

Outback Futures

REPORT

20 December 2021

One
Outback

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**Our
Outback**

**Your
Outback**

Table of Contents

Our unique Outback	2
South Australia's Outback – a value proposition	6
Executive summary	8
Recommendations	10
Background to the project	12
Governance	14
1 Strengthening the role of the Outback Communities Authority	15
2 Role of the Outback Communities Authority	16
3 Regional coordination	17
The vision for a shared responsibility financial model	18
Services and costs	21
1 Services required in the Outback	21
2 Public benefit services explained	22
3 Management of camping in the Outback to protect the environment and enhance experience	23
Appendix 1:	
About the Outback Communities Authority	24
1.1 General information	25
1.2 Outback Communities Authority structure and governance	26
1.3 Budget	27
1.4 Community Affairs Resourcing and Management (CARM) agreements	28
1.5 Community Contribution Schemes	29
Appendix 2:	
DRAFT Strategic blueprint for South Australia's Outback	30
Appendix 3:	
Summary of consultation	32
Phase 1: July 2020 – January 2021	33
Phase 2: May 2021 – December 2021	35
Appendix 4:	
State of the Outback – 2016 census	36





Our unique Outback

South Australia's Outback is a unique place in the world. Globally it has great significance for biodiversity and its deserts are among the least modified. Many plant and animal species have adapted to live in its harsh climate.

It contains unmatched geological features such as the Woodroffe Thrust-Mann fault just north of Marla; a subterranean mountain so large that it warps the Earth's gravity field.

Lake Acraman, north of the Gawler Ranges, is the site of one of the largest meteorites to strike our planet; the impact energy equivalent to more than five million megatons of TNT that would have caused a global catastrophe at the time, with debris found more than 300 kilometres east in the Flinders Ranges.

In the Gawler Ranges themselves, volcanic activity around 1600 million years ago and a lava field more than 500 kilometres in diameter created the famous 'organ pipes' and the world's largest hydrothermal deposit, a spectacular nine billion tonne ore system at Olympic Dam filled with huge reserves of copper, uranium, silver and gold.

Lake Eyre Basin covers almost one-sixth of our entire continent and is the world's largest internally draining river system.

Geologists have studied glacial rocks of the Flinders Ranges to understand that the whole planet was once covered in ice sheets up to several kilometres thick – a scenario called Snowball Earth, and that this global glaciation was thawed by a sudden reversal to warmer temperatures about 635 million years ago. This is evidenced by Ediacaran fossils found

in quartzite - the oldest soft-bodied organisms ever found. The current World Heritage Listing proposal is based on the notion that nowhere else in the world is evidence of the emergence of multi-celled life better displayed.

At the time of European arrival the Aboriginal people of the Northern Flinders Ranges were the Wailpi, Guyani, Jadiaura and Pilatapa, now collectively referred to as the Adnyamathanha people.

They have shared the country with Kuyani, Arabunna, Kokatha, Nukunu and Barngarla language groups. Likewise, Arabunna language groups of the Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre region share country with Wangkangurru/ Yarluyandi, Adnyamathanha, Kokatha, Barngarla and Antakirinja language groups, and the Yankunytjatjara people of the central interior have shared country with Antakirinja, Pitjantjatjara, Kokatha and Eringa language groups. Aboriginal people have lived in South Australia's Outback for more than 70,000 years.

The route now known as the Oodnadatta Track was travelled for tens of thousands of years by Aboriginal people, who used it as a trading route with stops at the springs along the track.

Geographically, the Outback is unified by a combination of factors, most notably a low human population density, a largely intact natural environment and, in many places, low-intensity land uses, such as pastoralism in which production is reliant on the natural environment.

The climate of South Australia's Outback is marked by high summer temperatures, relatively low and highly erratic rainfall for which spells of dry years are punctuated by irregular episodes of major rainfall events.

The largest industry across the Outback, in terms of the area occupied, is pastoralism, in which cattle, sheep, and sometimes goats, are grazed in mostly intact, natural ecosystems. Widespread use of bore water, obtained from underground aquifers, including the Great Artesian Basin, has enabled livestock to be grazed across vast areas in which no permanent surface water exists naturally.

Capitalising on the lack of pasture improvement and absence of fertiliser and pesticide use, many Outback pastoral properties are certified as organic livestock producers. In 2014, 17,000,000 hectares (42,000,000 acres), most of which is in Outback Australia, was fully certified as organic farm production, making Australia the largest certified organic production area in the world.

Townships in South Australia's Outback originally developed either as 'service centres' to support both the local area and travellers, as railway towns or because of mining. Most townships serve those purposes today.

The Outback is deeply ingrained in Australian heritage, history and folklore.



Originally dubbed the Afghan Express, The Ghan train was named for the pioneering cameleers who blazed a permanent trail into the Red Centre of Australia more than 150 years ago; the original Ghan line following the route of explorer John MacDouall Stuart.

The Simpson Desert, most of which is in South Australia, is the world's largest parallel sand dune desert with over 1,100 dunes.

For thousands of years Aboriginal people have lived in the Simpson Desert in 'good years'. Originally known as the Arunta Desert it wasn't until 1939 that Renmark born Cecil Madigan made its first scientific crossing and renamed it after his major sponsor Alfred Simpson, who was president of the

South Australian branch of the Royal Geographic Society of Australasia and the owner of the Adelaide based Simpson which manufactured household appliances.

In the early 1960's in a quest to discover oil, the French Petroleum Company was the first to blaze a track east across the Simpson and it is these same tracks today that thousands of people wanting to experience this special place now travel over.

Marree was home to Australia's first mosque, which was made of mud brick and built by the Afghan cameleers employed at Marree's inception. At the turn of the 20th century the town was divided in two, with Europeans on one side and Afghan and Aboriginal people on the other.

In 1987 William Creek became home to the first solar-powered public telephone in Australia.

Beltana is a state heritage listed (originally copper mining) town surveyed in 1873, with historic links to the overland telegraph, the Ghan railway and as a camel-based transport centre. All the buildings in Beltana are now privately owned and occupied and its small active community cares for the town's past, present and future with love, respect and dedication.

This deep history and the often stark characteristics of life in the Outback have meant that resilience, determination, innovation, adaptation and pulling together have become traits of the people and communities that live there.



These attributes were consistently identified with pride by the residents who participated in the initial consultation for the Outback Futures project.

The South Australian Outback connects us with Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales as a major gateway for tourism and travellers, and the movement of livestock, minerals and goods by road and rail.

Our contemporary Outback is home to significant mining operations, ongoing mining exploration, a natural environment that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year (usually) from all over the world and all over Australia, and a large pastoralism industry. In many senses the Outback is the state's heartland with the potential to derive further

economic benefit, particularly through increased tourism and environmental assets.

Outback Futures has, from the outset, has been transparent in embarking on the project from a position that the Outback has intrinsic value not only to the people who live, work and visit there, but to the economic and reputational wellbeing of South Australia.



South Australia's Outback – a value proposition

South Australia's Outback has a land area of more than 625,000 km² which encompasses two thirds of the state's area. Around 30 small communities and 312 pastoral leases are home to approximately 3,500 permanent residents.

As a region South Australia's Outback has a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of approximately \$1.7 billion. GRP per capita in the Outback is \$392,000 compared to the Gross State Product (GSP) of \$58,300 per capita.

This is remarkable given that the population in the Outback is less than 0.2% of the state, yet economically it punches above its weight by almost seven times the state average.

South Australia has the world's biggest known uranium deposit, the fourth largest copper deposit and the fourth largest gold deposit. According to figures from the South Australia Chamber of Mining and Energy (SACOME), the state government received \$311 million in mining royalties for the 2019/20 financial year, up from \$299 million the previous financial year and \$207 million in 2015/16. The 2020/21 figures are in excess of \$331 million.

The mining sector is both a user and beneficiary of services and infrastructure provided to the Outback. The government collects royalties from mining activity and

an opportunity therefore exists for a greater contribution to the Outback's capacity for economic, business and social development. The Outback community would put high value on this as a returned social dividend.

The region's pastoral leases account for approximately 40% of its area, with cattle and sheep industries contributing \$2.9 billion to the state's economy in 2017/18.

SA Tourism data identifies 127 tourism accommodation businesses with more than 15 beds in the Outback region alone, with 186,750 overnight visitors per year and providing 96 jobs. When the broader Outback region is included there are almost 800,000 visitor nights, 631,000 day trips and in 2019 a visitor spend of \$459m, which is projected to increase to \$638m by 2025.

This expected growth in visitation can be explained by the rapid expansion of the off-road vehicle and camper/caravan market sector, the swing to domestic rather than overseas travel because of uncertainties posed by the current pandemic and the opening of the northeast gateway

to the state with the sealing of the Strzelecki Track.

Visitation to the region's nine national parks attracts thousands of people each year, with 4,000 Desert Parks Passes usually sold each year.

The Outback's contribution to the state has considerable impacts on its residents, many of which are not properly recognised. Precious water resources are consumed by industry and visitors; heavy vehicles degrade unsealed roads; tourists and travellers generate an enormous amount of rubbish; self-contained travellers have a big impact on the natural environment; communities struggle to maintain facilities such as toilets which are primarily used by visitors and the transport industry.

The dividend that South Australia's Outback already returns to the state is enormous compared to its population, and will be even greater with ongoing support and investment in its assets - its people, amenity, and natural environment - and those economic endeavours that present the best opportunities for managed development of those assets.

Executive summary

The Outback Communities Authority (the Authority) has responsibility for the management and local governance of the unincorporated areas of South Australia. The region encompasses 63% of the state of South Australia and is home to approximately 3,500 people who reside in a number of small townships and numerous smaller settlements including pastoral, farming and tourism enterprises.

Since early 2020 the Authority has been considering the future of the Outback through its Outback Futures project.

Outback Futures is about the long term and sustainable management and growth of South Australia's Outback and considering what it means for its communities from social, economic, environmental and cultural perspectives.

South Australia's Outback is a unique place, and the Authority is absolutely committed to identifying those services and initiatives that will make it an even better place to live, work and visit.

This report and its recommendation have been endorsed by the Authority as a means of addressing community aspirations, and in dealing with the large number of issues that require integrated and sustained efforts into the future.

The recommendations on pages eight and nine have been strongly influenced by the expressed views of stakeholders throughout the 18 months to date of the Outback Futures project.

The recommendations suggest an enhanced governance model for the Authority, a financial model based on shared responsibility, and within this, a recommendation that state government funds those services provided in the Outback that primarily benefit visitors and non-residents who consume them. This recommendation acknowledges the largely unrecognised impact of this sector on a sparse population in an extremely large geographical area.

The recommendations also acknowledge the degree of cultural change that the introduction of a shared financial responsibility model brings to the Outback. Evidencing this, it has been difficult to gain consistency around the messaging and outcomes due to the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19; the result is that it remains less than fully clear that there is wholesale support and understanding around the benefits and mechanics of introducing a levy across the Outback. It is for that reason the Authority is recommending a further six months of consultation before concluding the project so that a key desired outcome – a shared view of what is wanted and needed for the long-term sustainability of the Outback as its own unique and autonomous region of South Australia – can be realised.



Recommendations



The Authority supports legislative and administrative changes that guarantee the establishment and maintenance of an enhanced Outback Communities Authority model of Outback governance where:

- the Authority employs its own staff, is more independent and empowered and has greater ability to influence and advocate for the South Australian Outback
- selection criteria for membership of the Authority is reviewed to improve its ability to maintain close links and represent different sectors of the Outback community
- the Authority and community strategic planning is better integrated and fosters connectivity between communities
- the Authority has a mandated role, leading a formal process which can deliver more coordinated and effective

services from agencies with responsibilities in the region

- the Authority is given a formal role in decision making about infrastructure in the Outback, for example roads and water supply
- the Authority is charged with increasing its focus on strengthening and underpinning the volunteer model, encouraging inclusiveness, good governance and risk management practices.

The Authority commits to its vision for a shared responsibility financial model that underpins sustainable administration of assets and essential services in the South Australian Outback, based on the following realities:

- a greater level of resources is needed by the Authority to meet an increasing demand for services and support in the Outback region, now and into the future as it faces significantly increased visitation

- the shortfall of resources is best addressed by sharing responsibility in proportion to stake, capacity to pay and/or benefit amongst all stakeholders
- in the South Australian Outback a significant component of demand for services arises from a visiting tourism and non-resident workforce population, highly disproportionate to the number of residents and potential ratepayers
- Outback residents and businesses do not have the critical mass or capacity to pay the shortfall of funds required for sustainable management of the region going forward
- the Outback region is an exceptional place with a unique range of existing and developing resources vital to the state's economy, where vibrant residential communities are an integral part of that resource



A greater level of resources is needed by the Authority to meet an increasing demand for services and support in the Outback region, now and into the future as it faces significantly increased visitation.

- the 'value proposition' of the Outback justifies a greater level of external funding to support the region, including a substantially increased appropriation from the state government
- an appropriately set Outback levy or rate needs to be considered for its ability to establish and support the shared responsibility rationale for future sustainable administration of the region.

The Authority supports further consideration of an Outback levy, with a view to providing a final recommendation, regarding any implementation, by the end of May 2022, but subject to:

- conducting further direct negotiations with individual Outback communities providing access, information and more opportunity to contribute
- addressing questions of equity, ability to pay and demonstrated local benefit

- consolidation of the principle that any levy, if recommended, would be capped in the Authority's legislation, with only CPI increases.

In order to support this work the Authority requests a six month extension to additional Outback Futures expenditure approval authorised by two previous ministers, expected to be approximately \$100,000.

Recognising the time needed to consult and implement an Outback levy, the Authority recommends an increased state government appropriation be provided to the Outback Communities Authority in two stages as follows:

- from the 2022/2023 financial year an increase in state government appropriation of \$1,000,000 per annum towards the actual cost of \$1,670,000 to support the provision of services that deliver public benefit across the region. The Authority acknowledges that

these services are also enjoyed by Outback community members as well as visitors to the region and as such would continue to contribute \$670,000 from its Financial Assistance Grant allocation. (This recommendation addresses the clear and present need to provide additional support now for regional infrastructure and services but it does not address the long-term issues around specific community level service provision).

- from the 2023/2024 financial year the state government match any approved and implemented Outback levy to address ongoing sustainability needs and consolidate the shared responsibility model.

In upholding its commitment to transparency, the Authority commits to releasing the Outback Futures Report to Outback communities by the end of January 2022.

Background to the project



The 2019-20 state budget provided the Authority with additional revenue of \$740,000 to address urgent infrastructure audits and undertake the work necessary to explore future service delivery needs.

That allocation, however, was predicated on the Authority recovering the amount in 2019-20 through the application of an Asset Sustainability Levy (ASL).

The Authority declined to accept the extra revenue on the basis that legislation requires consultation before a measure such as a mandatory Outback-wide levy could be introduced. ministerial approval (Minister Knoll) was then given to utilize the additional expenditure approval provided in the budget in order to consult with Outback communities.

At its October 2019 meeting the Authority established the Outback Futures Committee (OFC) for the purposes of undertaking a broad

and comprehensive engagement process with Outback people asking their views and aspirations and how to achieve a better and more resilient community into the future. At its meeting of 18 June 2020, the Authority approved the OFC terms of reference.

The OFC consisted of:

- Mr Bill McIntosh AM
- Ms Sue Chase AM
- Mr Ross Sawers.

The OFC was supported by Authority staff including a dedicated project manager.

The OFC held their first meeting on 10 June 2020 and commenced work on a discussion paper which was circulated as part of the

initial consultation process which commenced in early July 2020 after delays associated with COVID-19 restrictions.

The state government's response to the impacts of COVID-19 in the form of stimulus funding to generate employment and economic recovery provided an unexpected change to the project's parameters. The urgency of upgrading and/or replacing failing assets abated due to the injection of funds received. In turn, this allowed an opportunity for a considered 'reset' of South Australia's Outback and the Authority's role and operations in supporting it over a longer period of time in concert with the community and stakeholders.

After consultation with Outback communities the Authority provided a report to the Minister for Planning and Local Government in January 2021 (Minister Chapman). A further briefing with detail about the Authority's operations, community profiles and comparisons with

other jurisdictions and South Australian local governments was provided at the minister's request. The Authority's presiding member also wrote to the minister and this correspondence was discussed in person at a meeting on May 19 2021.

On May 26 2021 the minister wrote to the presiding member requesting that the Authority continue with the Outback Futures project and develop a business plan and accompanying revenue plan, in consultation with communities and stakeholders for her further consideration by the end of the 2021 calendar year.

The minister also confirmed that:

- an additional community development officer could be employed for 12 months
- existing expenditure approval could be utilized for both purposes.

The minister also requested that a business plan for the Outback Pass concept be developed in the first half of 2022.

Subsequent to the receipt of the minister's correspondence a project plan for phase two of Outback Futures was conceived and on June 18 Progress Associations were contacted about a three stage consultation process to develop a meaningful approach for the Outback's future growth and progress.

Stage 1: a residential strategic planning workshop from Friday September 3 to Sunday September 5 at Coober Pedy

Stage 2: 'in community' consultation over a two week period in October

Stage 3: an online workshop with participants from Coober Pedy to agree on and endorse the plan and its objectives.

Deliverables were identified as:

- a strategic blueprint for South Australia's Outback and its communities of interest
- identification of priority services required to be delivered by the Authority

- identification of priority services required that would benefit from a joint effort by government agencies
- options for a future financial model to support the community's desired services.

Registrations of interest were sought from people prepared to be local 'Outback Futures Champions', and who could:

- represent the views of their community at Coober Pedy
- attend and engage in the residential planning session
- be a key point of communication in the local community
- help present information at local community consultation meetings
- encourage local community members to participate in those consultation meetings.

Additionally a broad range of stakeholder groups were identified and invited to participate in the strategic planning workshop.

Strategic planning at Coober Pedy

Fifty people attended the Coober Pedy workshop. To facilitate participation the Authority offered complementary flights from some locations, and provided accommodation and meals.

A list of the topics that participants identified can be found on the Authority website (oca.sa.gov.au/get-involved/Outback-futures-project). Notes from all of the discussion groups are also on the website.

This documentation has been used as the basis for developing the Draft Strategic Blueprint for South Australia's Outback along with the 'what we heard' document produced in 2020 after consultation in August. This document is also on the website.

In community consultation

An invitation was extended to all Progress Associations to host a consultation meeting in October. Not all Progress Associations responded

to the invitation. After follow up some Progress Associations decided not to hold a meeting in their community. Despite best efforts it was not possible to make direct contact with all Progress Associations.

A choice of two online meetings was offered to people unable to participate in person in addition to the 17 meetings held face to face from October 16 to November 1.

Information about the October 'in community' consultation meetings, including a promotional poster, was emailed to all Progress Associations and all participants in the Coober Pedy strategic planning workshop.

Five hard copy posters were sent to each Progress Association for their use in promoting the meetings. Information was also available on the the Authority's website.

Amended stage 3

Outcomes from 'in community' consultation were mixed, it was therefore not possible to proceed with a single position that might be well supported by the majority of the Outback community.

Rather the Authority considered all feedback and developed its preferred position and way forward. This was communicated in an open letter to Outback residents from the presiding member, along with 'frequently asked questions'. This was emailed to all participants in the consultation process who provided their email addresses. Feedback was invited.

A hard copy brochure was distributed via Australia Post as a letterbox drop to Outback residents for information and inviting people to get in touch with the Authority to provide contact details and email addresses for future engagements. It is not possible to ascertain if this reached all Outback residences.

A summary of the consultation process for the entire project is provided in *Appendix 2*.



Governance

1 Strengthening the role of the Outback Communities Authority

Outback communities have called for the Authority's status and independence to be enhanced so that it can become a much stronger and more effective advocate and promoter of the Outback region.

Initially outcomes from consultation supported the notion of the Authority's membership being partially elected from the Outback by Outback residents, however during 'in community' consultation in October there was less of a consensus due to the cost of elections, which are estimated to be approximately \$40,000 per election, or \$10,000 per annum if held every four years.

The Authority has therefore proposed that the wording of the legislation be amended to strengthen the Authority's role and to increase transparency of appointments to the Authority.

The Authority's recommendation in support of legislative and administrative changes that guarantee the establishment and maintenance of an enhanced Outback Communities Authority model of Outback governance are based on some clear aspirational patterns identified by the Outback Futures Committee in 2020, which have been upheld in Phase 2 of the project this year. These include:

- a stronger, more administratively independent Outback Communities Authority (OCA) with direct accountability to government
- a deeper relationship between the Authority and the communities it serves through a strategic planning model that builds cohesion, regional identity and brand
- volunteers energized through a community development support package with the burden of red tape and provision of basic essential services dealt better supported by the Authority
- a desire for the Authority to take on the role of regional coordination and the promotion of cooperative arrangements between all relevant agencies to get better outcomes for services and infrastructure outside of its direct control
- an Outback more compliant with basic rules and regulations, with the Authority engaging, negotiating, monitoring and enforcing these matters in partnership with the range of government agencies that are responsible for compliance.



2 Role of the Outback Communities Authority

The Authority's role has been identified as:

- delivering on our vision of healthier, happier Outback communities
- being the leading representative voice and advocate for the Outback
- driving collaboration, partnerships and coordinated strategic and project planning that benefits the whole of the Outback, while maintaining its unique attributes and way of life
- establishing, maintaining and reporting on coordinated efforts for effective service delivery by government agencies across the Outback
- funding and/or managing the provision of essential community services and public facilities in the Outback
- supporting community capacity building and personal, social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing
- improving compliance and regulation.



3 Regional coordination

The wellbeing of South Australia's Outback is of interest and relevance to a large number of state government portfolios, including environment and water, primary industries, tourism, Aboriginal affairs, arts, industry and trade, infrastructure and transport and mining and energy.

There are also a number of other organisations and peak representative bodies with a keen interest in the sustained future of the Outback, including Regional Development Far North, SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, Flinders Ranges and Outback South Australia Tourism (FROSAT), the Pastoral Board, and the various Aboriginal community councils.

Outback communities have expressed a great deal of frustration with the lack of coordinated approaches by government agencies and the non-government (NGO) sector in enabling the broad range of issues that require a sustained

response to be clearly articulated, acknowledged and addressed.

Similarly, there is frustration about the opportunities missed through the lack of collaboration between peak bodies representing various issues affecting the Outback. The Authority intends to take a leadership role in addressing this issue by modelling behaviours that encourage cooperation and collaboration and forging strong relationships at the officer level across government agencies that support partnering to solve problems and foster innovation. This will in turn demonstrate connected decision-making that supports the

delivery of services provided by the NGO sector, which augers well for better outcomes for the people of the Outback.

The Authority believes that addressing a more joined up approach by government agencies will require that more formal relationships be established. As the leading representative voice and advocate for the Outback the Authority is well positioned to take on a role of convening a reference group charged with making strategic and prioritised recommendations about government and agency projects and expenditure over time to address critical infrastructure issues for the Outback, such as roads and water.

The changes to the functional capability of the Authority, discussed here, enabling it to deliver much greater benefits to the region, need to be seen as an integrated and inseparable package, incorporated with recommendations for a fair and sustainable financial model.

The vision for a shared responsibility financial model

This model implies the sharing of both financial costs and social and economic co-benefits between all those stakeholders who stand to gain from a better Outback. This includes state and federal governments, visitors and of course our key focus, residents and landowners.

It is built on the following basic principles:

- a high proportion of regional level services provided in the Outback are consumed by non-residents passing through the region and the cost of these services should not be borne by residents
- any compulsory form of rating for Outback residents should only

cover the proportion of services that offers benefits to those residents

- given the nature of the region, a fair and sustainable financial model for the South Australian Outback needs to be supported by additional external funding.
- Australia’s tax system, including the systems adopted by local

government authorities, use the payment of rates, or taxes, to fund a variety of programs, services and infrastructure for the benefit of all citizens. It is therefore a fair and reasonable expectation that all Outback residents make a financial contribution to supporting the region in which they reside.

Table 1: Summary of the Authority’s vision for a fully integrated solution

‘Shared responsibility financial model’	The Authority’s role, function and capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on the reality that a high proportion of beneficiaries of Outback essential services are non-residents • Outback residents are therefore only asked to pay for their proportion of benefit received from each essential service • responsibility for the balance of regional essential services is covered by external funding from other sectors and stakeholders • Outback levy rate is capped in legislation + CPI (for private/residential) • communities can voluntarily agree to a higher levy for higher levels of service in their own community through Community Contribution Schemes (CCS) • a more efficient 4 year planning and budget cycle for CCS and Community Affairs Resource Management (CARM) agreements is introduced to simplify administration • revenue from the Outback levy will give the Authority a greater ability to assist community organizations with ongoing costs and administrative functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Authority’s status and independence is upgraded, so it can become a much stronger and effective advocate for the Outback region and communities • provisions for membership of the Authority are reviewed, to guarantee a transparent process which achieves effective board representation of people and communities in the region • the Authority is given a formal role as a Coordinator of Outback Service Delivery – leading to better efficiency and outcomes from all agencies • the Authority/community planning model is reviewed to guarantee stronger links and communication between communities, which in turn are better integrated with the Authority’s strategic planning cycle • the Authority is supported in its investigation of an Outback Pass – which has potential to access resources to provide essential services and public access management, necessary to support a rapidly expanding tourism sector • the Authority has a greater, formal role in advising on policy for infrastructure and maintenance of Outback roads and setting priorities for dedicated funding to improve an identified system of local roads in the Outback





In recommending the shared responsibility financial model, the Authority has considered, and discounted a number of other options.

These can be summarised as:

- **Outback levy only**

'In community' consultation in October this year provided information about the costs of higher service levels requested, and showed the implications for Outback residents should the required additional revenue be generated solely through the application of an Outback levy. Many people who provided feedback through this phase of consultation expressed a strong view that the cost was too high and not affordable for many people. The introduction of a levy represents a very big cultural change for the Outback as a region, and while the Authority is strongly committed to the 'shared responsibility financial model' as

its preferred option, it agrees with community sentiment that the financial burden on the Outback from bearing all of the costs of increased services is unpalatable and unreasonable.

- **Local government**

The implementation of formal local government for the Outback is not seen as palatable. It would mean the loss of state government financial contribution, much higher rates than any proposed Outback levy, and would not guarantee that the sorts of services that the community expects to be delivered by a local government could be realised. Meeting the legislative obligations required of a local government would have significant resourcing implications, as would the establishment of offices in the Outback.

- **The 'do nothing' option**

Maintaining the status quo is not seen as desirable or sustainable. Patterns emerging

from consultation shape a clear case for change. Without an expanded budget the Authority will not be able to maintain existing infrastructure or address current gaps in service delivery and is likely to scale back some services, for example *Dog and Cat Management Act 1985* compliance functions (as outlined in the Act) and maintenance of public facilities such as toilets.

Without additional revenue services, and therefore liveability of the region will be reduced and it will be less attractive as a destination.

- **State government funding only**

The Authority does not believe this is the healthiest and most sustainable option for the Outback and that residents should make a financial contribution to services they receive, and through making that contribution become more engaged in the governance and strategic direction of the region.

Services and costs

Service priorities for Outback communities are those which result in:

- improved liveability
- a more vibrant region
- better managed tourism
- preserving, protecting and restoring the Outback's unique natural environment
- a stronger, more administratively independent Authority
- volunteers energized through a community development support package with the burden of red tape and provision of basic essential services dealt with by the Authority
- a deeper relationship between the Authority and the communities it serves through a strategic planning model that builds cohesion, regional identity and brand
- regional coordination and the promotion of cooperative arrangements between all relevant agencies to get better outcomes for services and infrastructure outside of the Authority's direct control
- an Outback more compliant with legislative requirements.

1 Services required in the Outback

The Authority has identified four categories of services. Those services that provide benefit:

- 1 to the public across the Outback - that is those services that primarily provide a benefit to people visiting the Outback, such as collection of public waste – for which it is proposed to seek external funding
- 2 to residents of the Outback – funded by the introduction of a levy
- 3 to a particular community – funded by the concept of the current Community Contribution Scheme
- 4 to individuals and therefore delivered on a 'user pays' basis.

Table 2 below shows the organisation of services into those categories with the addition of the Authority's governance function and the corporate overheads required to support operations.

Governance	Corporate overheads	Outback public benefit	Outback resident benefit	Community based	User based
Board	Finance	Public toilets	Community development	Iron Knob	CWMS
Director	Office accommodation	UHF's	Compliance	Andamooka	Andamooka pipeline
Executive Officer	Audit	Airstrips	Maintenance of township facilities	Dunjiba	Outback water stations
Community meetings	Legal	Open space	Small projects	Leigh Creek basic services	
	Administration			Youth programs	
	Assets and Works Management				



2 Public benefit services explained

Public toilets

The provision and maintenance of public toilets in the Outback is a service primarily used by non-residents (visitors, tourists and transport operators). It is currently problematic in a number of ways:

- insufficient budget to adequately clean and maintain them
- difficulty of identifying people willing to clean them either a volunteers or as a paid contractor (particularly as the available paid hours are usually less than what is required so it can be an unpleasant job) resulting in closure of these facilities in some areas.

Total budget of \$560,000 has been allocated with the Authority seeking efficiencies through 'contracts for services' on a sub-regional basis when contractors cannot be identified in particular locations. This represents an increase of approximately \$320,000 over the current allocation of \$240,000.

UHF repeater network

The Ultra High Frequency Radio (UHF) network is highly valued by travellers in the Outback and pastoralists, who often need to

communicate with staff working remotely from homesteads. The network serves both communication and safety needs.

As maintenance costs rise the existing budget of \$70,000 per annum has become inadequate and going forward an annual budget of \$100,000 has been allocated.

Airstrips

Having a strategically located network of well-maintained airstrips across the Outback is critical. The surface of an airstrip needs to be kept in good condition, as well as the area adjacent the airstrip, wind socks, lighting and fencing and gates. Ideally airstrips in the Outback should be fenced to keep out wandering stock, feral animals such as camels, goats and donkeys, and our native fauna.

For communities reliant on the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) for their primary community health care and emergency health care, having a well-kept all-weather airstrip is essential. Airstrips are also important for the evacuation of people injured in road crashes and other health emergencies for

both residents and visitors. The vast distances in the Outback mean a more traditional ambulance service is not viable in most locations.

Aircraft are an important part of the transport network for many Outback residents, once again because of distance and the time taken to drive. They are also a safer option than road transport. Aircraft are important to the tourism industry both for accessing the Outback and also for the Outback experiences.

A total budget of \$200,000 per annum has been allocated, increased from the current \$90,000 allocation.

Open space

The amenity and attractiveness of public areas in townships is particularly important to the Outback brand and historically the maintenance of these areas has been considerably under-funded and in many cases reliant upon the efforts of volunteers. \$360,000 has been allocated.

Once depreciation and corporate overheads are allocated the total cost of services that provide public benefit is \$1,670,000.



3 Management of camping in the Outback to protect the environment and enhance experience

Tourism is an industry sector with great potential for expansion in the Outback. Tourism already contributes enormously to the regional economy. In 2019 it generated an estimated \$459 million to the Flinders Ranges and Outback regional economy with 3,100 people employed in the sector either directly or indirectly. South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) data suggests that the Outback contributes approximately one third of this and that 31% of domestic travellers prefer caravanning and camping.

Anecdotally these numbers of 'self-contained' travellers are increasing and likely to continue to increase with the sealing of the Strzelecki Track.

The Outback Futures consultation identified the poor behaviour of some in this cohort as contributing to two major areas of concern – the negative impact on the natural environment and 'brand' damage.

It is proposed to further investigate the implement of an 'Outback Pass' to enable a planned and managed approach to providing services, facilities and compliance to directly address issues such as public access and encroachment on pastoral land, toilet and rubbish management, and land and water degradation. Revenue generated would directly offset management costs including paid workforce to service facilities and undertake a compliance function.

Self-contained travellers would be required to camp only in designated camping areas on Crown and (agreed) pastoral land (or in commercially run caravan parks and campgrounds).

The Outback Pass could also provide a platform for engaging with tourists to deliver information campaigns, such as the 'Aussie Travel Code' and to promote events. It could be developed into an app that provides tourists with information about

the area/s that they are travelling through – Aboriginal culture, flora and fauna, geology and history – as well as maps, safety information and points of interest.

The Outback Pass concept has received strong support after preliminary consultation with officers from National Parks and Wildlife and the Toyota Landcruiser Club of SA.

Preliminary investigations suggest the implementation of the Outback Pass concept could generate revenue over time that could at least partly replace the increased state government appropriation. A feasibility study and business case will be developed for this concept in the next six months

APPENDIX



About the Outback Communities Authority



The information provided below relates to the Outback Communities Authority's (the Authority) usual operations. Information about Leigh Creek is not included given that it is a project with discrete funding, objectives and timeframes.

1.1 General information

The unincorporated areas of South Australia, administered by the Authority account for 63% of the state's geographic area, not included in any local government.

Within that geographic area are nine national parks managed by Department of Environment and Water. There are also two separate entities; namely the District Council of Coober Pedy and Roxby Council (formerly Roxby Downs Council). While the Authority has no jurisdiction over any of these it has a collaborative relationship with them about matters that offer a clear benefit to the Outback as a whole.

Excluded from the Authority's area by regulation are Yalata Reserve, Gerard Community, the Nepabunna, Iga Warta and Nantawarrina areas and 106 small unincorporated islands in South Australian coastal waters and in the River Murray system. The *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act 1981* precludes the Authority from operating on the APY Lands, and it is similarly precluded from the *Maralinga Tjarutja Lands by the Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act 1984*.

South Australia's unincorporated areas share boundaries with Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and 15 South Australian local governments.

The Authority currently has working relationships with 22 Progress Associations, eight sporting organisations and several community associations, (for example Farina Restoration Group, Isolated Children's Parents Association) and recognises co-existing Aboriginal community groups in three towns – the Marree Arabanna Peoples' Committee (Marree); Dunjiba Community Council (Oodnadatta) and the Aroona Aboriginal Council (Copley).

There is a resident population of 3,344 dispersed over 24 communities, 312 pastoral leases and several service centres, such as Mt Dare and Cadney Park. A further approximately 2,500 people work in the area, mostly in the mining sector, followed by seasonal tourism workers.

The impacts of the mining sector being mostly reliant on a fly in/fly out, or drive in/drive out workforce (generally referred to as FIFO) are significant and well researched in Australia. They include:

- stress on community services and infrastructure
- little corresponding contribution to the local economy (mining and resource company contracts often go to external rather than local providers)
- reduced employment opportunities for local people
- possible revenue shortfalls arising from financial assistance grants being calculated on the basis of resident population estimates with only a small allowance for the 'effective' population.

1.2 Outback Communities Authority structure and governance

The Authority is established by the *Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009* to manage the provision of, and promote improvements in, public services and facilities for Outback communities. It also has a responsibility to articulate the views, interests and aspirations of these communities.

The Authority replaced the Outback Areas Community Development Trust, established in 1978. The Trust was established at this time primarily to ensure that residents within SA's unincorporated areas had access to federal grants provided through the local government Grants Commission. The activities of the Trust largely reflected this purpose, as it was focused on the re-distribution of these grants to community groups, rather than the provision of services themselves. This history has shaped the current context of the Authority's relationship with Outback communities, which has evolved rather than been designed.

At the time the Authority replaced the Trust, it took on significant additional responsibilities and functions without the provision of additional resources. These included:

- the requirement to regularly consult and engage with communities about matters including the Authority's strategic management plan, annual business plan and budget and Community Affairs and Resourcing Management (CARM) Agreements
- the ability to raise revenue (which has occurred via Community Contribution Schemes)
- some functions of the *Local Government Act 1999* such as anti-pollution and anti-nuisance measures and the ability to appoint authorised persons for enforcement purposes.

The Authority has seven members, four of whom must be from different areas of the Outback, with each member appointed by the governor for a term not exceeding three years. The presiding member is appointed from within the membership by the governor.

Current members are:

- **William (Bill) McIntosh AM**
Pastoralist from the northern Flinders Ranges area.
Presiding Member
- **Jo Fort**
Outback business owner at Innamincka and experience in remote area nursing in SW Queensland
- **Frances Frahn**
Pastoralist from the northern Flinders Ranges area
- **Lee Warmington**
Farmer and community member from the Penong Community on the far west coast
- **Sam Johnson OAM**
CEO of the District Council of Mt Remarkable and previous Mayor of Port Augusta Council
- **Tony Vaughan ASM**
CEO of the Royal Flying Doctor Service central region
- **Trevor Wright**
Business proprietor and tourism operator from William Creek

The administrative function of the Authority is provided by a staff of seven. These positions are:

Position	Level
Director	SAES 1
Governance manager/ Team leader community services	AS07/ AS06
Business services manager/Executive officer	AS05/ AS06
Business support officer	AS02
Finance officer	AS02
Community development officer	AS05
Asset and works officer	AS04

There is currently an additional (temporary) position (AS08) allocated to the Outback Futures project, and an additional community development officer (AS05) funded for 12 months until November 2022.

The core functions performed by the staff are financial management including grants, CARM agreements and CCS administration, board support, community development, project management of asset and town maintenance. Grants are provided to communities, usually on a 50/50 financial contribution, for events and projects prioritised by Progress Associations.

The director reports to the Authority and to the Director, Office of Local Government.

1.3 Budget

The table below provides a picture of the Authority's ongoing revenue and expenditure over two financial years.

It does not include externally funded projects that are reliant on grants that may be available from time to time, for example the Drought Communities Programme.

Table 3: Revenue and expenditure			
	2020-21 Budget \$000	2019-20 Budget \$000	Notes
Revenue			
Financial assistance grants	1,612	1,564	
State appropriations	698	694	\$376,000
Community Contribution Schemes	300	300	CCS Levies – Andamooka and Iron Knob
Other	237	233	Income from interest on the Authority's funds, Outback airstrips, dog registrations, public toilet donations and Outback community insurance
Total income	2,847	2,791	
Operating expenses			
Employee expenses	812	802	
Board fees	81	80	
Supplies and services	395	400	
Audit fees		60	
Andamooka town services	250	250	Return of CCS collected
Iron Knob town services	50	50	Return of CCS collected
Public conveniences	240	233	Service and delivery contracts, scheduled preventative maintenance, full operational costs
UHF management	70	63	Scheduled preventative maintenance and licence costs
Airstrips	28	23	Airstrip reporting officers, scheduled preventative maintenance
CWMS	75	66	Scheduled preventative maintenance, operational costs
Outback water stations		10	
Community assistance	389	432	Community insurance and streetlight costs
Other joint ventures		86	Regional Development Australia SLA
Youth		5	
Andamooka pipeline	30	30	Annual maintenance and water costs – linked directly to income
Annual investment program	417	187	
Total expenditure	2,979	2,777	

1.4 Community Affairs Resourcing and Management (CARM) Agreements

CARM Agreements are covered under section 17 of the *Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009*. They are formal funding and service provision arrangements between the Authority and incorporated bodies (community groups in townships and settlements) made annually.

Through CARM Agreements, communities decide their own priorities for local services and facilities, prepare community plans, and pay for amenities through local fundraising. The Authority provides advice, guidance and funding assistance to support these efforts. Communities are required to acquit the funds received and provide meeting minutes of such to the Authority at six-month intervals. The administration and implementation of CARM Agreements and the services provided by them are largely undertaken by volunteers. Some communities choose to use a portion of CARM Agreement funds to pay for some services, for example, a part-time administrator or the employment of a local person to undertake town maintenance.

There are currently 22 CARM Agreements across the Outback.

- APOMA - Andamooka
- Beltana Community Inc
- Blinman Community Inc
- Coorabie & Districts Progress Association
- Copley Progress Association
- Fowlers Bay Progress Association
- Gawler Ranges Progress Association
- Glendambo Community Inc
- Innamincka Progress Association
- Iron Knob Progress Association
- Kingoonya Community Inc
- Mannahill War Memorial Inc
- Leigh Creek Community
- Marree Arabunna Peoples Committee
- Marree and District Progress Association
- Olary Progress Association
- Parachilna Community Inc
- Penong & Districts Progress Association
- Pimba Community Inc
- William Creek Community
- Yunta District Hall Inc

1.5 Community Contribution Schemes

The Act allows for community contributions on land in an area of the Outback to raise revenue for the purposes of planning, carrying out, making available, supporting, maintaining or improving an activity that is, or is intended to be, of particular benefit to the Outback community in that area or to visitors to that community.

A community contribution is imposed in the same way as a council imposes separate rates on land in its council area, except that—

- (a) a contribution may only be imposed if it is authorised by a community affairs resourcing and management agreement; and
- (b) a contribution must be based on a fixed charge approved by the minister.

Two communities, namely Iron Knob and Andamooka, currently have Community Contribution Schemes (CCS) in place. These have been negotiated between the Authority and the town Progress Associations so that service levels can be obtained above those the Authority can provide from within its current budget. They are re-negotiated annually.

The CCS uses property units as the basis for rating; a house or a vacant block is one property unit. The CCS is collected by the Flinders Ranges Council under an MOU with the Authority. The CCS amount

per property unit in Andamooka is \$400 per annum. This is intended to generate \$250,000 revenue per year. The CCS amount per property unit in Iron Knob is \$240. This is intended to generate \$50,000 revenue per year. The Iron Knob Progress Association uses its CCS to provide a higher level of municipal services to the community than what the Authority is able to provide and also uses the revenue to deliver local community projects.

CCSs have been useful but they are not without problems.

There is a legislative requirement to negotiate the CCS annually with an association that represents the community. This can lead to internal community conflict if there are divergent views about community priorities, or if community members do not feel the association is truly representative, or if there is dissent about the need/desire for a CCS. This is a time consuming process that can be further exacerbated if there is a lack of sound governance structures and practices in community

associations, and the additional requirement to verify a community's expressed views through the Authority's own consultation process.

The CCS is also an administrative burden for communities and the Authority. The revenue collected is the Authority's to be spent on that community, however it is difficult to acquit unless the Authority manages the delivery of services. It is not resourced to do this. It is made more difficult when the community association wishes to have day-to-day control over the contracts. The solution was a grant (through the CARM agreement) to the community association. This then places pressure on volunteers to manage, report and acquit and therefore increases the pressure on volunteers rather than reducing it.

The Authority bears the costs of collecting the CCS and also the recovery costs of unpaid CCS contributions. The latter can mean a huge drain on the Authority's limited human resources.

APPENDIX

2

DRAFT Strategic blueprint for South Australia's Outback



Our Vision

A thriving place where happy, healthy people and communities work together for well managed and sustainable economic development, protection of our environment and the promotion of our unique identity and cultures.

Six Goal Areas

1

LIVEABILITY

- Services, amenity and infrastructure that support improved liveability of the region

2

VIBRANCY

- A vibrant region with a consolidated, strategic cultural and events management structure that builds social capital

3

CONNECTION

- A well connected Outback where collaboration between the Authority, communities, regions, industries and stakeholders is part of the way things are done

4

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- A future oriented approach to services and infrastructure that positions the Outback to capitalise on opportunities for appropriate economic development while maintaining its unique environment and character

5

THE BRAND

- The Outback brand and economy is strong and well understood.

6

GOVERNANCE

- Outback Communities Authority governance is strong, transparent, accessible, and represents the region well; and autonomous in its ability to advocate for issues that matter to Outback communities.

APPENDIX

3

Summary of consultation



Phase 1:

July 2020 – January 2021

July

Outback Futures project discussion paper released providing context, asking 10 key questions and inviting questionnaire responses

August

Meetings held in 10 Outback communities with discussions focussing on the same 10 key questions. Approximately 120 people participated.

September

Outcomes of discussions and the 42 questionnaire responses received collated into a summary document 'What we heard'. This was distributed to stakeholders and made available on the Authority's website.

October

Outback Futures Committee distilled key issues, which were identified as:

- the unsustainable nature of the current reliance on volunteers to deliver services at the local level, and a call for greater direct support for volunteer groups in building the social and cultural fabric of the Outback
- the need for delivery of critical assets and services, including roads, technology, utilities and water quality, health and aged care, transport, planning, regulation and compliance and town maintenance and amenity
- how to increase and capitalise on tourism opportunities while better managing the impact that tourists can have on Outback communities
- putting in place a more democratically formed governance structure for the Outback that can maximise funding opportunities, empower communities, and support the Outback to speak directly to governments and decision makers with a single voice.

November

The Authority endorsed guiding principles to underpin project decisions. These were:

- a stronger Authority with more status, independence and capacity to advocate
- volunteers valued and energised
- a funding model that recognises the users of the Outback as well as its residents
- the introduction of a user pays contribution which could unlock improved service delivery and sustainability in the Outback
- deeper connections between the Authority and the communities it serves
- the broad range of issues facing the Outback that require a sustained response are acknowledged and addressed
- a more organised and appropriately regulated Outback.

December

Stakeholder engagement via a series of interactive webinars. The purpose of the engagement was to:

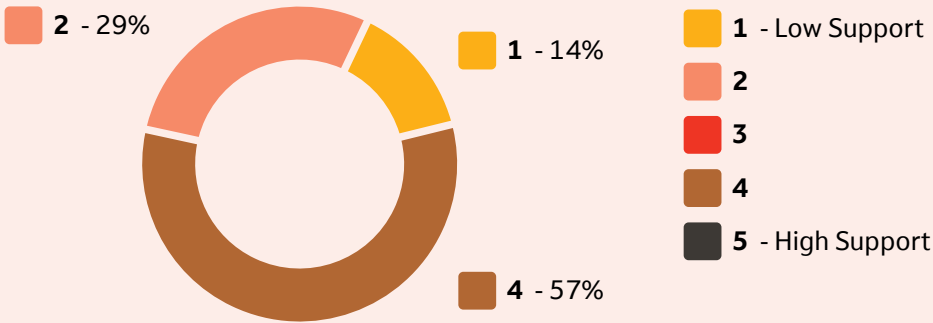
- share information on key themes, patterns and issues emerging from previous consultation
- 'road test' underpinning principles proposed to guide the project
- gauge the level of community support on current thinking on ideas, proposals and potential funding models being developed by the Outback Futures Committee.

A total of 45 people participated.

The proposals discussed at the first two webinars, and further tested at the final webinar were:

- expanded community development function with Authority staff available to assist with economic development, governance, grant writing, social and sporting activities to take the load off volunteers
- the Authority establishing a new function to work with Agencies to address regulation and compliance with things like litter management, nuisance, dog and cat management, inappropriate land use and development
- the Authority exploring funding options with government that acknowledge the users of the Outback as well as its residents ... for example the mining sector, the travelling public
- the Authority organising the delivery of basic municipal services
- the Authority instigating a coordinated approach with relevant government agencies to address the issues facing the Outback that would benefit from a sustained approach... eg roads, water quality, tourism infrastructure
- the Authority working with communities, stakeholders and government to develop a strategic plan for South Australia's Outback to get everyone on the same page with a blueprint for the future

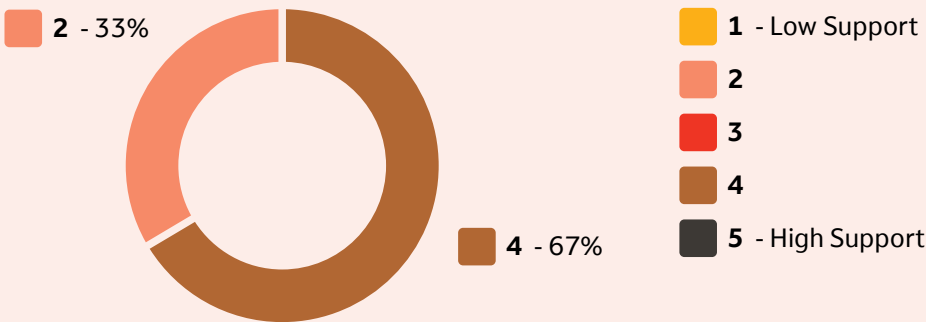
Figure A:
How supportive are you that these six proposals are formulated as recommendations to the minister by the Authority?



Three other concepts were discussed in more detail at the first two webinars, and once again, tested for support at the final webinar.

The concepts were around the Authority’s membership, the Outback Pass and the Outback levy.

Figure B:
How supportive are you that these three concepts /elements are developed into more detailed proposals for recommendation and further consultation?



Essentially there was quite strong support for all of the proposals and concepts put forward by the OFC, with the proviso that further detail was required about all of them, and a very clear demand for continued and detailed consultation with Outback communities.

December/January

Stakeholders notified about the availability of a recording of the final webinar and the opportunity to provide feedback via a questionnaire until early January

January

Outback Futures Report and recommendations endorsed by the Authority and presented to the minister. Its recommendations covered three key themes:

- an enhanced Authority model addressing governance, financial sustainability and reduced reliance on volunteers for service delivery
- better management of public access in the Outback
- improved regional coordination of government services.

Phase 2:

May 2021 – December 2021

May

Minister provides formal response to the report's recommendations

June

Progress Associations notified about next steps in the Outback Futures project, including the Authority's intention to run a three stage planning process with Outback communities to develop a meaningful approach for the Outback's future growth and progress.

September

Residential strategic planning workshop held at Coober Pedy attended by 50 people from across the Outback. Participants generated the topics for discussion. These and the notes from discussions are available at www.oca.sa.gov.au

October

'In community' meetings held in 17 communities. Two online meetings held. Relatively low participation (approximately 130 people across 19 meetings). Information presented about the outcomes from Coober Pedy and the financial implications for residents if the desired higher service levels were to be provided without any additional external funding source. There were vast differences between the moods of the various meetings and the responses to the information presented.

The most constructive feedback was received from people attending meetings where there was high acceptance that the information presented had resulted from prior consultation and was not the Authority's view of services that should be delivered. There were several meetings where this was either not heard or not believed and taken as the Authority's proposal.

Approximately 60 people provided feedback. The views expressed did not enable clear patterns to be identified, with feedback spanning strong support to strong opposition, most usually about the perception of how much a levy might be. There were a range of other opinions often linked to questions and requests for clarification. Not all people providing feedback attended meetings.

November

An open letter from the Authority's presiding member distributed to all consultation participants who provided an email address inviting feedback on the shared responsibility financial model. Hard copy distributed to Outback residents with an Australia Post mail service. It is not possible to ascertain if this reached all Outback residence.

December

Consultation on Phase 2 closed on December 6. Very little feedback was received and much of it was asking for further detail about specific services that would be received by communities and the pastoral sector if a levy was to be introduced. Progress Associations in Andamooka, Beltana and Yunta responded generally with a theme that further information was required and some criticisms of the consultation process. Critical feedback was also received from individual residents of Fowlers Bay (1), a friend of Yunta (1), Yunta (5) and three pastoral properties. Feedback in support of the shared responsibility financial model was received from a resident of Copley and a resident of Beltana, the latter with a request for further information about how budgets might be allocated.

APPENDIX



State of the Outback – 2016 census



625,000 Km²

LAND AREA

- this represents about 63% of the state

3,344

RESIDENT POPULATION

ABS estimated for 2019

- This number increases by almost 2,500 when enumeration is factored in – suggesting that the numbers of temporary and fly in / fly out workers and visitors to the region are 70% more than the resident population

0.00

PERSONS PER HECTARE POPULATION DENSITY

44

MEDIAN AGE

- which represents an increase of 4 years since the previous census

13.5%

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

- Aboriginal people comprise 13.5% of the population, compared with 4.1% in regional SA, and 2% state wide

\$1,092

INCOME

- Median weekly household income is \$1,092, slightly more than in regional SA but about \$200 less than for all of South Australia

\$70

WEEKLY RENT

- 30% of Outback people live in rented accommodation with an average weekly rent of \$70; significantly lower than anywhere else in the state

\$107

MORTGAGE REPAYMENT

- 8% of residents have a mortgage with average weekly repayments of \$107.

4.3%

UNEMPLOYMENT

- the Outback has the lowest unemployment rate in the state and a participation rate in the labour force on par with the rest of the state

48%

AGRICULTURE AND MINING

- Agriculture and mining are by far the two biggest employers, offering a total of 48% of jobs in the Outback, compared with 17.2% in regional SA. Accommodation and food services is the next biggest employer in the Outback at 9.8% compared with 6.7% in regional SA

25%

VOLUNTEERS

- Approximately 25% of people aged 15+ are engaged in volunteerism, however in the five years from 2011 the number of volunteers declined by 126 and the number of people choosing not to volunteer increased quite dramatically by 300.
- Income quartiles in the Outback compared to regional SA show that there is greater proportion of households in the highest income quartile as well as a greater proportion in the lowest income quartile.

Dominant age groups

- Analysis of the service age groups of the Outback Communities Authority region in 2016 compared to regional SA shows that there was a lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 to 17 years) as well as a lower proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years).
- Overall, 15.3% of the population was aged between 0 and 17, and 21.1% were aged 60 years and over, compared with 21.3% and 29.2% respectively for regional SA.

Age Structure

The major differences between the age structure of the Outback Communities Authority region and regional SA were:

22.9%

PARENTS AND HOMEBUILDERS

- A larger percentage of 'Parents and homebuilders' (22.9% compared to 17.8%)

19.4%

OLDER WORKERS

- A larger percentage of 'Older workers & pre-retirees' (19.4% compared to 14.6%)

14.6%

YOUNG WORKFORCE

- A larger percentage of 'Young workforce' (14.6% compared to 10.4%)

6.8%

SENIORS

- A smaller percentage of 'Seniors' (6.8% compared to 12.1%)

**Our
Outback**

**Your
Outback**

**One
Outback**