



Coonawarra Community Plan



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Executive Summary

The *Coonawarra Community Plan* is a starting point, a blueprint, to aid the future development and prosperity of the Coonawarra township and the surrounding region. The initial draft plan has been established in consultation with business, residents and the wider community. The Community input occurred over time and a through several plan iterations was finalised in 2017.

The Coonawarra Community Plan enables Council, in partnership with the community, to place an importance on creating opportunities, strengthening communities and valuing lifestyle throughout the region for the communities to enjoy vibrant lifestyles into 2030 and beyond.

While the township is small, it is undeniably unique and dynamic. Originally, a siding on the Mount Gambier railway line it now has a world-class reputation for producing some of the most sought after Cabernet Sauvignon wines and it certainly “punches above its weight” as a wine region with 25 cellar doors and numerous vineyards.

The Coonawarra Community Plan outlines five priorities for the Coonawarra community projects:

- Look and Feel of Coonawarra
- Social Media and Coonawarra Advertising & Promotion
- Coonawarra Celebrations and Events
- Coonawarra Assets & Infrastructure
- Coonawarra Community Projects

These priorities have been categorised and provided with a timeline outlined below:

- A = 1-2 years
- B= 3-4 years
- C= 5-8 years
- D= 9-12 years
- E=13-17 years
- F= 17-20 years

The Coonawarra Community Plan outlines the above five priorities to make it a more enjoyable place for residents to live and work in, and for visitors to spend time here. Amongst the projects in the plan are the development of walking and cycling experiences for tourists and improvement to road infrastructure.

The community outcomes and projects listed in this plan will assist in council’s future strategic direction and approach to the delivery of services and enables Council to work with the community to review the plan annually. Council’s overarching Community Plan and other strategic documents will be directly influenced by this plan. This will help ensure all council activities are responsive to the views and aspirations of local residents and businesses.

The History of Coonawarra

Coonawarra is a unique and vibrant regional community in the Limestone Coast region of South Australia. It grew out of the Penola Fruit Colony - which was initiated by John Riddoch, MP, in 1880 with the sale of 1,000 acres of land to anyone who wanted to grow fruit and contribute to the economic development of the region. A world-class premium wine growing region has since developed around the township of Coonawarra - and Penola, located 10 km south.

Coonawarra Today

The Coonawarra wine region is one of 69 such regions in Australia, and is world renowned for the production of Cabernet Sauvignon wines grown on the famous terra rossa soil, on a ridge just 27 km long and 2 km wide. With 5,600 hectares under vine production, and over 25 cellar doors, viticulture and winemaking are the foundation of the region's economy. Other regional pursuits include tourism, hospitality, accommodation, agriculture and horticulture.

Employment data

In the last Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (2011), Coonawarra had a population of 334, with 92 families in the region. Employment locally has 64% employed full time with 47.7% employed as managers and equal 12.6% as professionals and laborers.

The top five industries of employment in Coonawarra, show 31.4% working in sheep, beef cattle and grain farming, while 15.7% are involved in beverage manufacturing, 11.7% in fruit and tree growing while 4.9% in school education and 3.1% in bakery product manufacturing, which shows the reliance upon the agriculture, horticulture with wine and food.

Community, sport and events

The Coonawarra Memorial Hall provides a focus for the community with regular community dinners held each month, and as a venue for community and sporting club meetings. Active sporting groups include clubs devoted to: tennis, petanque, and eight-ball. The community is supported by the CFS for emergency and fire situations.

Coonawarra is the focus of several annual events that celebrate the unique wine culture:

- Coonawarra Vigneron's Cup in January
- After Dark weekend in March/April
- Penola Coonawarra Arts Festival in May
- Coonawarra Cellar Dwellers in July
- Coonawarra Cabernet Celebrations in October

Coonawarra residents are able to access a wide range of health, education, financial, cultural, retail and business services and facilities in nearby Penola, or further afield in Mt Gambier (60 km south) or Naracoorte (40 km north).

The Coonawarra Grape and Wine Incorporated (CGWI) represents the majority of grape growers and winemakers in Coonawarra. This organisation promotes events, wines and cellar doors plus the wider external promotion of wines beyond the immediate region.

Coonawarra wine region

The production of wine grapes is concentrated onto the unique rich terra rossa soil located in the Coonawarra region. Affiliated with the grape growing community, are best practice winemakers producing the various labels, which are supported by local cellar doors, food and accommodation. Wine tourism is a key attraction for the region.

The wine market can be prioritised as local, domestic and export market orientated. Local markets consist of cellar doors visits, mail order and direct to consumer and through Limestone Coast Wholesale trade.

The domestic market includes the major cities on the east coast and Adelaide.

The export markets compromise China, North America/Canada and secondary markets are the UK, Hong Kong, Singapore/Malaysia and Japan.

Why the need for Town Plan?

The idea of a *Coonawarra Community Plan* arose out of initial general discussions between Wattle Range Council staff and the Coonawarra Grape and Wine Incorporated Board.

Essentially, the *Coonawarra Community Plan* provides:

- An opportunity to articulate the issues that are important to Coonawarra based residents and businesses
- A clear blueprint for the future development of the Coonawarra township and the surrounding region
- A basis to attract local, state, and potentially, federal funding to help achieve identified community priorities and projects
- A more coordinated approach for the social, cultural and economic development of the township and surrounding enterprises
- An opportunity to continue to enhance the reputation of Coonawarra as a fine wine region, and tourism destination.

Vision Statement

A unique, small regional community, Coonawarra is seen as an innovative vine growing and wine producing region. Currently there are seven research projects active in the region which will help build their understanding of various elements of vine production.

Many grape growers are investing in rejuvenating their vineyards. Coonawarra is still the most awarded region of Jimmy Watson trophies – the most prestigious wine award in Australia.

The Vision statement:

Coonawarra is a community that's vibrant, passionate, sophisticated and unique – one that will continue to honour tradition while embracing innovation and nurturing sustainable viticulture for the future.

Coonawarra will be nationally and internationally recognised as a progressive, world class winegrowing and tourism region, whose unique culture is embodied in its wine and its people.

What Makes Coonawarra unique?

There are a number of factors that make the community of Coonawarra unique.

- Innovative and vibrant wine industry base
- Terra rossa soils have provided the foundation for the vines to grow in this rich environment
- The hub of the Coonawarra Memorial Hall and the township around it
- Strong resilient community and workforce
- Unified and welcoming community
- Long history in viticulture and wine making
- A showcase opportunity for wine, food and other value added products through tourism visitation

Location

Coonawarra is a small town 10km to the north of Penola in South Australia and 40 km south of Naracoorte.

Coonawarra was a station on the Mount Gambier railway line which opened in 1887 and now it is best known for the Coonawarra wine region named in its honor. The region experiences a relative cool climate with mild winters and warm summers.

Products and Services

Products and services are generally based around the wine and viticulture industry, however a number of other key activities are undertaken in the area and township.

- Wine tourism
- Cellar door food and produce
- The most famous product is the wine produced from the vineyards in the surrounds.
- Beef, wool, sheep and agricultural including grain
- Accommodation
- Events
- Racing events including the Coonawarra Cup held in Penola
- Local foods and value added products
- Horticultural – potatoes and carrots
- Township store, restaurant and other services including post office.

Who do we need to attract to Coonawarra?

- More high standard accommodation
- Tours linked to interstate and overseas visitors
- Experiential tour opportunities – included self-drive – charter vehicle and bus tours.
- Major events outside of the regular time frames of current events held in the region.
- Niche food value adding opportunities
- High quality eating and dining experiences.

Marketing & Promotion

This is largely undertaken by the Coonawarra Grape and Wine Incorporated (CGWI) and Penola Coonawarra Arts Festival, individual wineries and businesses.

There is an opportunity for Coonawarra to develop greater marketing tools in conjunction with Local, State and Industry Organisations. These may be better achieved with linkages to Penola and existing cross promotional opportunities.

This may include:

- Specialised video promotion.
- Expanded use of social media
- Better opportunities to build local blogs
- Facebook expansion
- Websites – (many private websites promoting wine and also the region exist)

Appendix

Coonawarra Projects

Look and Feel of Coonawarra

Time Line: A = 1-2 years B= 3-4 years C=5-8 years D= 9-12 years E=13-17 F= 17-20 years

Time Line	Project	Working Groups	Other Comments
B	Coonawarra interpretive signs. At sites of local and historical interest, tied in with the bike & walking trail and also marked on the Coonawarra tourist map (as produced by the CGWI).		SA Tourism Commission SA Heritage
A	Recreation Vehicle/big rig friendly facilities in or around Penola/Coonawarra, including dump site, signage, well signed parking near to town (possibly Portland Street).		
C	Footpath curbing for township. Improve the township look by providing curbing	WRC	
B	Coonawarra rail Platform. Provide seating, table and considering other amenities including tourism activates at the famous local railway siding.	CGWI/WRC	SATC Grant funding
B	TOWN promotional signage. There is a need to better signage on the Riddoch Highway indicating the township and railway siding.		
A	Airport re-naming. The airstrip was originally named after the donor of the land and as a part of local history promotion should be identified as that with signage.		
A	Hospitality Training. There is a need for better training of staff in food outlets and other service points to ensure a welcoming and professional experience for visitors.	RDA Limestone Coast Tafe SE. CGWI	RDA Limestone Coast. TAFE SE

Social Media and Coonawarra Advertising & Promotion

Time Line: A = 1-2 years B= 3-4 years C=5-8 years D= 9-12 years E=13-17 F= 17-20 years

Time Line	Project	Working Groups	Other Comments
A	Coonawarra website The building of a dedicated Coonawarra website linked to other regional sites. The town does not have its own identity with great accommodation and food available.	PBATA	Funded by: Wine Australia LCWC along with WRC
A	Greater promotion of accommodation. There are five B&B's in Coonawarra with the opportunity for greater marketing and exposure.	Community Tourism LCLCA Wineries LCWC	
A	Coonawarra signage opportunity. The single opportunity for visitors to have a photo taken in front of Coonawarra signage is at the railway Station. Possibly a new town signage and promotional board where tourist can stop and have their photo taken is an opportunity for greater township promotion.	WRC LC LGA (Tourism) CGV	

Coonawarra Celebrations and Events

Time Line: A = 1-2 years B= 3-4 years C=5-8 years D= 9-12 years E=13-17 F= 17-20 years

Time Line	Project	Working Groups	Other Comments
A	Have a calendar of events across the entire 52 weeks in the year	CGWI WRC	
	Hall dinner events Better promotion and possible expansion of monthly hall dinner nights. Possibly open up kitchen to external provider for other nights who may wish to run a mini restaurant in there.		
A	Beef Steak and Burgundy Clubs Opportunities to link events off of these existing groups.	Local Clubs	
B	Car Club attraction Significant opportunity exists to develop packages for car enthusiast from around Australia to visit and stay in Coonawarra and penola.	WRC	
B	Movie Nights Further expansion of movie nights in the Coonawarra Hall.	Coonawarra Hall Charitable org	
C	Opportunity for new experiences Examine the opportunity for experiences outside of wine. Look for other experience related businesses/projects to enhance the visitation and keep people longer.	LCGWC WRC Hall Committee CGWC	

Coonawarra Assets & Infrastructure

Time Line: A = 1-2 years B= 3-4 years C=5-8 years D= 9-12 years E=13-17 F= 17-20 years

Time Line	Project	Working Groups	Other Comments
A	Penola – Glenroy bypass. Continuing from the existing Penola by-pass and extending to Glenroy in order to separate high speed trucks & highway traffic from slow local and (often unpredictable) tourist traffic. In the interim, a speed reduction on the Riddoch Hwy from Penola to S. Kidman Wines is still considered desirable.	CGWI (per Transport Master Plan) WRC RDA L/Coast	State &/or federal Dept Transport & Infrastructure
C	Penola – Glenroy bike & walking trail. Following the railway line, with spur lines to cellar doors. Also linking to the evolving Coonawarra Wineries Walking Trail and incorporating the (proposed) Coonawarra Interpretive Signs and interactive history component.	CGWI & WRC & walking trail groups	Potential funding from PIRSA State, Federal & Local funding
C	Upgraded secondary roads. As identified in the plan presented to WRC over recent years, systematic upgrading and maintenance of secondary roads to allow Coonawarra machinery and local traffic to avoid the high speed traffic on the Riddoch Highway. This should include an upgrade of Memorial Drive, including intersections and signage. Better trafficability of unsealed roads.		
C	Extension and sealing of the Coonawarra airstrip to allow larger planes to land and visit Coonawarra, and Penola, as well as secure parking, toilets and amenities.	CGWI & WRC	
B	Develop a regional plan focused on long term transport requirements into the region with a focus on road users safety in the region Reduce main roads use and bring visitors to minor roads.		

A	Upgrade of town park. Upgrade and repair of items including wooden steps at sculpture, playground equipment and general park infrastructure which is aged and looking poor.		
C	Secondary Sealed access. Coonawarra requires a secondary sealed road that runs parallel to Riddoch Highway so residents have an alternate route if an emergency arose.		
B	Storm water Drainage. Improve storm water drainage near the Helen Street intersection as water pools there next to the Service Station.		

Coonawarra Community Projects

Time Line: A = 1-2 years B= 3-4 years C=5-8 years D= 9-12 years E=13-17 F= 17-20 years

Time Line	Project	Working Groups	Other Comments
A	Support in upgrading/maintaining Coonawarra Park	Coonawarra Hall, Local Business Walking Trail	
B	Increase awareness of Coonawarra tourism opportunities and wineries.	Tourism Local businesses CWI Wineries	
C	Coonawarra DPA Development Plan amendment consideration for examination of opportunities for housing and accommodation expansion with Coonawarra.	Coonawarra Community Local businesses	

