OCA: LEIGH CREEK TOWN PLAN: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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influences

connect create contribute

BACKGROUND

In late 2020 the Government approved a process for the Outback Communities Authority (OCA) to work with the Leigh Creek and northern Flinders Ranges Community to identify options for an improved Governance arrangement for Leigh Creek.

From February – May 2022, Innovative Influences undertook an engagement process with the Leigh Creek and northern Flinders Ranges Community on what a future Leigh Creek will look like, how it is governed or managed and the desired levels of service required to support Leigh Creek. Included within the deliverables was a conversation on how these services will be paid for through the introduction of a Community Contribution Scheme (CCS).

Much has happened since then and a second round of community engagement has been undertaken with a focus on creating and revitalising public spaces that are important to the social, cultural and economic life of Leigh Creek.

This second round of engagement included two community workshops (face-to-face), a Town Walk activity and Community BBQ.

The sessions focused on bringing people together, sharing of information and creating genuine opportunities for stakeholder input on:

- A vision for the newly created public recreational space
- Town signage
- The desired future use of community assets
- How Leigh Creek community groups could be structured to improve collaboration and impact

This report provides a high-level summary of the results and key findings arising from this second consultation process. Overall the engagement process was viewed by participants positively with most participants indicating strong agreement with the following statements.

- The workshop format worked well for me.
- I was able to share my views.
- I have a better understanding of the community's views.
- I am confident that the ideas generated will be implemented.

The following table outlines the activities delivered through the engagement process.

Date	Activity	Audience	timing	Number of people
Saturday 7 October	Community Workshop	Open	Afternoon	12
Saturday 7 October	Town Walk	Open	Late afternoon	6
Saturday 7 October	Community BBQ	Open	Early evening	14
Saturday 7 October	Community Workshop	Open	Evening	12

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Hopes	Concerns
• Creative ideas, good brainstorming • For a cohesive community working towards a collective future • Get a clearer vision of the future of Leigh Creek • Hope we can all work together to achieve our goals of the town/tourism • Future vision • We can create a vibrant community precinct • Hope for a better Leigh Creek • Hope to see that we will get goals that can be achieved for Leigh Creek • That all falls into place • Growth • Understanding information and growth for the town • Growth for the town • Community spirit • To maintain an ambulance service • Efficient workshop with fast talking and many ideas	• Concern that we do not have enough staff/money to do our vision/expectations • That not all pull together • Expansion of the town if need be • Execution of ideas • Realistic goals and funds to undertake vision • Only a very small portion of the community in attendance today. • Political interference • Not getting anything out of this • Financial constraints so good ideas might not be implemented • That if people don't volunteer the community won't be resilient • Lack of participation from community • All the litter. Not a lot of Adnyamathanha people here
What has changed over past 18 months?	
• Home ownership • Morale has increased • Houses have changed colour • Township is smaller • Demolition complete • Supermarket upgraded • Aerodrome upgraded • Town is busier – tourists using public spaces • Caravan park has moved • More gardening happening • Regular community events – car boot sales, dinners, Christmas pageant	• Resident and Ratepayers Association formed • The pool has gone • Community pride has increased • Private ownership of Rec Centre • Upgrade of outdoor recreation space – pump track • New community members • Town services yard has been sold • New medical clinic has been funded with construction imminent
Community Hall Future Use	
• Training/Skills Centre • Youth nights • Community market/carboot sale • Bingo/Trivia nights • Community dinners • Table tennis/pool table/darts • Agency use/rent • Yoga/meditation/pilates	• Playgroups (mums and bubs) • Photography club • Karaoke night • Community babysitting/creche • Community ball/book ball • Art/creative club • Movie night • Control centre

Visitor Information Outlet

- Gym – micro business
- Learning Centre (interactive)
- Laundromat
- Employment information/Upskill centre
- Arts and crafts centre
- Art Gallery
- Dog washing auto ATM (coin in, water and eco soap out, at dog park/oval)
- Dog training group (trainer visits once a month??)
- Multi-function rotating space (so it could be a pop up art gallery/learning centre)
- Business opportunity
  - Garden centre
  - Hardware Store
  - Coffee shop (honour system)
- Tourist info
- Hairdresser (once a month to be sustainable)
- Opp shop
- Clothes swap
- Community repairs/workshop
- Animal rescue sanctuary (oval?)

Recreational Hub

The community identified a range of infrastructure needs to enhance the recreational hub functionality, aesthetic and service provision.

- Town map and information board
- Large vehicle carparking (including coaches, campervans, camper trailers and caravans
- RV dump facilities
- Fresh water station for recreational vehicles (user pays facility)
- Additional day visitor facilities – picnic tables, benches
- Drinking fountain + dog drinking bowl
- Dog wash station (user pays facility)
- Bridge/improved pathway from existing BBQ area to playground (concerns over uneven rocky path)
- Culture park/memorial garden
- Native garden
- Community garden
- Walking trail
- Improved lighting throughout area
- Barista/Food van site (water/power access)
- Baseball pitch (on oval)
- Small pool

Town Entrance

There was strong support for the town entrance signage located on The Outback Highway to be upgraded and visually enhanced to make a more impactful statement of the town's presence.

In addition to the town entrance statement, many participants indicated a desire for an Information Bay to be developed. Suggestions for its location varied but included:

- Pullover area designated on Black Oak Drive east of Leigh Creek South Motors.
- Pullover area incorporated into the recreational hub area with clear directional signage leading visitors from The Outback Highway to the Information Bay.

Information Bay signage to incorporate

- Town map
- 'You are here' location
- Direction and distance to neighbouring towns/attractions

Signage

A range of signage was identified for development and/or upgrade. These formed a mix of directional and destination signage along with some interpretive signage.
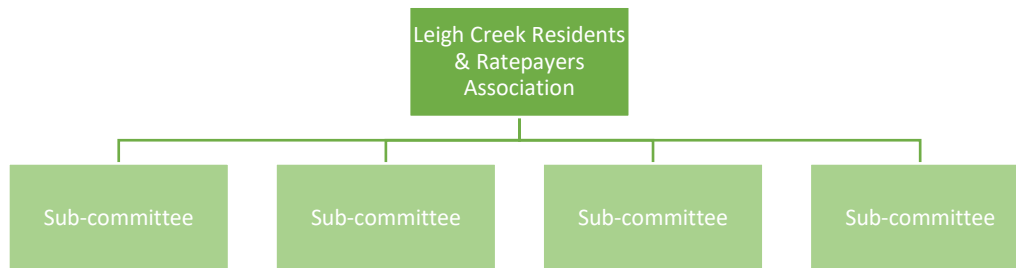
- Supermarket
- Post office
- Laundromat
- Community hall
- Tavern
- Resort
- Medical clinic
- Toilets
- BBQ/Picnic tables
- Playground

- Library
- School/Preschool
- Recycling centre
- Caravan Park
- Dog park
- Long vehicle parking
- RV dumpsite & potable water
- Walking and bike trails (trail head, interpretive & directional)
- No through road signage

Community Governance Structure – Pros & Cons

Current groups

- LCRRA
- ALACC
- LCPA
- LC Action Group (Christmas Pageant)
- Dog park group

- Archery
- Table Tennis
- Friends of Cemetery
- LC Historic Society
- Tennis

Proposed Community Group Governance Structure

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                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │ Leigh Creek Residents│
                    │    & Ratepayers      │
                    │    Association       │
                    └──────────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┬─────────┴──────┬──────────────┐
   ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐
   │Sub-committee│ │Sub-committee│ │Sub-committee│ │Sub-committee│
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Pros	Cons
• Formalising informal groups • Gets rid of red tape • Reducing competing • Transparency funding/money • Keeps groups democratic and fair • Accountability • Rate payers committee already structured to run, funds, history etc	• Checks and balance could be harder to enforce for smaller sub-groups • Community involvement at a lower level • Funding • Volunteer

Working together

- Volunteers – cleaning the town, gardening, sweeping the streets
- Committee groups
- School children
- Social activities/events
- Fortnightly community meetings (followed by Bingo Night)
- What's on in Leigh Creek?
- What we need?
- Who can volunteer?
- Engage school children into community activities through school educators

Who is missing from the consultation?

- Visiting service providers (NDIS, Aged care)
- Business owners
- Other emergency services
- Traditional Owners/First Nations people
- Newrizer (fertiliser company)
- Teenagers and young people
- Non-integrated members of community

What has been a key outcome from the workshops

- Need more sessions like this feel more informed
- Positivity
- On track with our previous vision
- Better understanding of committee's and grants etc
- Being more positive that the community might come together
- Positive seeds being sown
- Amazed at the journey we have already travelled and positive about our future
- Positive ideas and recognise some areas to improve
- Positivity
- Open up to new ideas
- Getting more people involved
- Positivity
- Hope for the future
- Meeting more people in the community
- Sense of community spirit
- Progress towards vision
- Expansion of good ideas for town
- Ideas

KEY FINDINGS

VISION for the FUTURE of LEIGH CREEK

The following vision was presented to the community. It reflects the vision elements and sentiments expressed by the community during the first round of engagement activities in 2022. The community continued to provide strong support for this vision.

> *Leigh Creek is an engaged, self-sustaining community that celebrates diversity and acknowledges its history, maintains a vibrant retail precinct and flourishing tourism sector that brings increased employment and business opportunities, and supports a quality of life that embraces wellbeing and creates a sense of belonging.*

COMMUNITY HALL

- The Community Hall (old Church building) was predominantly viewed as a shared space where community members could come together for social and leisure activities.

- It could provide a 'home' for community interest groups e.g., photography club.

VISITOR INFORMATION OUTLET

- Most suggestions for the VIO followed a business or enterprise theme where the centre provided spaces for micro-businesses and/or pop-up ventures with suggestions including a garden centre, hardware coffee shop and laundromat.
- Employment and training/learning opportunities were also considered potential uses for the outlet as was the provision of visitor information.
- Additionally, there was strong support for the outlet to be utilised as an Art Gallery/ Arts and Craft hub.
- Important to note is that discussions did not confine the VIO to being owned or run by the community/ ratepayers – it needs to operate as a viable business.

RECREATION HUB

- The community identified a range of infrastructure needs to enhance the recreational hub functionality, aesthetic and service provision.
- Visitor infrastructure was the key theme for development with an aim to provide an attractive environment for free-independent-travellers to relax, replenish water suppliers, manage waste and learn about the town's services and features.
- Improvements to landscaping including native, community and memorial gardens were well supported.
- Notwithstanding the focus on visitors, there was a strong desire to create a welcoming environment for residents that supported community connection and wellbeing.

SIGNAGE

- A range of signage was identified for development and/or upgrade. These formed a mix of directional and destination signage along with some interpretive signage
- There was strong support for the town entrance signage located on The Outback Highway to be upgraded and visually enhanced to make a more impactful statement of the town's presence.
- In addition to the town entrance statement, many participants indicated a desire for an Information Bay to be developed.

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

- There are several groups already in existence in Leigh Creek with many shared memberships.
- The identified benefits of adopting a holistic governance framework for community groups included improved transparency and accountability and a reduction in duplication and redtape.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

This engagement process has focused attention on the community's desired town assets and enhancements. Overwhelming, the feedback has been realistic and consistent amongst community participants.

In common with the community workshops held earlier in the year, many ideas were generated and discussed. The following strategies and actions fall logically out of these findings and will require additional investigation and funding to bring them to fruition. They are shared to generate further discussion.

RECREATION HUB

❖ Development of a Town Structure Plan to guide and prioritise improvement to the built environs of the township incorporating visitor day facilities, RV infrastructure, Electric Vehicle charging and town signage. Preparation of a project brief will be the first step prior to engaging relevant expertise to undertake the planning process. Following the plan's development, funding opportunities will need to be pursued to support the plan's implementation.

TOWN SIGNAGE

❖ Town signage is a crucial part of creating a positive and consistent visitor experience, and to directing both locals and visitors throughout the town. The development of a Town Signage Strategy that delivers improved tourism and wayfinding signage will assist the development of a strong brand identity for Leigh Creek Township. This strategy could be included in the Town Structure Plan project brief.

GOVERNANCE

❖ Transition of existing community groups into a hierarchical Governance Framework with LCRRA acting as the primary community association and other groups acting as sub-committees. This will support existing and emerging community groups to improve overall governance and collaboration, while enhancing grant funding success and reducing duplication and administration overheads.

❖ As part of this transition an investment in leadership and governance capacity building across the community will support the successful operation of the new Governance framework.

❖ Pursuing funding opportunities that can support the above objectives is a key first step.

RAW DATA