



# ANDAMOOKA TOWN AND COMMUNITY PLAN

**2024 – 2027**

Presented for adoption AGM, December 2024.

Adopted:

Full discussion version.

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## About Us

### Association details

<b>Business name</b>	Andamooka Progress & Opal Miners Association Inc Operating as: APOMA
<b>Date incorporated</b>	2/03/1960
<b>State incorporated in</b>	South Australia
<b>Australian business number (ABN)</b>	63 854 296 751
<b>Structure</b>	Not-for-profit community association. Location Status: Remote – Out of Areas
<b>Licences and permits</b> Australian, state and local.	Regulations, compliances and registrations are met as required.

### Contact details

<b>Name</b>	The Secretary
<b>Phone</b>	0477 184 485
<b>Email</b>	secretary@apoma.com.au
<b>Address</b>	Andamooka Town Office, Lot 281 School Road Andamooka
<b>Postal Address</b>	APOMA, PO Box 246, Andamooka SA 5722

### Online and social media details

	<b>Address/details</b>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.andamooka.sa.au">www.andamooka.sa.au</a> (currently under reconstruction)
<b>Facebook</b>	AndamookaHub

### Associated APOMA community groups

Andamooka Community Health & Wellness Advocacy Group (ACHWAG)

Andamooka Lapidary Group

Andamooka Arts Collective

Andamooka Events Planning Group

Andamooka Projects Group

Andamooka Recreation & Fitness Group

Andamooka Opal Miners Group

Andamooka Youth, Children & Families Group

Andamooka Legends Heritage & History Group

# Andamooka Town & Community Plan

## Plan summary

This community Plan is the third in a series of Andamooka town and community management and development plans designed to work with community to progress Andamooka township into a vibrant and resilient future, in sync with the needs, expectations and aspirations of the residents, business sector, community groups and visitors to Andamooka.

Challenges in achieving these outcomes relate primarily to the availability of significant funding to match perceived priorities of the community. Funding in turn is reliant on the focus at the time of government funding bodies, private funding organisations and both State and Federal governments, which means that funding won does not necessarily fall in line with the preferred order of priorities, and at times may simply present an opportunity for something completely out of left field, which when made available is well supported by community.

The benefit of having a forward-looking town and community plan with current determined ideas and priorities, underpinned by clear aims and objectives, is that this provides a dynamic blueprint from which to work and to also apply to new directions and opportunities as they arise, giving us a vital tool when seeking and applying for funding or support.

This approach has been progressively applied across the past decade working with:

- **The APOMA Management Plan 2016-19 – creating a foundation.** This plan was aimed at creating a sound platform from which to progress development of the town and community. It was about putting in place well-supported governance, undertaking broad analysis and updating the constitution and other key documents, reviewing and updating assets and insurances, compliances and registrations, policies and procedures, and working in consultation with community about development and services to establish a fresh direction forward. Primary aims and outcomes for this Plan were achieved by the end of 2018.
- **Andamooka Town & Community Plan 2019-23 – was about using that foundation** for development of infrastructure to provide for community identified needs. Aims were to upgrade existing facilities and to construct new structures to provide for community recreation, skill building, small business, enterprise and wealth building, and critically, to develop a web of community programs and activities which would benefit from achievement of these aims, and essential to connectivity, wellbeing, and to lifting the quality of life for the residents of Andamooka.

This Plan rode through the ups and downs of the Covid pandemic, which presented significant new funding opportunities for infrastructure development, but conversely presented challenges to the dynamics of planning and construction, so the Plan was extended to carry through to the end of 2024 as life took on a post Covid new normal. This in turn presented the need for:

- facing the challenge of working within and finding solutions around, changes to vital community funding, programs and services, and cost rises in materials and consumables,
- recognising significant changes to demographics and services within the town and community,
- simultaneously working in sync with the new OCA approach to regional planning,

all of which required on-going community consultation, offering community members and groups a variety of opportunities to add their input towards the next stage of the Plan.

- **Andamooka Town & Community Plan 24-27** – put for adoption in December 2024 is about building upon the existing infrastructure and programs developing or emerging across the previous five years, with an aim to create a fresh new profile for the Town from which to progress further development around facilities and visitor attractions, expand upon programs and activities, lift existing business operations and encourage new business opportunities, also to build networks that will connect, promote and inform, all aimed to revitalise the town and community.

Andamooka's history, culture and genuineness is its greatest asset. But how does the community see ourselves now? With so much change within demographics, *it is now about perspectives*, respecting and incorporating new views and ideas, whilst maintaining the historic spirit and culture of the town.

- Andamooka's demographic is changing, with many new residents without historic links to Andamooka making the town their home. Each come with different expectations and intentions, and some have made a significant impact on the town for a variety of reasons.
- Many long-term residents resist change to 'the way it was'. Others agree there is room for tradition alongside change in a place that celebrates history, tolerance and culture.
- Some residents old or new, see a future for more industry within the town and benefits of becoming part of the expanding mining industry across the region.
- Many want to see more tourist attractions and more luxury level facilities and services. Some say this will change what Andamooka is all about.
- Others see Andamooka as being promoted as a playground for those seeking relief, and escape from the grind of regional industry, major towns, or crowded, regulated lifestyles.
- Some see Andamooka as a refuge, a safe place where community and connection is paramount, and some view the town as a friendly community in which to raise their families. Others say the town does not offer enough to attract new residents.
- The arts have always been an ingrained and celebrated culture within the town and community, and many residents old and new support building upon the Arts to brand Andamooka as a primary outback arts centre.
- Many are fearful that by increasing population and new development, there will be less respect for and loss of environment, flora, fauna and Andamooka's unspoilt surroundings, seeing this as a threat to our daily close encounters and connections with this. But others see opportunities for the community to work together towards conserving, preserving, revitalising and re-establishing the natural environment within and around local development.

**So the primary challenge is, can we find a balance.** Each of these perspectives has its merits and warranted concerns. *More than ever our town and community plan will need to be dynamic enough to flex and change as the town progresses into the future*, but the most important factor is for community to provide on-going input to ensure that the Plan continues to work with and for the community over the duration, and always, with our collective eyes on the future.

**Purpose:**

The Plan is being put in place as a framework and blueprint from which to build upon past achievements, our history and existing services and infrastructure, to progress the town and community of Andamooka towards a sustainable, resilient, economically stable and vibrant future, increasing the population, facilities, services, business opportunities, and quality of life for residents.

**Stakeholders:**

Primary stakeholders are all members of the Andamooka Community, inclusive of Andamooka Opal Miners, associated community groups, local business and enterprises, and other local organisations.

Other stakeholders include local property holders, Roxby Downs and Woomera communities, and visitors to Andamooka.

**Our Vision:**

Our vision for Andamooka is for a vibrant, sustainable, resilient future, with a connected, welcoming and harmonious community that promotes tolerance and respect for others and for the environment and heritage, and encourages personal, community and business development and investment in the town, making Andamooka a great place to live and to visit.

**Our History:**

Andamooka Township was settled by multi-cultural opal miners in the 1930's. As the town grew and prospered, Andamooka Progress Association (APA) evolved across the 1950's as a collective group focused on developing and servicing the then isolated remote town, eventually becoming an incorporated, not-for-profit association in March 1960, registered as Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners Association Incorporated. (APOMA).

The Association has since continued to serve as the peak body managing and servicing the township and community, currently maintaining a member base of around 130 members.

## **Our Goals:**

APOMA's primary aim within this plan is to preserve and celebrate Andamooka's past whilst serving the town in the present and building a resilient and vibrant future for the township and community of Andamooka.

To achieve this, our secondary goals are:

To create and promote a profile for the town.

To employ good and effective governance practices to maintain protocol, inclusiveness, transparency, compliance, protections and contingencies, succession and connectivity with community.

To preserve, promote, celebrate, and where possible make accessible, the history and historic records and features of the town.

To increase the population of Andamooka to a sustainable level and increase residential retention.

To increase and expand infrastructure and services to the community which promote wellness, connectivity, resilience, wealth creation and skills building.

To increase visitation and extend the length of visitor stays by increasing the number, availability and types of visitor activities and services.

To preserve and reinvigorate the natural environment and associated eco-systems within the town and surrounds.

To make Andamooka a great place to live and to visit.

## **Key Personnel:**

### **APOMA Committee Executive:**

Chair: David Simons

Secretary: Alison Smoker

## Our Objectives

- To develop, maintain and service the community, visitors and township of Andamooka through on-going development of community programs and implementation services to provide for and improve quality of life and visitor experience, and which foster respect, connectivity, vibrancy, inclusion and resilience.
- To develop and maintain community infrastructure to provide opportunities for and to support community group development, new enterprise, new or expanded business and business viability, and for cottage industry, to assist wealth creation and a stable town economy.
- To develop, maintain and support facilities, services, and activities that will attract and broaden visitation and lengthen stays, including accommodation and hospitality.
- To develop and establish links and partnerships with organisations, agencies, other communities, heritage groups, and entities that will serve to assist and benefit development, sustainability, resilience and quality of life in Andamooka.
- To keep abreast of change through ongoing consultation and open channels of communication with community, local business and organisations, and visitors to Andamooka.
- To reflect achievements, change and opportunities through regular review of and updates to, the Plan.
- To ensure that the objectives within the APOM Constitution continue to reflect the activities of the Association in meeting the needs of the community and township, and that these will serve to achieve the Association's primary aim of making Andamooka great place to live and to visit, through annual review and updates as required.

*Association Objectives as set out in the APOMA Constitution, adopted in October 2018, last reviewed February/March 2024.*

- a) To provide positive leadership within the community and to act as the peak body representing the community and township of Andamooka*
- b) To protect the rights of those people engaged in opal mining*
- c) To promote social well-being, community wellness, community capacity building and positive engagement among residents of Andamooka Township and the Opal fields*
- d) To act, assist and promote such actions to maintain, improve and develop facilities for the benefit of the community*
- e) To act, assist and promote such actions to build a sustainable future for the township of Andamooka*
- f) To procure financial support from Government and private sources to provide whatever benefits to the Andamooka Township and the Opal Fields as shall be deemed necessary from time to time*
- g) To work to extend and encourage the extension of the opal fields by prospecting and to improve the market value of Andamooka Opal and Matrix products by promotion and publicity*



- h) To assist in or concur with the establishment of any other association having one or more similar objects*
- i) To promote tourism, sport and recreation, entertainment and amusement, participation and social interaction within the Andamooka Township and the Opal fields*
- j) To work with other relevant organisations to establish, maintain and improve community services in and around Andamooka Township and the Opal fields*
- k) To facilitate access and participation of local people in the functions of the association, through the application of principles of inclusion, merit and equal opportunity*

## CULTURE

Andamooka was pioneered in the 1930's by post war migrants from a diversity of backgrounds many of whom had survived far worse than this haunting isolated desert location with endless horizons, which then offered freedom and opportunity. They were joined by others from across Australia during the depression years, all learning to share out of necessity, their combined skills and knowledge, re-using and re-purposing, and finding innovative methods to provide for themselves and to mine the opal they sought, understanding and capturing natural elements and nurturing, preserving and harvesting the ecology, living with it rather than fighting against it, and this resonated with the indigenous peoples that roamed this region creating a connection and understanding of each other, and those respectful links continue today.

Enemies became friends, differences were appreciated, weaving the fabric of a vibrant multicultural lifestyle where the arts were celebrated, so this deep and diverse arts culture remains an integral part of Andamooka community's everyday life, and which continues to maintain a culture of connection and resilience, rich in the essence of freedom and creativity, and proud of their authenticity.

Collectively this has created an unspoilt outback town like no other, where the community respect tradition and continue to gather and work together in like interest groups, to pass on skills, share ideas and solutions to bring them to fruition. To passionately express themselves through a broad arts base and to maintain their historic mining industry, ensuring that the town continues to survive and develop. As they have eased into the outside invasion by internet, they are learning to embrace this as a tool that can benefit the town and community taking the town forward into wider world that may or may not appreciate and preserve this unique culture.

## CURRENT SITUATION

Andamooka has taken a giant step forward across the past decade to put in place a community contribution scheme, through the OCA. This collectively funds management and maintenance of community infrastructure, facilities and services, and provides a platform for planning and funding opportunities for on-going development of new infrastructure, community programs, events, and skills development.

The past five years has seen significant development of new infrastructure along with restoration and upgrades to existing infrastructure to house expanding programs and services, and this continues today, and together with simultaneous skills development and training to provide suitably qualified and certified personnel to manage and service associated programs, activities and local business, progressively improves and vitalises community quality of life.

Current projects include –

- expansion of recreation and hub precinct facilities to accommodate demand for emerging community groups space and community activities,
- continuation of upgrades to primary hubs, parks and gardens including cemeteries,
- the development of a community produce garden complex and outreach to build food security and healthy lifestyles.
- improving access and signage within the town by upgrading streetlighting and putting in place a network of information, directional and interpretive signs that will better direct residents and visitors and will assist with the development of interpretive / participative trails within the town and surrounds.

As of 2024 the next major step is to build upon and create new attractions, facilities, services and events and activities, to attract and support new residents and greater visitation by a broader demographic.

This will in turn provide small business and local employment opportunities that provide for wealth creation and new services for both visitors and the community to assist residential retention.

## OUR APPROACH TO FUTURE PLANNING

APOMA has a broad focus big picture approach to planning which views not only the immediate benefits of new development, but more importantly how this can work within the whole of the picture long-term to achieve the Plans primary objectives, and for development to be part of a more self-supporting network to support continuing development and maintenance.

It must also work within this collective approach, to be inclusive, economically viable, and overall to improve quality of life.

Planning for the future will continue to work with, develop and improve consultation with Andamooka's broad community, other regional communities, and take into account the direction of the OCA for regional development for facility, program and service development together with recognised strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and threats.

For this reason, this Plan will remain open, dynamic and consulted upon, to ensure that changing demands and needs are considered and provided for, development continues in line with the Plan, and that opportunities which may arise are taken up in accordance with community support.

## PARTNERSHIPS & ASSOCIATIONS

APOMA has developed links and relationships as set out below:

- Outback Communities Authority (OCA)
- Other Regional Communities
- Local Groups and Organisations
- Local Business
- Andamooka Primary School
- Roxby Downs Council
- Roxby Downs Community Hub
- ADF Woomera
- Pimba Progress Association
- Parks SA
- TicSA
- Volunteers SA/NT
- Be Connected
- Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS)
- Complete Personnel (CDP)
- Major corporations active in the region.

## POSITIONING

- As at November 2024 Andamooka is the largest town with the highest population of the regional and remote townships and communities functioning under the auspices of the Outback Communities Authority (OCA) and located 30kms from the BHP mining town of Roxby Downs (pop: 4000), 100kms from the ADF town of Woomera, and 350kms from the primary regional city of Port Augusta.
- Together with other regional community's progress associations and leaders, APOMA contributes annually to regional development via an OCA forum.
- Andamooka is a primary opal mining town on a national basis, with Andamooka opal world renowned for its clarity, colour and strength. Opal mining continues as a primary industry, tourist attraction and economic factor for the town.
- Andamooka is also well recognised as a vibrant arts township, with several artists well known internationally.
- The township and surrounds are often referred to as a photographer's paradise, offering dramatic landscapes and skylscapes, unique structural scapes, and a plethora of birds and other wildlife, both flora and fauna.
- Andamooka is recognized for rare fossils and rare incidents of ancient lifeforms, also a rich diversity of, including some previously unknown, species of small creatures.
- Country surrounding Andamooka is of great significance to a number of native heritage groups which traditionally shared these lands and rich in traditional stories and history.

## MARKETING

- In recognition of the role that social media and internet plays in current marketing activities, the Association is in transition from the traditional more localised advertising and promotions still preferred by many community members, to meet the increasing demand for participation via electronic communications and social media.

The Association is currently constructing a new interactive and interpretive website to encourage visitors to the site to explore all aspects of the town, community and culture, and to best promote world wide, local attractions, events and business, as well as the lifestyle and benefits of living in Andamooka.

Facebook at AndmookaHub is designed to be a community notice board to keep the community, visitors and others that visit, updated and well informed about activities and other matters of interest without the clutter of chat – which is well covered by the local Andamooka1 Facebook page. ‘the hub’ is managed via the Andamooka Town Office and set up to strike at peak times, so it has an enviable visitation record and a broad regular audience making it an effective and well respected voice to both community and visitors.

In addition to this, APOMA subscribes memberships to state tourism organisations provide access to national and regional marketing campaigns and websites, and links to networks embedded within the new website will increase this reach and extend it internationally.

APOMA is progressively working with other organisations and groups both regionally and locally, to put together a coordinated annual calendar of events which can include cross and joint community initiatives and to create new relationships that will broaden and enrich our regional and national market reach.

APOMA will remain open to new marketing opportunities and methods and will seek opportunities to maintain a distinct presence within our target markets.

## ECONOMIC

- The association is in a stable financial position with contingencies and reserves in place to assist sustainability. Currently APOMA has a three-budget approach based on association generated funds, town management funds generated from community contributions, and projects which covers the ins and outs of primary grants and funding. This provides a clear and transparent monitoring and reporting process for each of these budget components, which also assists with surplus dispersal and forecasting .
- Andamooka has taken a giant step forward across the past decade to put in place a community contribution scheme, which is applied via an annual agreement with the OCA. This collectively funds management and maintenance of community infrastructure, facilities and services, and provides a platform for planning and funding opportunities for on-going development of new infrastructure, community programs, events, and skills development.

- There are significant challenges to the current procedures around this system being subject to annual agreement by the community and by the incumbent state government.
- This creates uncertainty and inhibits long term arrangements for funding, agreements and employment, and increases the already strained workload around administration.
- To make this system fairer, APOMA has developed a user pay approach to supplement the CCS funds collected from property owners and local business, so that all people utilising facilities, programs and services, including renters and visitors, contribute towards town maintenance and development.
- A precinct approach brings most facilities and programs under one of two primary precincts, and each has one or two major income streams, which when applied across the collective cluster, provides funding for each within the respective precinct.
- Grants are essential to town and community development and to support major events and projects to enhance tourism and lifestyle.
- With substantial grant support, the past five years has seen significant development of new infrastructure along with restoration and upgrades to existing infrastructure to house expanding programs and services. This together with simultaneous skills development and training to provide suitably qualified and certified personnel to manage and service associated programs, activities and local business, serves to create wealth and to improve and vitalise community quality of life.
- There is increasing pressure on development, maintenance and management, including financial, from a growing raft of compliances, regulations and registrations which when applied to remote situations are often difficult to meet, and can be time consuming and costly. This may affect economic growth within small business and local enterprise and also the ability of APOMA to provide town management services to the community.

## SOCIAL

- The Andamooka community has traditionally been connected and self-supporting, and that culture continues to embrace new residents to the town and visitors alike. Primary voluntary community groups and organisations under-pin the fabric of the community offering a sense of belonging, skills sharing and social interaction.
- Andamooka has a sound participation rate for volunteering but experiencing a decline in numbers.
- Community meetings, events and activities are well attended.
- Increasing loss of the town's original pioneers and those who bought the town alive across the halcyon days of the 1960's, is being replaced by a new younger generation of residents, with a recognised need to put in place access to different services and programs that will assist them to integrate into the community and to live well.

## SUSTAINABILITY & VIBRANCY

- This is delivered primarily through community programs, established, emerging and planned which collectively service interest groups and needs of the community, and also provide visitor attractions and activities.
- Under-pinned by other programs and projects aimed at creating food and general services security, and other services including health, wellbeing & skills development.
- To keep facilities and programs maintained and serviced, APOMA's economic approach is clustering via precinct development, offering greater self-support and to also spread the load of funding these via a user pay system rather than put the full burden onto property owners and local business, and this is achieving positive results.
- Vibrancy is created and maintained via on-going management and/or support to inclusive community programs / events / facilities and programs / activities which encourage connections and social interaction and which spawn new ideas, encourage participation and provide benefits both community and the economy.

## CLOSING STATEMENT:

This heading almost being an oxymoron to the nature of this Plan, which is designed to remain as an open-ended and dynamic document. It is very evident that throughout this community led Plan there is a distinct sense of change, and of uncertainty, but also excitement for the future, and a sense of community determination and optimism, which suggests that the community is prepared to take on challenges ahead and to seek ways of finding a balance that will ensure that future development embraces the historic and unique culture of this unashamedly authentic and resilient township.

## Attachments:

Appendix 1: Swat analysis

Appendix 2: Strategic Action Plan

Appendix 3: 2025 Budgets to be attached

## Appendix 1:

### SWOT ANALYSIS:

#### KEY STRENGTHS

- Community focused
- Established organisation with strong relationships
- Economic Diversity
- Remote location
- Colourful and retained/celebrated history - authentic
- Strong volunteer base
- Environmentally aware community

#### WEAKNESSES

- Remote location off main highway network
- Decline in volunteer availability and participation
- Temporary / Floating / seasonal population variations (affects employment permanency and succession)
- As town develops - more stress on aging and restricted utilities and services – power & water – town waste dump life
- A current visitor/tourist demographic slanted towards ‘grey nomads’
- Accommodation – housing and visitor accommodation (seasonal population affects viability of rentals and visitor accommodation)

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- **CURRENT**
- Facility and service development to better provide for, meet and service community and visitor needs
- Upgrade on-line and hard-copy information for new residents and visitors
- Expand market reach and visitation to broaden visitor demographics with more attractive and visitor friendly website and social media, including strategic management of promotions.
- **FUTURE**
- Develop branding and lift the profile of the town
- Develop innovative solutions for food security and water conservation
- Innovation for moderation of extreme weather conditions within the local environment via greening & harmonious infrastructure to assist growth, & to support and protect flora and fauna.
- Reduce waste - re-use/recycling and composting -utilise for soil improvement/moisture retention
- Create new visitor accommodation options - offer temporary/occasional options which may also offer occasional income for residents and different levels of accommodation – ie swags to swank.
- Address the need for and seek solutions for, delivery and security long-term for services and utilities including power and water, and adopting ‘smart houses’ solutions.
- Utilise historic Andamooka heating and cooling systems to reduce demand on /costs of services.

#### RECOGNISED THREATS

- Extremes of climate and weather conditions
- Population retention / stability / accord
- On-going availability of volunteers
- Increasing compliance, regulation and registration- deters volunteers and willingness to take on responsible roles
- Servicing/ long term availability of essentials – fuel / power / water / food / accommodation
- Economic downturn and less availability of discretionary funds for trips and holidays.

## Appendix 2:

ACTION PLAN – currently undergoing broad community consultation for priorities and preferences.

To be attached and presented formally to community at the March 2025 meeting, which also addresses the annual CARM agreement for the next financial year 2025-26.