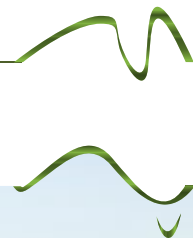


Coorow

Community Development Action Plan



July 2024

Foreword



***Coorow lies in fields of yellow and gold
Built by our forefathers struggle and toil
Their wives and children through heat and cold
We march to our future, yet salute the old***

The strength of Coorow is derived from its people. A variety of cultures and backgrounds have been thrown into a melting pot resulting in a population that is tolerant, respectful and caring.

We are a community that is built on agriculture and the businesses and services needed to support that industry. Today there is a diverse range of interests with strong sporting clubs, a thriving school, active council and hardworking service organisations.

Today we face many new challenges as

we move forward. Retaining and growing the population, enticing our young people to make a future here as well as encouraging new trades and business to town. We need to continue to be mindful and meet the challenges of sustainable land management and a warming, drying climate.

We have the people with the desire to see Coorow grow and prosper into the future, people with the passion to move ahead and challenge others to come along.

We are ready now.

Acknowledgements



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The financial contributions of the Mid West Development Commission during the early stages of the program are also greatly appreciated.

This Plan also acknowledges the traditional owners of this land and their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and to their elders both past, present and emerging.

Our Story

Our energetic community of Coorow is in the Mid-West region of Western Australia, 264 km north of Perth.

Coorow straddles two major geological regions: the Yilgarn Craton to the east and the Perth Basin to the west. This location has shaped the development of agriculture in the district with the native vegetation associated with the first clearing being Eucalypt Woodlands of Salmon Gum, Gimlet, Red Morrell and York Gum & Jam that grew on the heavy and fertile soils of the Yilgarn Craton to the east and many years later the 'new land' releases to the west on soils of the Perth Basin associated with Shrublands and Heath.

Two Aboriginal groups, the Yamaji and the Nyoongar people, within which various language groups exist (including the Yued, Taylor, Widi Binyardi, Badamia, Widi, Amangu and Arnold Franks) had occupied the Coorow district and beyond for thousands of years before the arrival of the first European settlers.

The name Coorow is derived from the Aboriginal name of a nearby spring (first recorded in 1872). The meaning of the name may be from the word curro, which is the Aboriginal name for a variety of portulaca, or another source give it as 'many mists'.

William and Sarah Long and family were the first European settlers in Coorow, arriving in 1862. William became a sandalwood cutter and mail contractor until the 1880's when he was classed as a grazier, running sheep and breeding horses as remounts for the British Army in India.

In 1867 the Benedictine monk, Rosendo Salvado was made the Abbot of New Norcia Monastery. He sent his monks out to dig wells to water their stock from anywhere between Wyening near Bolgart and the Irwin River in the north, including the Coorow area where some of the monks' wells can still be found.

The Midland Railway line reached Coorow in 1891. In return for building the railway line, the Midland Railway Company was granted over three million acres of land, including a significant portion of Coorow and most of Waddy Forest (East Coorow). The Company developed 'Ready-Made Farms', which were each about 400 acres in size, partially cleared of virgin bush, fenced and contained a weatherboard house, rainwater tank and dam. The first 'Ready-Made Farm' was purchased in 1911. Further land at Waddy Forest was opened for purchase by the Midland Railway Company in 1921. This land was made available to new settlers and soldiers returning from World War 1.

The townsite of Coorow was gazetted in 1893 and experienced rapid growth during the 1920's as a productive wheat and sheep farming region. 1932, the Wheat Pool of Western Australia established two grain elevators, each fitted with an engine and installed at the Coorow railway siding. In 1962, Coorow became a Shire with its western boundary at the coast.

Coorow has a long history of community enterprise activity beginning with the North Midlands Co-operative in 1920. Besides selling groceries, the Co-op was agent for Westralian Farmers' Cooperative Ltd, Vacuum Oil Company and Ford Motor Company. The North Midlands Co-op, built in 1928 and funded by the community still stands in the main street of Coorow.

1999 saw the creation of the CCLI (Coorow Community Land Inc) which subsequently purchased the Coorow Farm, Coorow Hotel Barracks and Roadhouse.

Today, the townsite of Coorow has a population of 250 persons. Agriculture remains the dominant industry, followed closely by tourism. Its stunning wildflower displays, and significant heritage buildings and collections provide a strong attraction.

Our Vision

A Vision Statement is a vivid description of what our community aspires to become, without its current barriers, but tied to what we value as a community.

The statement below is our intended outcome:

A united, welcoming, and resilient community, caring for our citizens and environment, where heritage, growth and lifestyle proudly combine

Our Goals

Community goals are broad statements of intent that direct our efforts towards accomplishing our vision in line with our guiding principles.

Below are the six community goals which guide our community aspirations, namely -

- To provide a safe and attractive living and working environment that will attract skilled people, families and new businesses to help grow our population base.
- To create an environment where our young people feel involved, supported and empowered, and will consider staying in / returning to our community for work, business, family and lifestyle opportunities.
- To preserve, maintain and strengthen our community assets, heritage and natural environment.
- To actively promote and showcase our community as a great place to stop, stay, experience, and reside.
- To support, promote and celebrate active community participation and volunteerism.
- To retain strong sporting and cultural clubs, competitions, facilities, and traditions.



Our Guiding Values

Guiding values are the fundamental, moral, and ethical beliefs that we share as a community. They represent core principles and capture what our community considers important. They help foster trust, respect, collaboration, and unity.

The following five guiding values and attitudes provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives, namely –

- **Community Pride & Connection** - ensuring all our residents experience community connection, inclusion, and a sense of pride in our history, uniqueness, achievements, structures, and future.
- **Active Citizenship** - fostering attitudes and behaviours that encourage greater community engagement, volunteerism and ownership.
- **Resilience** - maintaining attitudes and behaviours to deal with adversity and change.
- **Respect for Heritage and Environment** - valuing our heritage and culture, and our unique natural and built environment.
- **Safety** - maintaining high levels of community safety, low crime rate and wellbeing.

Our Challenges

Like many small inland rural communities, our community needs to respond creatively to a series of demographic, social, economic and environmental challenges. These issues include:

- An ageing and declining population, contributing to the weakening of social networks and community cohesion.
- Volunteer fatigue and declining numbers and dependence on a few pro-active community members.
- Lack of community action group.
- Lack of diversity of local employment opportunities.
- Community appearance- bland look of our mainstreet and lack of appeal.
- Business loss and service gaps.
- Climate change.
- Attraction and retention of suitably qualified staff.
- Decline in number of community gatherings and special events.
- Lack of childcare services.
- Lack of child and youth activities.
- Limited services support and allied health support.
- Transport costs and logistics.
- Time / distance from other markets and suppliers.
- Limited visitor infrastructure and attraction.
- Lack of rental and short-term worker accommodation.
- Shortage of skilled labour.
- Poor connectivity and telecommunications infrastructure and services.



Our Assets

People

Volunteers including emergency service workers, community leaders, councillors, CWA members, sporting club leaders & sports players, Playgroup members, Wildlife Carers, P&C, Ambulance volunteers, Heritage Group members, craft group members

Retail workers, teachers, publican, tradespeople, farmers, Shire workers

Weekly doctor visits, chiropractor visits, North Midlands Health Service Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) visits

Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

Historic assets - Koobabbie Precinct, Main Street precinct, Waddy Forest Hall, Old Co-op building, RSL Hall, CWA building, art deco hotel, interpretative signage, Community Farm, community owned hotel.

Coorow Town Hall, Community Resource Centre and Library, Churches x 2

Parks, reserves, Bart Mailey Memorial Wildflower Walk, drive trails

Churches - Uniting & Catholic

Physical

Town water supply (Water Corporation supplies Coorow through the Regional Town Water Supply), Power supply infrastructure, Town Park, Rotary Park and dog park, park next to Hall, Maley Park, skate park, railway reserve, remnant bushland

Aquatic Centre, Maley Park recreation centre, caravan park, Town Hall, Coorow Hotel, ovals (football & hockey), golf course, bowling club, netball courts

Wildflowers, Community Farm

Heritage buildings, railway barracks, Liebe Sheds, old swimming pool, newly created workspaces, Coorow Aquatic Centre (new pool)

Our Assets

Economic

Retail Businesses – hardware, fuel outlet, supermarket, post office and mail run service, café

Accommodation Businesses – Coorow Hotel, Barracks, Caravan Park, overnight and short-term accommodation

Personal Businesses – jeweller, nail artist

School Bus services

Agricultural Businesses – mechanical, transport x 2, seed works, Elders, Nutrien, CBH

Trade Businesses – electrician, builders, mechanic, carpenter

Community Resource Centre

Farming community, Community Farm and funding program

Tourism assets

Social Networks

Sporting Clubs – football, netball, hockey, bowls, golf, tennis, swimming

Heritage Group

CWA

P&C, Playgroup, Run Riot, Jungle Gym.

Coorow Christmas Tree, Waddy Forest Christmas Tree

Churches – Uniting & Catholic

Institutions

Shire of Coorow

Coorow Primary School

Community Resource Centre

Medical centres, aged housing

Visiting health services – child health nurse, community nurse, chiropractor, workers employed with North Midlands Health Service Commonwealth Support Program (CHSP)

Police

St Johns Ambulance, Bush Fire Brigade

Coorow Community Land Inc (CCLI)





Our Strategies & Actions

Theme One

A Connected, Friendly & Safe Community

ACTIONS

1

1. Evolve the current Community Builders Team into a **Coorow Town Team**, with expanded membership from interested residents, to undertake coordination of projects 2- 6, and become the basis of a local community action group.

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

2. To develop and instigate a **calendar of special events that build community connection and town pride.**

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

3. Form a **Childcare Task Team** to explore development of a business case to attract and maintain childcare services.

Timeframe: Short Term

4. Develop and utilise **mechanisms for continual community feedback and idea generation-**

- A 'travelling Ideas Board' at main events.
- An 'Ideas Box' at the Shire / local clubs / main street, regular meet ups.
- Annual 'Community Opportunities Workshop (C.O.W.)'

Timeframe: Immediate term and ongoing

5. In partnership with the local and neighbouring Shires, identify funding for, and maintain **grant writer** to assist with finding and submitting relevant funding applications to assist community development initiatives of a local as well as regional nature.

Already in place

6. Investigate ways to **enhance local internet connection, reliability and speed** and introduce WIFI within the main streets.

Timeframe: Medium Term

LEAD GROUP

Coorow Community Builders Team / Coorow Town Team
Shire of Coorow
Coorow Playgroup
CRC
Coorow Shire Councillors

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Coorow sporting and cultural groups
Shire funding- Shire Community Grants Program & Quick Grant Program
TTM
CWA
Community Farm
Neighbouring Shires
Coorow Playgroup

DoC grants
KAB
RA
VWA
CBHIF
FRRR
Lotterywest
Healthways

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Two

Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction

ACTIONS



1. Form the **Coorow Business Strategy Task Team** to implement the following economic and employment projects below

Timeframe: Immediate

2. With support from the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MWCCI) and neighbouring LGAs, create a **North Midlands Business Network** to enhance networking, information sharing, business advocacy, business capacity and local business opportunities.

Timeframe: Short Term

3. With Shire, develop and implement an **Coorow Economic Development Plan**.

Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing

4. Utilise the BOI '**Business Expansion and Retention Program (B.E.A.R.) Program**' set of tools to undertake a structured set of conversations with local businesses to ascertain what helps and hinders doing business in Coorow, and their ideas to improve the business environment (a similar initiative happened in Coorow in 1998)

Timeframe: Medium term

5. Advocate to the Shire of Coorow to create a '**Business Attraction Grant Program**', similar to the business grant program in Pingelly- the 'Pingelly Industry Attraction Programme' which aims to attract new businesses and help expand existing businesses.

Timeframe: Immediate

6. Explore feasibility and then promote **new business opportunities including weekend café / coffee shop and key trades**.

Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing

7. Explore the **development of affordable industrial land** to support business growth within manufacturing and engineering services, and other trade areas as identified.

Timeframe: Medium Term and Ongoing

8. Explore pathways to enhance **apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities** for local young people.

Timeframe: Medium Term and Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Changemakers Town Team

Shire of Three Springs

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

CRC
Coorow Town Team
MWDC- RED Grants
MWCCI
Jobs and Skills WA

Local businesses /
neighbouring Shire businesses
RDAMWG
Growing Regions Program
FRRR
BOI

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Three

Housing & Accommodation Initiatives

ACTIONS

3

1. Form **Housing and Accommodation Task Team** to increase the availability of family, worker and visitor dwellings and properties.

Timeframe: Immediate

2. Undertake **audit of existing land and housing availability** including on farms and understand current progress of the **Shire's investigation related to expanding housing stock.**

Timeframe: Immediate

3. Undertake **research into housing, land, property investment and subdivision development initiatives** happening in other small rural communities.

Timeframe: Immediate to Short Term

4. Explore **housing development resourcing options**, especially state government funding.

Timeframe: Immediate to Short Term

5. Develop and implement a **Housing and Accommodation Community-Driven Strategy** that encompasses family, short term worker and visitor housing and accommodation options.

Timeframe: Medium Term and Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Housing and Accommodation Task Team
Shire of Coorow
Community Farm

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

CRC
Coorow Town Team
DoC
DPLH
MWDC - RED Grants
RDAMWG



Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Four

Enhancement of Child & Youth Development Opportunities

ACTIONS



1. Undertake an **audit of existing child / youth facilities** to determine the need and capacity to renew or upgrade in order to increase usage eg playground (shade, fenced, maintained), skate park.

Timeframe: Immediate

2. Utilise **WA Youth Week** to grow awareness of youth contribution, leadership and instigate new local youth activities.

Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing

3. Explore the introduction, encouragement of **sporting, the arts and culturally diverse activities**.

Timeframe: Short Term

4. Explore the **creation of a BMX track and motor cross track**.

Timeframe: Medium Term

5. Create more **opportunities to regularly hear our youth voices**.

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

6. Identify and utilise a range of local, regional, state and national programs to connect Coorow young people with **leadership development opportunities**.

Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing

7. Maintain **regular contact with Coorow young people who have moved away** reminding them of current lifestyle, employment and business, and utilising special events and school and sporting reunions to invite them back.

Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Shire of Coorow
Coorow Town Team
Coorow Primary School
Coorow Playgroup
CRC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Shire funding – ‘Youth Professional Development Program’
Coorow sporting and cultural groups
DLGSC and their funding including CSRFF
Coorow Playgroup
DoC - youth grants
CBHIF
Lotterywest
Healthways
RA
CRC

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Five

Development of Local Tourism Potential

ACTIONS



1. Form a **Town Team Beautification Task Team** with a view to develop and implement the following actions to reinvigorate the local area and diversify its offerings.
 - a. Improve town entrances on **Midlands Road**.
 - b. Revitalise landscaping of the **Railway Reserve**.
 - c. Improve **public toilet lighting**.
 - d. Improve the entrance to **Maley Park**.
 - e. Explore options for utilisation of **Co-op building as an art gallery space**
 - f. Hold an annual **Keep Coorow Beautiful** event, as part of the Keep Australia Beautiful program.
 - g. Enter **KAB Annual 'Tidy towns' Awards**.
 - h. Undertake an audit of **town infrastructure and public facilities** including signs, seating, garden beds, nature strips, planter boxes, and heritage features to identify areas in need of further beautification.
 - i. Review **Caravan Park** in terms of possible enhancements.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

2. Form a **Signature Community Event Task Team** to-
 - a. **Review previous community events** for guidance and Shire of Coorow Economic Development Plan
 - b. Convene community event to **contribute ideas and opinions** and buy in, expanding on the themes – car or motorcycle rally / pioneers get together.
 - c. Determine event, budget, program content, timing and potential stakeholders.
 - d. Identify and **secure funding / sponsorship**.
 - e. **Implement.**
 - f. **Review.**

Timeframe: Short term

LEAD GROUP

**Coorow Town Team
Signature Community Event Task Team
Shire of Coorow**

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**MWDC
Community Farm
CWA
TTM 'Streets Alive Program'
Lotterywest
Healthways
RDAMWG
CBHIF**

**RED Grants
KAB
RA
RAC 'Connecting Communities Fund'
TWA
AGORTO**

Abbreviations

AGORTO	Australia's Golden Outback Regional Tourism Organisation
BOI	Bank of I.D.E.A.S.
CBH	Co-operative Bulk Handling
CBHIF	Co-operative Bulk Handling Investment Fund
CCLI	Coorow Community Land Inc
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Program
CSREE	Community Sporting & Recreational Facilities Fund of DLGSC
CGA	Community Gardens Australia
CRC	Community Resource Centre
CWA	Country Women's Association
DFES	WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services
DLGSC	WA Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries
DPHL	WA Department of Planning, Heritage and Lands
DPIRD	WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
DoC	Department of Communities
FRRR	Foundation for Regional and Renewal Renewal
KAB	Keep Australia Beautiful WA
MWCCI	Mid West Chamber of Commerce
MWDC	Mid West Development Commission
NMP	North Midlands Project
RA	Rural Aid
RAC	Royal Automobile Club
RED Grants	Regional Economic Development Grants of MWDC
RDAMWG	Regional Development Australia – Mid West and Gascoyne
TTM	Town Team Movement
TWA	Tourism Western Australia
VWA	Volunteering WA
YSRC	Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation



Coorow

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

