



Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2014 - 2016

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1 Executive Summary

Twelve actions have been identified for implementation by Central Desert Regional Council (CDRC) in the 2014 -16 period. These actions have been identified in consultation with a range of internal and external stakeholders and are broadly grouped into four areas; improving infrastructure, growing industry and employment, caring for the environment and strengthening communities. The twelve identified actions are:

1. Lobby for investment

Council will continue to be involved in the processes associated with securing funding for Economic development, tourism, other current and future capital plus ongoing maintenance of roads, housing and telecommunication infrastructure throughout the Council area.

2. Provide Power Water services on a commercial basis

Council aims to continue to work with Power Water to provide services on a commercial basis in communities throughout the region including infrastructure upgrades and the engagement of local staff to perform routine and emergency tasks.

3. Support Local Authorities and Community Plans

Council will champion the implementation of Local Authority initiatives currently being legislated by the NT Government. The integration opportunity with the Remote Jobs in Community Program (RJCP) and development of community plans enables Council, as a major employer in the region, to further facilitate economic development, tourism and jobs where resources are provided or can be generated.

4. Engage with Tourism Central Australia

Engage with Tourism Central Australia to promote The Outback Way and other potential tourism ventures.

5. Support Council's Indigenous Employment Policy

Continue to support the Council's Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy in all areas of operation. The RJCP actively supports Council's Indigenous Employment Policy within Region 25. The Central Desert Regional Council is the largest employer in the region covering positions in core and agency services municipal services, administration, aged care, Youth, sport and recreation.

The RJCP will also work closely sourcing other industry and employment opportunities in the North West Alice Region include pastoral, agricultural, construction, mining, public sector (NT and local government) community services (for example, aged care, childcare and health Workers), art centres and community stores.

6. Support local tourism initiatives

Council will support the current initiative to re open the Spotted Tiger Camping Facility on the Plenty Highway. The development of tourism activity at Eagle Beak will similarly be supported.

7. Support business investment across the Shire

Council will encourage and support investment across the region; particularly from the mining sector and new projects proposed by local residents. Council will work with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the Central Land Council (CLC) to ensure all potential investment and employment opportunities are investigated and optimised.

8. Work with stakeholders to promote sustainable practices

Council will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that a full range of sustainable practices are applied across all areas of operation. This will involve the utilisation of local people to facilitate Cultural Awareness training to staff and visitors. Council will support communities in the promotion of cultural events such as the Yuendumu Sports Weekend and the Lajamanu Festival.

As the regional economy grows there is an invaluable opportunity to implement sustainable practices. Future prosperity depends on our ability to manage and protect our environmental assets as we develop the region.

9. Support establishment of campgrounds / rest areas near communities

Council will encourage and support the establishment of campgrounds / rest areas near communities requesting such facilities. These micro businesses may include appropriate facilities and information for travellers.

The role and ambition of the RJCP aligns neatly with the development of campgrounds and rest areas. RJCP participants could have, as part of their participation obligations, the opportunity to engage in training and employment opportunities contributing to the installation of these areas.

10. Address disadvantage

Council will continue to work with government, private enterprise and local stakeholders to facilitate all measures that may alleviate the significant social and economic disadvantage experienced by residents.

11. Improve health outcomes

Central Desert Regional Council will foster partnerships to develop in kind and other resources to support improved community living & health outcomes. An improvement in health outcomes will facilitate economic participation and social engagement.

12. Explore affordable housing options

Council will explore affordable housing option development and building options during 2014. Council currently has two builders on staff and know that quality housing and living conditions are a prerequisite for healthy people and communities. Council will encourage the participation of residents in all community housing planning, construction and maintenance tasks.

The RJCP will have involvement with community housing infrastructure incorporating training and employment opportunities.

2 Background

The Central Desert Regional Council is located in the middle of the Northern Territory and covers an area of approximately 283,000 square kms. The Shire itself is relatively young as it was formed in 2008 through the amalgamation of a number of small Community Government Councils. Council has approximately 400 employees (including RJCP participants). Female

Employees comprise 49% (202) of the workforce while the Indigenous employees are 72% (294) of the workforce. Head office in Alice Springs employ 60 people with 13% (8) identifying as Indigenous

The Council is an elected body of twelve members who are elected for a three year term to carry out duties under the provisions of the Local Government Act and Regulations. Eleven Councillors are local Indigenous people. The President and a Deputy President are elected by the members of the Council. The Shire President, as well as being Chairman of Meetings, represents Council when it is not in session. Simply stated, Council is the decision and policy making body whilst Council staff are the means by which these decisions and policies are carried into effect.

Council is responsible for the delivery of a broad and unique range of services to their communities, with different communities within the region having their own priorities. These priorities are communicated to Council through Local Authorities in each community.

Council delivers a range of Agency, Commercial and other Council Services that contribute toward improving the level of facilities provided to communities.

Council plays a lead role in the economic development and promotion of Central Desert Regional Council communities and is charged with making the most of Council's assets to secure prosperity and jobs for the long-term future of the region.

Council has prepared this Economic Development Plan (EDTP) to support the success of the existing strategic action plan for the Central Desert Region economy and the Central Australian region more broadly. The existing Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy and Councillor Priority (Attachment A) documents have been utilised in the formulation of this plan.

The EDTP will provide guidance and reference for Council and key stakeholders in relation to economic development activities and projects. Council's Corporate Plan will act as the working arm of the EDTP and ensure specific actions in this plan are implemented subject to available resources.

The EDTP will also provide a clear and focussed direction to underpin and assist the delivery of the Central Australian Regional Economic Plan in partnership with key economic development bodies as well as the MacDonnell, Barkly and Alice Springs Town Council's; local government entities.

3 Purpose of Plan

This Economic Development and Tourism Plan outlines priorities and strategic actions that can be progressed by CDRC and a range of stakeholders over the next three years. It provides a high level framework for regional development in the CDRC Local Government Area, assisting all stakeholders to work towards shared outcomes.

The Plan provides clear direction for CDRC and can be used to inform the organisation's business planning.

The priorities and strategic actions identified in this plan will provide the initial focus of economic development activity in the period 2014 – 2016. To ensure the document continues to be relevant and accurate it will be updated annually.

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The EDTP will also provide a clear and focussed direction to underpin and assist the delivery of the Central Australian Regional Economic Plan in partnership with key economic development bodies as well as the MacDonnell, Barkly and Alice Springs Town Council's local government entities.

4 Policy Context

The Economic Development and Tourism Plan will outline the broad policy context for development in the CDRC communities and includes priorities and strategic actions. The following broad Priority Areas have been identified:

- A. Improving Infrastructure*
- B. Growing Industry and Employment*
- C. Caring for the Environment*
- D. Strengthening Communities*

This plan has been developed on the basis of consultation processes that extend over many years. It is a redevelopment of many existing documents. Feedback is invited through continuous communications undertaken by CDRC staff utilising their extensive networks. Reviews have allowed for consecutive improvements and participation of all stakeholders in this process is welcomed. A number of consultancies undertaken in recent years have also contributed to the robustness of the Plan.

CDRC consults with a wide range of stakeholders from across the region to identify issues and opportunities and to articulate priorities. To achieve our outcomes we need a multi-faceted community engagement strategy supported by Council, community members and staff.

CDRC consultation and engagement strategies have included:

- Collaborating with partner organisations;
- Visiting stakeholders across the region;
- Council member involvement in regional organisations and activities;
- Directors and Managers survey October 2013
- Attendance at regional and national events and workshops.
- Councillor Priority Ideas Forum
- Community Action Plan (CAP) consultations in 5 communities

It is important for CDRC to develop and maintain strong relationships across this spectrum of stakeholders. A particular emphasis is placed on consultation across the three tiers of government, as they are the key regional development service providers, and on broad regional representative bodies.

In addition to consultation, this plan is also informed by existing data, reports, plans, strategies and policies. This includes the Community Action Plan (CAP) recently undertaken by Council with the assistance from Matrix on Board. Consultation for CAP Plans included two rounds of meetings on site with a wide range of community members.

In this way the Economic Development and Tourism Plan benefits from the many consultations which supported these other research and planning processes. The Plan aims to build on this pool of information and on existing regional development initiatives. Our partners are the fundamental protagonists of regional development.

5 Priority Areas and Actions

A. Improving Infrastructure

There remains a widespread need for investment in infrastructure at the most basic level throughout the region. Some communities lack the simplest amenities, such as roads that allow for year-round access. Housing stock levels and ongoing maintenance remains a high priority in all communities. Costs are high and compromises may therefore be necessary.

However economic development, which is prioritised by all three tiers of government, must clearly be underpinned by a basic level of infrastructure.

Goals:

- New and improved road and housing infrastructure to support economic development and social connectivity, including ensuring safe access to communities
- Adequate and reliable power and water to meet future growth demands
- Improved investment in community services infrastructure, including mobile phone and broadband services.
- Stakeholder involvement in the development of long-term infrastructure plans

Key Actions

Action 1. Lobby for Investment

Target Date: Ongoing

Council will continue to be involved in the processes associated with securing funding for economic development, tourism and other current and future capital and ongoing maintenance of roads, housing and telecommunication infrastructure throughout the region.

Action 2. Power & Water Services

Target Date: 31 March 2014

Council aims to continue to work with Power Water to provide services on a commercial basis in communities throughout the region including infrastructure upgrades and the engagement of local staff to perform routine and emergency tasks. Economic development will be linked to Council's Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy. The renegotiation of current contracts with Power Water will be a priority as a commercial contract and will not be subsidised by Council.

Council notes the proposal for a power generation facility associated with a significant mining operation at Nolan's Bore. Reticulation options to the Ti Tree horticultural area should be considered as part of the evaluation process. Specific actions will be reviewed as the investment horizon advances.

Action 3. Support Local Authorities

Target Date: 30 May 2014

Council will champion the implementation of Local Authority initiatives currently being legislated by the NT Government. The integration opportunity with RJCP and development of community plans enables Council as a major employer to further facilitate economic development, tourism and jobs by supporting local enterprise and stimulating economic activity.

The CDRC area has critical infrastructure deficiencies. These are arguably the single biggest barrier to improving quality of life in the region. We believe that infrastructure investment will 'turbo charge' regional development.

B. Growing Industry and Employment

There has been considerable government enthusiasm around developing more sustainable economic models, particularly in remote indigenous communities. Despite the enthusiasm little economic growth and even less diversification can be seen on the ground. The reasons for this failure need to be understood and new, more effective strategies need to be developed as opportunities for employment are a fundamental indicator of the health of the region.

Goals:

- Education and training opportunities and outcomes which meet or exceed national standards
- Improved employment opportunities and workforce participation and reduced dependence on government support and welfare
- Business development and increased investment in the region, including new indigenous owned and/or operated business
- Focus on micro business that will support sustainable local communities

Key Actions

Action 4. Engage with Tourism

Target Date: Ongoing

Engage with Tourism Central Australia to promote The Outback Way and other potential tourism ventures.

Action 5. Support Indigenous Employment

Target Date: Ongoing

Continue to support the Council's Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy in all areas of operation.

The Remote Jobs in Community Program actively supports Councils Indigenous Employment Policy within Region 25. The Central Desert Regional Council is the largest employer in the region covering positions in core and agency services municipal services, administration, aged care, youth, sport and recreation.

The RJCP will also work closely with stakeholders in sourcing other industry and employment opportunities in the North West Alice Region include pastoral, agricultural, construction, mining, public sector (NT and local government) community services (for example, aged care, childcare and health Workers), art centres and community stores.

Action 6. Support Local Tourism Initiatives

Target Date: 31 December 2015

Council will support the current initiative to re open the Spotted Tiger Camping Facility on the Plenty Highway. The development of tourism activity at Eagle Beak will similarly be facilitated.

Action 7. Support Investment

Target Date: Ongoing

Council will encourage and support investment across the region; particularly from the mining sector and new projects proposed by local residents. Council will work with Indigenous Business Australia and the Central Land Council to ensure all potential investment and employment opportunities are investigated and optimised.

C. Caring for the Environment

The CDRC region is one of the most undeveloped regions in Australia. While this creates many challenges for us the relatively pristine nature of our landscape is also something Council places great value on. Economic and tourism development needs to occur in the context of protecting what is unique about our region, not least being the natural environment. Many initiatives are contributing to environmental outcomes. However, success in this area is dependent on our ability to understand that caring for the environment is not a discrete project; it must be a thread which runs through everything we do.

Goals:

- Implementation of sustainability principles throughout all regional development initiatives
- Investment in renewable energy projects and new technologies that support and celebrate the region's unique culture and history

Key Actions

Action 8. Ensure Sustainability

Target Date: Ongoing

Council will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that a full range of sustainable practices are applied across all areas of operation. This will involve the utilisation of local people to facilitate Cultural Awareness training to staff and visitors. Council will support communities in the promotion of cultural events such as the Yuendumu Sports Weekend and Lajamanu Festival.

Action 9. Develop Campgrounds / Rest Areas

Target Date: 31 December 2016

Council will encourage and support the establishment of campgrounds / rest areas near communities requesting such facilities. These micro businesses may include appropriate facilities and information for travellers.

The role and ambition of the RJCP would align neatly with the development of campgrounds and rest areas. RJCP participants would have, as part of their participation obligations, the opportunity to engage in training and employment opportunities contributing to the installation of these areas.

As the regional economy grows there is an invaluable opportunity to implement sustainable practices. Future prosperity depends on our ability to manage and protect our environmental assets as we develop the region.

D. Strengthening Communities

The Central Desert region faces significant demographic challenges. These include poor educational outcomes, a lack of employment opportunities and welfare dependence. These issues demand complex, coordinated and long-term strategies. Concurrently, however, there are also simple and more immediate opportunities to mitigate social and economic disadvantage and enhance community life.

While strengthening communities is often about infrastructure and services it is also fundamentally about people. Ultimately communities will always face challenges, building capacity and social capital gives communities the resilience to survive and to thrive in the face of adversity.

Goals:

- New and improved strategies to address social and economic disadvantage
- Improved housing availability and affordability
- Improved health and wellbeing of residents
- Increased partnerships between service providers, including a rationalisation of service delivery to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and better outcomes
- Increased community capacity and community pride, including greater participation in community decision making
- Support and celebrate the region's unique culture and history

Key Actions

Action 10. Address Disadvantage

Target Date: Ongoing

Council will continue to work with government, private enterprise and local stakeholders to facilitate all measures to alleviate the significant social and economic disadvantage experienced by residents.

Action 11. Improve Health Outcomes

Target Date: Ongoing

CDRC will develop explore partners to develop in kind and other resources to support improved community living & health outcomes. An improvement in health outcomes will facilitate economic participation and social engagement.

Action 12. Sustainable Housing

Target Date: 31 December 2014

Central Desert Regional Council will explore affordable housing option development and building options during 2014. Quality housing and living conditions are a prerequisite for health people and communities. Council will encourage the participation of residents in all community housing planning, construction and maintenance tasks.

CDRC communities represent a remarkable spectrum of social diversity. Many communities, particularly in more remote parts of the region, face profound structural and social challenges. It is important, however, not to neglect the needs of the region's major communities as progress in population centres will have a flow-on benefit for the wider region.

6. Conclusion

As the major employer in the region Council is in a unique position to support and implement appropriate Economic Development initiatives in this very remote region of Central Australia.

To do this Council must work with the widest range of stakeholders including all levels of government, mining companies, small independent businesses and all local people to facilitate activity that is economically and socially viable, profitable and sustainable.

This plan is an initial step on a journey to improve the viability of the region and improve the lives of its residents.

Central Desert Regional Council will implement the following twelve actions:

- Continue to be involved in the processes associated with securing funding for capital and ongoing maintenance of roads, housing and telecommunication infrastructure throughout the region.
- Work with Power Water to provide services in communities throughout the area including infrastructure upgrades and the engagement of local staff to perform routine and emergency tasks. The renegotiation of current contracts with Power Water will be a priority.
- Champion the implementation of Local Authority initiatives currently being legislated by the NT Government.
- Engage with Tourism Central Australia to promote The Outback Way and other potential tourism ventures.
- Support the Council's Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy in all areas of operation.
- Support the current initiative to re open the Spotted Tiger Camping Facility on the Plenty Highway. The development of facilities at the Eagle Beak outstation will similarly be facilitated.
- Encourage and support investment across the region; particularly from the mining sector and new projects proposed by local residents. Council will work with Indigenous Business Australia and the Central land Council to ensure all potential investment and employment opportunities are investigated and optimised.
- Work with all stakeholders to ensure that a full range of sustainable practices are applied across all areas of operation
- Support the establishment of a campground / rest area near Yuendumu and other interested communities including appropriate facilities and information for travellers.
- Work with government, private enterprise and local stakeholders to facilitate all measures to alleviate the significant social and economic disadvantage experienced by residents.

- Explore and develop partnerships to develop in kind and other resources to support improved community living & health outcomes.
- Pursue alternative housing construction methods and encourage the participation of residents in all community housing planning, construction and maintenance tasks.

These actions will be regularly reviewed and amended to ensure that progress is measured and alignment with broader Regional Development initiatives is maintained.

Council encourages feedback on all aspects of this plan and looks forward to working with all stakeholders and community members to bring mutual goals to fruition.

Please direct feedback to Mr Glenn Irvine, our Commercial and Planning Manager at glenn.irvine@centraldesert.nt.gov.au or call Central Desert Council office on (08) 8958 9500.

Attachment A CDSC Councilor Priority Ideas Forum

Top 10 Ideas for 2013 / 2014 April 2013

As a result of Councilor Workshop the following priority ideas were agreed by Councilors from 36 ideas highlighted by Councilors. All other ideas are also being considered.

The Actions and Comments are highlighted by the CEO and council staff to progress the Councilor ideas.

No	Recommended Ideas	Who	When	Status	Suggested CDSC Actions / Comments
1.	More Funding – to ensure Council is viable & can progress range of community enhancements	All	Ongoing	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed all Councilors will support request for reestablishment of NT Operational Grant at 2008 levels as core service currently not sustainable. In addition need more proactive approach to revenue generation and cost savings and reducing inefficiency.
2.	Improve Community Housing – Numbers of homes & renovations	DFC	Ongoing	To Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to obtain current review & profile per community to determine extent of issues and priorities. Need to brainstorm options & solutions with community & stakeholders. Need to review other social housing & ownership models. Need to review range of renovation issues & provide feedback.
3.	More Jobs – Private Business & Council - Create Business	DFC	March 2014	To Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will Explore options with community and stakeholders to set up Commercial Arm for Central Desert to support jobs. Also will explore not for profit social services agency and other options. Review other options. Council has applied for CDEP and will ensure better integrated approach to support Council services.
4.	More Aged Care Funding (Some gaps in service)	DC	Dec 2013	To Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review & determine gaps in service & options for new service. Discuss with Cr Martin.
5.	More support authority & responsibility for local boards	DFC	Dec 2013	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NT Review occurring. Support Local Boards to set priority projects for year. Community operational issues dealt with locally via SDC.

6.	Improve roads	DW	Mar 2014	In process	Workshop current plan with Crs & brainstorm other priorities with stakeholders. Ie Tanami Rd and also Outback Highway & other roads.
7.	Improved sports facilities & activities for young	DC/DW	Mar 2014	In Process	Build on current Youth Program where funding can be sought.
8.	Support community and families	DC	Mar 2014	To Do	Seek Cr feedback & funding for ideas and programs.
9.	CDSC listen to community and take action	DW/DFC	Mar 2014	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan annual community engagement & feedback forums per year. • Establish client request register per SDC in 3 months.
10.	Support young people to work in Night Patrol	DC	March 2014	To Do	Review options & clarify issue & solutions with Councilor. Confirm next steps & action & options to set up a Youth Patrol.