion that the TG has any authority to award titles of Honorary Resident of Coober Pedy to anyone, whether formal or informal.

Revised Questions continued next page.

# ALLIANCE RESPONSES TO CEO G. HERDEGEN INCL REVISED QUESTIONS & REASONS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

**REVISED QUESTION 3:** Will the council direct the Together group to retract their statement calling the Governor General and their spouse an "Honorary resident of Coober Pedy"? The Coober Pedy Community Alliance is otherwise prepared to issue an appropriate public notice and a letter to the Governor.

**QUESTION 4** Is the Council considering renewing the contract of TGFacilitator for another year? If so, and as public money is involved what is the purpose, and will there be a fair public procurement process?

**Your Response:** The Council's draft budget is currently out for consultation. As always there is a proposed allocation in the budget for Community and Economic Development. As part of councils Service Review all council services and contracts are under review.

**REVISED QUESTION 4** – Your answer is confusing; please be more precise. In addition: Why is the Together Group included in the draft budget, yet the council excludes established Associations such as the Coober Pedy Retail Business and Tourism Association Inc, and ignore the service of Regional Development Australia Far North, provided free of charge by the Federal Govt?

**REASON:** Favouritism without qualification erodes public trust: When the public perceives favouritism or forms of cronyism, it can damage their trust in the council's ability to make decisions based on merit and genuine public interest. No confidence in a council is a serious matter.

**QUESTION 6.** What views does the council have on implementing a housing and social support model for essential workers, as per the surprise Coober Pedy Plan 2024-2028, published on the Together Group website?

**Your Response:** Council will continue to as it has done in the past advocate and encourage for appropriate housing in Coober Pedy. Council has responded to the far north regional Plan as per The Council Meeting held April 2025, resolutions #731

**QUESTION 7:** Can you inform us of the assessment process for the alleged need for this particular type of housing? Original answer on previous page.

**We reject your answer as incomplete.** **REASON:** You refer to State Planning, yet do not acknowledge that Council has a role in advocating for or against such proposals based on genuine community consultation. Stating that Council has made "no formal investigation" into housing needs, while supporting speculative private proposals, reveals a lack of strategic planning and a lack of regard for this community.

**REVISED QUESTION 7:** Will the council hold a public community meeting for consultation on the private development proposal for Coober Pedy's alleged housing needs?

**QUESTION 8** The council allocated funding for two new toilet blocks in 2023. When will they be installed and operating? (Answer prev page)

**QUESTION 9** McArdle Freight and visiting truck drivers have requested that the large hole in the sidewalk area of Flat Hill Road be filled and repaired for several months, but no one at the works department has bothered to return their calls or investigate the issue. What does it take for the council to respond to local maintenance problems where business/ratepayer's livelihood and integrity of services is at stake?

Council's ongoing failure in service delivery and maintenance is noted.

**REASONS:** Questions regarding basic service delivery, such as the toilet block (Q8) and the unaddressed road hazard on Flat Hill Road (Q9), were met with partial answers and jurisdictional deflections. These issues have lingered for years and months, respectively, and your responses fail to show any urgency or ownership.

**REASONS:** DIT roads within the township are the responsibility of the council to report defects and repairs to DIT promptly. Ratepayers should not be satisfied once a complaint is lodged; follow-up and updates should be provided. The Community Alliance lodged formal complaints and received followup from DIT immediately and regularly on all issues.

Thank you for your time, and please reply asap, preferably before our next community meeting 28th June 2025.

Kind Regards,  
John Di Donna, for Coober Pedy Community Alliance  
PO Box 361, Coober Pedy SA 5723  
Email: cpcachairperson@gmail.com  
Mob: 0427 649 389  
UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL

# FINANCE BASICS

## Online Training

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June  
6:00pm-8:30pm

A FREE online training session on how to be an effective Treasurer for your club, group or organisation.

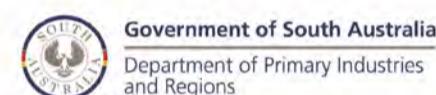
### What will you get?

- 2 ½ hour online training session.
- The processes that help a Treasurer do their job
- Learn how to develop a budget
- Understand and interpret the financial reports
- How to develop a budget
- Finance Q&A with an expert!



Register Here

For more information contact:  
Leadership Program Manager  
Renata Hackett  
E: lpm@rdafn.com.au P: (08) 8641 1444




**BHP Coober Pedy REGIONAL TIMES**  
Outback Communities Newspaper Established 1982

**SUPERSTAR DJAY | EMCEE**

**THE ITALIAN CLUB COOBER PEDY PRESENTS**

**OPAL FEST 2025**

**THE OFFICIAL AFTER PARTY**

**WITH SPECIAL GUEST DJ SUPERSTAR**

**SAT 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025**

**DOORS OPEN FROM 6PM - LATE**

**ENTRY FEE'S: FREE FOR MEMBERS | \$10 FOR NON MEMBERS**

# STATE OF THE NATION AT DCCP's LAST AUDIT

A recent audit by Bentleys has confirmed what many locals already fear: Coober Pedy Council remains in serious financial trouble.

After more than six years under Administration, the Council is still operating at a loss, with aging infrastructure, limited transparency, and growing concern over how public money is managed.

Here are some important points of community interest

**1. Massive Debt and No Access to Credit:** The Council has a net financial liabilities ratio of 543% (healthy range is 90–110%).

It is so overdrawn, its main lender won't provide any more loans until major improvements are made.

**2. Ongoing Deficits:** Council ran a \$1.926 million operating loss in 2023–24.

It hasn't priced services like electricity, water, and rates to cover actual costs leading to ongoing losses.

**3. Critical Infrastructure Risks:** Only 32% of assets are being renewed far below the minimum standard of 90%.

This means roads, powerlines, water systems, and equipment are breaking down faster than they're being fixed.

**4. Equipment and Safety Concerns:** Powerlines and transformers are located on private land and in dangerous positions.

Council often has to hire or lease equipment reactively, wasting money and delaying repairs.

#### 5. High Legal Spending

Council spent \$156,668 on legal fees in one year, despite being in deep financial distress.

Meanwhile, community services and infrastructure are neglected.

#### 6. Lack of Transparency

47 confidential orders remain unresolved. Important decisions are still made behind closed doors, with minimal community input.

**7. Minimal Reserves and Heavy Reliance on Grants:** Council would not survive without outside help: Federal grants covered 7.4% of income. State Government contributes \$150,000 annually to help fund the Administration itself.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

##### For Council/Administration:

**Publicly commit to full financial transparency** publish detailed monthly reports, including legal costs, consultants, and procurement.

**Prioritise essential asset replacement**—develop an emergency plan for critical infrastructure (e.g. water, electricity).

**Cap legal expenses** and halt unnecessary litigation until the town is financially stable.

**Develop a clear path out of Administration**, including a timeline and milestones for returning to elected Council.

**Accelerate asset renewal**—seek dedicated infrastructure funding from State and Federal governments.

#### For Ratepayers and Community Groups:

Demand regular updates from the CEO and Administrators—insist on open forums or town hall meetings.

Request an independent investigation into high legal costs and past spending decisions.

Form a ratepayers' oversight committee to monitor spending and ensure accountability.

#### Push for an early return to democratic governance—self-determination requires elected representation.

Use media and advocacy tools to apply public pressure and keep the issue visible.

Despite promises of reform, Coober Pedy remains in a precarious financial and operational position, largely due to poor management, lack of transparency, and a service provider that still doesn't prioritise community needs.

If meaningful change isn't achieved soon, services will continue to decline, rates may rise again, and the trust between Council and the public will deteriorate even further.

The time for silence is over. It's time for open books, open public meetings, and honest answers.



Based on pages 102–108 of the Bentleys Audit Report (included in the 2023–24 Annual Report of the District Council of Coober Pedy), the auditors provide several critical insights into the Council's financial viability, compliance, and governance risks.

#### 1. (Pages 102–108) show serious financial sustainability issues

Net Financial Liabilities Ratio: 543%

Well beyond the target range (90–110%). This ratio suggests that the Council is extremely over-leveraged.

Most councils would be in crisis at anything above 150%.

Asset Renewal Funding Ratio: 32%

Target is 90–110%. This means Council is not renewing essential infrastructure at anywhere near sustainable levels, which will lead to system failure over time.

#### 2. Council had an operating deficit of \$1.926 million and an underlying deficit of \$344,670.

The audit notes that fees and charges (including rates) are not set at levels that recover the cost of services, especially concerning when Council operates major utilities like power and water.

#### 3. The Local Government Finance Authority has refused further loans until Council improves its financial position, highlighting the severity of credit risk.

#### 4. Council is only staying afloat due to external financial support, particularly:

**Federal Assistance Grants** (~7.4% of income)

\$150,000 per year from the State Government to offset costs of administration

Without these, core functions would be unsustainable.

**5. Due to capital restrictions, the Council leases or hires equipment reactively** (e.g. plant, aerators, elevated work platform), often after failure, which is both risky and expensive. The Electrical and Water teams report critical infrastructure needing upgrades, including: Unsafe powerline placements on private property. Failing SWER transformers and Stobie poles. Aged sewerage and desalination infrastructure.

**6. The audit notes** a "significant number of non-compliance matters", particularly in governance and finance. These are still being addressed. The council has **47 matters under confidentiality orders**, a concerning number, especially given the lack of transparency in prior decisions.

**7. Legal fees** for FY24 amounted to \$156,668, with \$66,704 specifically detailed. This appears disproportionately high considering the Council's poor financial state.

#### Areas Requiring Urgent Improvement

Area	Required Action
<b>Financial Management</b>	Urgently develop a viable long-term financial plan. Raise fees/rates to match service costs or reduce service scope.
<b>Debt and Liquidity</b>	Develop a debt-reduction strategy and build working capital reserves.
<b>Asset Management</b>	Prioritise asset renewal in line with safety and service delivery, and secure dedicated capital funding.
<b>Transparency</b>	Reduce over-reliance on confidential orders and improve communication with ratepayers.
<b>Governance Compliance</b>	Resolve outstanding non-compliance issues in financial reporting and risk management.
<b>Legal Oversight</b>	Audit legal expenses; why are legal costs so high when services and infrastructure are in decline?



**RED FLAGS:** Questionable Practices Excessive Confidentiality: 47 confidential items still unresolved—unusual for a public body in administration.

**Legal Cost vs. Service Failures:** Rates are rising, infrastructure is crumbling, yet thousands are spent on legal action. Why?

**Poor Asset Renewal:** At 32%, this suggests that essential services may begin to fail (e.g. electricity or water supply disruptions).

**Revenue Mismanagement:** The audit identifies that utilities and rates are underpriced relative to service cost—creating ongoing deficits.

#### Summary Conclusion

The Bentley Audit confirms that Coober Pedy Council is not financially viable in its current form. Key infrastructure is underfunded, essential services are at risk, and the council is running a growing deficit with limited options for borrowing.

Without substantial governance reform, capital investment, and greater transparency, the town risks service collapse, ratepayer backlash, and further State intervention.



# 160 ALLIANCE MEMBERS + SAY "NO" TO DRIVEIN MASTER PLAN

We ask Council to:

1. Implement meaningful heritage protections in conjunction with the Coober Pedy Historical Society and the whole community, and not lock us into a premature and costly long-term agreement under conditions that do not reflect our shared values.
2. Ensure any development, meaning small upgrades, aligns with financial responsibility and community priorities—not just consultant visions and a narrow focus group.
3. Alternatively abandon the project until such time as the community is back in control of its own future, reunited in purpose with a stable and predictable governance system in place.

Via Chief Executive Officer (or Acting)  
District Council of Coober Pedy  
Lot 773 Hutchison Street  
Coober Pedy SA 5723

15-05-2025

Dear CEO and others,

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION – DRIVE-IN MASTER PLAN (in conjunction with the Associated 20-Year Licence Agreement with the Outback Open Air Cinema)

As Community Alliance members and concerned residents of Coober Pedy, we submit this formal response/objection to the proposed Drive-In Master Plan (in conjunction with the associated 20-year Facilities/Licence Agreement with the Outback Open Air Cinema). We believe this incomplete proposal, in its current form, raises significant issues of community concern, cost, consultation, cultural value and trust.

These are Key Objections sourced from our membership (160+) and general community over a series of meetings and other surveys.

## OUR MEMBERSHIP VOTES – NO. We include SUGGESTIONS.

### 1. Ongoing Financial and Maintenance Burden – bearing in mind the Agreement will need to be updated if refurbishment takes place. So, these figures would increase.

The current proposal would lock Council, and by extension, the ratepayers into substantial ongoing costs:

- \$15,000 annual utility subsidy (plus CPI increases) for 20 years.
- Extra, unclear liabilities for building maintenance, site grading, road access, insurance, and risk compliance
- No long-term budget strategy or contingency for cost overruns or inflation-linked service costs.

This is an unsustainable commitment without clear financial justification or community benefit assessment.

### 2. Lack of Heritage Protection

The Drive-In holds historical, cultural, and social significance dating back to 1965. Yet:

- The Licence Agreement and Master Plan provide no enforceable protections for existing heritage elements (e.g., screen, projection room, memorabilia).
- The Master Plan anticipates demolition without guarantees of reuse or interpretation.
- There is no structured involvement of the original architects or the longer term established residents in future design or potential remodelling.
- Any indigenous cultural connections are acknowledged only superficially.

P1.

### 4. Costly and Inappropriate Landscaping Features

The proposed \$7.5 million Master Plan includes high-cost outdoor landscaping elements that:

- Are unnecessary for the core function of a Drive-In cinema or a community social hub given the extreme weather condition of the location.
- Requires high maintenance in a harsh desert climate (e.g., turf lawns, irrigated planting).
- Offer low utility for the majority of users, particularly local residents who use the site for simple, functional recreation.

As an active opal mining town and community, the local cultural evolution should come before urban design aesthetics borrowed from metropolitan models.

### 5. Lack of Local Input in Design and Delivery

Design and planning have been driven by external consultants with:

- Limited local knowledge.
- No structured opportunities for tradespeople, creatives, or businesses in Coober Pedy to participate in the build or branding.
- No mechanism to ensure that procurement or jobs flow into the community.

The Master Plan could be restructured to ensure strong and genuine local content and engagement should the community come forward requesting such dramatic urban changes.

### 6. Poor Project Communication and Oversight

We note the following issues:

- Minimal public-facing updates.
- No clear timeline or public reporting on feasibility, funding, or staging.
- Unclear alignment between the Licence Agreement and the Master Plan's redevelopment phases.

Better communication is required through regular community briefings, published reports, and updates.

### 7. Need for a Renewed Feasibility Study

Given the scale of investment and evolving community priorities, we urge Council to:

- Commission a new independent feasibility study with updated cost-benefit analysis.
- Evaluate alternative models, such as shorter-term licensing, community co-management, or staged development.

A Feasibility Study conducted in 2023 found that Coober Pedy is not currently ready for a National Film Centre to be established and made a comprehensive series of recommendations in the interim. No "master plan" or long-term facilities agreement should proceed without this updated due diligence being completed.

P3.



Council must embed enforceable heritage and cultural conservation into all development phases. Temporary appointees have endorsed a project that will serve to extinguish the physical heritage of an important feature in Coober Pedy's evolution. The drive-in, built by opal miners in 1965 defines the historic opal mining town's early self-governing period. In this time period, the opal miners built by hand an entertainment centre which served as an important social hub for several decades and financially supported town maintenance for the remote working community during the Progress years.

The 1960s across Australia was a period of significant social and cultural change, marked by growing political and social activism, the end of the White Australia Policy, and a shift towards multiculturalism. Coober Pedy became a huge multicultural community with very successful integration united by the Opal Industry, not the film industry. It was also a decade of war, with Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War being a defining event. All this was part of Coober Pedy's evolution with the Drive-in as the central hub.

As the last drive-in to exist in South Australia, it would seem imperative in a purpose-built town to keep the original architecture intact or replace sections as small projects if required. To expunge Coober Pedy's physical history is inconsiderate and disrespectful. Our heritage is not being highlighted objectively by outsiders and part timers seeking both change and flimsy, last-minute consultation from our community.

The decision to approve a flawed and incomplete Master Plan in principal and in the doing confuse and divide a remote community, lacks both logic and respect.

### 3. Insufficient and Narrow Community Consultation

The current process does not reflect broad community input:

- Feedback was largely drawn from a limited volunteer group and committee members claiming to be elected by the community. This statement gives a false impression of a democratic process, which it was not.
- Broader community stakeholders—including original architects, established groups in the town, any first nations groups, school community etc have not been adequately or specifically engaged.
- Project terms appear to have been "agreed in principle" before genuine public consultation occurred.

We call for either a restart of consultation with transparent documentation, town hall meetings, as well as the arm's length online input processes, or simply halt the ambitious project that is clearly being driven externally.

P2.

### 8. Community Expectations

We ask Council to:

1. Implement meaningful heritage protections in conjunction with the Coober Pedy Historical Society and the whole community, and not lock us into a premature and costly long-term agreement under conditions that do not reflect our shared values.
2. Ensure any development, meaning small upgrades, aligns with financial responsibility and community priorities—not just consultant visions and a narrow focus group.
3. **Alternatively abandon the project** until such time as the community is back in control of its own future, reunited in purpose with a stable and predictable governance system in place.

### Further suggestions:

We need to put such futuristic decision-making on hold to release the heavy burden of pressure being placed on the town's fragile financial resources, as is currently the case. This current scenario has the potential to not end well.

The CEO needs to take a more active role in communicating with the ratepayers of Coober Pedy rather than being cajoled into consulting with a quasi-arrangement of non-democratic origins.

The Coober Pedy Drive-In is a vital community asset with deep history and local affection.

Sincerely,

John Di Donna Chair  
George Rosewarne Vic Chair  
Teena Rosewarne Committee Member  
Margaret Mackay Media Officer

On behalf of our members.

Coober Pedy Community Alliance  
PO Box 361, Coober Pedy SA 5723  
Email: [cpsc.chairperson@gmail.com](mailto:cpsc.chairperson@gmail.com)  
Mob: 0427 649 389  
UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL

P4.

# FINAL Submission DCCP 2025–26 Draft Annual Business Plan/Budget

Submission - District Council of Coober Pedy  
 RE: 2025–26 Draft Annual Business Plan/Budget

To Whom It May Concern,

I write as a long-term ratepayer of the District Council of Coober Pedy to express serious concerns regarding the 2025–26 Draft Annual Business Plan.

## My first concern is about Council's potential trading while insolvent.

**FEEDBACK:** It is troubling and stressful on our community that Council continues to operate with persistent operating deficits and a working capital balance that is only marginally above the minimum threshold.

While the plan outlines a target of \$0.5M in working capital, this is far too low given the scale of Council's operations and the essential services it provides. If a single critical asset fails, for example, in the electricity or water supply, the Council may not have the liquidity to respond.

In the case of the Water Supply, the council is putting the community at serious risk of not having access to water. The council's business plan does not include a contingency plan for such a life threatening emergency.

This raises legitimate risk concerns. This would be a breach of fiduciary responsibility and places both the community and the Council at legal and financial risk. I request that the administrators seek urgent legal and financial advice on this matter and disclose this risk more transparently in the Business Plan.

## My second concern is council's use of consultants:

**FEEDBACK:** In a financially distressed Council, every dollar spent on consultants is a dollar not spent on roads, waste, or water.

It seems clear that the Administrators believe that they lack the skills for their positions, but hasn't hiring consultants proven a futile way of trying to compensate, given that nothing has been produced in 7 years to improve council's bottom line?

## WATER (PGE 52+). My third concerning point is water supply risks due to remoteness.

**RESPONSE:** Council would be well advised to actively engage with the State Government for a clear exit strategy and transfer of this responsibility to a properly resourced WATER UTILITIES COMPANY, but first, call for expressions of interest and see what options arise, and involve the community in discussions.

**REASONS:** The Council's acknowledgment that the water supply should be transferred to a third party highlights the burden of management on unqualified public servants during the last 6 or more years where a rapid decline in maintenance and service is noted.

Council has failed to provide cost breakdowns making any worthwhile submission, a time-wasting exercise!

The plan admits that most of the plant and infrastructure used in water delivery are beyond their useful life. Yet capital investment remains low, and no contingency plan is clearly outlined if a major water asset fails.

## A fourth point that stands out is insufficient funding to deliver adequate services

**FEEDBACK:** The budget plainly admits that Council cannot currently provide adequate services in several areas; from waste management and road maintenance to tourism and childcare.

As a resident, I see this every day: potholes go unfixed, essential community services are cut back to the point that buffel grass a known fire hazard is suffocating the town, while staffing appears stretched thin.

This is particularly concerning given that rates are increasing by 7.5%, yet services are diminishing or stagnating and those charged with the responsibility are for the most part never on-site.

Ratepayers should not bear the financial burden for a system that is structurally broken and here negligence on a grand scale might be argued.

There needs to be an open and honest discussion with the community about what services can realistically be sustained and what needs urgent external support.

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (PGE 28).

My fifth point is a serious and ongoing concern shared by many in the community is the Council's continued decision to engage an expensive consultant for Economic and Community Development, despite consistent and clear community opposition to this approach.

**RESPONSE: I do not agree with, and strongly oppose the Council funding this program, and/or paying a facilitator.**

**REASONS:** This decision is particularly questionable given that the Federal Government already funds the highly effective Regional Development Australia (RDA) Far North, which delivers tailored economic development support across the region.

For a modest annual membership fee, our community benefits from RDA Far North's proven ability to co-design impactful, locally relevant programs in collaboration with industry, Aboriginal groups, small businesses, many community groups and other stakeholders.

Instead of leveraging this existing, credible regional body, Council appears to be duplicating services at significantly higher cost, with little evidence of outcomes or accountability.

There is also growing concern that Council is undermining what should be a genuinely community led economic development process.

Programs like Coober Pedy Together have the potential to build local capacity, but instead appear to be centralised and controlled by Council staff or external consultants, limiting genuine grassroots input.

Given the estimate from the Annual Business Plan that \$3.31 of every \$100 in municipal rates is spent on Economic and Community Development, I request full transparency on how these funds' approximately \$111,000 are being budgeted to be used.

**QUESTIONS:** Specifically related to Economic & Community Development.

\*\*What projects or programs are being funded under this allocation?

\*\*What are the costs for each project?

\*\*Who is responsible for delivering them (individuals, staff, consultants or other)?

\*\*What fees or salaries are they receiving?

\*\*What performance measures (KPIs) or outcomes are being tracked?

This information must be made public before the budget is adopted.

## ELECTRICITY PAGE 47 + FEEDBACK: The ElectraNet Transmission Annual Planning Report (TAPR) – June 2025

This provides an in-depth analysis of South Australia's transmission network and planning for the energy transition. It has potential relevance to Coober Pedy's power situation, particularly under the EDL model or a post-EDL scenario.

While Coober Pedy is not yet on ElectraNet's map, the policy environment is favourable to remote, renewable-rich towns. There is opportunity to actively engage in upcoming transmission planning.

In concluding my assessment, I also reiterate the following points.

**\*\*The Council** must openly address whether it is trading insolvent or approaching that point. **\*\*There** should be greater accountability around consultant spending, with measurable outcomes.

**\*\*Accurate Costings** on ALL projects must be published.

**\*\*If the State Government** refuses to intervene to manage the water supply, given the critical risks posed by our remote location, then a third party must be sought as a matter of extreme urgency.

**\*\*Rate increases** must be matched with genuine service improvements, not simply used to plug recurring deficits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I trust the Council and Administrators will take these concerns seriously and work collaboratively with the community toward realistic and sustainable solutions.

As of November 2026, eight years (all up) of Administration inflicted on a small community, that was intended to produce solutions during year ONE!

Sincerely, Margaret Mackay  
 PO Box 10 Coober Pedy SA 5723



**WEDNESDAY**

**Cfs Training**

Tuesday evenings - 6pm at Station

**Mine Rescue/SES**

1st Wednesday of the month 7.30pm,  
and 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month  
9am at Mine Rescue shed

**FRIDAYS**

**CP Shooters Club**

See back page for  
latest updates



**Italian Club**

Italian Club Coober Pedy is  
open April - December  
Thursday 5-10pm and  
Friday nights 5 - 1am.



**Greek Charcoal BBQ**

Fridays at the Greek Hall.

**Alcoholics Anonymous**

Meet Fridays 7pm at the side of the Catholic  
Church. If you have a drinking problem and  
need help. Call 1800222222, Or call Dave on  
0409349753

**SATURDAYS**

**parkrun**

8am Saturday mornings Town Oval



**GOLF 8 30am**

**MINE RESCUE/SES**

2nd & 4th Saturday of the month 9am

**CP SHOOTERS CLUB**

See BACK page for latest  
updates, or Ring John Di Donna  
on 0427 649 389

**CROATION CLUB**

Happy Hour 6-7pm



**SUNDAYS**



**KIDS CHURCH/CLUB**

**Catacomb**  
**Anglican Church**

Every Sunday at 10 am  
( 40 mins) - church  
starts at 9:30 am

**CP SHOOTERS CLUB**

See BACK PAGE for latest updates  
Ring John DiDonna on 0427649389

**COOBER PEDY RSL**

Open Sunday afternoon from 4.00pm, Happy hour  
and members draw between 5.00pm and 6.00pm



**FRIDAY 13th JUNE, SATURDAY  
14th JUNE, SUNDAY 15th JUNE**

**FRIDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

- **Opal Festival Opening**  
Night dinner 7:00pm  
Big Winch \$65 per head
- **Night Time Golf**  
7:00pm Hit Off
- **6:00pm - Italian Club**  
Meals with Cucinare

**SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

- The Grand Parade 11:00am – Hutchison Street. The Street Parade will celebrate Coober Pedy as The Heart of The Outback. Floats will be judged by festival goers at the Information Tent at the Oval and announced at 3:30pm
- Town Oval This is where the fun really begins – Stalls, stalls and more stalls! There's opals, crafts, nic nacs. RICE will be onsite with activities for the kids, bouncy castles, bugs & slugs, indigenous art & souvenirs, Dusty Feet Mob, jewellery, food & drinks and more!

- 10:00am – 4:00pm | Opal Cutting Demonstrations at Opal Cave
- 1:00pm | Circus Elements
- 1:30pm | Backhoe Competition
- 1:00pm – 4:00pm | Assorted races and events Iron Man & Woman, Sausage Tossing, Egg & Spoon, Sumo Wrestling Register at Information Tent from 12:30pm.
- 3:45pm | Box Cart Parade & Race
- 4:00pm | Tug of War
- 2:30pm | Circus Elements Workshop
- 3:30pm | Prize for Best Float & Raffle Draw
- 7:15pm | EDL Fireworks
- Drive In | Movie starts 8:15pm (after the fireworks)

**SUNDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

- Music throughout the day from Gleny Rae and The Mparntwe Band – instruction on the beautiful, infectious chaos of a bush dance.
- Paul Greene and Vanessa Jade as Caliko
- The Italian Club After Party  
Free entry for members  
\$10 for non-members

- 2:00pm | Historical Society Outing at Boot Hill Cemetery
- 2:00pm – 6:00pm | Speedway
- 6:10pm | RSL Serving Meals | Music with the Double J's



# List of events at Coober Pedy & Andamooka Opal Fields - Outback SA

Follow the Stuart Highway north, and experience the unique culture, community spirit, and outback charm of these iconic opal mining towns.

## ANDAMOOKA June Long Weekend Activities Sat-Monday, 7-9 June 2025

Opal mining and stargazing tours at the Andamooka Observatory, opal showroom visits, and local art displays.

## Coober Pedy Shooters Club Competition Sat-Sunday, 7-8 June 2025

A weekend of competitive shooting events, including shotgun, pistol, and rifle competitions.

## Coober Pedy Great Kanku-Breakaways Bolt Sunday, 8 June 2025

A community run, walk, or ride through the stunning Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park.

## Coober Pedy 36th Opal Festival Friday-Sunday, 13-15 June 2025.

The town's largest annual event celebrating its opal mining heritage with a grand parade, live entertainment, market stalls, and more.

### Coober Pedy Opal Festival Dinner

Friday, 13 June 2025

A buffet dinner at Big Winch 360 to kick off the Opal Festival weekend.

### Coober Pedy Italian Club - THE OFFICIAL AFTER PARTY FOR OPAL FEST 2025

Saturday 14th June from 6pm

Free for club members - \$10 for non-members

### Coober Pedy Speedway - Opal Festival Meet

Sunday 15 June 2025 - 2 pm to 6 pm

Another exciting night of speedway racing under the outback stars.

### Andamooka Opal Classic- Saturday-Sunday, 14-15 June 2025

A shooting competition held at the Andamooka Shooting Range, attracting participants from across the region.

### Coober Pedy RSL Weekly - Sunday afternoons from 4.00pm.

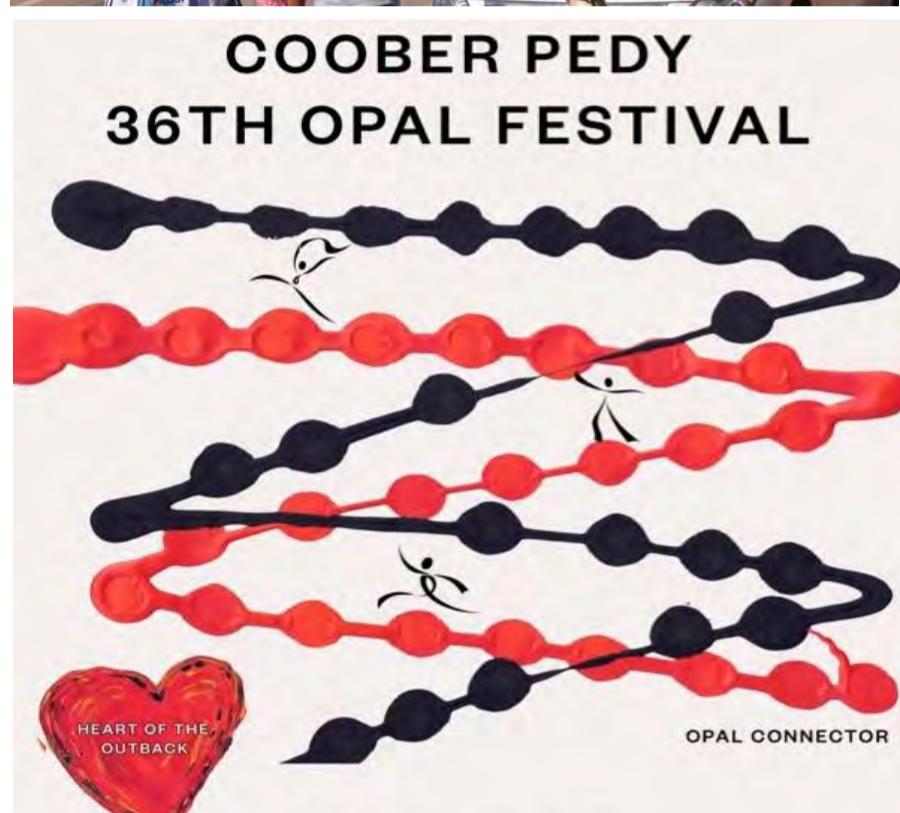
Happy hour and members draw between 5.00pm and 6.00pm

### Coober Pedy CROATION CLUB Weekly on Saturdays - Happy Hour 6-7pm

### Coober Pedy parkrun. Weekly, 8am Saturday mornings Town Oval

### Coober Pedy Greek Charcoal BBQ. Most Fridays at Greek Hall.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063689523307>



SAVE THE DATE  
13-14-15 JUNE 2025



SCAN FOR MORE INFO  
@COOBERPEDYSA



# THE 36th COOBER PEDY OPAL FESTIVAL



**13th - 15th June, 2025**

The Coober Pedy Opal Festival is proudly supported by these major Sponsors:



Regional Event Funding Program Partner

**BHP**



District Council of Coober Pedy

**Peak**  
IRON MINES

**LANDSCAPE**  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
SA ARID LANDS



## The Mparntwe band



**JOIN US** for the biggest bush dance Coober Pedy has ever seen at this year's Coober Pedy Opal Festival, 13 - 15 June 2025.

The **Mparntwe band** hails from Alice Springs, born from a locally funded string band initiative run by Gleny Rae.

From performances at the Desert Festival and Top Half Folk Festival, nationally renowned musician Gleny Rae (she's got herself a golden guitar award) and her band of merry musicians, will call and instruct us in the beautiful, infectious chaos of a bush dance.

This is a chance for people of all ages, backgrounds and experience levels to dust off their dancing shoes and come together for some foot-stomping fun!!! It's going to be a hoot!!

## Stall holder application forms:

<https://opalfestival.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Stall-Holder-Registration-2025.pdf>

## Grand Parade application forms:

<https://opalfestival.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Grand-Parade-Registration-Form-2025.pdf>

**PUBLIC NOTICE**



**District Council of Coober Pedy**  
 invites feedback regarding the following key plans:

- Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35
- Draft Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35

**Community consultation**

is NOW OPEN and will close at 5pm on Friday 20 June 2025.

Copies are available at:

- Coober Pedy School Community Library;
- Civic Centre (Council Office); and
- Council's Website.

**Written submissions inclusive of accurate details of the author will be accepted until 5.00pm on 20 June 2025 and can be made by:**

- Emailing [dccp@cpcouncil.sa.gov.au](mailto:dccp@cpcouncil.sa.gov.au);
- Visiting [www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au](http://www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au)
- Mail to Attn: Chief Executive Officer

District Council of Coober Pedy; PO Box 425, Coober Pedy SA 5723 or

- Dropping them directly into our office at Lot 773 Hutchison Street Coober Pedy.

**POSITION VACANT**



**PLANNING AND REPORTING COORDINATOR**

Landscape South Australia –  
 Alinytjara Wilurara  
 Adelaide or Ceduna  
 Full-time position  
 Long Term Contract (2 years)  
 Ref no. 675322  
 \$98,478 to \$104,165 p.a. (ASO6)

Are you passionate about nature conservation and the environment?

Join us in safeguarding South Australia's landscapes—apply today!

1x Full-time ASO6, Term 2 Year Position available immediately.

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board is seeking an experienced Planning and Reporting Coordinator to coordinate the development and oversight of its regional landscape plan. This strategic role manages planning and reporting systems and provides expert advice to support performance monitoring and informed decision-making.

Enquiries to: Damon Ezis, Manager, Strategy and Sustainable Landscapes; 0457 512 769; [damon.ezis2@sa.gov.au](mailto:damon.ezis2@sa.gov.au)

To apply and for more information visit the I WORK FOR SA website: [www.iworkfor.sa.gov.au](http://www.iworkfor.sa.gov.au) and search by vacancy number. Applications will only be accepted through I Work for SA.

The South Australian Public Sector promotes diversity and flexible ways of working including part time. Applicants are encouraged to discuss the flexible working arrangement for this role.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applications close:  
 11:45pm, June 15 2025

[IWORKFOR.SA.GOV.AU](http://IWORKFOR.SA.GOV.AU)

**ACCOUNTANT - COOBER PEDY**

**Arid Areas Accounting  
 Audit & Tax  
 Richard Younger**



**These services include:**

- Business Activity Statements (BAS)
- Income tax returns
- Book-keeping
- Payroll Services
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- Audit
- Forming partnerships, trusts and companies
- Obtaining Australian Business Number (ABN)

**Mob: 0422 428 850**  
[richard@aaaaat.com.au](mailto:richard@aaaaat.com.au)

We specialise in providing practical, sound accounting, auditing & tax services & advice to individuals, families & businesses

**Office:** Business Centre, Hutchison Street (next to Centrelink) PO Box 711 Coober Pedy

**Supporting "Shop Local at Coober Pedy"**



**The District Council of Coober Pedy**  
 invites feedback regarding the  
 Community Engagement / Public Consultation Policy.

**Community consultation**

is NOW OPEN and will close at 5pm on Friday 11 July 2025.

Copies are available at:

- Coober Pedy School Community Library;
- Civic Centre (Council Office); and
- Council's Website.

**Written submissions inclusive of accurate details of the author will be accepted until 5.00pm on 11 July 2025 and can be made by:**

- Emailing [dccp@cpcouncil.sa.gov.au](mailto:dccp@cpcouncil.sa.gov.au);
- Visiting [www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au](http://www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au)
- Mail to Attn: Chief Executive Officer District Council of Coober Pedy PO Box 425, Coober Pedy SA 5723 or
- Dropping them directly into our office at Lot 773 Hutchison Street Coober Pedy.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**



**The District Council of Coober Pedy**  
 invites feedback regarding the  
 Proposed Renaming of the Town Oval  
 located in Coober Pedy.

**Community consultation**  
 is NOW OPEN and will close at 5pm on Friday 4 July 2025.

**Written submissions inclusive of accurate details of the author will be accepted until 5.00pm on 4 July 2025 and can be made by:**

- Emailing [dccp@cpcouncil.sa.gov.au](mailto:dccp@cpcouncil.sa.gov.au);
- Visiting [www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au](http://www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au)
- Mail to Attn: Chief Executive Officer District Council of Coober Pedy PO Box 425 Coober Pedy SA 5723 or
- Dropping them directly into our office at Lot 773 Hutchison Street Coober Pedy.



# RED DIRT CP PTY LTD

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*Coober Pedy & Oodnadatta*

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**Guardian Interlock Service Centre**

**Lot 66 Seventeen Mile Rd (Opposite Lion's Club)**  
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100085582637596>

**PHONE: 0488007450 or FB Messenger**



**Diagnostics**  
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**Air-con regassing**  
**Diesel mechanic**  
**Mining Machinery**  
**Heavy Vehicles**  
**Vehicle parking**

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 2) The Coober Pedy Regional Times reserves the right to edit or decline copy, in accordance with newspaper policies.  
 3) Due to concerns of bureaucratic victimisation of whistleblowers, and allegations of bullying, community members or writers may use a 'PEN NAME' but must provide correct details for our files

# South Australia Introduces First-Ever Biodiversity Act

The SA Government has introduced the state's first Biodiversity Act to Parliament, aiming to better protect native plants and animals and respond to climate change.

## Key outcomes:

- Stronger protection for threatened species and their habitats.
- Clearer rules for managing native vegetation.
- Harsher penalties for harming wildlife or damaging the environment — to \$500,000 for businesses and \$250,000 or five years in jail for individuals.
- A new duty for all South Australians to help protect biodiversity.
- A streamlined and nationally consistent process for listing and protecting threatened species.
- Better planning decisions based on science, with less red tape for development.

This new law brings together multiple environmental protections into one Act and supports future investment in restoring nature. It complements over \$15 million already invested by the government in biodiversity protection.

Deputy Premier Susan Close says: This Act will help protect and restore nature while also supporting economic growth. We must not only stop harming the environment, we need to help it recover.

Tim Jarvis, Act Ambassador says: This is a big step for South Australia in showing environmental leadership and creating new opportunities for nature-positive business.

## Support for Drought-Affected SA Farmers: Fodder Inspection Fees Waived

The South Australian Government is waiving inspection fees for farmers bringing in fodder from other states due to ongoing drought.

Normally, farmers pay \$167 per hour for biosecurity inspections to prevent pests like Red Imported Fire Ants and Green Snail.

These inspections will still happen, but drought-affected farmers won't have to pay.

Farmers who already paid inspection fees since November 2024 can apply for a rebate.

The change supports safe fodder movement into SA while protecting farms from biosecurity threats.

This is part of the \$73 million Drought Support Package.

More details are available at [pir.sa.gov.au/drought](http://pir.sa.gov.au/drought).

Minister Clare Scriven says: This fee relief is to help farmers in tough times while ensuring we stay protected from pests that could cause more problems for agriculture.



## Eating Fibre Helps Protect Your Heart – and Now We Know Why



A major study from Monash University has found that eating enough fibre can lower your risk of heart disease and high blood pressure by up to 20%. This is the first time this has been proven in people, not just in lab tests.

### So, what's the key?

When you eat fibre (found in things like fruit, veggies, wholegrain bread, and beans), the good bacteria in your gut break it down. As they do this, they release helpful substances called short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). These SCFAs send signals to your body that help protect your heart and lower blood pressure.

What the study found:

The study looked at nearly 400,000 people.

Some people have rare genetic differences (less than 1 in 100 people) that stop their bodies from receiving the helpful SCFA signals.

These people were more likely to get high blood pressure, heart attacks, stroke, and other heart problems, even if they ate a lot of fibre.

This shows that the SCFA signals are the reason why fibre helps protect the heart.

### What does this mean for most people?

For the vast majority of people (more than 99%), eating enough fibre is a powerful and natural way to protect your heart.

You don't need fancy pills – just eat foods high in fibre every day.

### What's next?

The researchers are working on:

- A supplement that gives your body the helpful SCFAs directly.

- New medicine that can help people (especially those with the rare gene) to get the same heart protection.

### In simple terms:

Eating healthy, high-fibre foods helps your gut bacteria make substances that keep your heart strong and your blood pressure down. For most people, this could lower your risk of heart problems by 20%.

Scientists now understand how this works, and they're working on new ways to help even more people benefit.

## Warning to Illegal Tobacco Sellers: The ATO Is Cracking Down

### Selling illegal tobacco isn't just unfair—it's a serious crime.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is actively targeting individuals and businesses involved in the illicit tobacco trade.

This illegal activity undermines honest businesses and deprives the community of essential services like healthcare and education.

### What Is Illicit Tobacco?

Illicit tobacco includes:

Cigarettes, cigars, or loose tobacco sold without paying the required taxes.

Tobacco grown or manufactured in Australia without a proper license.

Imported tobacco products that bypass customs duties.

### Penalties Are Severe

If you're caught dealing with illicit tobacco, you could face:

Fines up to \$495,000

Prison sentences up to 10 years

### Penalties Are Severe

If you're caught dealing with illicit tobacco, you could face:

Fines up to \$495,000

Prison sentences up to 10 years

Criminal convictions, which can lead to:

Loss of your business

Travel restrictions

Difficulty finding future employment

### The ATO Is Taking Action

The ATO, along with other agencies, is actively:

Conducting raids and investigations

Seizing and destroying illegal tobacco crops

Prosecuting offenders

For example, between July 2024 and April 2025, Queensland authorities issued over \$10.7 million in fines to 243 businesses for illicit tobacco activities.

Last week, South Australia Police (SAPOL) conducted searches at a home and business in Naracoorte, seizing around \$1,000 worth of illicit tobacco.

### Protect Your Community



Illegal tobacco sales hurt everyone by funding organized crime and taking away from public services. If you suspect someone is involved in the illicit tobacco trade, you can report it anonymously:

Online: [ato.gov.au/tipoff](http://ato.gov.au/tipoff)

Phone: 1800 060 062

### Stay Legal, Stay Safe

Don't risk your future. Engaging in the illegal tobacco trade can have lifelong consequences. Support your community by staying within the law.

For more information, visit the ATO's page on illicit tobacco: [ato.gov.au/illicittobacco](http://ato.gov.au/illicittobacco)



**THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE  
IS RECRUITING NOW.**

## WILL YOU STEP UP TO PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY?

We're run by volunteers (not full-time staff), so here is the best way to get in touch:

### COOBER PEDY CFS BRIGADE

- 📞 David Frost 0478 669 035
- ✉️ david.frost2@sacfs.volunteer.org.au
- 📍 502 Hutchinson Street, Coober Pedy SA 5723

### OUR TRAINING TIMES

Every Wednesday night.  
Doors open at 6pm, training starts 6:30pm

We look forward to chatting with you soon.

**1300 364 587 | [cfs.sa.gov.au/volunteer](http://cfs.sa.gov.au/volunteer)**

#### Please note:

All training and protective clothing is provided by the CFS. All volunteers are required to consent to a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check. We will provide consent forms for this free-of-charge service.

**A SAFE COMMUNITY STARTS WITH YOU.**

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**  
Government of South Australia

**CFS**



**VOLUNTEER FOR  
A LIFE-CHANGING  
EXPERIENCE.**

It takes a mighty team of all different ages, genders and abilities — and we welcome everyone!

### WHY VOLUNTEER?

You'll be equipped to help your community when it's needed most. A volunteer role opens you to training in life-changing skills, including:

Basic firefighting	Structural firefighting
Mapping	Communications
Leadership	Teamwork
First aid	Operational support

### WHAT DO WE NEED FROM YOU?

- The desire to help protect your community as part of a dedicated team.
- Willingness to be trained in providing assistance in emergency situations and/or providing support to the team on the ground

### HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE?

Coober Pedy CFS trains on Wednesday nights each week. Doors open 6pm and training begins at 6:30pm.

We encourage you to attend training regularly to stay familiar with equipment, skills and your team.

Many CFS volunteers also work full-time or part-time. Employers often release CFS volunteers from work to respond to emergencies as they arise. If your employer is unable to release you, you can commit to volunteering outside of work hours.

### ABOUT THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE (CFS)

The CFS is a volunteer-based fire and emergency service dedicated to protecting life, property and environmental assets in regional and semi-metropolitan South Australia.

We couldn't do it without people like you! With approximately 14,000 volunteers, the CFS cares for more than 425 communities across the state through a range of fire and emergency services.

Our volunteers are people from all walks of life, with one extraordinary difference — they step up to regularly commit their time and energy to assist their communities when it's needed most.

### YOUR COMMUNITY COUNTS ON THE CFS FOR:

- Suppressing bushfires
- Suppressing structural fires
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Advice on building fire safety
- Risk and response planning
- Community education and awareness programs

Our volunteers can also play vital roles through:

- Administration
- Radio operations
- Finance
- Mapping
- Logistics
- Brigade and group meeting participation
- Equipment and brigade maintenance
- Organising cadet programs

## Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program

### Current Grant Opportunity View - GO7626

GO ID: GO7626

Agency: **Department of Veterans' Affairs**

Close Date & Time: **5-Feb-2026** 9:00 pm (ACT Local Time) Show  
 close time for other time zones

Internal Reference ID: 2024-3769

Primary Category: 361001 - Commemorative

Publish Date: 31-Mar-2025

Location: ACT, NSW, VIC, SA, WA, QLD, NT, TAS Selection Process:  
 Open Competitive



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

VN/67/0130/11

- The Australian Government is inviting eligible organisations to apply for grant funding under the Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program (the program).
- The objective of the program is to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service personnel who served in wars, conflicts and peace operations, including National Service personnel, and their families.
- The intended outcome of the program is to provide funding for projects and activities that:
  - promote appreciation and understanding of the experiences of service, and the role of service personnel
  - preserve, add to the sum of knowledge on, or provide access to information about Australia's wartime heritage.
- There are 2 categories of grants available under the program:
  - Community Grants (STS-CG)
  - Grants up to \$10,000 are available for local, community-based projects and activities.
  - Major Grants (STS-MG)
- Grants between \$10,001 and \$150,000 are available for major commemorative projects and activities that are significant from a national, state, territory and/or broader regional perspective.
- If your project relates to restoring or changing a memorial or other commemorative artefact, there may be heritage and conservation considerations. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all local heritage requirements are met. You may like to seek advice from your local council, RSL, the owner of the memorial, or your state or territory government heritage body.
- Eligibility:**
- To be eligible, you must be one of the following entity types:
  - Company
  - Cooperative
  - Corporate State or Territory Entity
  - Incorporated Association
  - Indigenous Corporation
  - Local Government
  - Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
  - Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
  - Partnership
  - Person
  - Sole Trader
  - Statutory Entity
  - Unincorporated Association – grant activities up to \$10,000 only.

## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

# The SA Power Networks Community Grants program is back in 2025!

Applications are welcome from not-for profit organisations, registered charities, schools or community groups who are seeking support up to \$5,000.



We believe these grants might be of interest to members in your local council community. We are more than happy for you to share the program through any of your communications to ensure we can help get these grants out to the local community.

Applications for this year's round are now open and **close 9am, Tuesday 17 June 2025**.

We are again seeking to empower activities, programs or events which will help make a positive impact in South Australia. Our focus areas for 2025 are:

Growing a sustainable SA  
 Fostering Reconciliation & Cultural Understanding

We are committed to supporting many different community projects, however, please be aware that our target areas may vary each year, which could affect eligibility for the program.

Applications are welcome from not-for profit organisations, registered charities, schools or community groups who are seeking support up to \$5,000.

For more information on the application process, FAQ's and more details on the focus areas, please visit  
<https://www.sapownetworks.com.au/communitygrants>



# OMBUDSMAN SAYS, "FIX CHILD SUPPORT LAWS TO HELP STRUGGLING PARENTS"

An investigation by the Commonwealth Ombudsman found that Services Australia is not doing enough to stop financial abuse in the Child Support system.

**Some parents use Child Support to hurt their ex-partners by:**

- \* Not paying what they owe
- \* Not doing their tax so their income looks lower
- \* Lying about how much they care for the kids
- \* Being abusive to scare the other parent away from asking for help

Many parents say they feel ignored and let down when they ask Services Australia for help.

**The Ombudsman found Services Australia:**

- \* Does not have proper rules or training to deal with this abuse
- \* Needs to do more to collect unpaid Child Support
- \* Should make changes so parents don't have to share private details with abusive ex-partners

The Ombudsman wants the government to change the law to make Child Support fairer and safer. He made 8 recommendations. Services Australia agreed to all of them.

Right now, over 1 million kids rely on Child Support, but \$1.9 billion is still unpaid.

This report looked at over 270 complaints, research, and info from Services Australia.

To read more, visit [ombudsman.gov.au](<https://ombudsman.gov.au>)

COURT/LEGAL

# Coober Pedy Magistrate Court

Malliotis Blvd. Coober Pedy (08) 8672 5601



**Coober Pedy  
Sitting dates in  
MAY 2025**

Monday 28 July  
Tuesday 29 July  
Wednesday 30 July  
Thursday 31 July

**Court attendees can check case lists here**

<https://www.courts.sa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/caselists/copcr.pdf>

<https://www.courts.sa.gov.au/case-lists/coober-pedy-list/>



## Stronger protections for vulnerable adults under new SA safeguarding laws

This week, the South Australian State Government will introduce the Ageing and Adult Safeguarding (Review Recommendations) Amendment Bill 2025 to the South Australian Parliament. The proposed legislation is designed to enhance protections for adults at risk of abuse and strengthen the safeguarding of their rights.

The Bill implements key recommendations from an independent review conducted by the South Australian Law Reform Institute. It includes significant reforms aimed at improving the operation and effectiveness of existing laws.

This legislative response also addresses growing public concern following several high-profile cases of elder abuse in South Australia and across the nation—cases that have deeply disturbed many Australians and underscored the urgent need for stronger legal safeguards.

**Key changes include:**

- \*\*Strengthening the role of the Office for Ageing Well
- \*\*Expanding the powers of the Adult Safeguarding Unit to respond to serious cases of financial and criminal abuse
- \*\*Providing a broader range of safeguarding actions to protect people at risk
- \*\*Adopting a “no wrong door” approach to streamline referrals to police and complaint bodies
- \*\*Giving the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) authority to issue orders, replacing the current role of the Magistrate’s Court

The Adult Safeguarding Unit—Australia’s first—was allocated \$8.7 million over four years in the 2023–24 State Budget and has been recognised for its expertise by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

These reforms come ahead of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, a global reminder of the importance of protecting the rights and dignity of older people.

The Bill reflects extensive consultation with people with lived experience, legal experts, service providers, and the wider community.

Minister for Human Services and Ageing Well Nat Cook said, “These amendments are about making sure we’re doing everything we can to prevent abuse and uphold the rights of older South Australians who may be vulnerable to abuse.

This Bill says loudly and clearly: we’ve heard you, and we’re not just acting on it, we’re enshrining it in legislation.

Every South Australian deserves to be safe and live free from abuse, regardless of their age or ability.”

**To contact the Courts Administration Authority (CAA) for information about courts in the Far North region of South Australia, you can use the following contact details:**

**Phone: +61 8 8204 2444 or Freecall 1800 571 191.  
Email: [enquiry@courts.sa.gov.au](mailto:enquiry@courts.sa.gov.au).**

**Live Chat: Available in the bottom right corner of the CourtSA website: [www.courts.sa.gov.au](http://www.courts.sa.gov.au).**

**The CourtSA Registry Services team is available from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.  
They can assist with inquiries, but cannot provide legal advice.**

## Updated Local Service Provider Listings

### C.P. Police Station

Malliotis Blvd. Coober Pedy  
(08) 8672 5056; Assistance 131 444;  
Emergency 000; Crime Stoppers 1800 555 677

### Coober Pedy Hospital

Lot 89 Hospital Rd  
Open 24 hours · (08) 8672 5009

### Coober Pedy Medical Practice

Lot 89 McDougal Road  
(08) 8678 9224

### iCCnet SA (Remote Health Monitoring)

Level 1, Administration Building  
1 Tonsley Boulevard, Tonsley SA 5042, Australia  
Tel 7117 0600 (9am to 8pm seven days a week)  
Email: [HEALTHFMCiCCnetSA@sa.gov.au](mailto:HEALTHFMCiCCnetSA@sa.gov.au)

### Coober Pedy Area School

17/18 Paxton Rd. Coober Pedy  
(08) 8672 5077

### Umoona Tjutagku Health Service

Lot 8 Umoona Rd  
(08) 8672 5255

### Housing SA

Lot 334 Hutchison St (Opposite Bank)  
PHONE: 131 299

### Centrelink

LOT 715 Hutchison St. Coober Pedy  
13 24 68

### District Council of Coober Pedy

LOT 773 Hutchison St. Coober Pedy  
(08) 8672 4600

### Coober Pedy Tourist Information Cen.

LOT 773 Hutchison St  
(08) 8672 4600

### Umoona Community Council Inc

Umoona Rd  
(08) 8672 5246

### MAP/Sobering Up Centre.

MAP BUS Tues to Sat. 4pm-12am.  
Sobering Up Centre Tues - Sat 4pm - 8am

### Umoona Tjiti Tjapu Tjuta Childcare Centre

Lot 315 Robins Blvd  
(08) 8672 5644

### Umoona Aged Care

Lot 89 Hospital Rd  
(08) 8672 5605

### National Indigenous Australians Ag. (NIAA)

17/18 Paxton Rd. Coober Pedy  
(08) 8672 5077

### Far North Health Advisory Council

C/- Coober Pedy Hospital  
(08) 8672 5009

### C.P. Community Correctional Centre:

Malliotis Blvd. Coober Pedy  
(08) 8672 3091

### Uniting Country SA

Paxton Rd  
1300 067 777

### TAFE SA

Adult education school  
Hutchison St. Coober Pedy  
(08) 8678 9000

### Coober Pedy Magistrates Court

Malliotis Blvd. Coober Pedy  
(08) 8672 5601

### Child Abuse Report Line (CARL)

131478

### Aboriginal Family Support Services

Lot 1991 Aylett Street, Coober Pedy  
(08) 8672 3066

## Coober Pedy Country Fire Service

### COMMITTEE

Captain: Interim Captain David Frost  
2nd Lieutenant: Geoff Squires  
3rd Lieutenant: Ann Gerschwitz  
Senior Firefighter: Linda Buckeridge  
Contact: [David.Frost@sacfsvolunteer.org.au](mailto:David.Frost@sacfsvolunteer.org.au)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/813853775367739>

## Coober Pedy Retail, Business & Tourism Assoc. Inc

### Committee Elected for 2025

President: George Kountouris  
Vice President: George Russell OAM  
Treasurer: Nick Brellas  
Secretary/Public Officer: Nicky Kountouris  
Committee Members: Irene Spillman, Mim Ward, Daniel Tsharke, Clarissa Bigelow  
<https://www.cooberpedy.com/contact-2/>

## Coober Pedy Sports & Rec Assoc. Inc

Dilusha Fernando - Chairperson

Jacqui Boland - Treasurer  
Gwen Martin - Secretary  
Jon Fatt-Clifton - Committee member  
Paul Maduro - Committee member  
Email: [cpsportsandrecreation@gmail.com](mailto:cpsportsandrecreation@gmail.com)

COOBER PEDY, SA 5723

Committee Elected for 2024-2026

## Coober Pedy Shooters Club Inc

COOBER PEDY, SA 5723

### Committee Elected for 2024/2025

President Daniel Lamb  
Senior Vice President Stephen Scott  
Junior Vice President John Mc Dermott  
Secretary John Di Donna  
Treasurer Suzanne Bunker  
Public Relations Jason Wright  
PR /MPIO Officer Tabetha Wilkes  
F/Arms Instructor Chris Warrior  
F/Arms Instructor John Di Donna  
F/Arms Instructor Dale Price  
F/Arms Instructor James Michie  
Licensee/Armourer Chris Warrior  
Licensee/Armourer Daniel Lamb  
Contact Secretary: 0427 649 389

## Coober Pedy RSL (Sub)

President: Anthony Goodacre

Vice President: Mick Cox

Secretary: Kingsley Kammermann

Treasurer: Miriam Kammermann

Committee Members:

Raylene Hagel

Rebecca Adnum

Linda Buckeridge

Coober Pedy RSL, Edward Street

COOBER PEDY SA 5723 (08) 8672 5477

## Coober Pedy Historical Society Inc

### Committee Elected 20/10/2024

Chairperson: Trish Turner

Secretary: Jenny Davison

Treasurer: Sue Britt

Public Officer: Judy Harper (30-3-25)

Contact: [cooberpedyhs@gmail.com](mailto:cooberpedyhs@gmail.com)

## DUSTY RADIO INC

### Committee 2025

#### Chairperson

Secretary: Patsy Anne Noble

Treasurer:

Public Officer: Patsy Anne Noble

Social Media Officer:

Committee member:

Committee member:

<https://www.dustyradio.com.au/>

## ASSOCIATIONS

### COOBER PEDY MINERS ASSOC.

Coober Pedy SA 3723

#### Committee Elected for 2024/25

President: Matt Graham,

Secretary:

Treasurer: John Olsson,

Committee Members: Rod Wells, Mish Blanusa, Dean Kennelly, Sebastian Crisa, Mike Eakins, Steve Perkins, Lachlan Blanchford, Shannon Blanchford, Bailey Stevens

### Coober Pedy Opal Fields Golf Club Inc.

Coober Pedy SA 3723

#### Committee Elected for 2025

Club Captain: Stephen Borrett

President: Chevahn Hoad

Vice President: Miro Markovic

Secretary: Nadine Lewis

Treasurer: Father Paul Crotty

Grounds Keeper: Dylan Lewis

Bar Manager: Stephen Borrett

Committee Members: Sue Britt, Bob Martin

Contact: [cooberpedygolfclub@gmail.com](mailto:cooberpedygolfclub@gmail.com)

### Coober Pedy Area School Governing Council

Maurice Saah (Principal) - Ex-Officio Member  
Elected Staff Representative

Veronika Witham

Elected Parent Members

Lisa McClure

Chantelle Bamford- Secretary

Sabrina Troisi- Treasurer

Lyn Boussios

Ariane Montminy-Roberge- Chairperson

Lia Pantelis, Yuko Castles

Marzena Mazurkiewicz

Sarah Rethus; Donna Clements

#### Elected Community Members

Amber McDonald; Maria Brellas

Gary Herdegen DCCP

We are currently waiting on our representatives from the Umoona Community

### Outback Open Air Cinema Inc (Coober Pedy Drive In )2025

Chantelle Bamford Chairperson

Lyndal Price Deputy Chairperson

Tanya Lauder Secretary/Treasurer

Gemma Hoad- Committee member

Mitchell Hoad - Committee member

Clydine Carboni - Committee Member

Kaysy Clet de Leon-Committee member

Gary Herdegen (Council) Committee Member

<http://www.cooberpedydrivein.org.au/documents.html>

### Coober Pedy Italian Club Inc

#### Committee Elected 19/10/2024

Brett Smith President,

Nicko Farantouris Vice Pres

Deanna Smith Secretary,

Cat Bell (Treasurer)

Tara Jane Smith,

Izzy Zelenko,

Nick Farantouris (Jr)

Karen Harvey,

Rosslyn Jazepczyk;

Peter Cech,

Brad Jeffree.

### Coober Pedy GEM TRADE SHOW

#### Committee Elected 19-12-2024

President - Corey Edwards

Secretary - Tara-Jane Smith

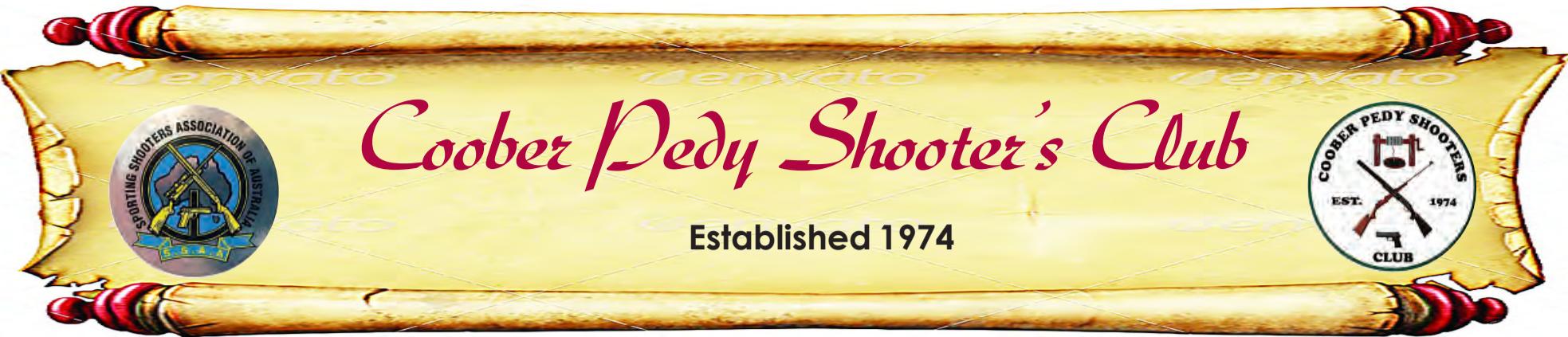
Treasurer – Emily Pennisi

#### Committee members

Catherine Bell,

Rachel Crothers,

David Hammermeister



**Coober Pedy Shooter Club welcomes all new members, visitors and Sponsors**

If you don't have a firearm, come along & our members will assist you with all enquiries.

Minimum age for shooting at the club is 10 yrs (Rifles and Air Pistol)  
 & 10 yrs (Pistols).

**Starting Times 9:00**

**AM**

**Saturday — Pistols**  
**IPSC**

**14 June**

**21 June**

**OPAL FESTIVAL**

**28 June**

**5 July**

**12 July**

**DISCIPLINES  
 INCLUDE:**

- ◆ Air Rifle/  
 pistol
- ◆ IPSC
- ◆ ISSF
- ◆ Rifle Metalic  
 Silhouette
- ◆ Combine  
 Service
- ◆ Black  
 Powder
- ◆ Service pistol
- ◆ Shotgun
- ◆ Steel  
 Challenge

**Coober Pedy  
 Shooter's  
 Club supports:**

- ◆ Darts
- ◆ Archery

**Starting Time: 10:00**

**AM**

**Sundays Fly Shoot**  
**100m Benchrest**

**15 Jun4**

**22 June**

**29 June**

**6 July**

**13 July**

## SHOOTER'S CLUB ANNUAL FEES

### MEMBERSHIP Renewal Now Due 2024

**Single Membership \$ 100.00**

**Couple Membership \$150.00**

**Family Membership \$ 200.00**

**Affiliate Membership \$20.00**

### SSAA MEMBERSHIP DUE NOW

**Sign-up online**

**<https://ssaasa.org.au....> Or at the club**



Any Enquires regarding Membership, sponsorships, donations, or shooting, please contact

Suzanne Bunker - - Email [cpsc.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:cpsc.treasurer@gmail.com)

John Di Donna - Mobile 0427 649 389 - Email. [jidonna@dodo.com.au](mailto:jidonna@dodo.com.au)

The Coober Pedy Shooter's Club is affiliated with the  
 Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (South Australia) Incorporated.  
<https://ssaasa.org.au>