



COBAR COMMUNITY WORKING PARTY

HOUSING and ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PLAN

MARCH 2022



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4			
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

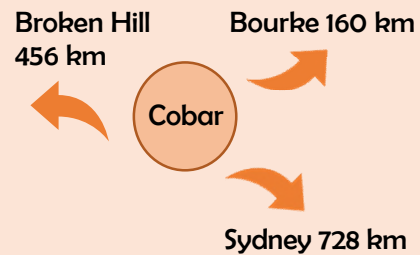


Cobar

Housing and Environmental Health Plan Executive Summary

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan provides a Master Plan for housing, infrastructure and housing-related human services for the Aboriginal community of Cobar. The Master Plan is based on a body of evidence outlined in this Executive Summary. Much community input is drawn from the Household Survey organised by Murdi Paaki Services, and from the Cobar CWP's Community Action Plan. The Plan describes the current situation and proposes measures to improve the state and supply of housing, the way it is allocated and managed, and what needs to be done in the future to meet community needs for housing, wrap-around services and economic development. The Executive Summary begins with some facts about the community, looks at the housing situation, then presents the key points of the Master Plan. The Plan belongs to the Aboriginal community of Cobar

Where we are to be found?



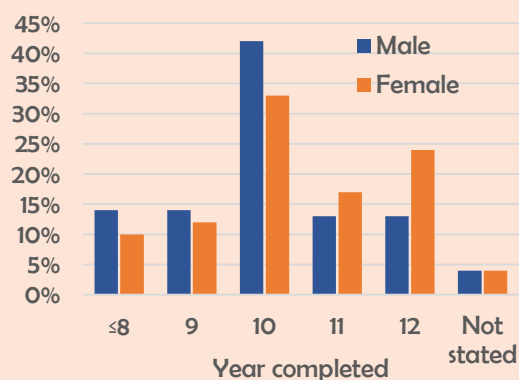
The Cobar climate is hot and dry.
The number of days with temperatures >35°C is predicted to increase by 30-40 days by 2070

About the community:



Aboriginal population = 12% of total population of 3,741 persons

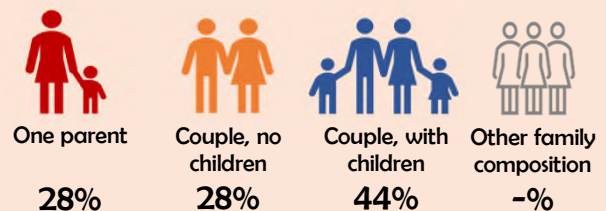
Highest year of schooling, all Aboriginal adults



32% of the Aboriginal population is aged under 15 years



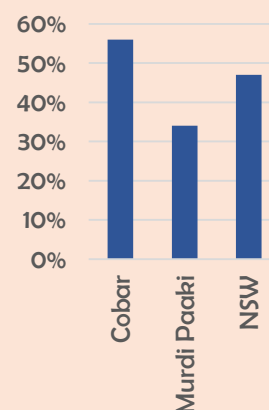
Family household composition



Median age of the population



Employment to population ratio

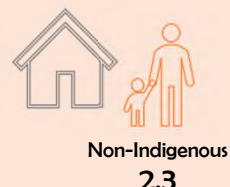




Cobar

Tenure type (from Census)

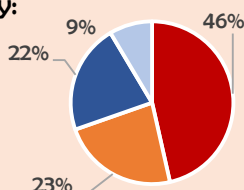
- Owners
- Private renters
- Social housing renters
- Other



Facts about housing in our community:



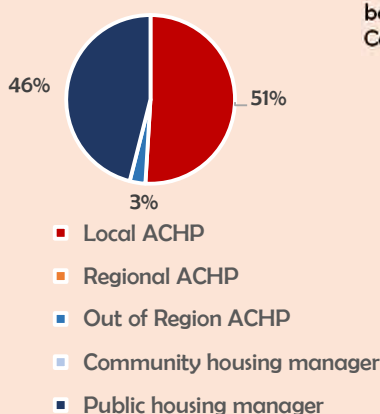
On Census night, 19% of private dwellings were not occupied



Average household size

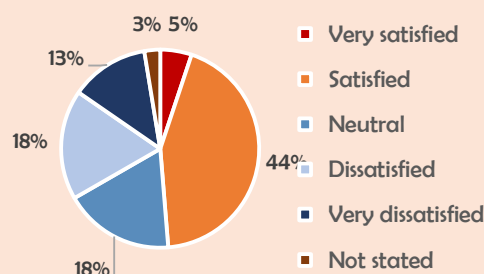
Existing Aboriginal social housing				
Ownership	Bedrooms			
	1	2	3	4+
Cobar LALC	3	6	10	7
AHO		2	15	10
CAAA			5	
Total dwellings	3	8	30	17

Social housing manager(s)

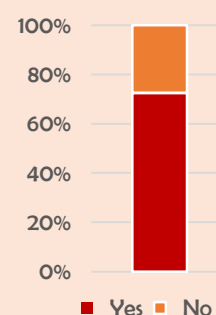


57% of Aboriginal households lived in the same house 5 years before the ABS 2016 Census

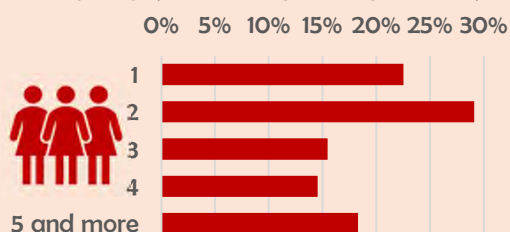
Satisfaction with housing manager



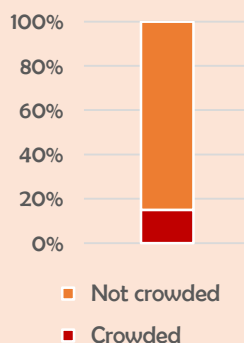
Feeling safe



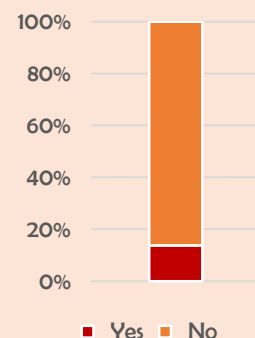
Occupancy (number of persons per house)



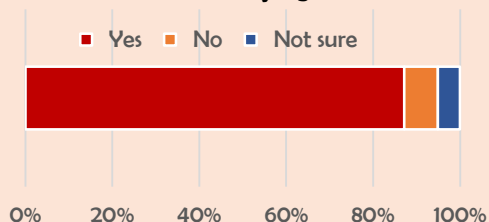
Households crowded



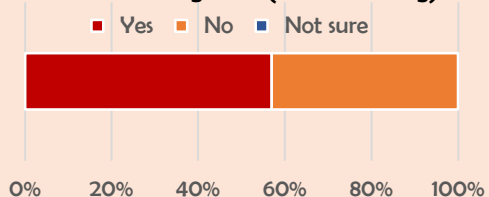
Households giving shelter to homeless persons



Tenants with a tenancy agreement



Tenants claiming CRA (Social housing)



Reasons respondents gave for living in Cobar:

- I was born here - 55%
- My family has been here a long time - 53%
- To be close to family and relations - 49%



ESTIMATE OF HOUSING NEED

Predicted housing need

	Bedrooms		
	2	3	4
Families	4	4	-
Older persons	1	-	-
Young persons	8	-	-
Homeless families	-	-	-
Total dwellings	13	4	-

AHO asset growth proposal:

> 4 x 2 bed and 2 x 5 bed dwellings

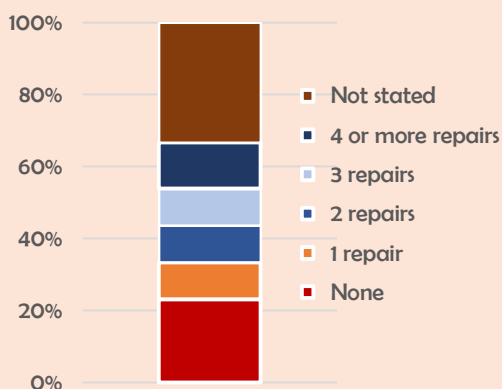
Home modifications

Required	4
Completed	3
To be completed	1

Extra bedrooms

	Bedrooms		
	1	2	3
Estimated	-	-	-

Tenant reported condition (Social housing)



Housing repairs

(Number of properties)

Degree of work	Number
1 hammer icon	6
2 hammer icons	24
3 hammer icons	5
4 hammer icons	13
5 hammer icons	6

MASTER PLAN - HOUSING



- Rearrange social housing management services to be delivered through a local provider
- Foster a strong working relationship between the housing manager, CWP, LALC, community and tenants



- Revisit rent levels in view of housing quality, remoteness and cost of living
- Replace Housing Pathways portal with a local application and allocation process to ensure residents of Cobar have priority
- Ensure 'at risk' tenants have access to TSEP services and improve take up of Commonwealth Rent Assistance
- With AHO and IBA, support annual initiatives to promote home ownership



- Involve the CWP in developing specifications and planning for new housing and improvements
- Increase purpose built housing for aged and disabled to enable reallocation of larger houses for families
- Priorities are units for young people and the elderly, and larger homes for families. Avoid one-bed units
- Provide for people who are homeless
- Explore spot purchase of suitable houses for social housing to ensure earliest access to additional housing for those in greatest need
- Encourage more effective use of existing properties - improve housing mix



- Repair existing housing to a standard acceptable to the community and make safe
- Improve access and responsiveness of local trades to responsive R&M, at the same time developing a local capacity



- Improve thermal performance of homes
- Provide all social housing properties with energy efficient heating and cooling
- Advocate for affordable water supply to reduce the burden of operating evaporative coolers and maintaining gardens and footpaths



- Advocate for all properties with septic to be connected to town sewerage



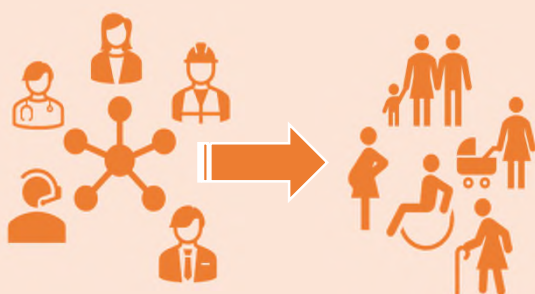
MASTER PLAN - HUMAN SERVICES

Local collaboration



Negotiate a working relationship with Cobar Shire Council to advance the Cobar HEHP, Cobar CWP Community Action Plan and Cobar Shire Council Community Strategic Plan in the interests of meeting Closing the Gap targets

Human service provision



Aspirations:

- Improve cultural safety, coordination and integration among service providers
- Adopt a case management approach to care coordination to improve service awareness, access and outcomes
- Increase local training and employment pathways for community members
- Support colocation of service providers within a local community-hub to improve access and assist coordination and navigation of services
- Build capacity of local community aged care services and increase access to disability support (NDIS)
- Establish a local TSEP presence

Wellbeing services



Aspirations:

- Advocate for access to Aboriginal alcohol and other drug residential and counselling services to meet need
- Increase availability of non-clinical mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services,

The Master Plan sets out the actions the CWP has adopted to secure a better future for the community. The actions come from the contributions of the community and from analysis of the gaps which prevent people from living healthy, prosperous and comfortable lives in Cobar. The actions written into this Executive Summary are shorthand versions of the actions in the Plan itself

Children's and young adults services



Aspirations:

- Establish a youth coordinator and support leadership development and activities for younger community members
- Increase access to structured child and family early intervention services and programs that are co-designed and delivered locally

Education, training and employment



Aspirations:

- Encourage youth leadership and successful transition to employment
- Increase skills base through development of training pathways
- Foster the growth of Aboriginal businesses
- Undertake a feasibility study and create a nursery business to serve the needs of the local environment and mining industry

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GLOSSARY

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACHP	Aboriginal Community Housing Provider
ACFI	Aged Care Funding Instrument
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Management Information System
AHO	Aboriginal Housing Office
ALRA	Aboriginal Land Rights Act
APB	Aborigines Protection Board
AWB	Aborigines Welfare Board
CAACS	Cobar Aboriginal Advancement Cooperative Society Ltd
CAP	Community Action Plan
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Programme
CLALC	Cobar Local Aboriginal Land Council
CNOS	Canadian National Occupancy Standard
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
CWP	Community Working Party
DCJ	Department of Communities and Justice
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
dmft	Decayed, missing or filled deciduous teeth
DMFT	Decayed, missing or filled adult teeth
DPIE	NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
HCP	Home Care Package
HEHP	Housing and Environmental Health Plan
HLP	Healthy Living Practices
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
IFD	Intensity Frequency Duration
LHD	Local Health District
ILOC	Indigenous Location
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
MLAHMC	Mid Lachlan Aboriginal Housing Management Co-operative
MPRA	Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
MPRH&BC	Murdi Paaki Regional Housing and Business Consortium
MPS	Murdi Paaki Services Limited
MP TSEP	Murdi Paaki Tenant Support and Education Programme
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSHS	National Social Housing Survey
N-W NSW IREG	North-West NSW Indigenous Region
NSWALC	New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
OCHRE	Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment
OOHC	Out of Home Care

OoR	Out-of-Region
PHN	Primary Health Network
RAHLA	Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly
REDI.E	Regional Enterprise Development Institute Ltd
SA1	ABS Statistical Area Level 1
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SPS	Sewage Pumping Station

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan has been prepared by the Cobar Community Working Party with the help of Murdi Paaki Services Ltd. The Cobar Community Working Party acknowledges the contributions of all community members and others who participated in the development of this plan through offering their advice, knowledge and encouragement.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge and respect the efforts of those community members seeking to improve the wellbeing of all Aboriginal families and individuals living in our community.

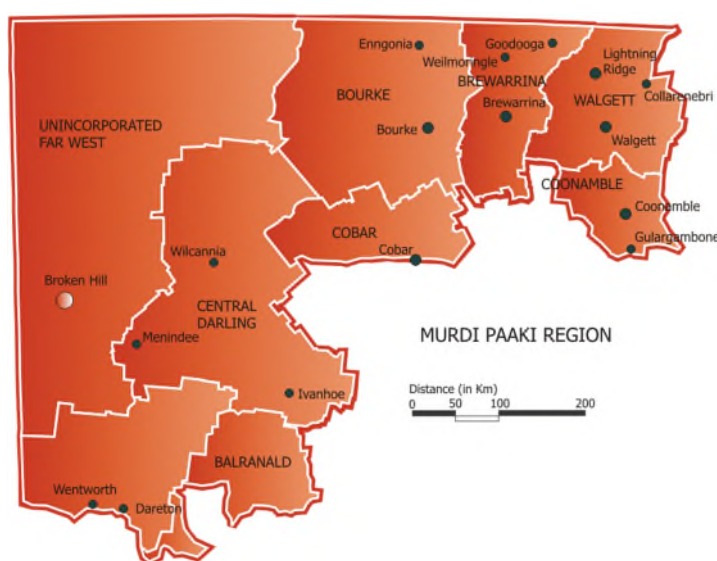
For the purposes of this Plan, an Aboriginal person is a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (person) and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan (HEHP) is prepared by the Aboriginal community of Cobar, in Western NSW. The Cobar community is one of sixteen larger communities within the Murdi Paaki Region as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Murdi Paaki Region



- Contribute to a review of requirements for financial wellbeing of the Aboriginal social housing sector;
- Provide an informed basis for planning for future housing need and development, and associated value-adding initiatives; and
- Describe a high-level community-led approach to project master planning to shape the future of Aboriginal housing and related human services in Cobar.

The Plan describes the aspirations of Aboriginal people living in Cobar and outlines a strategic approach to achieving the community's goals. Planning is the necessary first step in a programme aimed at achieving better housing and environmental health outcomes by building and improving housing and environmental health infrastructure, together with related services and amenities in the community. The Aboriginal community of Cobar, and particularly existing and prospective tenant households, will benefit directly through having the foundation of a more strategic, informed and innovative approach to resourcing and managing the Aboriginal social housing sector in the community.

The purpose of the HEHP is to:

- In conjunction with data collected through the Murdi Paaki Regional Housing and Business Consortium (MPRH&BC) project and described in the Social Housing Providers and Assets Audit Report, establish an evidence-base to guide the way in which housing policy is set and decisions are made in respect of Aboriginal social housing provision and management;
- Describe the current situation in relation to housing Aboriginal individuals and families in Cobar;
- To the extent possible, report on the condition of Aboriginal social housing assets;
- Give an assessment of 'wrap-around' human services;
- Determine the need for and form of tenant support and education services;

1.2 Governance arrangements

HEHPs are an initiative of the Murdi Paaki Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly (RAHLA), a partnership of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA) and the NSW Government created through the NSW Government OCHRE Local Decision Making (LDM) policy and directed by the Ministerial Agreement to improve Aboriginal social housing outcomes in the Murdi Paaki Region.

The RAHLA sees the preparation of HEHPs in all Murdi Paaki communities as a priority project under the Agreement and has authorised Murdi Paaki Services Ltd (MPS) to carry out the project to begin the process of developing the evidence base for regional policy setting and decision making as a vital step in rebuilding the social housing sector

and the social and economic capabilities of the Region.

The Agreement sets a framework for the active participation of Murdi Paaki communities, through elected representative bodies, in the development and delivery of better services, and the building of individual and organisational capacity to raise skills, knowledge and competencies. In this regard, the Agreement recognises the status of the Cobar Community Working Party (CWP) as the principal point of contact for conducting business within the Aboriginal community and for leading the development of the HEHP planning process at community level.

1.3 Respecting Land Council autonomy

The roles and functions of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) are defined in the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1982 (ALRA). Land Councils play a vital role in maintaining cultural practice and conserving Aboriginal heritage within their boundaries. They fulfil a critical function in NSW of restoring to the local Aboriginal population land which has been alienated by European colonisation. This land may be used for cultural or economic purposes; the rationale for each land claim is based upon the aspirations of the relevant LALC. LALCs also provide Community Benefit Schemes which may include Aboriginal social housing provision. In the Murdi Paaki Region, most LALCs are housing owners; some also manage their own housing. Individual LALCs have the inalienable right to make decisions in relation to their assets in accordance with the processes and constraints set out in the ALRA.

The Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly has made it a policy not to involve itself in matters of heritage and culture which are rightly the domain of the LALCs. Similarly, the Assembly recognises the autonomy of LALCs to make their own decisions in relation to their land and property. This Housing and Environmental Health Plan does not in any way impinge on the LALC's autonomy as a sovereign decision-maker in relation to its assets. In the interests of achieving maximum benefit for the community, the CWP invites the LALC to join its voice and hands in unity to advocate for and

implement the change agenda set out in the Master Plan.

1.4 The bigger picture

This HEHP is intended to supplement the work undertaken to date through the MPRH&BC project with more detailed and targeted enquiry at community level. Plans have been produced to a similar degree of detail for all communities across the Murdi Paaki Region, providing the opportunity for MPRA to assess communities' strengths and needs both as individual communities and comparatively, in relation to each other. The Plans acknowledge the reality of the experiences of Aboriginal people living in far western NSW and form a resource for intelligent leadership and an integrated, creative response which places communities, to the greatest extent possible, as the principal drivers of sustainable local action.

Put together, it is hoped the HEHPs will:

- Reinstatement and strengthen the capacity of Murdi Paaki regional and local Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs) to ensure that all Aboriginal people living in Aboriginal social housing in the community can receive culturally appropriate, professional and sustainable tenancy and asset management services from ACHPs which themselves are viable and supported;
- Increase access, opportunity and choice in affordable, healthy and safe housing for Aboriginal persons and families living in Murdi Paaki communities through growing the size and mix of the ACHP asset base;
- Work to ensure that assets are maintained in good condition in the long term;
- Ensure that tenants most at risk of a tenancy breach can access the services they need to sustain their tenancies; and
- Set the foundation for procurement practices and value add initiatives which respond to the 'failed market' environment and benefit the community.

2. ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION, A BRIEF HISTORY

2.1 Aboriginal ownership

The area of interest to this Plan is the urban settlement of Cobar. Other settlements within the Shire, including Murrin Bridge, are not included.

The back country surrounding Cobar town, the Cobar Peneplain, is characterised by rocky, stony soils in a rolling to hilly landscape, a harsh, dry climate and stunted vegetation. Wangaaypuwan speaking Ngiyampaa people, the traditional custodians of this Country, were skilled at managing the scant resources and adept at finding water. Subgroups were defined by their particular Country: Pilaarrkiyalu (Belah Tree people), Nhiilyikyalyu (Nelia Tree people) and Karulkiyalu (Stone Country people). Land was held under a tenure system related to the commonly understood boundaries between clan groups. This conferred inalienable rights to specific language and kin groups that created restrictions about who could come and go from a particular area. These limits also applied to who was given permission to use resources. The Cobar Peneplain is thus a landscape imbued with traditional culture and is alive with creation stories.

Adjacent language groups with whom Ngiyampaa people interacted were Ngemba Wangaaypuwan Mayi peoples to the north and north-east, and Baakantkji people who occupied the floodplains of the Darling River to the west.

2.2 Dispossession

The traditional way of life of Ngiyampaa people was disrupted during the early nineteenth century encroachment of European colonists. From the 1840s, settlers sought to displace traditional owners from their land. Settlers waged a frontier war for the alienation of Ngiyampaa land and resources in the Cobar Peneplain between the 1840s and 1860s.

As pastoralism expanded, Aboriginal people's ability to access traditional country, practices and

resources diminished. After the 1860s, Aboriginal people of the Cobar Peneplain were confronted by a new reality as properties were alienated and permanent settlements established.

Although early settlers came for pastoralism, speculative mining arrived in the 1870s, primarily in the north-north-west of the Cobar Shire and especially in Country occupied by Karulkiyalu peoples. The first discovery occurred at Kubbur Waterhole in 1870. As well as sinking shafts, miners dug wells for water and destroyed large tracts of woodland for firewood. The Great Cobar Copper Mine, the largest in the district, commenced operation in 1871.

2.3 Co-existence

Many Aboriginal people had no option but to work in camps created around homesteads, enabling a continuing association with traditional Country. Camps were encouraged to ensure access to a dependent pool of workers. Campsites formed at Bald Hills, Belarabon, Boppy Ranges, Bulla, Corinya, Coronga Park, Elsinore, Euabalong, Keewong, Kulwin Caves, Mount Doris and Devils Rock. All camps were within reach of a water source.

By the early years of the twentieth century, as camping on pastoral properties became less viable as a way of life, people began to gather at Carowra Tank (Kirraawara in Ngiyampaa language), about 80 km north-east of Ivanhoe, which was located at the centre of the Ngiyampaa people's ngurrampaa, (which translates as 'camp-world'). Carowra Tank was originally a natural drainage depression and had been part of the ngurrampaa of the Ngiyampaa for millennia. A reservoir was constructed in the 1880s and an area of 608 acres, containing the site, was gazetted as a public watering place in 1890. In 1907, 270 acres in two parcels of land around the reservoir were gazetted as a reserve, and rations delivered from Mossiel. Camping was permitted for the droving of livestock: an activity known to employ Aboriginal workers.

When the Condobolin-Menindee railway link was built in 1919, closer settlement ensued, and the groups known as the Keewong and Trida mobs

(both Pilaarkiyalu) moved into Carowra Tank. This was in a time of drought and the reservoir provided some security of water supply. In 1923, about 170 people from Trida went to live at Carowra. The Reserve became an Aborigines Protection Board (APB) managed station in 1926, with a resident white manager. Two room corrugated iron huts and a school were provided. People continued to move from surrounding stations to Carowra Tank, with a large group of people from Marfield, the Nhiilyikiyalu, who spoke both Ngiyampaa and Baakantji, being forcibly moved in by the APB in 1927. During the early 1930s, because of unemployment, further, formerly independent families from Hillston, the Darling River and other localities settled at Carowra.

The 1930s saw the introduction of changes in APB policy. A policy of concentration involved the revocation of smaller Reserves and the concentration of populations at larger managed stations including the Menindee and Brewarrina government stations. In 1933 the water supply at Carowra Tank failed. In September of that year, 270 or so residents of Carowra Tank were loaded onto cattle trucks, their houses and shelters were set alight and the Carowra residents taken to the railway platform at Conoble, where they were put onto the train to make the journey to Menindee. At the same time, the APB removed the Baakantji living along the Darling River from Wilcannia to Pooncarie to the Menindee Government Station, located about 11 km from Menindee on the Darling River.

The Ngiyampaa and Baakantji peoples did not traditionally have much in common, but made a life together over the ensuing years. The morbidity and mortality rates at Menindee were high, with a high incidence of respiratory illnesses including tuberculosis. Much of this illness was attributed to the proximity of the tin hut housing provided to ancient, eroding burial sites. Living conditions at Menindee Mission were poor and environmental health issues took their toll, as did the sorrow of living in exile from Country. The stealing of children and their removal to children's homes compounded the anguish of both Ngiyampaa and Baakantji peoples.

In 1949, the Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB), as the APB had been reconstituted in 1940, closed Menindee Mission without warning and moved the residents to Murrin Bridge at Lake Cargelligo. This is not in either Ngiyampaa or Baakantji country, but is in traditional Wiradjuri lands. Most of the Carowra Tank people made the move from Menindee to Murrin Bridge; most of the Baakantji moved to Menindee town or Wilcannia.

The former Carowra Tank reserve remains an important site for Aboriginal people in Cobar, particularly the descendants of those who lived there in the period prior to 1933. The Reserve was revoked in 1937, and the area is now part of a pastoral lease. Cobar people still identify strongly, too, with the places their ancestors lived for millennia: Keewong, Trida, Marfield and other significant places across the length and breadth of their ngurrampaa.

2.4 Aboriginal people and the town of Cobar

In 1969, following the 1967 Referendum, the AWB was disbanded. Oversight of Aboriginal Affairs was subsequently managed by the Commonwealth. By the early 1980s, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations began to form, as a pathway to self-determination in service delivery. Following from the enactment of the ALRA in 1983, the Cobar Local Aboriginal Land Council (CLALC) was created, with responsibilities for land management and culture as well as provision of Aboriginal social housing. Later, the Cobar Aboriginal Advancement Co-operative Society was established; this organisation also owns social housing in the community. Following successful management of these properties at a community level for many years, the Aboriginal Housing Office's Build and Grow policy made it necessary for the Co-operative to head lease their properties to the Aboriginal Housing Office, and these were then sub-leased to Mid Lachlan Aboriginal Housing Management Co-operative. Through this process, the community lost its ability to manage housing in a way that is culturally responsive to the needs of Cobar tenants and their families.

In 2001, the Cobar CWP was formed. An objective of the CWP is to promote the strategic interests of the Aboriginal community of Cobar on an equal footing with other, often larger communities. The CWP represents the needs and aspirations of the community through the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly.

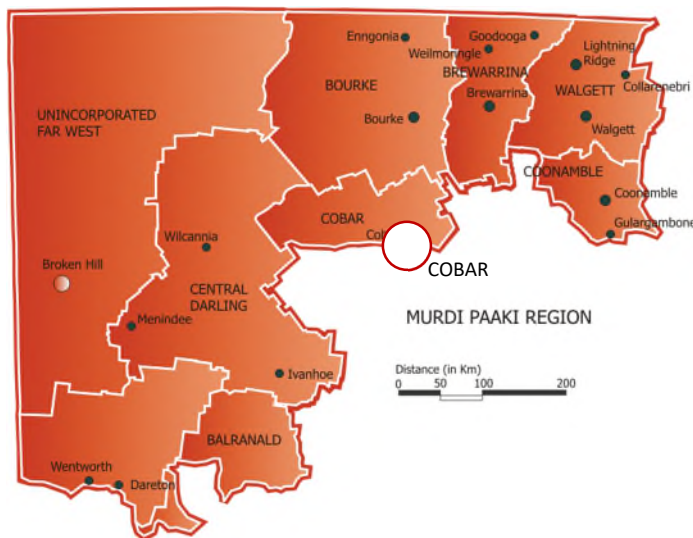


3. GEOGRAPHY

3.1 Location

Cobar is located in the far west of New South Wales, 687 km to the north-west of Sydney by way of sealed roads. Location is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Locality



Cobar is a service centre for surrounding communities. The nearest regional city is Dubbo.

3.2 Access

Cobar is located at the crossroads of the Barrier Highway and Kidman Way, 686 km by road north-west of Sydney, 457 kms east of Broken Hill and 160 km south of Bourke. Highways are sealed and passable in most weather except during flooding.

Cobar is accessible via NSW TrainLink's daily regional rail service from Sydney to Dubbo and connecting coach service to Broken Hill. A daily bus service operates between Sydney and Cobar via Bathurst and Dubbo. The railway, connecting to Nyngan, is exclusively for transport of ore from the mines and wheat from trackside silos.

Cobar's airstrip, 5 km south-west of the town is operated by Cobar Shire Council and is certified with CASA. The main runway is 1,519 m long and

asphalt surfaced, while a second runway is 1,221 m long but unsealed. Airline Fly Pelican operate a direct service between Cobar (CAZ) and Sydney (SYD) three or four times per week depending upon timetable.

3.3 Topography

The Cobar Peneplain is a landscape of undulations and flat plains interrupted by stony ridges and hills. Elevation is between 230 m to 260 m above sea level. The town of Cobar sits on the western edge of a small ridge that rises to 40-50m to the north-west and south-east of the town which provides some relief to the flat landscape. Falls in ground level occur generally in a south-westerly direction away from the town towards the airport. Elevation in the centre of town is 244m.

3.4 Soils

Unlike the dominant river floodplain geography and alluvial soils evident in most of the towns of the Murdi Paaki Region, the Cobar Peneplain Bioregion is characterised by undulating plains interrupted by stony ridges. Soils are weathered rock fragments forming brown and red sandy soils, and wind-blown sands.

3.5 Flora and fauna

Native vegetation is generally open mulga and poplar box woodlands, consistent with a semi-arid climate. Much of the landscape immediately around Cobar has been impacted by extensive clearing of trees to supply building material for mining and building construction, for firewood and for grazing. This has seen the emergence of modified shrublands, including isolated dense regrowth of woody shrubs, on areas that previously would have supported poplar box and cypress pine.

The mulga vegetation community around Cobar includes taller umbrella mulga with other species such as grey mallee and isolated trees such as kurrajong and poplar box particularly on hill slopes.

Ground cover is sparse with wiregrass, spear grass, wallaby grass and various burrs.

The bioregion supports a range of mammals that inhabit much of the Peneplain such as echidna, eastern grey kangaroo and bats, as well as many woodland birds. The composition and structure of vegetation and native animal populations has been altered significantly as a result of clearing for mining, agriculture, pastoral activities and the introduction of feral animals and resulting habitat loss and encroachment has depleted species range and numbers to the extent that many native animal species are either vulnerable, endangered or are now extinct.

3.6 Climate

The climate of Cobar may be described as hot, dry semi-arid. Climate data has been recorded continuously at Cobar from 1881: at the Cobar Post Office (048030) from 1881 to 1965, Cobar Meteorological Office (048027) for the later years 1962 to 2021, and at Cobar Airport (048237) from 1993. For the purposes of this Plan, data from the Cobar MO site has been adopted to ensure the more recent changes in climate can be reflected in decision-making.

Figures 3.2 to 3.5 provide an indication of the temperatures and temperature extremes experienced in Cobar.

Figure 3.2: Temperatures

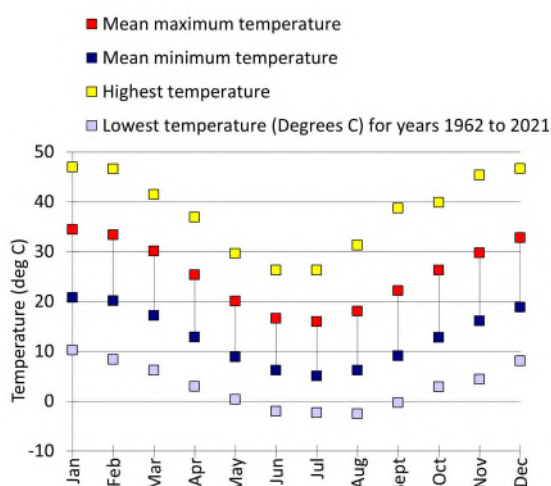
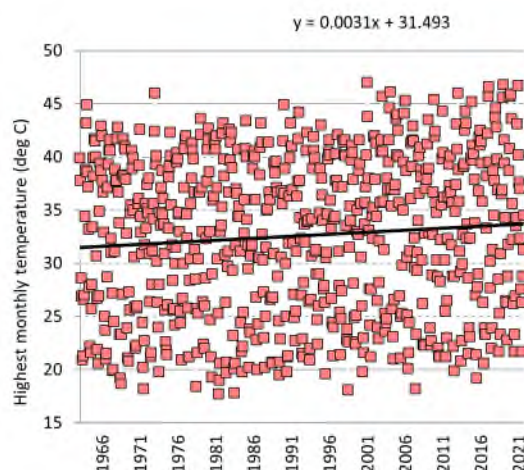


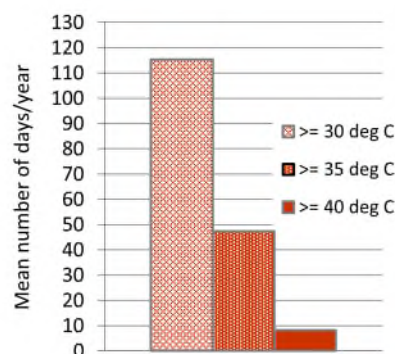
Figure 3.3 suggests that the highest monthly temperatures experienced in Cobar have steadily increased since recording commenced at the Met Office site in 1962.

Figure 3.3: Trend in highest monthly temperature



As shown by Figure 3.4, the mean number of days per year already exceeding 35° is 37.

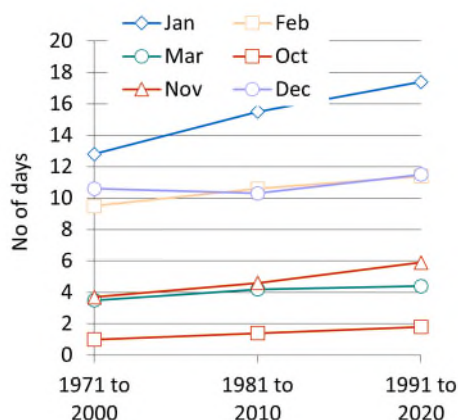
Figure 3.4: Mean number of hot days



The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage is projecting in its summary report, *Far West Climate Change Snapshot*, November 2014, the annual mean number of days with temperatures greater than 35°C to increase by between 30 and 40 by 2060-2079. This is over and above the corresponding mean of 53 days for the period 1991 to 2020. The inevitable conclusion is that the district can expect hotter temperatures for longer with further exaggerated extremes and a consequent effect upon the ability of residents to

live and work productively for longer periods of the year.

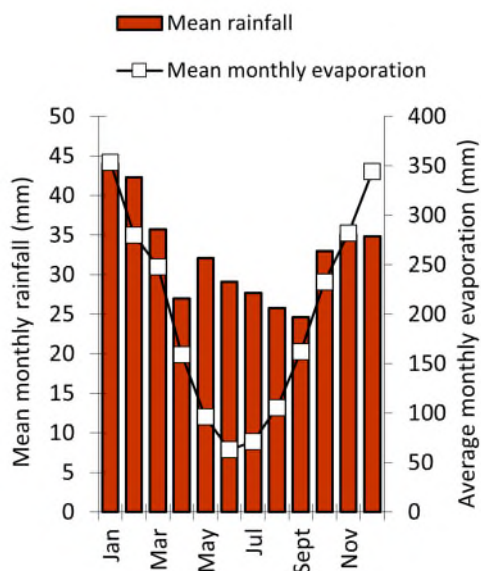
Figure 3.5: Number of days with temperatures $\geq 35^{\circ}\text{C}$



This projection is reinforced by Figure 3.5 which illustrates an increase in the mean number of days with temperatures $\geq 35^{\circ}$ for all summer months for progressive 30-year time periods.

Mean monthly rainfall distribution and pan evaporation is shown by Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Rainfall and monthly pan evaporation

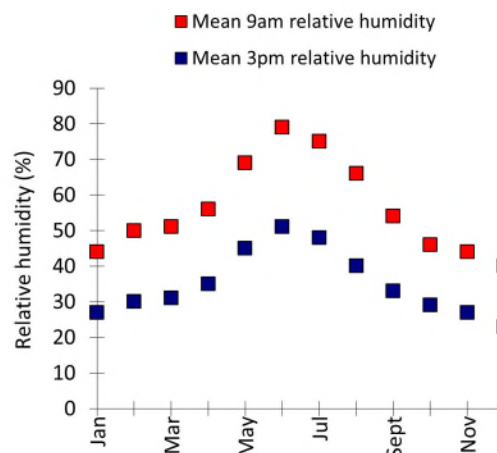


Mean annual rainfall recorded at the Cobar Met Office site is 390 mm while a value of 351 mm was

recorded at the Cobar Post Office site over the period of 83 years prior to closure. The mean number of days of rain ≥ 1 mm was slightly higher in the later record at 45 days compared with 42 days for the Cobar Post Office station. Average monthly pan evaporation estimated from the Bureau of Meteorology is well in excess of the mean monthly rainfall throughout the year.

Change in relative humidity over the course of the year is shown in Figure 3.7. Mean humidity is typically above 40% in the morning, the threshold accepted as ideal for human health and comfort, for all the year, but reduces to below 40% into the afternoon in all months except the winter months.

Figure 3.7: Relative humidity



Wind is predominantly from the east in the morning trending north-east, veering to south-westerly in the afternoon. Mean wind speeds are shown in Figure 3.8 and maximum wind gust speeds recorded at Figure 3.9. Maximum wind gust speed recorded is 111 km/hr.

Mean daily hours of sunshine and solar exposure is given by Figure 3.10. Solar energy available to residential solar PV installations varies from a low 2.8 kWh/m² in winter to a high of 7.7 kWh/m² at the height of summer.

Figure 3.8: Wind speeds

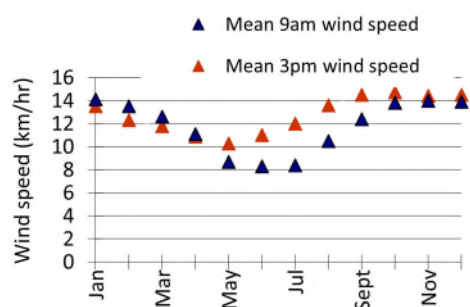


Figure 3.9: Maximum wind gust speed

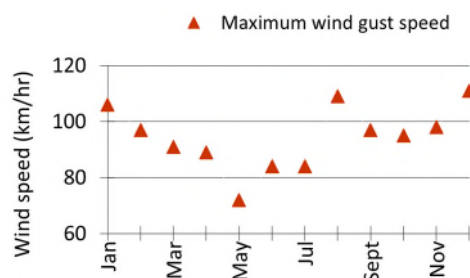
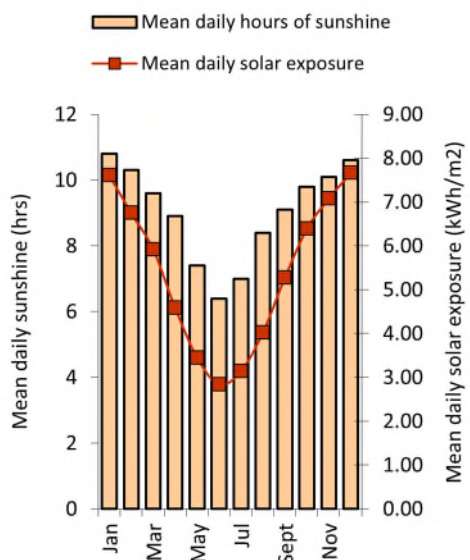


Figure 3.10: Sunshine and solar exposure



3.7 Flooding and drainage

Cobar is subject to only minor localised and flash flooding during heavier rain events. The town can be isolated by flooding of the Kidman Way and the Barrier Highway to the east. Closures are of short duration although damage to roads can be extensive. Work has been carried out to safeguard the railway.

Table 3.1 provides the highest daily rainfall on record for Cobar and the year of occurrence for each month while rainfall intensity-frequency-duration (IFD) values are shown at Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Highest daily rainfalls (mm)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
102.2	89.7	108.8	71.4	59.4	38.8
2008	1971	1983	1984	2000	2009
Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
44.6	56.9	44.4	44.6	56.6	74.8
1993	1971	1997	2003	1966	1985

Table 3.2: Rainfall IFD (mm)

Duration	Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)			
	10%	5%	2%	1%
1 min	3.60	4.32	5.32	6.12
2 min	6.26	7.47	8.99	10.2
3 min	8.57	10.2	12.4	14.0
4 min	10.6	12.7	15.4	17.5
5 min	12.4	14.8	18.1	20.7
10 min	19.0	22.8	28.2	32.6
20 min	26.8	32.2	39.9	46.1
30 min	31.5	37.9	46.8	53.9
1 hour	39.7	47.4	58.0	66.4
2 hour	47.7	56.6	68.6	78.0
6 hour	61.5	72.2	87.1	98.8
12 hour	72.2	84.6	102	116
18 hour	79.5	93.3	113	129
24 hour	85.2	100	122	139
48 hour	100	118	144	164
72 hour	108	128	156	178
96 hour	113	134	163	186
120 hour	117	137	167	190

3.8 Dust

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage collects data related to dust, including the hours of dust haze and storms and the extent of ground cover, through its DustWatch programme in the Western Natural Resource Management (NRM) Region. Figure 3.11 highlights the change in the amount of groundcover > 50% over time. The DustWatch programme revealed that dust storms occurred with record-breaking frequency in 2019 in the NRM Region. January 2019 was the dustiest month recorded across the Region since measurement commenced but Cobar experienced its highest reading of 202 hours of dust one year later during January 2020. October 2020 was the third dustiest month across the region since 2005.

Dust particles can be harmful to human health. There is strong evidence of long-term exposure to fine particles (PM_{2.5}) in the air contributing to adverse respiratory conditions.

Figure 3.11: Seasonal variation in the land area with groundcover exceeding 50%, Western NRM, to Aug 2021

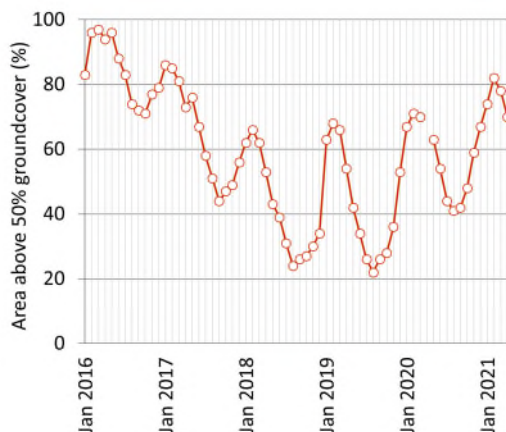
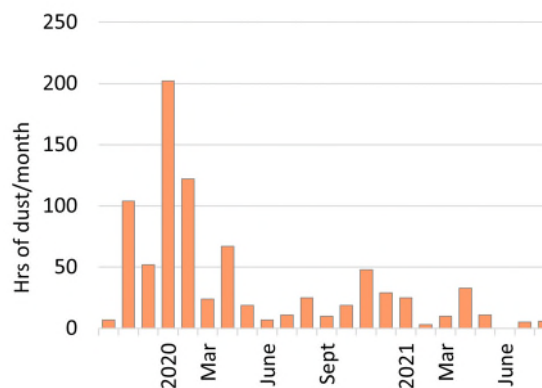


Figure 3.12 shows the prevalence of dust at the Cobar recording stations for the two-year period to date. The cause of dust generation is a combination of very low groundcover resulting from prolonged dry conditions (Figure 3.11), high temperatures and increased hours of strong winds (> 40km/h) associated with the passage of cold fronts bringing with them north to north westerly winds.

Figure 3.12: Indicative hours of dust (Oct 2019 to Aug 2021)



Note: One dust hour is achieved if the hourly average concentration of particles up to PM₁₀ size exceeds 25 µg/m³

3.9 Native title

Ngemba, Ngiyampaa, Wangaaypuwan and Wayilwan peoples lodged a Native Title claim (NC2012/001) in 2012 over Country bounded by the towns of Bourke, Brewarrina, Gilgandra, Nyngan and Hillston and the locality of Baden Park. The area of claim is approximately 95,000 km² with Cobar at the centre. A determination is yet to be made by the Federal Court.

3.10 Sites of cultural significance

A preliminary search of the Heritage NSW Aboriginal Heritage Management Information System (AHIMS) for sites of cultural significance within the rectangle formed by latitude and longitude -31.5344, 145.7777 and -31.4623, 145.8918 provided no evidence of sites in or adjacent to Cobar town.

Of great significance is the Mount Grenfell historic site located 67 km north-west of Cobar on the Barrier Highway. The site contains examples of ancient Aboriginal rock art, scarred trees, ochre pits and a waterhole.

3.11 Economic geography

The prosperity of Cobar is heavily dependent upon the wellbeing of the local mining industry. Copper, lead, zinc, silver and gold have been mined since

copper mining began 1871 with development of the Great Cobar Copper Mine which became the largest copper mine in Australia. At its peak in 1912, the operation employed over 2,000 workers. It closed in 1919 following a decline in the global market for copper.

The fickle nature of the industry is evidenced by repeated opening and closure of mines since that time. In 1934, the New Occidental Gold Mine opened and continued operations until the early 1950's. Peak Gold Mines has recommenced mining at the site in 1992 using modern methods and has started operations at the New Cobar site on Fort Bourke Hill. The Cornish, Scottish & Australian Mine mined copper from the early 1870's but closed its mine in 1920. The mine re-opened in 1965 and continued until 1998 when market conditions forced it to close again. It has since re-opened and is fully operational again. The CBH Resources Limited Endeavor Mine opened in 1983 is now the largest producer of zinc, lead and silver in the locality. About 650 workers are employed by the combined operations. Further exploration and smaller scale exploitation is planned for sites further removed from, but still serviced by, Cobar.

The mining industry is the economic backbone of the town not only providing employment but also supporting the heavy manufacturing, retail, housing and hospitality sectors.

Cobar has historically had a large part of its economic base centred on rural industry: predominantly sheep and wool production but, more recently, goat production. The importance of this sector has been receding slowly in line with a general decline in traditional rural industries throughout Australia. Council sees a future in intensive, low environmental impact agriculture servicing non-traditional markets.

Accommodation and food services are important sectors in the town's economy satisfying the needs equally of recreational and business travellers. Tourism Research Australia record 54 tourism-related businesses in Cobar Shire in 2019. This would include operators of the seven motels which are, on occasions, at 100% occupancy. Approximately 60% of travellers were from within

NSW with the balance from interstate. Average length of stay was two nights and just over half of travellers were unaccompanied. Reasons for visiting or stopping at Cobar would be the town's industrial heritage and Aboriginal heritage as exemplified by Mt Grenfell.

As a point of interest, the The Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme was founded in Cobar in 1924 by the Reverend Stanley Drummond. The scheme continues to operate from Manly, providing an outreach service to all children in regional and remote NSW.

3.12 Design influences

This Chapter focusses on a range of environmental and economic issues which bear upon the living conditions that the next generation of community members can expect to encounter over their lifetime and which help to define design criteria for new housing and other facilities. Any design decisions made now must recognise the more challenging environmental conditions predicted to occur within the serviceable life of a structure built in the near future.

Uppermost of the challenges is that presented by climate change and, in particular, the longer periods of temperatures > 35°C as modelled by the former NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and discussed in the *Far West Climate Change Snapshot, 2014* which flags an additional 10-20 days of high temperatures in the period 2020 – 2039, increasing to 30-40 additional days of high temperatures by 2070. Separate bodies of work by Healthabitat and by NSW Health at Weilmoringle to assess the impacts of passive thermal control interventions verify that measures which reduce thermal gain result in much lower internal temperatures and make the active thermal controls such as air conditioning more effective and cost-efficient.

Retro-fitting improvements to existing housing is not easily accomplished although, by this time, all houses should have roof spaces fully insulated as a very minimum. Aboriginal social housing owned by Cobar LALC is scheduled in 2022 to be retrofitted with reverse cycle air conditioning and grid-



connected 5.0 kW solar systems and, similarly, the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is thought to be installing, or to have installed, rooftop solar and air conditioning to its housing but details have not been disclosed.

4. THE POPULATION

4.1 Population profile

The statistical information set out in this Chapter has been derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census 2016 using data available from ABS TableBuilder.

Data are generally for Cobar Locality. The Locality (L) geography was chosen as it describes the Cobar urban area as against the entire area of Cobar Shire. Indigenous Location (ILO) and Local Government Area (A) geographies have been used where locality data are unavailable, as indicated in the table heading. It should be noted that Indigenous Location and Local Government Area data also include the populations of Murrin Bridge, Euabalong and Euabalong West (total Aboriginal population 160), which are not located in the Murdi Paaki Region.

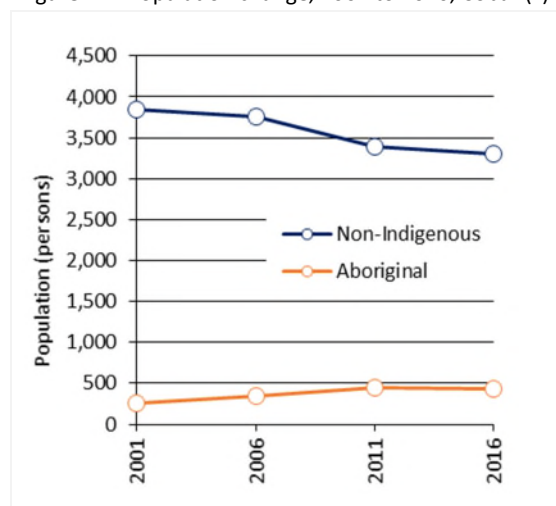
Where possible, the Murdi Paaki Region comparison geography used in this Plan is the aggregated 154 SA1s (ABS Statistical Area Level 1) that approximate the Region. For variables where SA1 level data are not published, either the 8 Local Government Areas (LGAs) approximating the Murdi Paaki Region or the North-West NSW Indigenous Region (NW-NSW IREG) has been adopted.

Table 4.1: Total population, Cobar (L)

3,741	persons
Change from 2011 Census	-94
Source: ABS Census 2016	
Table 4.2: Aboriginal population %, Cobar (L)	
12%	n=435
Murdi Paaki Region	23%
New South Wales	3%

The most accurate count of the population is the Estimated Resident Population (ERP); however, the finest scale at which this is available is by Local Government Area. At the ABS Census 2016, based on comparison with the ERP, the Aboriginal population of Cobar Shire was undercounted by 21%, and the non-Indigenous population by 12%.

Figure 4.1: Population change, 2001 to 2016, Cobar (L)



Data for Cobar indicate that the ABS has imputed populations for 156 dwellings which were thought to be occupied on census night but which returned no census form. Imputation is a statistical process for predicting values where no response was provided. The ABS imputes values for four variables: sex, age, place of usual residence and registered marital status, but not for Aboriginality. It does this by locating a 'donor record' and copying the relevant responses to the record requiring imputation. The donor record will have similar characteristics, will have the required variables stated, and will be located geographically as close as possible to the location of the record to be imputed. For Cobar, the ABS imputed a total of 450 persons (242 male and 208 female) to the 156 dwellings. These people form the great majority of the cohort for whom Aboriginality is not stated in the tables generated by the ABS Census 2016. It is not possible to know how many of these dwellings housed Aboriginal households. Indeed, given the arbitrary nature of the process, any one of the 156 households could equally house the population imputed to it based on the

composition of the donor record household, or a group household of 80-year-old pensioners. It is likely, based on the undercount, that a greater proportion of these dwellings accommodate Aboriginal households.

Figure 4.2: Population age distribution

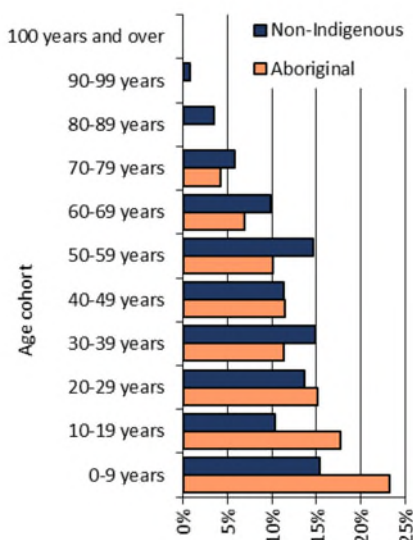
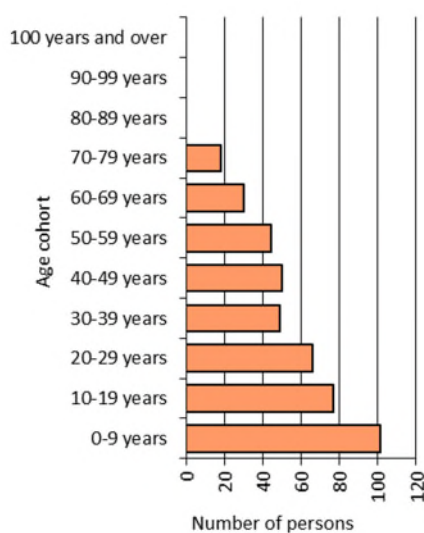


Figure 4.3: Aboriginal population age distribution



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.3: Median age of persons (years) (Cobar (ILOC))		
	23	38

Murdi Paaki Region	26	46
New South Wales	22	38

Table 4.4: Population aged under 15 years (2016)		
	n=141	n=688
Of population fraction	32%	21%
Murdi Paaki Region	32%	16%
New South Wales	34%	18%

Table 4.5: Social marital status (Persons aged 15 years and over)		
Registered marriage	24%	47%
De facto marriage	22%	17%
Not married	54%	37%

Table 4.6: Lone person households		
	n=48	n=388
Lone person households	22%	34%
Murdi Paaki Region	21%	36%
New South Wales	15%	24%

Table 4.7: Family household family composition		
One parent	28%	13%
Couple, no children	28%	44%
Couple, with children	44%	42%
Other family	0%	1%
One parent families:		
Murdi Paaki Region	43%	15%
New South Wales	36%	15%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.8: Multi-family households (of all family households)		
	n=4	n=3
	3%	0%
Murdi Paaki Region	4%	1%
New South Wales	4%	2%
Table 4.9: Families with resident non-dependent children (Cobar (L))		
	n=27	n=100
	17%	14%
Murdi Paaki Region	25%	18%
New South Wales	25%	21%
A non-dependent child is a natural, adopted, step or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the household, who is aged 15 years and over and is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and who has no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household		

KEY FINDINGS

- Of all those counted in Cobar on Census night 2016, 169 (all non-Indigenous) were in a non-private dwelling including hotel, motel, hospital or nursing home;
- Since 2001, the Aboriginal population in Cobar has increased by 4.44% on average each year;
- The median age of the Aboriginal population, at 23 years, is lower than that of the non-Indigenous population, lower than for the Murdi Paaki Region on average, but about the same as for NSW;
- The Aboriginal population aged under 15 years is the same as the Murdi Paaki Region as a whole, and for NSW, but is almost one and a half times the non-Indigenous population fraction of Cobar;
- Non-Indigenous households are one and a half times as likely to comprise a person living alone as an Aboriginal household;

- When compared with a non-Indigenous family, Aboriginal families living together in a household are twice as likely to be a single parent family;
- Aboriginal adults were almost 20% less likely to be in a couple relationship than non-Indigenous adults, perhaps reflecting the younger population age structure;
- About 3% of Aboriginal households contained multiple families compared to no multi-family households in the non-Indigenous population;
- Aboriginal households had about the same proportion of resident non-dependent children as non-Indigenous households. The fraction in both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous households was less than for the Murdi Paaki Region and NSW.

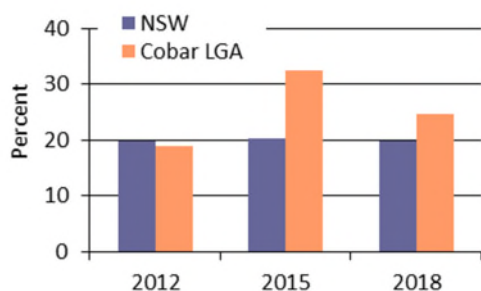
4.2 Educational status

Table 4.10: Educational institution attended by the Aboriginal population	
	n=151
Preschool	14
Infants/primary – Government	47
Infants/primary – other non-Government	13
Secondary – Government	44
Secondary – Other Non-Government	0
University or other Tertiary Institution	15
Other educational institution	0
Not stated	18

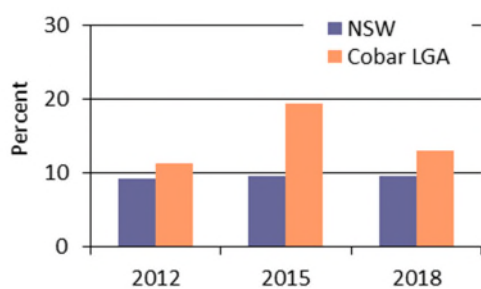
Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.11: Pre-school attendance		
	n=15	n=52
Children 3 years old	0%	6%
Murdi Paaki Region	41%	50%
New South Wales	52%	49%
	n=9	n=48
Children 4 years old	33%	65%
Murdi Paaki Region	82%	79%
New South Wales	72%	72%

Figure 4.4: AEDC summary indicator of developmental vulnerability (all children)

One or more domains:



Two or more domains:



Aboriginal children (n=28 or 34% of 82)

Table 4.12: AEDC vulnerability indicators

	Vuln 1	Vuln 2
Cobar	24.7%	13.0%

Source: Australian Early Development Census, Community Profile 2018, Far West NSW

Figure 4.5: Student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time), 2019 Semester 1

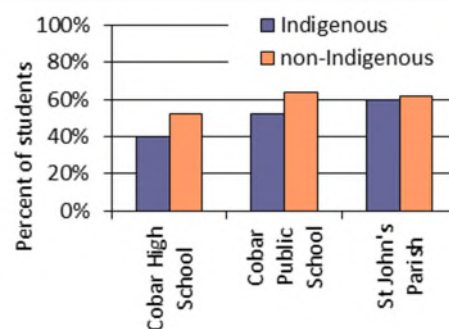


Table 4.13: Educational attainment, NAPLAN, School average when compared with all Australian students

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3					
Cobar Public School	4	5	4	4	5
St John's Parish	5	5	5	4	4
Year 5					
Cobar Public School	5	4	5	5	4
St John's Parish	3	3	4	4	4
Year 7					
Cobar High School	4	4	5	4	4
Year 9					
Cobar High School	5	5	4	5	5
Legend					
Above average	2	Close to		3	
Below average	4	Well below		5	

Source:acara MySchools website

Figure 4.6: Highest year of schooling, all Aboriginal adults

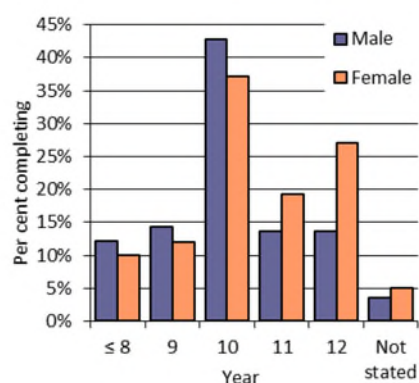
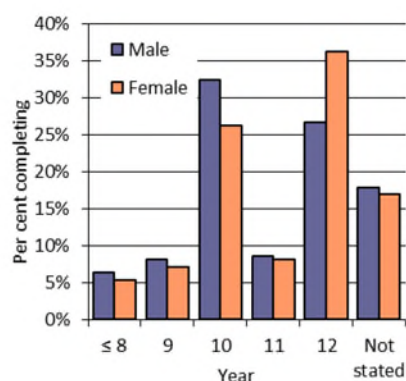


Figure 4.7: Highest year of schooling, all non-Indigenous adults



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.14: Percentage of students completed Year 12 (Persons aged 15 to 19 who have completed schooling and are no longer at school)		
	n=15	n=47
	40%	32%
Murdi Paaki Region	20%	48%
New South Wales	33%	51%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.15: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with a vocational qualification		
	n=302	n=2613
Cert I-IV	21%	22%
Murdi Paaki Region	18%	26%
New South Wales	25%	20%
Table 4.16: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with an undergraduate diploma		
	n=302	n=2613
Diploma and Advanced Diploma	2%	6%
Murdi Paaki Region	5%	7%
New South Wales	7%	10%
Table 4.17: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with a tertiary qualification		
	n=302	n=2613
Degree and higher	3%	10%
Murdi Paaki Region	4%	12%
New South Wales	8%	27%
Table 4.18: Engagement of persons aged 17 and 18 years in employment, education and training		
Fully engaged	100%	67%
Murdi Paaki Region	49%	74%
New South Wales	62%	84%

KEY FINDINGS

- A third of the Aboriginal four-year-olds enumerated in the 2016 census appear to attend pre-school compared to almost two-thirds of the non-Aboriginal children. No Aboriginal child aged three years attend pre-school;
- On Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) indicators, children commencing their first year of full-time schooling in the Cobar LGA have not reached the same stage of early childhood development as their counterparts in NSW;
- Student attendance level for Aboriginal children (the proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) is slightly lower than for non-Indigenous children at the three Cobar schools;
- Educational attainment at the three Cobar schools is close to or below the average of all Australian students;
- Of those young persons aged 15-19 who had left school, a higher proportion of Aboriginal than non-Indigenous young people had completed Year 12. This reflects the mining economy of the town where apprenticeships may be available;
- All Aboriginal persons aged 17 or 18 years were engaged in training or learning;
- Non-Indigenous adults were one and a half times more likely than Aboriginal adults to hold a post-school qualification at any level. The Aboriginal population aged over 15 years in Cobar has about the same proportion of the population with a post-school qualification as the Murdi Paaki Region but the proportion is less than for the Aboriginal population of NSW.

4.3 Economic participation

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.19: Labour force status (Percent of labour force)		
	n=192	n=1547
In full-time or part-time work	89%	95%
Unemployed, looking for work	11%	5%
Murdi Paaki Region	76%	94%
New South Wales	85%	94%
22% of those employed worked part-time		
Table 4.20: Participation in the labour market (Percent of population aged 15 and over)		
	n=306	n=2256
In labour force	63%	69%
Not in labour force	37%	31%
Murdi Paaki Region	44%	61%
New South Wales	56%	64%
Table 4.21: Employment to population ratio (Percent of population aged 15 and over)		
	n=170	n=1470
Employment to population ratio	56%	65%
Murdi Paaki Region	34%	57%
New South Wales	47%	60%

Table 4.22: Industry of employment – Total population

Industry	Aboriginal		Non-Indigenous	
	No employed	% of total employed	No employed	% of total employed
Mining	43	26%	548	37%
Accommodation and Food Services	18	11%	100	7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	17	10%	121	8%
Retail Trade	16	10%	111	7%
Public Administration and Safety	16	10%	101	7%
Education and Training	10	6%	98	7%
Construction	8	5%	62	4%
Administrative and Support Services	8	5%	36	2%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	7	4%	31	2%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5	3%	54	4%
Manufacturing	5	3%	32	2%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	4	2%	13	1%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	3	2%	15	1%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	0	0%	26	2%
Wholesale Trade	0	0%	16	1%
Financial and Insurance Services	0	0%	11	1%
Information Media and Telecommunications	0	0%	8	1%
Arts and Recreation Services	0	0%	8	1%
Other Services	0	0%	51	3%
Inadequately described/not stated	7	4%	49	3%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.23: Occupation of all persons employed		
Managers	7%	10%
Professionals	8%	14%
Technician/trades	18%	20%
Community service workers	15%	10%
Clerical/admin workers	10%	10%
Sales workers	6%	6%
Machinery operators	20%	19%
Labourers	16%	10%

Figure 4.8: Hours worked by age group

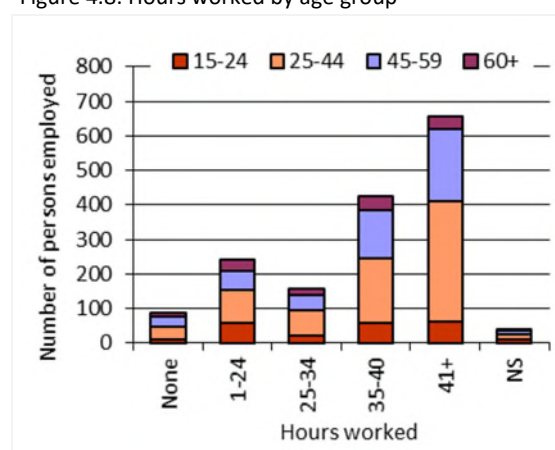


Table 4.24: Number of Aboriginal workers employed in the public and private sectors

Australian Government	4
NSW Government	11
Cobar Shire Council	13
Private sector	134
Not stated	4

Table 4.25: Total number of businesses, Cobar LGA

At 30 th June 2019	
No of employees	No of businesses
Nil	282
1-4	109
5-19	53
20 or more	10

Table 4.26: Business entries and exits, Cobar LGA

At 30 th June 2019	
Year	Change in number
2015	-
2016	4
2017	24
2018	11
2019	7

KEY FINDINGS

- With an unemployment rate two times that of the non-Indigenous population, and a lower labour force participation rate, the employment to population ratio for Aboriginal people in Cobar implies that more than one in two adults are in any form of employment. This ratio is lower than for the non-Indigenous population fraction but higher than for the Murdi Paaki Region or NSW as a whole;
- Aboriginal workers are more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be employed in accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance or retail trade but less likely to be employed as a manager, professional or tradesman;
- The mining industry employs the largest proportion of the workforce, both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous, followed by health care and retail trade;

- Data for Cobar LGA as a whole indicate a slow increase over time in the number of businesses.

4.4 Income

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.27: Median total household income (Cobar (ILO))		
\$/week	\$1,202	\$1,610
N-W NSW IREG	\$907	\$1,013
New South Wales	\$1,214	\$1,498

Table 4.28: Estimates of personal income, total population, Cobar LGA

Median employee income (\$) (2017)	\$57,165
Income share of top 10% of earners (excl. government payments)	28%
FW and Orana SA4	\$44,418
New South Wales	\$49,256

Figure 4.9: Average annual growth in median employee income, 2014-2017, Cobar LGA

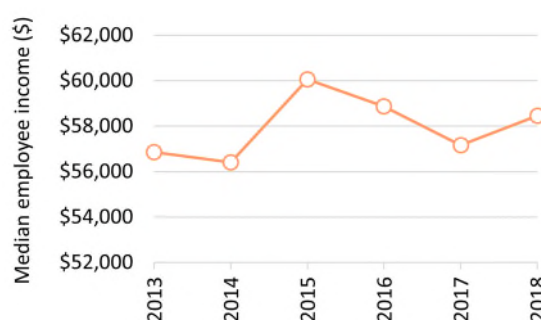


Table 4.29: Sources of income support, Cobar LGA

In 2019, percentage of total population aged 15 and over receiving:

Age pension (n=418)	12%
Carer payment (n=35)	1%
Disability support pension (n=164)	5%
Newstart allowance (n=128)	4%
Parenting payment, single (n=64)	2%
Family tax benefit A (n=231)	6%
Family tax benefit B (n=195)	5%
Commonwealth rent assistance (n=128)	4%

Table 4.30: SEIFA Index of disadvantage 2016

SEIFA Index (IRSd) – Cobar LGA	968
Rank in NSW	63 rd of 130
Murdi Paaki Region:	
Highest (Cobar)	968
Lowest (Brewarrina)	757

KEY FINDINGS

- Median weekly income for Aboriginal households is lower than other households; the Aboriginal median weekly individual income is 33% lower than for non-Indigenous persons.
- It is well established that the Murdi Paaki Region suffers the highest level of socio-economic disadvantage in NSW. Cobar LGA is ranked the least disadvantaged LGA in the Murdi Paaki Region, ranking 63rd in NSW (very close to the median for the state) in the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSd).



5. COMMUNITY HOUSING PROFILE

5.1 Cobar housing generally

There are a total 1,980 dwellings recorded in the ABS Census 2016 in the Cobar Locality (L).

Table 5.1: Dwelling types, Cobar (L)

Total number	1,980	
Separate houses	1,583	80%
Terraces, town houses	40	2%
Apartments	253	13%
Other dwelling types	104	5%

Table 5.2: Private dwellings unoccupied on Census night (Cobar (L))

	n=1,980	
	376	19%
Change since 2011	+49	
Murdi Paaki Region	19%	
New South Wales	9%	

273 people were counted elsewhere on Census night

Table 5.3: Households counted in a dwelling on Census night (Cobar (L))

Resident households	1,341
Visitor households	115
Non-classifiable	152

Table 5.4: Number of bedrooms per dwelling (Cobar (L))

0 or 1 bedrooms	120	9%
2 bedrooms	191	14%
3 bedrooms	634	46%
4 bedrooms	382	28%
5 bedrooms and more	52	4%

Figure 5.1: Dwelling size by number of bedrooms

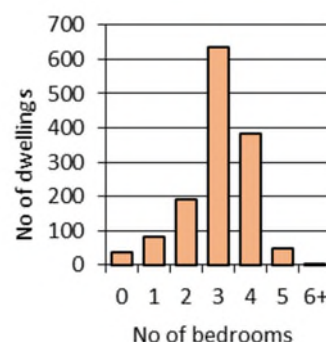


Table 5.5: Building approvals, 2019 (Cobar (A))

Total building approvals	6
Private sector houses	3
Private other dwelling	-
Other dwelling units	3

Source: ABS Data by Region, 2011-19, Economy and Industry

Table 5.6: Median residential property price (Cobar (A))

In 2019	\$197,500
No of transfers	63

Source: ABS, Data by Region, 2011-19, Economy and Industry

5.2 A statistical comparative snapshot

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
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Table 5.7: Average household size (Cobar (ILOC))

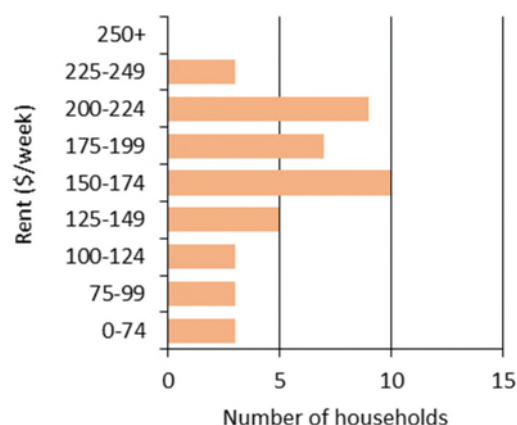
Persons	2.9	2.3
N-W NSW IREG	3.0	2.1
New South Wales	3.1	2.6

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.8: Average number of persons per bedroom (Cobar (ILOC))		
Persons	1.0	0.7
N-W NSW IREG	0.9	0.7
New South Wales	1.0	0.9
Table 5.9: Households enumerated (Cobar (L))		
One family household	152	719
Multiple family household	4	3
Non-family household	60	400
Non-classifiable	0	0
Not applicable	0	0
Table 5.10: Occupancy (Cobar (L))		
One person	48	388
Two people	62	398
Three people	33	119
Four people	31	136
Five people and greater	39	87
Table 5.11: Proportion of all households renting (Cobar (L))		
Proportion of all households	54%	34%
Real estate agent	32%	36%
NSW housing authority	26%	6%
Community housing provider	14%	2%
Other private	11%	13%
Other	16%	43%
Murdi Paaki Region	62%	24%
New South Wales	56%	32%
Table 5.12: Median rent (Cobar (ILOC))		
\$/week	175	156
N-W NSW IREG	160	150
New South Wales	270	390

Table 5.13: Percentage of all households with rent equal to or greater than 30% of household income (2016) (Cobar (A))

Renting **5.7%**

Figure 5.2: Weekly rent payable by Aboriginal households, social housing rentals (Cobar (L))



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.14: Home ownership (including owned with a mortgage) (Cobar (L))		
	n=87	n=689
Proportion of all households	40%	50%
Murdi Paaki Region	38%	76%
New South Wales	44%	68%
Table 5.15: Change in Aboriginal home ownership (Cobar (L))		
	2016	2011
Proportion of all Aboriginal households	40%	36%
Table 5.16: Persons accommodated in non-private dwellings (Cobar (L))		
Hotel, motel, B&B	0	143

Table 5.17: Number of persons homeless in Bourke, Cobar, Coonamble SA3

(After Chamberlain and MacKenzie)

Marginally housed	14
Tertiary homeless	7
Secondary homeless	45
Primary homeless	294
Living in crowded conditions	167

5.3 Population mobility

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
---------------------	------------	----------------

Table 5.18: One-year residential mobility (Cobar (L))

	n=204	n=1,060
Residents in the household aged one year and over with a different address one year ago		
All residents	14%	16%
Some of the residents	7%	2%
No resident	78%	82%
Murdi Paaki Region		
	12%	10%
New South Wales		
	16%	13%
Residents in the household aged five years and over with a different address five years ago		
All residents	39%	39%
Some of the residents	7%	3%
No resident	54%	58%

Table 5.19: Number of Aboriginal persons with a different address at stated location 1 year ago and five years ago (Cobar (L))

Place of residence	1 year ago	5 years ago
Within Cobar LGA	34	23
Elsewhere in the MPR	10	8
Elsewhere in NSW	8	13
Other	0	0

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
---------------------	------------	----------------

Table 5.20: Access and mobility (Cobar (L))

No motor vehicles	10%	5%
One motor vehicle	29%	33%
Two motor vehicles	37%	34%
Three motor vehicles	10%	9%
Four or more motor vehicles	6%	3%
Not stated	8%	16%

5.4 The local housing market

House prices in Cobar vary markedly depending on the quality of construction and building age, size and condition. There were 72 sales in 2020. For the four years to 2020, information is available for 238 sales and sale prices have been disclosed for 232 of these. The median price was \$170,000; the range was \$100 for a small, run-down dwelling to \$440,000 for modern brick home on a 2,131m² block. At the time of writing, there were 54 houses on the market with asking prices between \$70,000 and \$430,000.

5.5 Building activity

Development approval for residential development has been subdued to some time as indicated by Table 5.21 which is for freestanding houses.

Table 5.21: Development applications for residential dwellings

Period	Private	Public
FY2017-18	2	0
FY2018-19	3	0
FY2019-20	3	0
FY2020-21	2	0
Total	10	0

Source:
https://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_BLDG_APPROVALS_LGA2018#

5.6 Aboriginal social housing

Two local Aboriginal organisations, Cobar Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Cobar Aboriginal Advancement Cooperative Society Ltd (CAACS)

have title to residential properties in Cobar. Number of holdings is shown in Table 5.22. Cobar LALC manages its own properties while the assets of Cobar Aboriginal Advancement Co-op are managed by Mid Lachlan Aboriginal Housing Management Co-operative, now rebranded as Mlahmc. The AHO also owns social housing properties in Cobar which are specifically available for the Aboriginal community. AHO properties are managed by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and Cobar LALC.

In addition to Aboriginal social housing, Cobar LALC has title to three vacant lots within established residential developments and greenfield sites in Nullamut Street and Railway Parade North. Lots in Nullamut Street east of Wood Street are zoned R1 General Residential and can be used to develop housing with consent. Lots in Railway Parade North, east of Sixth Street (and the three lots immediately to the west), are zoned IN1 General Industrial. While dwelling houses are not a

prohibited use in this zoning, it may be challenging to obtain consent, and it is thus likely to be preferable from CLALC's point of view to develop these lots for industrial use. The AHO has title to six vacant lots.

Table 5.22: Ownership of Aboriginal social housing

Asset owner	Number	Manager
CAACS	5	Mlahmc
Cobar LALC	26	CLALC
AHO	1	CLALC
AHO	24	DCJ
Total	56	

Cobar LALC is an approved AHO Growth Provider supported through a partnership arrangement with the AHO to grow and strengthen capabilities to be able to expand its managed portfolio of AHO properties.

Table 5.23: Cadastral information for Cobar LALC residential properties (Self-managed)

Lot	Section	DP	Registered Proprietor	Area (m ²)	Street Address	Property Type	Number of Bedrooms
71		622081	CLALC		1/29 Leah Street	Unit	1
71		622081	CLALC		2/29 Leah Street	Unit	1
71		622081	CLALC		3/29 Leah Street	Unit	1
1		860711	CLALC		1/15 Nullamut Street	Villa	2
1		860711	CLALC		2/15 Nullamut Street	Villa	2
1		129470	CLALC		74a Marshall Street	Villa	2
1		129470	CLALC		74b Marshall Street	Villa	2
75		869164	CLALC		1/27 Acacia Drive	Villa	2
75		869164	CLALC		2/27 Acacia Drive	Villa	2
72		261594	CLALC		19 Tindera Street	Cottage	3
44		857715	CLALC		4 Baldry Close	Cottage	3
65		863149	CLALC		11 Echidna Street	Cottage	3
77		869164	CLALC		14 Belah Crescent	Cottage	3
34		792294	CLALC		10 Jones Drive	Cottage	3
51		860711	CLALC		6 Hogan Place	Cottage	3
14		860711	CLALC		5 Bannister Court	Cottage	3
11		618405	CLALC		26 Bathurst Street	Cottage	3
109		262941	CLALC		34 Kurrajong Circle	Cottage	3
42		847169	CLALC		13 Acacia Drive	Cottage	3
117		262941	CLALC		50 Kurrajong Circle	Cottage	4
49		261594	CLALC		7 Cypress Place	Cottage	4
52		857715	CLALC		5 Echidna Street	Cottage	4

Table 5.23: Cadastral information for Cobar LALC residential properties (Self-managed)

Lot	Section	DP	Registered Proprietor	Area (m ²)	Street Address	Property Type	Number of Bedrooms
40		792294	CLALC		7 Jandra Crescent	Cottage	4
37		847169	CLALC		3 Acacia Drive	Cottage	4
99		262941	CLALC		4 Box Place	Cottage	4
384		755649	CLALC		46 Bathurst Street	Cottage	4
21		860711	CLALC		6 James Place	Vacant	-
37		1115073	CLALC		15 Duffy Drive	Vacant	-
86		869164	CLALC		3 Belah Crescent	Vacant	-
			CLALC		Nullamut Street	Vacant	-
			CLALC		Railway Parade North	Vacant	-

Table 5.24: Cadastral information for CAACS residential properties (Managed by Mlahmc)

Lot	Section	DP	Registered Proprietor	Area (m ²)	Street Address	Property Type	Number of Bedrooms
3		506326	CAACS		68 Bradley Street	Cottage	3
17	40	758254	CAACS		2 Longworth Street	Cottage	3
8	41	758254	CAACS		39 Mopone Street	Cottage	3
222		547280	CAACS		62 Louth Road	Cottage	3
16	16	758254	CAACS		5 Mitchell Drive	Cottage	3
Identified by TSEP as an omission and added after HEHP completion and endorsement							
16		213415	CAACS		15 Booroomugga Street	Cottage	3

Table 5.25: Cadastral information for AHO residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	Registered Proprietor	Area (m ²)	Street Address	Property Type	Number of Bedrooms
Managed by Cobar LALC							
57		863149	AHO		6 Bilby Close	Cottage	3
Managed by DCJ							
51		787508	AHO		35 Prince St	Villa	2
52		787508	AHO		37 Prince St	Villa	2
66		614461	AHO		15 Goold St	Cottage	3
24		262071	AHO		6 Bathurst St	Cottage	3
31		261594	AHO		23 Tindera St	Cottage	3
101		262941	AHO		2 Box Pl	Cottage	3
50		228086	AHO		2 Rankin St	Cottage	3
2		508015	AHO		50 Green St	Cottage	3
42		262941	AHO		27 Yarran Cir	Cottage	3
41		262941	AHO	650.2	29 Yarran Cir	Cottage	3
32		262941	AHO		28 Yarran Cir	Cottage	3
20		262941	AHO		8 Wilga Cres	Cottage	3
18		219437	AHO		95 Monaghan St	Cottage	3
14		260360	AHO		19 Mathews St	Cottage	3
65		262941	AHO		16 Kurrajong Cir	Cottage	3
62		262941	AHO		10 Kurrajong Cir	Cottage	3

Table 5.25: Cadastral information for AHO residential properties

Lot	Section	DP	Registered Proprietor	Area (m ²)	Street Address	Property Type	Number of Bedrooms
18		220704	AHO		2 Madden St	Cottage	4
2		541474	AHO		31 Goold St	Cottage	5
16		262071	AHO		1 Mulga Pl	Cottage	4
8		792294	AHO		17 Jones Dr	Cottage	4
24		806636	AHO		21 Acacia Dr	Cottage	4
45		262941	AHO		21 Yarran Cir	Cottage	4
26		262941	AHO		16 Yarran Cir	Cottage	4
5		250116	AHO	735.8	6 Lamrock St	Cottage	4
68		262941	AHO		22 Kurrajong Cir	Vacant	-
27		262941	AHO		18 Yarran Cir	Vacant	-
37		860711	AHO		11 James Place	Vacant	-
9		1115073	AHO		8 Clifton Place	Vacant	-
11		3751	AHO		41 Morrison Street	Vacant	-
61		262941	AHO		8 Kurrajong Circuit	Vacant	-

Figure 5.3: Aerial photograph of Cobar



Maps data: Google, © 2022 CNES/Airbus

5.7 Housing assets

The houses shown in Figure 5.4 are illustrative of the types of building construction to be found in the Aboriginal social housing sector throughout Cobar. The main forms of construction are lightweight timber frame with suspended timber floor on piers, with Hardiplank style cladding and either a tiled or metal roof, and brick veneer housing with both metal and tiled roofing materials.

Figure 5.4: Typical lightweight forms of construction, tiled or metal roofs



5.8 MPRH&BC household survey

5.8.1 Survey findings in summary

A data gathering exercise was undertaken in 2016-2017 under the guidance of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly to provide the evidence for reform of the Aboriginal social housing sector in the Murdi Paaki Region. Over 1,400 households took part, including 55 households in Cobar. As well as tenants living in social housing, homeowners, private renters, people staying in refugees and/or couch surfing contributed to the findings of the survey. The contribution from Cobar is presented below.

Table 5.26: Housing mix, number of bedrooms

Asset owner	1	2	3	4	5+
Cobar LALC	3	6	10	7	-
CAACS	-	-	5	-	-
AHO	-	2	15	7	1
Total	3	8	31	14	1

Figure 5.5: Housing mix (All households participating in the survey)

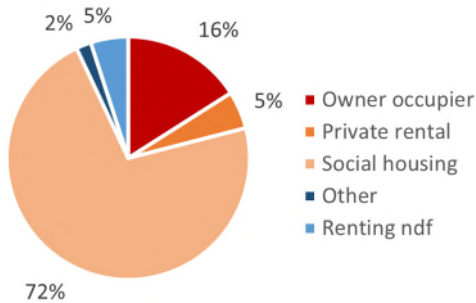


Figure 5.6: Managing organisation (Social housing tenants)

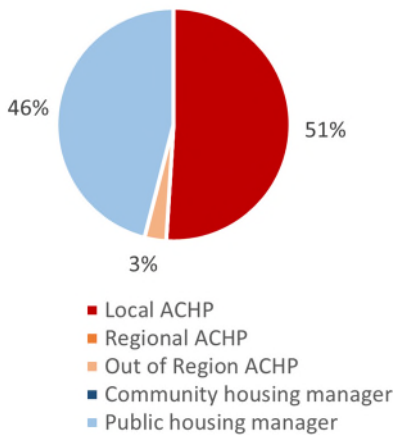


Figure 5.7: Level of satisfaction with housing manager

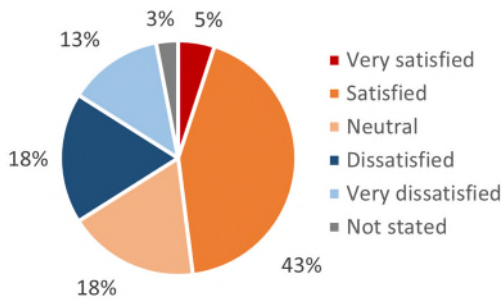


Figure 5.8: Preferred manager of Aboriginal social housing (Social housing tenants)

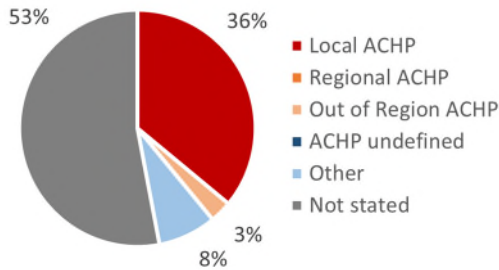


Figure 5.9: Social housing tenants with a tenancy agreement

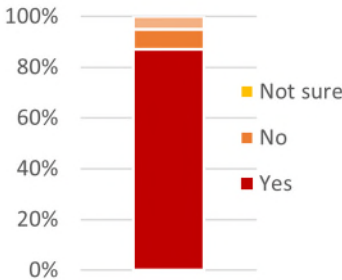


Figure 5.10: Social housing tenants claiming Commonwealth Rent Assistance

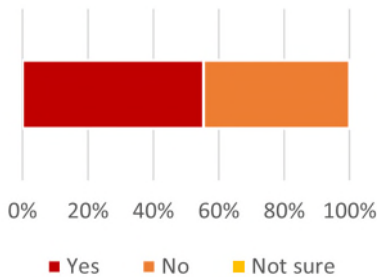


Figure 5.11: Rent levels 2016-2017

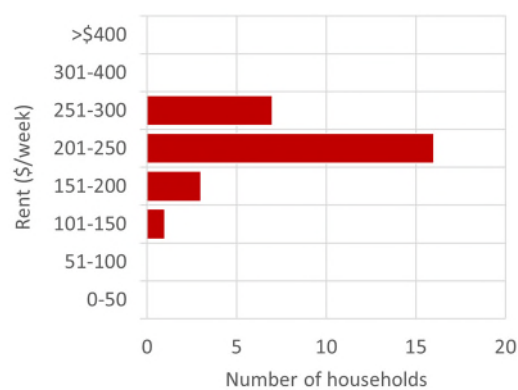


Figure 5.12: Household size range (All households)

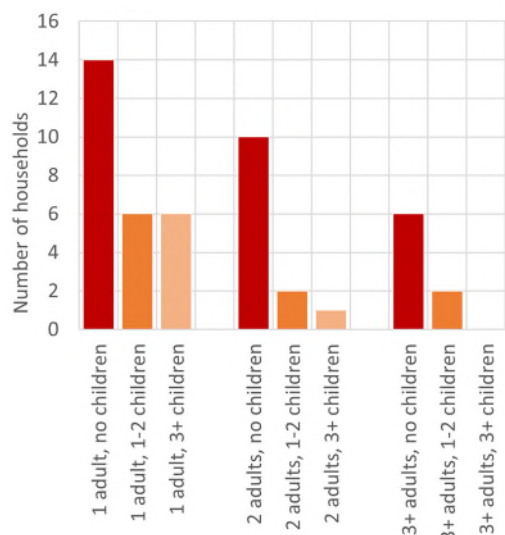
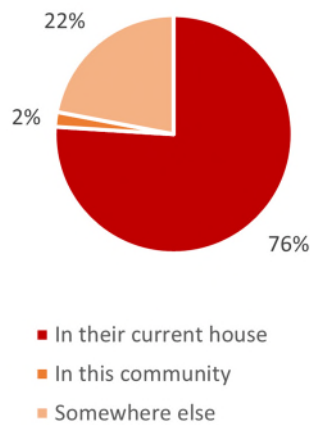


Figure 5.13: Address of household 5 years ago



KEY FINDINGS

- 72% of respondents to the survey were renting social housing, 5% were in private rentals and 16% were homeowners. Two respondents were homeless;
- Of Aboriginal social housing tenants, 51% rented through a local Aboriginal community-controlled housing manager, 3% through an Out-of-Region (OoR) provider, and 46% of tenants in Aboriginal social housing managed by a non-Indigenous manager;
- 48% of tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with their housing manager, 18% were neutral, while 31% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 2% did not state a view;
- 36% of tenants stated a preference for a local Aboriginal community-controlled housing manager while the majority, 8% preferred to that social housing be managed by another entity but 53% did not state a preference for housing provider;
- Over 4 out of 5 households had entered into a formal tenancy agreement;
- At the time of the MPRH&BC household survey, social housing tenants indicated rent levels to be predominantly in the range \$201- \$250/week. A smaller number were paying \$251-\$300/week and a handful \$151-\$200/week;
- Just over half (55%) the social housing tenants were claiming Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA);
- Just over half (55%) of households stated they were single adult households with or without children;
- Some evidence of mobility was present with one quarter of households indicating residents were

living at a different address 5 years ago, mostly in another community.

5.8.2 The experiences of homeowners

Nine homeowners responded to the survey and all stated they were either purchasing or had purchased their properties. All properties were detached residential dwellings. Three owners were purchasing with the aid of a loan from a bank, building society or credit union and one respondent had sourced a loan from other institutions. Two owners were purchasing using their own savings. No owners were purchasing with the assistance of a loan from Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) nor were any purchasing under a rent to buy scheme.

Of those who responded to the question, seven owners were satisfied with their decision to purchase, and one was indifferent about their decision. Owner respondents valued the sense of ownership and security that home ownership brought: most respondents valued ownership for economic reasons and the autonomy of being independent of a landlord was important. The ability to modify the dwelling to suit individual preferences and needs was seen as an advantage.

Some owners commented that affordability, the cost of meeting mortgage payments, and personal responsibility for repairs and maintenance were downsides of home ownership. Respondents were not asked to disclose the value of monthly mortgage repayments.

Of the nine respondents, six said they had trouble paying their power bills and three did not offer an answer.

Of the homeowners who provided occupancy details, none required additional bedrooms. Four households reported a visitor staying for longer than a week and three had a visitor staying for less than a week. Six reported feeling crowded in their home: two felt a bit crowded, three felt quite crowded and one was very crowded. Two respondents reported always being stressed because of crowding. Three homeowners reported that one or more persons living in their house had

been homeless in the three years prior to the survey.

In most instances, homeowners had a long-standing attachment to the community through having been born in Cobar or through a lengthy family residency. To live on Country was an important reason for many respondents to live in Cobar, as was being close to other family and relations. A sense of belonging to the community created a strong attachment to the town. In consequence, this cohort exhibit stability of tenure: all respondents lived in their current house one year and five years prior to the survey.

5.8.3 The experience of tenants renting privately

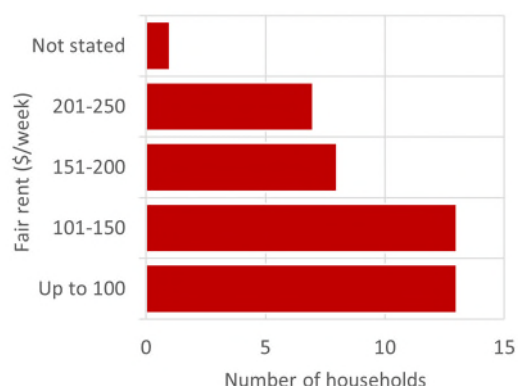
The ABS Census 2016 enumerated 49 Aboriginal households living in private rental accommodation at the time of the survey with three-quarters of these renting through a real estate agent. Responses to the survey from private renters was weak with only three participating so a discussion on experiences is not meaningful and has not been pursued. No respondent offered a comment on their experiences of applying for a private rental or subsequent tenancy management although two respondents advised of difficulties in obtaining agent attention to urgent repairs in a timely manner.

5.8.4 The experience of tenants renting Aboriginal social housing

The household survey captured approximately 39% (n=45 of 115) of Aboriginal households living in rented accommodation in Cobar. Twenty-two tenancies related to Aboriginal social housing provided through the two local Aboriginal community-controlled housing providers.

Thirty-four of thirty-nine respondents had a signed tenancy agreement and just over half of tenants were aware of the limit on occupancy imposed by the agreement. When asked about fair rent, respondents felt that rents were too high and an equitable level would be in the range shown in Figure 5.14. Only five respondents consider their rent fair.

Figure 5.14: Respondent opinion as to a fair rent



Affordability of housing is clearly an issue with nine respondents indicating that renting in the Aboriginal social housing sector was the only housing available to them while seven others said it was the most affordable housing. Ten tenants considered they could not afford to buy a house. Underlying evidence of financial stress was reflected in 64% of respondents reporting trouble in paying electricity bills.

At the time of the household survey, there were eight young people wanting their own accommodation and two had applied and been accepted onto a waiting list for a unit or house in Cobar. Two older persons were seeking accommodation but neither had applied and been accepted onto a waiting list. No respondent had been accepted onto a waiting list in another community. The DCJ dashboard indicates that waiting times for social housing in Cobar is up to two years and that currently six people are on the general list.

Social housing tenants were relatively stable with approximately 90% of respondents indicating they did not have any intention of moving if their circumstances changed. Ten percent of respondents indicated they might consider relocating if their needs changed.

Over 90% of respondents stated they were living in their current house one year prior to the MPRH&BC household survey while four of five respondents report living in the same house five years prior to the MPRH&BC household survey. The median duration of a tenancy was calculated

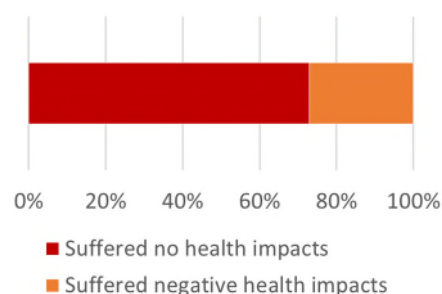
from the information provided to be eight years. One respondent stated that someone in their household was paying rent on another property rented elsewhere. Of those social housing tenants who responded to the question, half indicated a strong preference for social housing tenancies to be passed down within the family.

When asked about their reasons for living in Cobar, most respondents stated that they had been born in Cobar or their families had been resident in the town for a long time. Four respondents indicated that they lived in Cobar because they were forced to or did not have a choice. Being close to family and friends was an important consideration in being in Cobar for many as was feeling part of the community. Access to services, amenities and work opportunities did not rate many mentions.

Most respondents (n=28) stated their dwelling met their cultural needs but a small number (n=7) did not. Of those that advised their house did not meet their cultural needs, four gave the reasons as insufficient outdoor space, lack of facilities for cultural activities and the absence of a cultural sense of place.

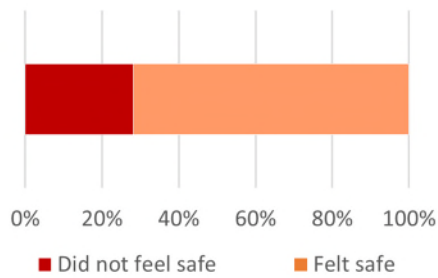
Generally, respondents considered their living environment not to pose any impacts on health although a quarter did not subscribe to this view. For those that felt adversely affected and gave the reasons, poor quality housing and/or environmental conditions, stress associated with unstable living arrangements and threat of eviction were mentioned.

Figure 5.15: Respondent reporting a negative health impact



A slightly higher proportion (n=11 or 28%) of respondents did not feel safe living in their neighbourhood. Reasons given were unsafe locality, harassment, theft and antisocial behaviour.

Figure 5.16: Respondent reporting feeling unsafe



By far the biggest issue for respondents was ensuring that urgent repairs and planned maintenance were scheduled and carried out competently and in a timely manner. This aspect is discussed in §5.13.

5.8.5 The experience of homeless persons

The MPRH&BC household survey captured two homeless families, one of a couple and child living in a caravan and classified as tertiary homeless and one of two persons whose relationship was not disclosed who were couch surfing and may be classified as secondary homeless. In assessing the need for additional housing, both families have been included in the count of need. Assessing the scale of homelessness is speculative but, as indicated by Figure 5.17, the need to address the issue is real.

5.9 Quantifying crowding

The MPRHC&B survey data suggested that crowding was not an area of concern in for Cobar Aboriginal social housing households. Only one respondent reported being stressed often because of crowding. Nine respondents stated their house was a bit crowded, eight quite crowded and one very crowded. This appears to be a normal state since visitors staying with respondent households did not add to a feeling of crowding or increased stress levels in respondents. At the time of the

survey, eleven households reported having visitors staying for longer than one week and eight with visitors staying less than a week.

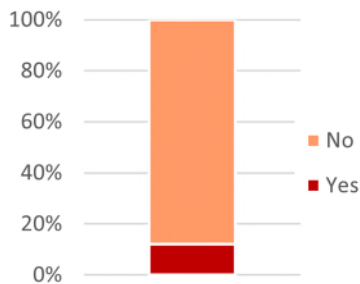
Table 5.27 provides an indication of the degree of utilisation of the 19 dwellings for which information was provided by respondents. The evidence of under-utilisation is consistent with the significant cohort of individuals and couple without children shown in Figure 5.12. The numbers stated in Table 5.27 do not account for visitors or family reformations.

Table 5.27: Number of bedrooms required to accommodate permanent residents only

Size of house (No of bedrooms)	Number of households using			
	1	2	3	4+
	bedrooms			
2	3	-	-	-
3	3	3	-	-
4	5	2	2	-
5	-	-	1	-
Total	11	5	3	-

In the three years prior to the MPRH&BC household survey, six respondents in all had given shelter to one or more persons who would otherwise have been homeless while four respondents were giving shelter to a person who would otherwise have been homeless at the time of interview. Figures 5.17 refers.

Figure 5.17: Households providing shelter to one or more people who would otherwise be homeless



Occupancy levels in all Aboriginal households were assessed against the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) for crowding.

Canadian National Occupancy Standard

CNOS adopts the following criteria to determine the number of bedrooms required by a household:

- There should be no more than 2 persons per bedroom;
- Children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may share a bedroom;
- Children 5 years of age or older of opposite sex should have separate bedrooms;
- Children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may share a bedroom;
- Single household members 18 years or older should have a separate bedroom; and
- Couples share a bedroom

At the time of the MPRH&BC household survey, two social housing dwellings exceeded the threshold criteria for additional bedrooms and required extension. Other dwellings might be eligible under the CNOS criteria but survey responses were not sufficiently detailed to allow evaluation.

5.10 Homelessness

The AHO 2015 report *Demand and Supply of Aboriginal Housing in Remote and Outer Regional NSW* considered the plight of homeless Aboriginal people in western NSW, reporting significant homelessness in larger urban centres in western NSW but not Cobar. Scale remains elusive. ABS Census data is not a good indicator of levels of homelessness in remote Indigenous communities and cannot be wholly relied upon as an indicator of either absolute numbers or trends. The ABS Census 2016 recorded the number of persons homeless as Table 5.28 for the Bourke-Cobar-Coonamble cluster.

Table 5.28: Number of persons homeless in Bourke-Cobar-Coonamble cluster

(After Chamberlain and MacKenzie)

Marginally housed	3
Tertiary homeless	-
Secondary homeless	23
Primary homeless	63
Living in crowded conditions	141

Mackenzie and Chamberlain defined homelessness by the three categories shown in Table 5.28:

- Primary: as experienced by people without conventional accommodation, for example, sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings;
- Secondary: as experienced by people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another, for example, emergency accommodation, youth refuge, or couch surfing; and
- Tertiary: as experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards, for example, boarding housing and caravan parks.

In comparison and as reported by the local media, the CentraCare Cobar service identified 70 persons as homeless in the town in 2016 but it is not known how many of these were Aboriginal individuals or families in need of shelter.

5.11 Evaluation of housing need

Based on evaluation of responses to the MPRH&BC household survey, unadjusted housing need is assessed in summary as shown in Table 5.29.

Table 5.29: Reported need for new housing: Private and social housing renters

	Number
Total number of households renting	58
Total number of households stating need	44
Assessed need	
Young people requesting own housing	6
Older people requesting own housing	1
Homeless person/couple in need	1
Homeless family household in need	1

To generate a full appreciation of housing need, the assessment accounts for the preferences of younger adult and older persons to move into separate accommodation. There is no need for new housing arising from crowding or the presence of multi-family households and the need for additional bedrooms is negated if the proposed relocation of younger persons proposed by Table 5.29 occurs.

Table 5.30 provides further detail of unadjusted need in terms of house size. The assessment is empirical in nature and requires to be refined with each household to determine most recent status and willingness to relocate.

	Bedrooms				
	2	3	4	5	6
Families	-	1	-	-	-
Older persons	1	-	-	-	-
Young persons	6	-	-	-	-
Homeless persons/families	1	-	-	-	-
Total	8	1	-	-	-

In addition, four households stated a prior need for home modification for tenants with mobility issues of which three had been modified at the time of the survey.

This scale of need is consistent with a lower order of demand as reflected in the DCJ Housing Pathways schedule of approved applicants which, at 30th June 2020, listed 6 general applicants and fewer than 5 priority applicants. These numbers would include non-Indigenous applicants seeking social housing.

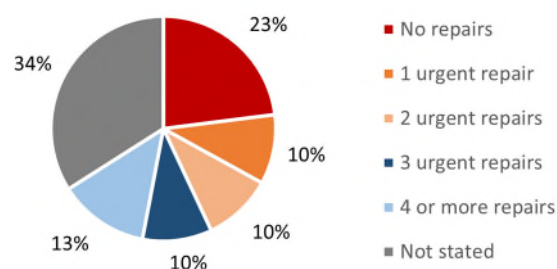
The findings stated in Table 5.30 may underestimate need. Every attempt was made to ascertain actual household composition at the time of the MPRH&BC survey but household populations may be greater than recorded, and likewise demand. It is a requirement of the tenancy agreement that a tenant notify the housing manager of any change in the number of residents housed. Observing this process is likely to lead to a rent increase which, for obvious reasons, tenants are eager to avoid and so, although this places a tenant in breach, non-disclosure of all occupants is common.

5.12 Evaluation of asset condition

The MPRH&BC household survey invited private and social housing tenants to advise about the need for urgent repairs as a general indicator of housing manager responsiveness to critical defects

and, subsequently in the survey, to provide a more detailed appreciation of condition. Responses from social housing tenants to the first enquiry are shown in Figure 5.18.

Figure 5.18: Respondents reporting need for urgent repairs



A method of analysis similar to that employed by the National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) conducted by AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018) has been used to characterise asset condition on the basis of information self-reported by tenants about dwelling condition, defects and facilities.

The basis of this assessment is the judgment that a house is deemed to be of acceptable standard if it has no more than two major specified structural, electrical and/or plumbing problems and has at least six working facilities. In this context, facilities are those comprising 'health hardware' in the Housing for Health terminology which characterise safety and nine healthy living practices (HLPs):

- HLP 1: Washing people
- HLP 2: Washing clothes and bedding
- HLP 3: Removing wastewater safely
- HLP 4: Improving nutrition – the ability to store, prepare and cook food
- HLP 5: Reducing the negative impacts of over-crowding (treated separately in this Plan)
- HLP 6: Reducing the negative effects of animals, insects and vermin
- HLP 7: Reducing the health impacts of dust
- HLP 8: Controlling the temperature of the living environment
- HLP 9: Reducing hazards that cause trauma

The MPRH&BC household survey sought to establish observance of the practices using the indicators shown in Table 5.31.

Table 5.31: Indicators for meeting safety and HLPs

Practice	Represented by functional:
HLP 1	Bath or shower, and hot water heater
HLP 2	Laundry tub
HLP 3	Toilet and wastewater disposal/septic
HLP 4	Cooking stove and oven, kitchen sink
HLP 6	Flyscreens and site drainage
HLP 7	Glazed windows
HLP 8	Heating and cooling devices
HLP 9	Electrical installations

The single divergence from the NSHS methodology adopted in this project is to increase the number of working specified facilities to seven through the addition of air-conditioning which MPRA and HLP 8 consider to be essential to managing the health of residents at risk from heat, particularly children, older people and those with long term health conditions. A means of heating the home is also included.

Classification of structural and major services faults

Sinking/moving foundations
Uneven/sagging floors
Major cracks in wall and/or ceiling
Termite damage
Roof leaking inside
Major electrical faults
Major plumbing faults
Major air-conditioning problems
Malfunctioning on-site wastewater treatment system

The result of the evaluation of tenant responses is shown at Table 5.32. Classification in this way might be considered somewhat arbitrary in that a single major structural problem could objectively render the dwelling uninhabitable but it is to be expected that, if serious faults were present at the time of the household survey, the property would have been vacant and not included.

Table 5.32: Social housing condition as expressed by tenants

Condition	
No structural problems, and 7 working facilities	11%
No more than 2 structural problems, and 6 or more working facilities	43%
3 or more structural problems, and 6 or more working facilities	9%
None, 1 or 2 structural problems, and 5 or fewer working facilities	26%
3 or more structural problems, and 5 or fewer working facilities	11%

The principal deficiencies recorded in the quality of social housing are noted in Table 5.33. It is noteworthy that 89% of householders reported defects, either structural or major service faults, of some form.

Table 5.33: Social housing principal structural, electrical, plumbing and facilities problems (%)

Problem area	Houses affected
Moving foundations	8%
Uneven floors	6%
Cracks in wall and/or ceiling	19%
Termite Damage	8%
Roof leaking inside	17%
Major electrical faults	14%
Major plumbing faults	11%
Major air conditioning problems	33%
Septic/sewerage problems outside	6%
Non-functional facilities	
Kitchen stove/oven	19%
Electric hot water heater	0%
Kitchen sink	8%
Shower	12%
Toilet	8%
Laundry tub	0%
Air conditioning	38%

The results of the assessment against the Housing for Health safe and healthy living practices are reported in Table 5.34. Whereas Table 5.33 indicates the proportion of installed systems, appliances and fixtures which are non-functional, Table 5.34 captures those households which do not have the benefit of some appliances, primarily

wood or electric heaters or air conditioners. For example, 7 of 54 households reported they had neither a wood heater or electric heating and fourteen households stated their properties were not provided with any means of cooling.

Table 5.34: Social housing observance of the HLPs (%)

Practice	Meeting the standard	
HLP 1	Washing people	89%
HLP 2	Washing clothes and bedding	96%
HLP 3	Wastewater disposal	85%
HLP 4	Improving nutrition	81%
HLP 6	Pest control	69%
HLP 7	Reducing impact of dust	86%
HLP 8	Temperature control (heating)	74%
HLP 8	Temperature control (cooling)	48%
HLP 9	Free of electrical hazards	86%

Tenants also reported other minor defects such as fractured verandah decking (14%), no fence or gates (42%), no working clothesline (8%) and the like. An inability to secure the house because entry and/or back doors could not be closed or locked was noted by 25% of households, contributing to the feeling of insecurity mentioned by some tenants and reflected in Figure 5.16

In respect of HLP 2 and HLP 4, provision of whitegoods is a tenant responsibility. The percentage of household survey respondents stating access to a working washing machine and fridge were 52% and 48% respectively.

5.13 Asset preservation

5.13.1 Methodology for budgeting

As discussed above, and in answer to a series of objective, closed questions, tenants reported a range of structural, building fabric and facilities defects in response to the household survey. Unlike the original HEHP investigations of the late 1990's, no independent scoping of properties has been carried out to determine the scale of repairs needed to restore properties to a fully serviceable state and develop a schedule of planned works. This Plan relies on the household survey to generate a profile of asset condition.

In the absence of detailed scopes of work, this HEHP adopts an analysis of previous repair and maintenance projects to derive an 'order of probable cost'. The sample totals 98 properties spread across seven communities in the Region, large and small, and includes properties requiring little or no work to those in need of major refurbishment. The sample is grouped into five bands (quintiles) of increasing scope to generate median values for each band. No adjustment has been made for the average age of properties or type of construction, but values have been revised to account for remoteness as per Rawlinsons cost guide. Costs are to September 2020.

The analysis concentrates on social housing specifically identified for allocation to Aboriginal households.

5.13.2 Median values

For Cobar, band medians are listed in Table 5.35.

Table 5.35: Median values for property repair and maintenance, Cobar

Band	Median value (\$)
One	8,910
Two	27,120
Three	41,930
Four	62,680
Five	93,880

The median values for repair and maintenance quoted in Table 5.35 allow for minor routine works or responsive works in the case of Band 1 and Band 2 properties progressing through Band 3 to Bands 4 and 5 which include elements of works categorised as planned: cyclical and life cycle (preventative) maintenance. Band 4 and Band 5 works would include internal and external repainting; replacement of floor coverings; replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and/or laundries; replacing appliances, fixtures and fittings where these are no longer serviceable; and ensuring roofing, gutters and downpipes are brought to a satisfactory condition.

To develop an accurate assessment of the scope and costs of repair and maintenance works

required, a detailed asset inspection is necessary to provide current information on the condition of all houses, scope of works required and associated costs required to complete upgrades and to model the expected lifespans of existing housing and environmental health infrastructure. This data will allow detailed and accurate asset management planning, including targeted repairs and maintenance planning, housing upgrades and replacement and more mature cost benefit analysis of major upgrades as against replacement to be undertaken

5.13.3 Repair and maintenance budget

Based on tenant response to the questions relating to property condition posed in the MPRH&BC household survey, the probable order of cost for repairs and maintenance is given by Table 5.36. Information about any expenditures between the time of the household survey and the preparation of this HEHP which might influence cost projections is not available.

Table 5.36: Repair and maintenance, probable order of cost

Band	Number of properties assessed in band from survey	Total number of properties for repair	Probable order of cost (\$)
One	4	6	53,500
Two	15	25	678,000
Three	3	5	209,700
Four	9	14	877,500
Five	4	6	563,300
Total	35	56	2,382,000
Average spend/property = \$42,536			

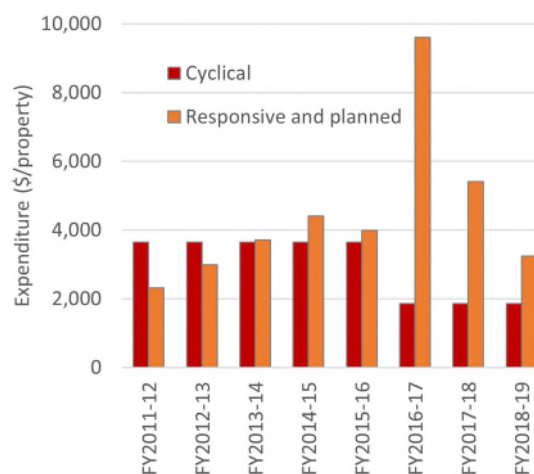
To derive an order of probable cost for all repairs and maintenance, the number of properties has been factored in the inverse of the ratio of respondents providing detailed information on asset condition in identified properties to the total number of social housing properties in the community. In the case of Cobar, the factor is 56/35 or 1.60. The total number is an aggregate of Cobar LALC, Cobar AACS and AHO properties.

It is stressed that the cost projections are based on tenant responses to the MPRH&BC household survey and the actual scale of repair and maintenance work will be identified through scoping once regional priorities have been established. From the data analysis and as identified in Table 5.36, up to 20 properties may require major refurbishment.

The AHO has advised that, between FY2011-12 and FY2018-19, it funded repair and maintenance costs to between 20 and 27 properties each year. Figure 5.19 provides a summary of expenditures. It is not known whether these were AHO, Cobar LALC or Cobar Aboriginal Advancement Co-operative Society properties, or whether these included out-of-Region properties at Murrin Bridge, for instance.

An additional need identified by the community is for the provision of sheds for the storage of yard maintenance equipment and other personal items not suitable to be stored in the house. Allowance is made in Chapter 11 for providing sheds to each property at a unit cost of \$4,430.

Figure 5.19: AHO repair and maintenance expenditures



5.13.4 Replacement

One property has been identified by Cobar LALC as in need for replacement. In consequence, only this house is proposed for demolition. As noted in Table 5.36, up to six properties are assessed to be in poor condition and some may, on scoping, be

recommended for replacement. The total number of properties to be refurbished as shown in Table 5.36, Band 5, is reduced by one to account for the one certainty.

5.14 Entrenched structural inequity

The 2015 report *Demand and Supply of Aboriginal Housing in Remote and Outer Regional NSW*, prepared on behalf of the AHO, sought to explore the “unexpressed demand” for remote Indigenous housing in twenty-two remote, very remote and outer regional communities across central, western and far west NSW. The focus of this study was to gain an understanding of the factors that contributed to homelessness and crowding in these communities and the attitude towards home ownership. Cobar was one of the three communities initially surveyed as a pilot to inform the final design and broader roll-out of the study across twenty-two communities.

While the report found that homelessness and crowding are significant issues in over half the targeted communities at levels that are more than those identified by the ABS census, Cobar was not one. The report put forward a series of responses to address the service barriers and deficiencies identified, including the following which are relevant to the Cobar community:

- Improve access (communication) between housing providers and the community;
- Improve consistency and transparency of the housing application process and waiting lists;
- Review the effectiveness of human services provision in relation to domestic and family violence, homelessness and tenancy support;
- Develop strategies to reduce crowding and homelessness through increased housing supply, and reducing under-utilisation;
- Improve the flexibility of housing providers in relation to occupancy limits through better communication, provision of human services and tenancy support;
- Review the feasibility of delivering a wider range of housing types to suit housing need such as smaller and larger housing to suit a broader range of households;

- Ensure maintenance issues are addressed promptly;
- Undertake Property Asset Surveys (PAS) to ensure housing stock meets FACS Asset Performance Standards and develop asset management programs to repair or replace properties deemed to be below standard; and
- Review stated and actual maintenance response times particularly for urgent maintenance.

While now a little dated, the report, when read in conjunction with the findings of the MPRH&BC household survey, illustrates the existence of longer term deep-seated structural and policy issues which negatively affect the Aboriginal population of western NSW and which have remained unaddressed for a lengthy period.

6. THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6.1 Council strategic interests

Cobar Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) identifies five overarching strategies which it considers fundamental to addressing the key issues of social, environmental and economic sustainability, and civic leadership. The Strategic Plan is largely silent on engagement with the Aboriginal community, making only one reference to active involvement:

Table 6.1: Community Strategic Plan Aboriginal engagement

Reference	Strategy
1.4	A generous, engaged and participative community with a strong community spirit
1.4.4	Support Aboriginal people and organisations to increase the broader community's awareness and recognition of local Aboriginal cultural identity in Cobar and to assist in meeting the targets set out under the current government policy of 'Closing the Gap'.

Council sees a role in improving the lives of Aboriginal people living in Cobar but there are few practical strategies or areas of engagement where initiatives are promoted. In its Annual Report 2019-20, Council states that there were no new programmes undertaken during the year for *'people of Aboriginal descent'*.

The Cobar Community Strategic Plan sits within the planning framework defined by the Far-West Regional Plan 2036 prepared by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). The plan outlines goals around diversifying the regional economy, improving transport and infrastructure, environmental management and strengthening communities. Areas of engagement relevance to this HEHP are summarised in Table 6.2.

Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) endorses the actions related to Direction 27 in Table 6.2.

6.2 Planning controls

Cobar Shire Council Local Environment Plan defines the various zones throughout the town area and determines the nature of development in these zones.

Land zoned for general residential purposes (R1) and located close to the town centre, is suitable for housing development and has the following planning objectives:

- To provide for the housing needs of the community;
- To provide for a variety of housing types and densities;
- To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents; and
- To promote a mix of compatible uses along the Barrier Highway, including tourist-orientated development and limited retail activity, that maintains and supports the economic strength of the local centre.

Within the R1 zone, construction of housing (dwelling houses) is permitted with consent, allowing a range of housing types from residential flats or other multi-unit dwellings to detached homes.

Land zoned low density residential (R2), which makes up most of the residential areas of Cobar, has the following objectives:

- To provide for the housing needs of the community within a low-density residential environment; and
- To enable other uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.

Within this zone, minimum lot size is 464 m² and higher density housing such as residential flats and multi-unit dwellings are precluded.

Council does not have a Development Control Plan and the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is silent on development controls such as building setbacks, height and floor to space ratio.

Table 6.2: Opportunities offered by the Far-West Regional Plan 2036

Direction	Action
10	Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities
10.1	Work with the Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify landholdings and map the level of constraint for each site at a strategic scale to develop options for the potential commercial use of the land
10.2	Identify priority sites that can create a pipeline of potential projects that the Local Aboriginal Land Councils may wish to consider
10.3	Support pilot projects and opportunities that empower Aboriginal people to develop tourism businesses as a means of increasing economic participation on Country
22	Collaborate and partner with Aboriginal communities
22.1	Develop partnerships and engagement protocols with Aboriginal communities during the planning process
22.2	Engage Aboriginal communities during the preparation of local housing strategies and local environmental plans
22.3	Work with stakeholders, including Aboriginal housing providers and prescribed body corporates, to identify opportunities for social and affordable housing options to meet the distinct cultural needs of Aboriginal communities
27	Provide greater housing choice
27.1	Review planning controls in existing town centres to increase housing options in centres and locations close to services and jobs
27.2	Align infrastructure planning with land release areas to support new developments with adequate infrastructure
27.3	Locate multi-dwelling housing developments close to town centres and villages to capitalise on existing infrastructure and to provide a greater choice of housing close to services and amenities
28	Deliver greater opportunities for affordable housing
28.1	Promote incentives to encourage greater housing affordability, including a greater mix of housing in new release areas
28.2	Prepare planning guidelines for local affordable housing needs in local housing strategies
28.3	Promote a range of housing types and affordable housing options in local housing strategies

Schedule 5, Environmental heritage, of the LEP describes items of heritage value, including items of cultural significance, to which conservation measures apply. Potentially, heritage controls could bear on future Aboriginal social housing developments and, if so, will need to be accounted for the planning phase.

6.3 Rates and charges

General rate, waste management and other utility charges levied by Cobar Shire in 2021/22 are shown in Table 6.3 and Table 6.4. Typically, a residential lot of 740 m² with an unimproved land value of \$17,500 (6 Lamrock Street) will incur a rate and fixed services charge of \$2,086.00.

Table 6.3: Municipal charges (2021/22)

General rate	
Base amount	\$520.00
And variable rate based on unimproved capital value of property (currently 3.19c/\$1.00 land value)	
Waste management	
Domestic waste base charge	-
Domestic waste service	\$252.00
Domestic waste service (vacant)	\$108.00

Table 6.4: Utilities charges (2021/22)	
Annual water supply and sewerage service charges	
Drinking water charge	
Per customer service connection:	\$343.00
Filtered water usage charge:	
Usage 0 kL-550kL	\$2.95/kL
Usage over 550 kL	\$5.60/kL
Annual sewerage charge	
Per customer service connection:	\$412.00

Households are charged a water rate (base charge) where a water service is available close to the property plus a metered per kilolitre charge for all water consumed. How much a householder pays is largely dependent on the amount of water used. Accounts are issued on a quarterly basis.

7. COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE

7.1 Community health profile summary

Cobar is the largest community in the Cobar Shire. The Cobar Shire is considered remote and very remote on all remoteness scales. It is one of twenty-three local government areas in the Western NSW Local Health District.

Quantitative data for the Cobar community is not available due to its small size. A mixed methods approach to describe the health of the community has been used for the purposes of preparing this Chapter.

Combined methods show that the Aboriginal community of the Cobar Shire overall has poorer health and has been impacted significantly by the social determinants of health. Overall, the underlying risks of poorer health are evident: risky birth outcomes, historically poorer access to educational opportunities, higher rates of admission to hospital, poorer health behaviours (like smoking and drinking) and more likely chronic condition diagnoses leading to death caused by these chronic conditions.

7.2 Health status – qualitative assessment

Qualitative evidence was gathered by interviewing local health care providers to assess the perceived health status of the Cobar community. Evidence indicates that the health of the Aboriginal population is poor. Even though there are few childhood illnesses and the older adult population is considered to be managing well, the impacts of limited access to GPs and other health care providers locally have impacted on the health of the community. The following observations were noted from the interviews:

- There has been no increase in the presentations to the local hospital for head

lice, skin infections (like scabies and school sores) or gastroenteritis;

- Access to GP services is the single most imperative issue for the community at present. The hospital currently does not have a resident medical officer, relying solely on locums;
- Elderly patients need to travel to Dubbo for chronic disease high risk complication screening. Sometimes, the community will present to the Cobar Hospital Emergency Department but with limited local GP services most patients are asked to go to, or if needed transported to, Dubbo for chronic disease follow-up and care;
- The referral pathways for accessing ongoing care locally are complicated and tedious;
- Use of and access to illicit drugs is a current concern for the community. The issue is community wide; the use of heroin and cocaine has increased as state border closures during the current health crisis have restricted the methamphetamine trade in town. There has been an increase in the number of 'Fit Packs' (clean needle exchange programme) being provided over the past year;
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is not enough Aboriginal housing. This has become particularly problematic when developing plans for discharge from hospital;
- However, there doesn't appear to be any disparity in access to social housing for Aboriginal people compared to non-Aboriginal people in the community;
- Cobar town water is very 'hard' but locals continue to use it for drinking and bathing. The quality is poor;
- There is limited employment outside of the mines and no targeted approach to traineeships from government; and
- Council has worked hard on the aesthetic of the town; however, the first impression is that most roads leading to town need some work.

In 2019, 77.8% of Western NSW Local Health District (LHD) residents who participated in the annual NSW Population Health Survey reported excellent, very good, or good health¹.

7.3 Health status – quantitative assessment

Data for Cobar Shire, Western NSW Local Health District and NSW as a whole is presented to describe the health status of the population.

7.3.1 Mother and baby health

- The proportion of babies born to teenage mothers in Western NSW LHD is 2.5 times higher than in NSW²;
- Almost two-thirds of Aboriginal mothers in Western NSW LHD had their first antenatal visit before 14 weeks gestation (65.4%) compared to all NSW Aboriginal mothers (75.3%) and all NSW mothers (79.6%)³;
- By comparison, 71.7% of all women in Cobar Shire had their first antenatal visit before 14 weeks, which is significantly lower than the proportion of all women in NSW⁴;
- Aboriginal women in Western NSW LHD are almost 6 times more likely to smoke during pregnancy (49.5% compared to 8.8%)⁵;
- Compared to all Aboriginal women in Australia, Aboriginal women in the Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE are less likely to smoke during pregnancy (35.3% compared to 47.3%)⁶;
- All women in Cobar Shire are significantly more likely to smoke during pregnancy compared to NSW (24.1%)⁷;
- Aboriginal women in the Western NSW LHD are almost 2 times more likely to have a baby with a low birthweight (<2,500g)⁸;
- Aboriginal women in the Western NSW LHD are 1.5 times more likely to have a baby prematurely (<37 weeks gestation)⁹.

7.3.2 Growth and development of children and young people

- Compared to all NSW 1-year olds, there are more Aboriginal 1-year old children fully vaccinated in the Western NSW LHD (95.2% compared to 94.2%)¹⁰;
- Children in Western NSW LHD had significantly more decayed, missing and filled deciduous (baby) teeth (dmft) compared to all NSW children (average of 2.4 dmft in Western NSW

LHD children compared to 1.53 in NSW children). The average number of decayed, missing and filled permanent (adult) teeth (DMFT) in Western NSW LHD children is about the same as all NSW children (average of 0.87 DMFT in Western NSW LHD children compared to 0.74 in NSW children)¹¹;

- The average number of dmft and DMFT for all Aboriginal children in NSW are both significantly higher than the NSW comparison (3.04 average dmft and 1.17 average DMFT)¹²;
- Children in Western NSW LHD are significantly less likely to have no caries in their baby teeth (dmft=0) compared to all NSW children (47.7% of children in Western NSW LHD children compared to 61.2% of NSW children);
- The proportion of Western NSW LHD children with no caries in their adult teeth (DMFT=0) is not significantly different to the proportion in NSW (58.4% of children in Western NSW LHD with DMFT=0 compared to 65.4% in NSW children)¹³;
- The proportions of Aboriginal children who are caries free in both their baby and adult teeth (dmft=0, DMFT=0) are both significantly lower than the NSW comparison (35.2% with dmft=0 and 53.6% with DMFT=0)¹⁴;
- Children in the Western NSW LHD are significantly less likely to eat the recommended number of serves of vegetables compared to all NSW children (2.8% of Western NSW LHD children eating the recommended number of serves compared to 5.5% in NSW);
- The proportion of children in Western NSW LHD eating the recommended number of serves of fruit is not significantly different to the proportion in NSW (67.7% of Western NSW LHD children eating the recommended number of serves compared to 62.7% in NSW)¹⁵.

7.3.3 Morbidity

- Compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia, Aboriginal people in the Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE are significantly more likely to present to the Emergency Department for all reasons. Overall, Aboriginal people in the Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE are 1.25 times more likely to present to the Emergency Department

compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia (76,698.3 per 100,000 people compared to 62,109.4 per 100,000 people)⁶;

- In 2016/17 there were, on average more than 110,000 admissions to hospital by Western NSW LHD residents, of whom 14% were Aboriginal people, who form 13% of the total LHD population¹⁶;
- The leading cause of admission for Aboriginal people in the Western NSW LHD is dialysis (27%) then maternal health, childbirth and neonatal issues (9%), and symptoms and signs of illness (8%)¹⁶;
- The proportion of Aboriginal people in the Western NSW LHD admitted to hospital for dialysis is more than twice that of the proportion expected based on comparison with the NSW (total) population¹⁶;
- Compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia, Aboriginal people in the Cobar-Murrumbidgee IARE are significantly more likely to be admitted to hospital for mood affective disorders and babies with congenital malformations. There are significantly fewer admissions for cancers, endocrine, nutritional and metabolic disease, respiratory system diseases and digestive system diseases⁶;
- Conversely, the admission rate for all people in the Western NSW LHD for skin infections is significantly higher than the rate in NSW (493.4 per 100,000 people compared to 355.3 per 100,000 people)¹⁷;
- The rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations in Cobar Shire is significantly higher than in NSW (2,862.1 per 100,000 admissions compared to 2,160.7 per 100,000 admissions)¹⁸;
- The leading cause of potentially preventable hospitalisation in the Western NSW LHD is cellulitis followed by dental conditions and ear nose and throat infections¹⁹;
- Aboriginal people in Cobar-Murrumbidgee IARE are significantly less likely to be admitted to hospital for a potentially preventable condition compared to all Aboriginal Australians (4,470.1 per 100,000 people compared to 5,395.2 per 100,000 people)⁶;

7.3.4 Mortality

- In 2018 there were 2,467 deaths of people who lived in the Western NSW LHD. For people who lived in the Western NSW LHD, the all causes death rate was significantly higher than the rate for all of NSW (610.1 per 100,000 people compared to 506.4 per 100,000 people)²⁰;
- For all Aboriginal people in the Cobar-Murrumbidgee IARE, the median age at death is 65.0 years compared to 61.0 years in NSW⁶. By comparison the median age at death for all people who live in Cobar Shire is 77.5 years compared to 82.0 years for all NSW residents²¹;
- The leading age-adjusted death rate for all Aboriginal people in NSW is circulatory disease (189.0 per 100,000 population) which is significantly higher than the rate of circulatory disease death in all of NSW (144.6 per 100,000 population)²²;
- Similarly, in the Western NSW LHD, the leading cause of death is also circulatory disease (28.1% of all deaths)²³;
- In Cobar Shire in 2016-2018, the death rate from injury and poisoning was significantly higher than in NSW (52.8 per 100,000 population compared to 35.6 per 100,000 population)²⁴;
- In NSW, 6.9% of all deaths in outer regional and remote areas are due to injury and poisoning and 1.5% are due to infectious and parasitic diseases²⁵;
- The rate of potentially avoidable deaths in Cobar Shire is not significantly different to the rate in NSW (126.0 per 100,000 population compared to 99.4 per 100,000 population)²⁶;
- Premature mortality data for selected causes for Aboriginal people in the Cobar-Murrumbidgee IARE are unavailable because of low numbers (<5)⁶.

7.3.5 Health risk factors

- In NSW, 26.4% of the Aboriginal population smoked cigarettes daily²⁷. In the Western NSW LHD, 12.4% of the total population aged 16 and over smoked daily; by comparison the proportion of smokers in NSW was 11.2%²⁸;

- In NSW, 48.7% of the Aboriginal population drank alcohol at levels that posed a long-term risk to health²⁹. In the Western NSW LHD, 35.9% of the total population aged 16 and over drank alcohol at levels that posed a long-term risk to health; by comparison the proportion of at-risk drinkers in NSW was 32.8%³⁰.

Tables 7.1 to 7.5 and Figure 7.1 provide detailed information of the health statistics for the region. Unless otherwise noted, data is sourced from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Health Atlas of Australia, Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University Australia.

Table 7.1: Cause of presentation to Emergency Departments, all Aboriginal people, rate per 100,000, Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE, NSW and Australia 2015/16-2017/18

	Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE	NSW	Australia
All causes	76,698.3*	71,135.8	62,109.4
Infectious and parasitic disease	2,096.3	3,393.1	3,293.9
Mental health and related conditions	3,142.5	3,649.3	3,636.7
Circulatory system diseases	1,264.7	1,274.2	1,570.1
Respiratory system diseases	7,476.9	7,153.7	6,340.7
Digestive system diseases	4,155.4	3,972.5	3,500.8
Musculoskeletal system diseases	4,218.9*	3,936.2	2,910.1
Urinary system diseases	2,423.9	2,364.4	2,263.4
Injury, poisoning and external causes	19,554.5*	16,420.0	14,458.8
Other factors requiring contact with the health system	4,699.7	5,889.1	4,664.0
Other reasons	27,729.3*	23,097.0	19,471.0
* Significantly higher than the rate for Australia			

Table 7.2: Leading cause of admission for Aboriginal people, Western NSW LHD, 2016-17

	% admissions: Aboriginal people in Western NSW LHD	All NSW Aboriginal % admissions	All NSW % admissions
Dialysis	27%	27%	13%
Maternal, neonatal & congenital disorders	9%	10%	7%
Symptoms & abnormal findings	8%	7%	8%
Respiratory diseases	8%	7%	5%
Digestive system diseases	7%	7%	10%
Injury & poisoning	7%	7%	7%
Other factors infl. health	6%	7%	11%
Nervous & sense disorders	4%	4%	7%
Circulatory diseases	4%	3%	5%
Genitourinary diseases	4%	4%	5%
Mental disorders	4%	5%	5%
Musculoskeletal diseases	3%	3%	5%
Skin diseases	2%	2%	2%
Infectious diseases	2%	2%	2%
Malignant neoplasms	2%	2%	4%
Endocrine diseases	2%	2%	2%

Table 7.2: Leading cause of admission for Aboriginal people, Western NSW LHD, 2016-17

	% admissions: Aboriginal people in Western NSW LHD	All NSW Aboriginal % admissions	All NSW % admissions
Blood & immune diseases	1%	1%	1%
Other neoplasms	1%	1%	2%

Data source: NSW CAPED, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health

Table 7.3: Cause of admission, all Aboriginal people, rate per 100,000, Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE, NSW and Australia 2015/16-2017/18

	Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE	NSW	Australia
Infectious and parasitic disease	771.0	759.9	1,093.5
All cancers	371.3 [#]	926.1	983.8
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	603.4 [#]	704.9	1,101.0
- Diabetes	218.2	319.0	420.9
Mental health and related conditions	2,211.7	2,515.3	2,626.5
- Mood affective disorders	695.0 [*]	351.3	355.6
Nervous system diseases	1,280.4	807.1	916.5
Eye and adnexa diseases	398.2	465.4	531.6
Ear and mastoid process diseases	534.8	336.1	423.4
Circulatory system diseases	1,357.7	1,389.5	1,822.7
- Ischaemic heart disease	439.3	473.7	652.8
- Heart failure	253.2	163.4	238.4
Respiratory system diseases	2,667.2 [#]	2,659.0	3,373.8
- Asthma	Not reported ^a	280.6	300.4
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	445.5	548.3	594.9
Digestive system diseases	2,142.8 [#]	2,843.6	3,099.5
Skin diseases	1,126.3	821.0	1,370.0
Musculoskeletal system diseases	1,173.7	1,415.0	1,446.0
Urinary system diseases	1,420.9	1,460.8	1,696.2
- Chronic kidney disease	189.2	252.7	387.3
Pregnancy and childbirth	11,777.2	12,749.2	14,700.7
Congenital conditions	585.1 [*]	215.0	210.3
Injury, poisoning and external causes	3,604.0	3,305.9	4,364.1

^{*} Significantly higher than the rate for Australia
[#] Significantly lower than the rate for Australia

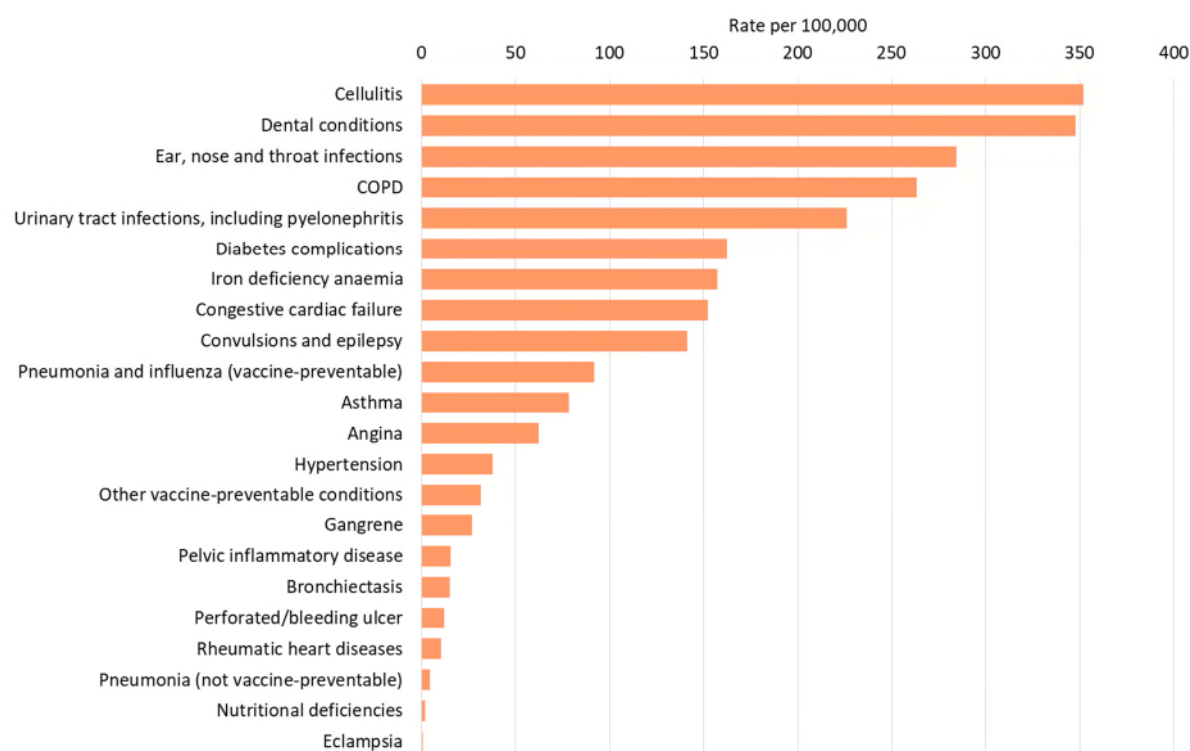
^a Data for this indicator is not reported for Cobar-Murrin Bridge IARE as the actual number is between 1 and 4.

Table 7.4: Leading cause of death, Western NSW LHD and NSW, 2018-19

	Western NSW LHD total population			NSW	
	Ave # deaths per year	Rate per 100,000	% deaths	Aboriginal % deaths	Total % deaths
Circulatory diseases	714.5	169.2	28.1	21.8	27.6
Malignant cancers	659.5	167.9	26.0	25.3	28.3
Respiratory diseases	305.5	73.9	12.0	11.6	9.8
Injury and poisoning	147.0	47.5	5.8	13.6	5.9
Mental and behavioural disorders	147.0	33.6	5.8	6.7	6.9
All other causes	567.5	142.2	22.3	21.0	21.5
All causes	2,541	634.2			

Data source: NSW COC URF, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health

Figure 7.1: Potentially preventable hospitalisations (rate per 100,000), total population Western NSW LHD, 2018-19



Data source: NSW CAPED, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health

7.4 Available health services

Cobar Health Service is a small rural health service with a 10 acute/subacute bed capacity. There is a 24-hour emergency care service, outpatient service

and the hospital can provide respite and palliative care.

Health services in Cobar are provided by the Western NSW LHD, the Western NSW Primary Health Network (PHN), CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese (formally CentaCare), Cobar

Primary Health Care Centre, and other, standalone providers.

Western NSW LHD provides:

- Locum visiting medical officer
- Registered nurses
- Administration support
- Security and domestic services
- Community midwife
- Child and family nurse
- Sexual health
- Women's health
- Family planning
- Mental health and drug and alcohol services including child and adolescent mental health support
- Dental care
- Visiting paediatrician, oncologist and renal physician
- Virtual chemotherapy support, fracture clinic, burns care, physiotherapy clinics
- Access to medical specialists (in Dubbo)

Western NSW PHN provides:

- Outback eye services

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes provides:

- Community transport (including transport to Dubbo to access specialists)

Cobar Primary Health Care Centre (Outback Division of General Practice) provide the following services (if referral criteria are met):

- General practitioners
- Visiting specialists (cardiologist and gynaecologist/obstetrician)
- Allied health (podiatrist, dietitian, speech pathologist, physiotherapist, osteopath and neuropath)
- Aboriginal health worker
- Social and community coordinator

Other, standalone providers include:

- General practitioners
- Optometrist

8. HUMAN SERVICES

8.1 Human services target population

The sectors of the Aboriginal population which would be expected to be the target of human services are identified in Table 8.1 together with the corresponding population numbers. The figures are for 2016.

Table 8.1: Service age groups, 2016

Total persons (Usual residence) Service age group (years)	Aboriginal		Non-Indigenous		Ratio
	Number	%	Number	%	
Babies and pre-schoolers (0-4)	53	11.9	213	7.5	1.6
Primary schoolers (5-11)	67	15.1	286	10.1	1.5
Secondary schoolers (12-17)	50	11.2	185	6.5	1.7
Tertiary education and independence (18-24)	60	13.5	187	6.6	2.0
Young workforce (25-34)	51	11.5	475	16.7	0.7
Parents and homebuilders (35-49)	74	16.6	499	17.5	0.9
Older workers and pre-retirees (50-59)	43	9.7	414	14.6	0.7
Empty nesters and retirees (60-69)	28	6.3	280	9.8	0.6
Seniors (70-84)	14	3.1	241	8.5	0.4
Elderly aged (85 and over)	5	1.1	64	2.3	0.5
Total	445	100.0	2,844	100.0	-

Source: ABS Tablebuilder with age classifications as .id Consultants

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 8.2: Core activity need for assistance		
	n=430	n=2,774
Of cohort population	4.7%	4.4%
Murdi Paaki Region	7%	7%
New South Wales	8%	6%

The proportion of the Aboriginal population requiring assistance in the core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication because of disability, long term health condition or old age is identified at Table 8.2, together with the non-Indigenous population for comparison. The age range of the Aboriginal population fraction is given at Table 8.3.

8.2 Human services in the community

Human services available to the Aboriginal community to cater for a range of needs are shown at Table 8.4 and the features of home care services are described at Table 8.5. Table 8.6 lists the NSW government principal agencies providing services.

Table 8.3: Core activity need for assistance by age group, Aboriginal population

	Census	NDIS
0-9 years	0	
10-19 years	3	
20-29 years	0	
30-39 years	0	
40-49 years	6	
50-59 years	4	
60-69 years	3	
70-79 years	6	
80-89 years	0	
90+ years	0	
Total	22	21

Number of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants is for Cobar LGA as a whole

Table 8.4 Human service providers and service mix

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
Health services	Western NSW Local Health District	Cobar Health Service/Hospital - 10 acute/subacute beds	Cobar	General population	-
	NSW Outback Division of General Practice	Cobar Primary Health Care Centre	Cobar	General population	-
Mental health services	Flourish Australia	-	Cobar	General population	-
	Royal Flying Doctor Service	Western NSW Outreach AoD Service	Cobar	General population	-
	AWI Consulting Pty Ltd	General psychological services	Cobar	General population	-
Aboriginal social housing services	Mid Lachlan Aboriginal Housing Management Corp	Aboriginal social housing	Dubbo	Aboriginal community	AHO
	Cobar Local Aboriginal Land Council	Aboriginal social housing	Cobar	Aboriginal community	NSWALC
	Housing NSW	Public housing	Orange	General population	-
Tenant support	Murdi Paaki Services Ltd	Tenant education and support (MP TSEP)	Cobar	Aboriginal community	DPIE/AHO
	Western Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service	Tenant advocacy and representation	Dubbo	Aboriginal community	Fair Trading
Homelessness services	CentaCare Wilcannia-Forbes	Cobar Homelessness and Housing Support	Cobar	General population	DCJ
	Barnardos	Reconnect	Cobar	Young people aged 12 - 18	DSS
	Mission Australia	Upper Western Homeless Youth Assistance	Broken Hill	Young people aged 12 - 15	DCJ
Early childhood services	Far West In-Home Care Services (Cobar Shire Council)	In-Home Care	Cobar	Young Aboriginal children	-
	Cobar Mobile Children's Services	Ngali Preschool Early Childhood Projects	Cobar	Young Aboriginal children	NIAA
	Cobar Preschool Centre	Early Childhood Education	Cobar	Young children 4-6 years	-
	Cobar and District Mother's Association	Community Hub	Cobar	Young children generally	-
	Barnardos	Brighter Futures	Cobar	Parents and young children	DCJ

Table 8.4 Human service providers and service mix

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
	The Benevolent Society	Brighter Futures	Cobar	Parents and young children	DCJ
Family support services	Barnados Australia	Targeted Early Intervention	Cobar	General population	DCJ
	Interrelate	Relationship services, parenting and family support	Cobar	Parents and children	DSS
Children's services	Livebetter Services Limited	Intensive Residential Care Transition (OOHC)	Orange	General population	DCJ
DFV services	Mission Australia	Domestic Violence Response Enhancement Linker Support Project	Dubbo	General population	-
Employment services	REDI.E	Community Development Programme	Cobar	Aboriginal community	NIAA
	AWI Consulting Pty Ltd	Employee Assistance Programmes	Cobar	General population	-
Residential aged care services	Lilliane Brady Village Hostel	Residential aged care, respite high and low care	Cobar	General population	ACFI
	Cobar Senior Citizens Amenities Organisation Inc	Bill Brennan Centre – 18 units	Cobar	General population	-
Home care and home support services	Australian Unity Home Care – Ngangana Home Care	Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and Home care packages (HCP), Levels 1 to 4 Refer to Table 8.5	Cobar	Aboriginal community	HCP/CHSP
	LiveBetter Community Services - Cobar		Orange	General population	HCP/CHSP
Cultural services	Cobar Local Aboriginal Land Council	Culture and heritage, land management	Cobar	Aboriginal community	NSWALC

Table 8.4 Human service providers and service mix

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
Disability services	Aboriginal Ability Links (LiveBetter)	Plan development, support coordination and support services	Orange	General population	NDIS
	Flourish Australia		Cobar	General population	NDIS
	Mackillop Rural Community Services	Childhood Intervention (ECI) services	Cobar	Children 0-8 years	-
	Orana Far West Dementia Respite Service	In-home respite	Cobar	General population	-
Legal services	Western NSW Community Legal Centre Inc	Legal information, assistance and advocacy	Dubbo	General population	-
	Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)	Legal information, assistance and advocacy	Dubbo	Aboriginal population	-

Table 8.5: Home care services

Services	Transport	Meals	Other food services	Home maintenance	Home modifications	Social support individual	Flexible respite	Personal care	Domestic assistance	Social support group	Nursing	Centre-based respite	Specialised support services	Allied health and therapy services	Assistance with care and housing	Transition care
Australian Unity Home Care – Ngangana Community Options	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y	Y						
LiveBetter Community Services - Cobar	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y					Y		

Table 8.6: NSW Government agencies

Cluster	Principal department and agencies	Responsibilities	Service access
Stronger Communities	Department of Communities and Justice	Families, communities and disability services; public housing and homelessness services; law and justice; child protection; sport, seniors and veterans	Cobar
Treasury and Finance	Department of Customer Service NSW Office of Fair Trading	Customer services: primary access point to government services; registration and licensing; working with children checks	Cobar
Planning, Industry and Environment	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment	Urban and regional planning; water and natural resources; industry; environment, energy and science; Aboriginal and social housing; and Aboriginal heritage and land use	Dubbo

9. COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

9.1 Authority for change

The way Aboriginal social housing is managed has changed markedly since the first Murdi Paaki HEHPs were produced, that change being very much to the detriment of the Region:

- The discriminatory treatment of local managing ACHPs has adversely impacted management services, enfranchisement of tenants, and asset condition and preservation;
- Spatial variability of capital works programmes, coupled with disjointed rollout, inappropriate material and equipment specification, and ineffective quality supervision, has contributed to greater variability in the quantum and condition of housing assets and infrastructure;
- The skills base relevant to housing and infrastructure which was built through major capital works training programmes and the Healthy Housing Worker programme has been substantially eroded and dispersed; and
- The AHO *Build and Grow* policy created an operating and financial environment in which managing ACHPs could safely disregard requirements for planned maintenance, contributing to asset deterioration and tenant dissatisfaction

so there is a compelling need to redraw the sector landscape at community scale to reflect the status of Aboriginal housing and environmental health infrastructure in all Murdi Paaki communities.

9.2 Expected principles and standards

The CWP has reiterated a set of principles drawn from the Murdi Paaki LDM Accord Mark II it wishes to see applied to community renewal in answer to the criticism levelled by §9.1 and the examination of services received. These principles are summarised as:

- Our Aboriginal leaders and Elders understand our own community needs. They have the drive and ability to develop their own

solutions and must be engaged in the development of initiatives;

- Initiatives must reflect the circumstances and aspirations of the Cobar community, with input from outside when, where and in the form in which the community requests;
- Service design should reflect the needs, and be driven primarily by the best interests, of the community, taking account of cultural norms and desire to be self-reliant;
- Engagement must demonstrate a genuine commitment by all parties to developing transformative rather than transactional relationships, with a renewed focus on developing innovative and holistic solutions and on considering different, more equal approaches to partnership; and
- Investment into the community is to be optimised through targeted, efficient, effective and equitable forms of programme, project and service delivery.

9.3 Community priorities

These principles are given effect to in the Cobar Community Action Plan (CAP) prepared by the CWP. The CAP informs external agencies and stakeholders of the priorities of the Cobar Aboriginal community and provides the foundation for improved service delivery across the full spectrum of health and human services. The CAP was endorsed by the CWP on 19th June 2019.

The CAP identifies five key priority areas for action. Three goals are directly relevant to this HEHP and are listed in Table 9.1. All goals are weighted equally in their importance.

9.4 Community engagement

The community view is that Cobar is suffering a severe shortage of rental housing in general, and social housing in particular; and that crowding is widespread. The private sector rental market is tight, and weekly rents relatively high. Perversely, though, at the same time, houses stand unallocated, with community members not knowing how to obtain access to the properties:

“There is a home that is brand new. It took one year to build and it’s been unoccupied for five years. Why is it still vacant when we have people and families who are homeless?”

Among social housing applicants, preference is being given to applicants on the NSW Housing Register listed as priority applicants who are often from a community other than Cobar. In consequence, local applicants feel discriminated against in the allocation process, and angry that transferred tenants are simply dumped in the community without support:

“When DCJ make housing transfers to the Cobar community they just ship them out and don’t provide tenants with any referral pathways.”

Housing policy imposed by AHO has made it impossible for the community to influence housing

management such that it functions in a way that is responsive to community needs. For example, the CWP recounted a circumstance where a family long-established in a property owned by the Cobar Aboriginal Advancement Co-operative was unable to secure succession of this dwelling within the family; the next generation were instructed to apply for the house through Housing Pathways:

“[A well respected tenant] had the tenancy ... for 46 years and he wanted to transfer the family home into his niece’s name because he can no longer live there due to illness, but Mlahmc said that his nieces would need to apply for the house through housing pathways. How many people even know about housing pathways??”

Table 9.1: Community Action Plan goals and objectives

Goal	Objective
3	To improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people in Cobar
3.1	Improve early childhood education
3.2	Resource a youth program
3.3	Support our young people to succeed at school
3.4	Build the capacity of youth leadership
4	Increase opportunities for employment, training and business development for the Cobar Aboriginal community
4.1	Improve employment opportunities for the Cobar Aboriginal community
4.2	Grow business development of a Cobar community nursery
4.3	Support local training opportunities
4.4	Ensure offenders successfully reintegrate into their community
5	Ensure better maintained and more secure housing for the Aboriginal community of Cobar
5.1	Provide employment opportunities for local people in the housing industry
5.2	Work in partnership with housing providers to identify gaps in housing

A few rental properties are one-bedroom units which are difficult to fill because need is for family homes and homes modified to suit people with a disability such as, for example, the duplex dwellings recently constructed in Marshall Street. The community aspires to:

- Have local people given preference in the Housing Pathways allocation process;

- Be provided with a choice in housing to be constructed;
- See a planned approach to asset growth with two to three additional houses added to the portfolios each year. The community expresses interest in being closely involved in the design phase to advise on inclusions and to influence delivery programme;

- Have access to a locally based TSEP to provide support to tenants and act in an advisory capacity in respect of home purchase; and
- Have all social housing managed locally.

Underutilisation of existing properties is an inefficient use of scarce assets. Family homes are at a premium; the community considers that building of units for older people would allow relocation of older single people or couples currently remaining in the family home who might wish to move to a more manageable dwelling.

Obtaining timely maintenance services for social housing properties is problematic in Cobar:

"It's so hard to get a tradesperson to do any R&M because they are all contracted to the mines and the little R&M jobs aren't worth it to them."

A solution would be to train community members in property maintenance to ensure at least the minor faults and failures can be attended to before becoming more major issues. It is generally felt that most houses needed repairs and maintenance and some houses need to be replaced. The Land Council has one old fibro property not upgraded for many years that falls into this category. Housing quality is reported to vary across housing providers, and this is a function of the way repairs and maintenance requests are managed by housing providers and works planned and executed. In the MPRH&BC household survey, tenants of DCJ and Mlahmc were consistently critical about response times to reports of repair needs, quality of work, and communication with tenants. Typical tenant comments included:

"I can't lock the house, there is black mould, sewage leaking from all drains. I haven't seen [the housing manager] for more than 10 years. There's no help available when needed; they're unwilling to assist with security. I love the house but I'm paying above market rent and sinking money to repair a house that shouldn't come from my kids' needs."

"We need more maintenance checks and repair. Communication needs to happen. It's not a liveable property as I cannot lock up."

"I don't know who my housing manager is. I was transferred from Dubbo two months ago and haven't heard from anyone."

Community members highlighted the impacts of climate change on poorly designed dwellings in relation to the urgent need to provide for better cooling of houses. The cost of power to provide cooling is excessive and can result in financial stress for tenants, particularly single parent families. The high cost of water for evaporative coolers and domestic irrigation for lawns and gardens to reduce dust and provide cooling is also of concern:

"We can't afford to have nice yards or even run our evaporative air conditioner in summer. People with big families even struggle to do washing for 4-5 people because it becomes costly. The water isn't drinkable, I don't even let my dog drink it".

"There's no air conditioning [housing manager declined to install] – we're elderly people living without it. It took 2 months [for housing manager] to mail a rent certificate and we're still not receiving CRA."

As an additional measure, the community would like to see verandas incorporated on all housing, and outdoor spaces for improved cultural fit. The inclusion of sheds to facilitate yard maintenance is highly desirable.

The community advises that many residential properties still rely on on-site wastewater collection and treatment systems raising health and economic concerns. This issue, and other environmental health improvements, are discussed in Chapter 10.

Data from the ABS 2016 Census and the MPRH&BC Household Survey indicated that Aboriginal residents of Cobar have embraced home ownership to a greater degree than elsewhere in the Murdi Paaki Region. The community sees access to home ownership as important and wishes to have home ownership information workshops provided in the community at least annually by AHO and IBA.

Services shown in Table 8.4 are known to the community and are active. Two areas identified by the community for improvement are family counselling and suicide prevention:

“There are too many conflicts of interest. If a family is going through a family breakdown, then only one member of that family can access the service”.

Community members highlighted that service configuration needs to be mindful of close family relationships and ensure conflicts of interests are managed to ensure access to and confidence in services. Services for youth and health promotion for young children and families are also identified as key needs.

Access to co-ordinated health care is seen as a priority. The community would like to see arrangements put in place for:

- Local access to a greater range of medical services;
- Care co-ordination to assist community members with referrals;
- Better information so that community members are aware of service availability; and
- Access to community transport for medical appointments both within Cobar and in other centres for people of all ages.

The community favours local service provision through a community hub. Service locations “scattered all over town” are seen as a barrier to service access. Remote service delivery is even less successful: community members are required to travel to Bourke to access any but the most basic Centrelink services. The local service is not viewed as culturally safe and, in consequence, clients defer action until they are at risk of sanctions. The preference is for a fully featured local Centrelink office.

Children’s and youth services are limited. Youth services have been interrupted while the Cobar Youth and Fitness Centre has been undergoing upgrades. Parents’ preference is for children’s play facilities to be provided which do not require constant parental supervision. Barnardos offer a weekly playgroup at the Cobar LALC office, and the

Ngalii Pre-school provides early childhood education to three- to five-year-old children, with preference given to Aboriginal families.

Ageing in place services, particularly home care services, were highlighted as not being adequate to meet demand. Many staff working in aged care are “underpaid and overworked” and there is a consensus many Elders in the community do not receive adequate care. Responsibility for delivering disability services, specifically the NDIS service and service coordination, rests with providers which are remote from the community, resulting in a lower level of service and access issues for Aboriginal people. It is the view of the community that is essential that home care services be managed and delivered locally to ensure that clients have access to the full range of services they are entitled to.

Housing and yard maintenance services, not only for elderly people but more generally, are limited: there are only two in town and these are fully committed to existing clients.

Despite the strategic intent shown in Table 6.1, Cobar Shire Council has not forged a relationship with the community. Council does not invite Aboriginal people to important meetings nor celebrate NAIDOC. Acknowledgement of Country does not feature in the preamble to Council meetings. Council’s primary focus appears to be the mining and agricultural sectors. Following sustained pressure, Council has agreed to fly the Aboriginal flag.

The community is nevertheless keen to foster a relationship with Council. The strategic focus of the NSW Government as set out in Far-West Strategic Plan 2036 under Direction 10 clearly envisages a more participatory role for the Aboriginal community in the local and regional economy and a working relationship with local government will be key to accessing opportunities for skills development, employment and business creation. A starting point would be for Council to support NAIDOC celebrations.

Table 9.2: Summary of housing and housing-related issues

Issue	Description
Housing repairs and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More routine inspections of social housing properties are required to determine the extent of all work necessary to restore structural soundness, functionality, amenity and safety Most houses are in urgent need of moderate maintenance Carrying out of repair and maintenance work is too slow, even for essential services Tenant security should be a high priority Houses are poorly insulated and are hot in summer and cold in winter Some tenants are or may be living in sub-standard accommodation which requires to be replaced Opportunities exist to train a local Aboriginal maintenance workforce
Housing management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preference from tenants is for housing management to be locally based The Housing Pathways allocation process should advantage local applicants, even over priority applicants from elsewhere Housing inspections could be more proactively implemented to identify needs for repair and maintenance before escalating to major defects/failures Tenant communication protocols need to be improved and observed
Crowded housing and related stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some houses are crowded due to inadequate social housing options for older people and a general undersupply of affordable housing Crowding causes greater wear and tear on houses
Housing affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private rentals are limited and often significantly more expensive than social housing options Many people struggle to pay power bills when they fall due because of high energy consumption, especially in the hotter months Water charges are elevated by the need to run inefficient evaporative coolers Commonwealth rent assistance is essential to ensure rental affordability, however this can at times be difficult to access
Housing supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite there being a private rental market, access is limited by competition from mining employees able to afford higher rents The quality, cost and waiting times for Aboriginal social housing must be addressed by increased supply The is interest in home ownership within the community of renters There is a need for emergency housing to be available when houses are damaged and become uninhabitable
Housing accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited access to home modification services to support living needs of older persons and people with a disability
Housing design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community have expressed a desire to be closely involved in the housing design process Housing is to have adequate thermal properties, including heating and cooling
Environmental amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water restrictions can result in yards becoming very dry, producing dust and generating adverse health outcomes There are often few shade trees and other vegetation in house yards

Table 9.3: Summary of human services issues

Issue	Description
Facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relationship exists with Council and areas of joint interest are not actioned
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural awareness of visiting and local human services staff can be poor and adversely impact service access and quality Services are poorly coordinated, partly because of a reliance on visiting services, virtual options and staff rotations, and because services are not co-located Community lacks knowledge of funded services, creating barriers to access and to co-ordination across providers
Human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers often experience a high turnover of staff, decreasing the quality of services and effectiveness of engagement with the local community Professional isolation and short-term contracts contribute to a revolving door of human services personnel
Mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no locally available residential alcohol and other drug services, the nearest Aboriginal community-controlled service is at Brewarrina Access to non-clinical mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services is very limited There is an urgent need for suicide prevention programmes, education and activities Conflicts can arise in counselling services due to local family relationships and community connections, creating barriers to access
Children's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There need to be more activities to support early intervention and prevention programmes for children and families Specialist child and maternal health services are very limited
Youth services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urgently need funding for a youth coordinator to support personal development, capacity-building and leadership in young people There need to be more programmes for young people including pathways to training and employment, and social and emotional wellbeing. Youth need to be better supported to achieve more at school
Aged and disability services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to aged care support and NDIS is complex, and it is difficult for people to receive care matching their eligibility and need There are significant barriers to access home modifications and related supports Older members of the community, especially those with reduced mobility, without a ready means of transport find it difficult to access services
Connectivity and digital literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider preference for virtual service support and digitally supported consultations creates barriers to access to human services More needs to be undertaken to support people with digital literacy (online forms, service NSW and my Gov Apps, for example) Many community members do not have access to a computer or the internet, or are literate enough to manage government -driven online processes
Business creation, employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher proportion of school students need to successfully complete their education to Year 12 level School-based traineeships and apprenticeships should facilitate the progression of young people into areas of potential employment Opportunities exist for the Cobar community nursery project to expand to participate in environmental rehabilitation work with miners Opportunities for and easier pathways to vocational education and training should be found
Information and knowledge of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult for community to understand which services are visiting when and who the key contacts are There is often inadequate joint planning and evaluation of local services and sharing of health and service performance/benchmarks with community Local community hub with co-located services is preferred as better suited to local community members needing to access multiple providers
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water for lawns and domestic use is prohibitively expensive and is contributing to more dust in households and homes

10. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

10.1 Infrastructure asset schedule

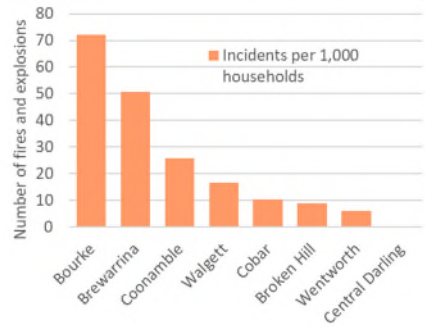
INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE			
10.1 WATER SUPPLY		Responsible Authority: Cobar Water Board	
Works	Description		
Source	Burrendong Dam via the Macquarie River and Albert Priest Channel to Nyngan		Macquarie River flow diverted at Warren, conveyed via 73 km open channel (Albert Priest Channel) to Nyngan weir pool. Cobar supply then pumped, with in-line boosting, via 130 km twin pipelines to Fort Bourke Hill balance tank
Treatment	Lamella clarifiers Dissolved air flotation and filtration (DAFF) Coagulation and flocculation Chemical dosing: PAC, KMnO ₄ , pH correction, ACH and polymer dosing Disinfection: UV and chlorine dosing Provision for fluoridation		Treatment capacity = 8.0 ML/day Plant built in 2018 at a cost of \$8m Raw water and treated water supplies are reticulated to consumers
Storage	Fort Bourke Hill 1.14 ML raw water balance tank Fort Bourke Hill 4.54 ML treated water tank Bathurst Street reservoir In-ground tanks to service demand from mines		
Distribution	Reticulation comprising variously cast iron, ductile Iron, uPVC, AC and PE in a range of classes		Sections to be upgraded to meet firefighting flows and pressures
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action	Estimated cost
-	-	No actions proposed	-
-	-	-	-
Indicative performance metrics (2019-20)		Weighted median	Cobar Water Board
Service complaints per 1,000 properties: Water		2.29	38.84
Service complaints per 1,000 properties: Sewerage		4.84	3.73
Operating cost, W&S (\$/prop)		1,034.00	1,685.00
Typical residential bill – Usage – Water and Sewerage		1,413.60	1,103.63
Cost to bring systems to satisfactory condition: Water		7,085.00	2,566.00
Cost to bring systems to satisfactory condition: Sewerage		6,657.00	4,000.00
Source: Department of Planning, Industry and Environment local water utilities online performance monitoring database			

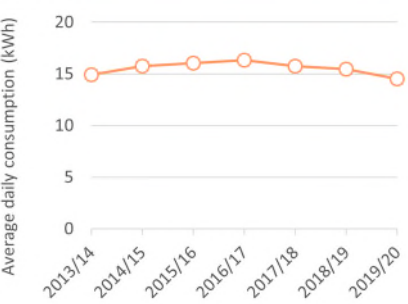
INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE			
10.2 WASTEWATER		Responsible Authority: Cobar Shire Council	
Works	Description		
Collection	Reticulated sewerage: 150 to 380 mm diameter AC, PVC and RC		
Treatment	Inlet screening, aeration pond, twin facultative lagoons, five polishing lagoons and wet weather lagoon		Design flow = 140 L/s
	On-site treatment for residential properties not serviced by town sewerage		
Pumping stations	Ward Oval Pumping Station 3 local sewage pumping stations (SPSs): Belagoy Street, Cowper Street Nullamut Street		
Effluent use	Effluent chlorination prior to reuse for golf course irrigation and Ward Oval		
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action	Estimated cost
-	-	Council proposes construction of a pressure sewerage system to service the currently non-serviced area in East Cobar	-
-	-	Community expressed desire to see properties still serviced by on-site systems connected to reticulated sewerage or on-site systems upgraded	-

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE			
10.3 STORMWATER DRAINAGE		Responsible Authority: Cobar Shire Council	
Works	Description		
Piped drainage	Approximately 10,000 m of various sizes from 300 mm diameter to 1,500 mm diameter and box culverts	System capacity limitations in Marshall St, Linsley St, Louth Rd, Lewis St, Blakey St, Woodiwiss Ave, Bathurst St	
Open drains	Approximately 2,800m	Discharge to the Newey wetland area and Green Belt	
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action	Estimated cost
-	-	No actions proposed	-
-	-	-	

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE			
10.4 ROADS		Responsible Authority: Cobar Shire Council	
Works	Description		
Hierarchy	Most roads in the town are classified as Local Roads, except for the Barrier Highway (State Highway 32) (Marshall Street), and the Kidman Way (State Highway 87) (Bourke Road)		
Roads	Sealed carriageways throughout the town, with kerb and gutter in most residential streets		
Speed limit	50 km/hr		
Black spots	None identified in the Australian Government 2019-20 and 2020-21 Black Spot Programme		
Heavy traffic routes	Heavy vehicles, 25/26 m B-doubles are permitted on the Barrier and Kidman Way Highways and Mulya Rd		
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action	Estimated cost
-	-	Community request kerb and guttering to roads in the east Cobar, to Dunstan Street	-
-	-	-	-

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE					
10.5 ENVIRONMENTAL AMENITY		Responsible Authority: Cobar Shire Council			
Works	Description				
Streetscape	-		Council does not have a Street Tree Planting Guide and/or Street Tree Masterplan to guide landscape design in existing or new developments but does have a tree preservation code to control the removal of trees from Council controlled road reserves, recreation reserves and public places		
Public spaces	The Ward Oval precinct includes a large oval, a smaller oval, netball courts, showground pavilions, amenities buildings, agricultural buildings		Precinct offers facilities for netball, cricket, soccer, Little Athletics, AFL and rugby league and casual activity: walking and running Master Plan under preparation (2021) is silent on Aboriginal cultural activities and facilities		
	Drummond Park		Children’s playground and skate park with picnic areas		
	Bathurst Street Reserve		Tennis courts and Tom Knight rugby league oval		
	Acacia Park Drive, Apex, Dalton, Lions, Little Tassie and Mulga Place parks		Children’s playground and passive recreation areas		
	Cobar Memorial swimming pool complex		Outdoor 7-lane 50 m pool with hydro programme pool, wet splash play area, waterslide and low diving board		
Air quality	Air Quality Index (2020 and 2021 Jan–Oct) (Cobar)				
	Air pollution level PM 2.5		Good	Moderate	Very Unhealthy
	No of days of record 2020	356	346 days	8 days	2 days
	No of days of record 2021	293	280 days	-	-
	Daily AQI is based on the 24 hours average of hourly readings Good: Air quality is considered satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk Moderate: Air quality is acceptable but some pollutants may be of concern to people unusually sensitive Very Unhealthy: Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected. https://aqicn.org/city/australia/nsw/western-ls/cobar/				
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action		Estimated cost	
-	-	No actions proposed		-	
-	-	-		-	

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE																				
10.6 FIRE CONTROL		Responsible Authority: Fire and Rescue NSW																		
Works	Description																			
Mobile plant	Two operational appliances with a brigade strength of 12 ±	 <table><caption>Incidents per 1,000 households</caption><thead><tr><th>Town</th><th>Incidents per 1,000 households</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Bourke</td><td>72</td></tr><tr><td>Brewarrina</td><td>50</td></tr><tr><td>Coonamble</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Walgett</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>Cobar</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Broken Hill</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Wentworth</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>Central Darling</td><td>5</td></tr></tbody></table>	Town	Incidents per 1,000 households	Bourke	72	Brewarrina	50	Coonamble	25	Walgett	18	Cobar	10	Broken Hill	10	Wentworth	8	Central Darling	5
Town	Incidents per 1,000 households																			
Bourke	72																			
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Coonamble	25																			
Walgett	18																			
Cobar	10																			
Broken Hill	10																			
Wentworth	8																			
Central Darling	5																			
	Data opposite from FRNSW Annual Report 2019-2020																			
Fixed plant	Hydrants located throughout town connected to raw water reticulation. Mains pressure and flows generally adequate for appliances to operate effectively																			
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action																		
-	-	No actions proposed																		
-	-	-																		
But refer to Table 10.1 for qualification																				

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE																			
10.7 POWER, STREET LIGHTING		Responsible Authority: Essential Energy																	
Works	Description		 <table><caption>Average daily consumption (kWh)</caption><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Average daily consumption (kWh)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2013/14</td><td>15.0</td></tr><tr><td>2014/15</td><td>15.5</td></tr><tr><td>2015/16</td><td>16.0</td></tr><tr><td>2016/17</td><td>16.5</td></tr><tr><td>2017/18</td><td>15.5</td></tr><tr><td>2018/19</td><td>15.0</td></tr><tr><td>2019/20</td><td>14.5</td></tr></tbody></table>	Year	Average daily consumption (kWh)	2013/14	15.0	2014/15	15.5	2015/16	16.0	2016/17	16.5	2017/18	15.5	2018/19	15.0	2019/20	14.5
Year	Average daily consumption (kWh)																		
2013/14	15.0																		
2014/15	15.5																		
2015/16	16.0																		
2016/17	16.5																		
2017/18	15.5																		
2018/19	15.0																		
2019/20	14.5																		
Service	66 kV supply from Nyngan 132/66 kV zone substation to Cobar 66/22 kV zone substation. Pole mounted cabling distributed to residential properties throughout developed area of town; LV distributed as single and three phase power																		
Connection	Dwellings are connected via aerial cabling, some underground in new developments																		
Outage	Frequency and duration not known																		
Street lighting	Pole mounted LEDs																		
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action	Estimated cost																
-	-	No actions proposed	-																
-	-	-	-																

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE						
10.8 COMMUNICATIONS			Responsible Authority: Various providers			
Works		Description				
Digital service		Telstra	Optus	Vodaphone		
	3G	1	1	-		
	4G	1	1	-		
	5G	1	-	-		
NBN	Fixed line				All parts available for connection	
TV satellite	VAST satellite TV and Foxtel satellite TV				Free to air and pay TV services	
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action			Estimated cost	
-	-	No actions proposed			-	
-	-	-			-	

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE				
10.9 SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL		Responsible Authority: Cobar Shire Council		
Works	Description			
Collection	Weekly kerbside household waste service		Council is not able to offer a kerbside recycling collection service because of cost	
Disposal	Waste disposal depot		Separate cells for domestic and construction waste, bins for metals, oil storage drums	
Recycling	Batteries, metals, tyres and oils		Shredded garden organics used for site dust control	
Clean up	Annual Australia Day clean up organised by local businesses			
Safety	Site fully fenced and under CCTV surveillance			
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action		Estimated cost
-	-	Community requests quarterly rubbish clean-up for large items		-
-	-	-		-

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET SCHEDULE				
10.10 ANIMAL CONTROL		Responsible Authority: Cobar Shire Council		
Works	Description			
Services	Mandatory cat and dog registration Ranger patrol			
Facilities	Cobar Animal Shelter			
Domestic pets	Action in respect of dangerous and menacing dogs, restricted dogs, and nuisance dogs and cats		Limitation on pet numbers as per Council Code for Keeping Domesticated Animals P5-30. Includes rules relating to keeping sheep and goats, horses and cattle at residential properties	
Item	Strategy Ref	Proposed Action		Estimated cost
-	-	No actions proposed		-
-	-	-		-

10.2 Infrastructure improvements

Environmental health infrastructure services in Cobar are the responsibility of Cobar Shire Council. No infrastructure elements are owned, operated or maintained by any local Aboriginal community organisation.

Aboriginal residents of Cobar have the benefit of a full range of municipal and essential services provided to an acceptable standard. The nature and extent of each service has been investigated within the limits imposed by data collection and analysed where appropriate to determine the current level of service, serviceability and, where appropriate, compliance with environmental health standards. This HEHP does not propose any improvements to environmental health infrastructure as work is underway on several major infrastructure upgrades as noted in Tables 10.1 to 10.10.

Any environmental health improvements flagged by the community are included at Chapter 11.

11. MASTER PLAN

11.1 Aspiration

Development of the Cobar HEHP marks the culmination of the second round of the MPRA's approach to sector strategic planning at a community scale. The Plan has been prepared by the community to reflect community aspirations and priorities and represents a strategic approach to responding to community needs. With the RAHLA now firmly established and evidence collected and synthesised, the community is optimistic that informed policy-setting and decision-making will lead to positive change.

11.2 Cultural influences on decision-making

The NSW Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Programmes Implementation Manual (1999), an initiative of the then Murdi Paaki Regional Council and the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (as was) flowing from the successful Australian Government National Aboriginal Health Strategy projects, placed the concept of effective community management of capital works and associated housing and infrastructure projects onto a practical footing. CWPs, working with a community-selected professional Project Manager, demonstrated ample capacity to set community objectives, and to control and co-ordinate overall programme delivery on behalf of, and in the best interests of, their communities. The agreed negotiated system of rules governing projects roll out was formal acknowledgement of the ongoing position and competence of CWPs as the local decision-making body. The Regional and local governance structures remain in place and CWPs are still well positioned to bring their local knowledge and cultural perspectives to inform the shape and substance of housing and infrastructure developments. This Master Plan evidences that decision-making in practice.

11.3 Defining a need for growth and adaptation

11.3.1 Expressed need for new housing

The total number of Aboriginal social housing dwellings in Cobar is currently 58, 31 of which are owned by the two Aboriginal community housing providers. At the time of the MPRH&BC household survey, there was a waiting list for Aboriginal social housing in the community across all eligible age groups. The estimate of increased supply required to meet demand shown in Table 11.1 is derived by extrapolating the findings of the survey across all Aboriginal households to account for those households that did not participate.

The method of estimating new housing need accounts for:

- Responses to the MPRH&BC household survey from Aboriginal social housing households, modified by the ratio of total Aboriginal social housing households to the number of respondents to the survey;
- Individuals and families who were homeless at the time of the survey, and
- Responses from people in private rentals and from owner occupiers who reported crowding and/or a desire to leave the family home.

Effort is made in the needs assessment to keep the older member(s) of the community in the housing they were occupying at the time of the survey for reasons of attachment and stability. The older member of a household is most likely to be the nominated tenant. Discussion at §5.9 and Chapter 9 in respect of under-utilisation of existing properties suggests merit in questioning these assumptions further. More efficient use of existing larger properties would be derived from the willing relocation of older occupants, allowing a co-located family with children to remain in residence or reallocation to another family. Where older members have indicated a desire to move to new accommodation, this wish has been acknowledged in Table 11.1; otherwise, assessment of need is based on the responses to the MPRH&BC household survey.

Table 11.1: Unmet demand for new Aboriginal social housing, number of dwellings

Tenure type	Ratio	From MPRH&BC household survey				Factored for whole community			
		Number of bedrooms				Number of bedrooms			
		2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
Owner occupier	98/9	1	0	0	0	1	-	-	-
Private rental	49/3	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Homeless	213/56	1	1	0	0	4	4	-	-
Social housing renters	56/42	6	0	0	0	8	-	-	-
Total						13	4	0	0

Note: Ratio is derived from the AHO total number of Aboriginal social housing properties as adjusted by the community for later acquisitions and the total number of properties enumerated in the MPRH&BC household survey by tenure type, excluding those 'not stated'. For the homeless category, the total for all tenure types has been adopted

A breakdown of social housing waitlist numbers by bedroom capacity as of June 2018 provided by the AHO is shown at Table 11.2 for comparison purposes. The number of approved applicants as of June 2020 was 6 general applicants and < 5 priority applicants, although these figures represent the total social housing application waitlist including non-Aboriginal persons.

Table 11.2: Estimated number of dwellings by bedroom size, 2018 waiting list

	Number of bedrooms					
	1	2	3	4+	NK	Σ
Number of dwellings	2	3	2	1	1	9

Demand is not only derived internally within the community but also from the policy of DCJ to allocate scarce housing to priority applicants from away. This policy, if it is to continue, adds further pressure on existing portfolios and increases projected need shown in Table 11.1. One-bedroom units are not the solution when:

"... need is for family homes and modified homes to suit people with a disability."

The modified duplex units recently built at 74 Marshall Street are examples of preferred designs for people with disabilities. The AHO has several undeveloped sites all within existing residential precincts and suitable for residential development. Similarly, Cobar LALC has three lots suitable for immediate residential development. All are level blocks with no apparent impediments and without the need for additional infrastructure. Figure 11.1 is indicative of the potential of

undeveloped sites with R1 General Residential Purposes zoning within the town.

Figure 11.1: 15 Duffy Drive, Cobar LALC vacant lot typical of lots suitable for residential development



Source: <https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>

A cautious approach is required if consideration is to be given to rebuilding in the Kurrajong/Yarran Circuit precinct as the concentration of Aboriginal social housing is already high and social issues pressing. The site at 41 Morrison Street was the location of a fatal house fire in 2013 and is viewed as unsuitable for future redevelopment. AHO have indicated a programme of asset growth for 2022 and beyond, details of which are summarised in Table 11.3, and which should offset need stated in Table 11.1.

Table 11.3: AHO asset growth proposals

Location	Development
11 James Place	2 x 2-bed houses
8 Clifton Place	1 x 5-bed house
13 Rankin Street (LAHC site)	1 x 5-bed house
71 Morrison Street (LAHC site)	2 x 2-bed houses

There are few vacant residential blocks of land for sale in Cobar and recent land sales indicate that residential blocks are selling for between \$15,000 and \$50,000, including legal fees and other statutory charges depending on location and size.

Spot purchase may be an effective solution in Cobar in respect of managing priorities: several 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom properties are for sale throughout the town in the range \$200,000 to \$450,000 although the lower end tend to be older cottages. This option is to be balanced against the desire of the community to form a small building team not only to build new houses but also to maintain existing properties.

Table 11.4 places an order of cost against increased supply based on new builds.

Table 11.4: Estimated cost of new builds (GST excl)

Number of bedrooms	GFA (m2)	Unit cost (\$/m2)	No	Estimate (\$)
2	120	3,470	13	5,413,200
3	160	2,850	4	1,824,000
4	185	2,850	-	-
5 +	200	2,850	-	-
Total				7,237,200

11.3.2 Replacement housing

One dwelling is recommended for replacement as per the advice of Cobar LALC. Table 11.5 provides an indication of required investment.

Table 11.5: Estimated cost of replacement housing (GST excl)

Number of bedrooms	GFA (m2)	Unit cost (\$/m2)	No	Estimate (\$)
2	120	3,640	-	-
3	160	2,990	1	478,400
4	185	2,990	-	-
5 +	200	2,990	-	-
Total				478,400

The MPRH&BC household survey did not record any Aboriginal social housing respondents describing their properties as 'condemned' or 'unliveable', so this Plan assumes that scoping of existing properties is unlikely to identify any further houses which are beyond economic repair.

11.3.3 Housing extensions and modifications

Using the process of analysing individual MPRH&BC survey responses to determine new housing need, on the understanding that the recommendations for new housing set out in Table 11.1 are accepted and implemented, the need for housing extensions and extra bedrooms is negated. One household indicated a need for home modifications for a tenant with impaired mobility as indicated in Table 11.6. Again, this requirement is dependent upon the decision to relocate persons with a disability to new purpose-built accommodation.

Table 11.6: Requirement for housing extensions and modifications

Extensions	Number of bedrooms		
	1	2	3
Number of extensions	-	-	-
Total number of bedrooms	-	-	-
Modifications			
Number of dwellings	1	-	-

Estimated budget to attend to modifications noted in Table 11.6 is given in Table 11.7.

Table 11.7: Estimated budget for housing extensions and modifications

	Estimate (\$)
Extensions	-
Modifications	3,000
Total	3,000

11.4 Defining need for property preservation

Chapter 5 discusses in detail the methodology and findings of the MPRH&BC household survey in respect of asset condition. Corresponding estimated costs for repair and maintenance required to attend to immediate restoration and asset preservation are summarised in Table 11.8. Average spend/property is approximately \$40,860.

Table 11.8: Repair and maintenance, probable order of cost

	Cost (\$)
Responsive and planned maintenance	2,288,100
Particular works – sheds	257,000
Total	2,545,100

The total amount differs from that shown in Table 5.36 since one property flagged for replacement has been removed from the repair and maintenance costing for Band 5 properties. Approximate average cost of repairs is \$46,270/property.

11.5 Environmental health infrastructure

There are two environmental health considerations raised by the community:

- As Table 10.2, Community desire to see properties which are still serviced by on-site wastewater systems (septics) connected to reticulated sewerage or on-site systems upgraded;
- As Table 10.4, a request for kerb and guttering to roads in the east Cobar, to Dunstan Street; and
- As Table 10.9, a request quarterly rubbish clean-up for large, bulky items.

All three service improvements are the responsibility of Council and, ideally, the subject of negotiation so no cost should attach to them. As a contingency, an allowance is included for the replacement of several septic systems where these are causing a health hazard. A notional budget is itemised in Table 11.9.

Table 11.9: Environmental health infrastructure improvements

Improvement	Cost (\$)
Replacement of septic tanks with sand filter (Provisional item, \$17,500/unit)	262,500
-	-
Total	

11.6 Home ownership

Nine respondents to the MPRH&BC household survey were owners. Most were satisfied with their decision to purchase their house and for many the advantages this brought over renting. Building on this sentiment, and in the knowledge that Cobar has a real estate market with prospects for capital gain and future sale, the CWP has expressed a desire to pursue this form of tenure on behalf of the community more broadly so this Plan contains a recommendation for an information session, conducted by the AHO and Indigenous Business Australia for those tenants who might wish to consider this option further.

11.7 Tenant support and education

The Murdi Paaki Tenant Support and Education Programme (TSEP service) has become an essential and valued support service in the Aboriginal social housing space in Cobar. TSEP staff play a key role in supporting community members to establish and maintain tenancies, negotiate application and compliance processes and leverage partnerships to negotiate wrap-around services. The service is also playing an increasingly strategic role in supporting and progressing CWP and MPRA initiatives; the Murdi Paaki Alternative Energy project, to which DPIE is a co-contributor, involving the installation of 5kW residential rooftop PV panels and 5kW split system type air-conditioning, being an example. Given the complexity of the housing and related

human services landscape from a community perspective, ongoing resourcing of the Murdi Paaki Tenant Support and Education Programme (MP TSEP) is considered important in the context of sector sustainability and the effective and targeted delivery of human services.

11.8 Emergency accommodation

Although data provided by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research may not be entirely representative, the number of domestic assault incidents recorded in the period July 2020 to June 2021 for the total population at 1.36 times the rate for NSW (550.4 incidents per 100,000 population cf. 405.4). Cobar LALC can arrange emergency accommodation of Aboriginal individuals and families on occasions, but a more permanent solution is required to meet short term needs. The focus of the CWP is on emergency housing to assist people whose houses have been destroyed or require repair: transit accommodation, rather than a staffed facility with the purpose of providing shelter and on-site support to victims of violence-related incidents. Accordingly, this Plan includes a recommendation for a furnished four-bedroom transit property, managed by Cobar LALC, for use as short-term housing under strict eligibility rules. Budget is as Table 11.10.

Table 11.10: Estimated cost of emergency housing (GST excl)

Number of bedrooms	GFA (m2)	Unit cost (\$/m2)	No	Estimate (\$)
4	185	3,135	1	580,000
Total				580,000

11.9 Master Plan

The issues addressed in this HEHP are inter-related, complex and demanding involving, as they do, a physical, social, financial and economic interplay. Interdependencies between the housing and human services sectors add to complexity and uncertainty in the strategic planning process, particularly from political and cultural perspectives.

This Plan makes transparent the core demand drivers that are affecting the housing and human services sectors, and documents an evidence base for strategic planning for growth of the community's housing and infrastructure assets and improvement in housing and human services. The lead time for, and long lifetime of, housing infrastructure requires a long-term view so identifying, planning and prioritising a package of measures is vital to ensure the sectors deliver sustainable long-term outcomes for the community. The package of measures proposed by the community, which lays out the community's collective vision and values, is documented in the Master Plan, Table 11.11. Table 11.12 provides clarity on the order of sector investment.

Table 11.11: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
CAP-5.2	5.8 5.11 5.13 9.3 9.4 11.3	Work in partnership with housing providers to identify gaps in housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve utilisation of existing properties by matching household composition to property size Increase housing supply generally in accordance with Table 11.1 with emphasis on providing modified/accessible housing for older members of the community and on meeting the needs of larger families Restructure housing application, allocation and transfer processes to ensure preference is given to locally based applicants Transfer management of AHO properties to a local ACHP in line with the aspirations of the community and MPRA to rationalise and strengthen housing management services Foster a more inclusive partnership between the CWP and housing manager(s), including regular communication and performance reporting Conduct an objective rent review to reflect housing condition, level of amenity and cost of living in a remote location Advocate with housing manager(s) for improved responsiveness to tenant circumstances, perceptions of safety, enquiries and requests for assistance, including repairs and maintenance Foster an enduring partnership between MP TSEP, housing provider(s) and homelessness services to ensure vulnerable Aboriginal individuals and families can receive the practical support which keeps them safe Maintain the role of MP TSEP to assist tenants at risk to retain their tenancies, including negotiating access to human services 	<p>The MPRH&BC household survey, the CWP, and human service providers consistently flag a series of concerns in relation to tenancy and asset management services.</p> <p>The survey indicated a strong desire for housing management services to be consolidated locally while the CWP feel that the allocation process is flawed in favouring applicants from other towns over local applicants. The survey did not find evidence of crowding but the CWP is of the view that this does not represent the true situation and crowding is a major but hidden issue. People are reluctant to disclose true occupancy levels as, in doing so, they could fall foul of tenancy or Centrelink obligations.</p> <p>DCJ and OoR housing management performance is sub-optimal in the eyes of the community with criticism levelled at lack of visibility, accessibility and inadequate communication with tenants. Inaction in relation to requests for repairs and maintenance is a universal censure but it is unclear whether this relates to breakdown in housing management or lack of trades. Some actions recommended in this Plan sit within a regional context and should be referred by the CWP Chair to MPRA for a Regional response. Rent level and questionable aspects of the housing application and allocation process fall within this category.</p> <p>Acceptance of MP TSEP by the community is ensuring that tenants and others in need have access to a culturally safe housing support service. The TSEP team has built an impressive capacity to work with tenants across a wide range of human services and to address barriers to access.</p> <p>The MPRH&BC household survey indicated that approximately half of all tenants were not claiming CRA. Targeted support by MP TSEP can assist tenants to obtain the necessary documentary evidence and apply for this financial benefit.</p>

Table 11.11: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
CAP 4.1 CAP 4.3 CAP 5.1	9.3 11.11 11.12	Provide employment opportunities for local people in the housing industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the RAHLA and MPS to establish a local small-scale building enterprise with the primary objective of carrying out new builds and asset maintenance Develop the training and mentoring infrastructure required to grow local skills in building, construction and landscaping Organise building project work activities to create a sustainable training and employment programme which produces tangible outcomes in terms of skills development and long-term employment 	As advised by the CWP and Cobar LALC, trades in Cobar are focused on working in the mining sector. Obtaining a carpenter, plumber, electrician or air conditioning specialist is proving challenging, leading to tenant dissatisfaction with asset management services and unnecessary deterioration of property condition. The opportunity and willingness exist to create an internally driven solution.
CAP 4.1 CAP 4.2	9.3 11.12	Develop a business case for a Cobar community nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a feasibility study into the potential expansion of the Community Nursery, inclusive of environmental and rehabilitative needs of the Cobar mining industry Work with MPS on establishing an environmental rehabilitation and landscaping contract service 	The mining industry is the largest employer in Cobar. Providing goods and services to the mining sector locally and regionally provides a significant opportunity for the creation of Aboriginal owned business(es) and sustainable employment.
CAP-2.1	8.1 8.2 9.3 9.4	Increase the provision and quality of local health and human services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a closer relationship between the CWP, all tiers of government and other key stakeholders to establish areas of common strategic interest and drive improvements in human services, including a tighter focus on service availability, cooperation, integration and community wellbeing, and measurable gains in outcomes Advocate through MPRA for a review of Aboriginal alcohol and other drug residential and counselling services with a view to developing a strategy to address unmet local need Increase availability of non-clinical mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services Arrange a review of NDIS and aged care services, a check of client entitlements, and availability and performance of current service providers Negotiate with human service providers for more opportunities for local employment to improve cultural safety and accessibility Resolve once and for all the issue of community transport services 	<p>The CWP sees the lack of engagement with and by Council as a lost opportunity to strike a working relationship and forge a partnership to progress mutual interests, particularly around an improvement in human services. While the CWP is aware and appreciative of the role and performance of the providers listed in Table 8.4, there is room for improvement. Areas of strengthening are primary health care and non-clinical health services, and disability and aged care services where the CWP is adamant that services are inadequate with some clients denied the care services they are entitled to.</p> <p>Service providers find it difficult to recruit and retain local personnel so opportunities exist to improve cultural safety through encouraging interested local young people into employment in the human services sector.</p> <p>Transport in remote communities is a perennial issue, not only for those that need to attend medical specialist appointments in Dubbo but also for the less mobile to access local services. Consolidation of services into a local hub would go some way in improving service coordination and access</p>

Table 11.11: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
CAP-3.2 CAP 3.4	9.3	Build the capacity of youth leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for funding to employ a youth coordinator and adequate resources to support young people to realise their potential and increase their capacity for leadership In collaboration with young people in the community, develop and implement a youth strategy, design and deliver activities which encourage positive behaviours and healthy living Encourage youth leadership in the CWP and provide the opportunity for participation in community decision-making 	Over 40% of the Aboriginal population is aged between five and 24 years yet recreational and personal development activities are few. The CWP is keen to see a formalise and permanent arrangement with qualified staff and adequate resources and facilities to offer structured recreational activities, mentoring and diversionary pursuits which build the capacity of young people to contribute positively to the community.
CAP 3.3 CAP-4.1 CAP-4.3	6.1 9.3 11.11 11.12	Build partnerships with employment providers and businesses to link training to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly support Aboriginal students to complete year 12 With MPS support and in conjunction with interested local businesses and services, develop a package of initiatives relating to transitioning young adults from education and training into employment 	The CWP aspires to improve economic prospects by increasing the level of active participation in the labour market. All Aboriginal people aged 17 and 18 years were engaged in employment, education or training at the time of the 2016 Census and the overall unemployment rate for Aboriginal people was 17%. The mines offer one pathway to employment in conjunction with strategies CAP_4.1 and 4.2, a future in human services another. Developing a local employment plan in conjunction with MPS would be a useful starting point.
COB-01	5.11 9.3 11.3	New housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost Aboriginal social housing supply through new builds and/or acquisitions. Give priority to housing older members of the community where this frees an existing family home for others and those with a disability Engage the CWP in the planning and design process for all new developments to ensure future housing provision are matched to need 	The MPRH&BC household survey and evidence from the CWP point to a need for additional housing at least to the extent stated in Table 11.1. Cobar LALC sees an opportunity in conjunction with increasing supply to rationalise housing utilisation to improve sector efficiency and, in doing so, to ease crowding pressures and community wellbeing. The CWP has firm views on the mix and type of new housing to be built and seeks to be engaged from the earliest stages of planning and design. The AHO and Cobar LALC have a combined total of seven serviced residential blocks ready for development.

Table 11.11: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
COB-02	5.13 11.3	Replacement housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Cobar LALC fibro cottage is deemed unserviceable although up to six other dwellings are reported by tenants to be in a poor state of repair and some may be candidates for replacement once inspected 	The MPRH&BC household survey did not identify any Aboriginal social housing dwellings which needed replacement but Cobar LALC has subsequently indicated that it has one while the CWP consider that some properties managed by other providers may also be candidates for replacement. A comprehensive condition inspection and scoping of works will determine whether any additional properties have reached the end of life
COB-03	5.11 11.3	Housing extensions and modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No extensions are proposed provided that the relocations recommended by Table 11.1 are implemented Arrange for OT assessment of tenants with an impairment requiring home modifications 	<p>If the recommendations for new housing are implemented the need for extension of existing houses is extinguished. If no new housing is planned, then additional bedrooms will be built as required to satisfy the CNOS criteria. The provisional assessment was for one extra bedroom to one property and a two-bedroom extension to a second.</p> <p>One house remained to receive modification because of a physical impairment of an occupant but there is a need for further assessments to be carried out.</p>
COB-04	5.13 9.4 11.4	Housing repair and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit adequate investment to restore asset condition, amenity and longevity Ensure that security and safety measures are regularly maintained in functional condition 	<p>Tenants reported on asset condition at the time of the MPRH&BC household survey. Reports, as might be expected were mixed, ranging from satisfactory to not so satisfactory. Response time and quality of repairs were bones of contention. Under the AHO <i>Build and Grow</i> policy, asset condition has deteriorated and decline in condition requires to be reversed. Survey responses indicated that manager responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act may not be being complied with. 25% of tenants did not feel safe in their homes, many because doors and windows could not be locked.</p>

Table 11.11: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
COB-05 CAP 5.2	9.3 11.8	Ensure access to emergency housing to assist people whose houses have been destroyed or require repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide one four-bedroom dwelling as transit accommodation to be available under strict eligibility rules 	Cobar has not been favoured with emergency accommodation of any nature, whether crisis accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, temporary shelter for the homeless, a halfway house for clients exiting residential Aod services, or returning to the community post-release. The primary focus of the CWP is on ensuring short term transit accommodation for tenants who would otherwise find themselves homeless and/or to allow housing providers to carry out extensive planned maintenance requiring tenants to vacate.
COB-06	5.8 9.4 11.6	Home ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange with the AHO and IBA to deliver community information workshops on an annual basis in support of home ownership 	Cobar has a functioning real estate market. Private and social housing tenants could purchase affordable housing as a viable alternative to longer term rental. The MPRH&BC household survey identified a greater than expected cohort of owner occupiers so the foundation for greater participation in home ownership exists. By and large, these owner occupiers were satisfied with their decision to buy. The CWP considers it would be beneficial to hold annual information sessions to provide guidance to the community on the steps to ownership, and pros and cons.
COB-07	3.12 9.4	Energy affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install residential solar PV panels to all dwellings not currently provided with solar power and include associated energy saving measures 	Energy poverty is a problem in most communities across the Region, including Cobar. Previous energy affordability measures have not addressed the needs of all Aboriginal social housing tenants so this proposal is a step to an equitable solution for those households which have not benefited so far from measures which reduce the burden of electricity bills.
COB-08	3.12 5.11 9.4	Thermal improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with Strategy COB-10: Provide reverse cycle split system type air conditioning and draught proofing measures to all Aboriginal social housing Ensure all houses are properly insulated to maximise the effect of air conditioning and heating Upgrade passive thermal controls where it is practical to do so 	The MPRH&BC household survey established that 26% of Aboriginal social housing dwellings in Cobar did not have cooling appliances installed and 13% did not have a form of heating. With the duration of extreme temperatures increasing, it is essential for reasons of personal health and general wellbeing for air conditioning and other passive thermal controls to be provided to each household.

Table 11.11: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Action area	Strategy	Justification
COB-09	9.4 Table 10.2 Table 10.4 Table 10.9 11.5	Environmental health infrastructure and municipal services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate with Council for reticulated sewerage for residential areas currently reliant on on-site waste management systems, failing which upgrade/replace existing septic systems where health is at risk ▪ Advocate with Council for provision of kerb and gutter in all residential areas ▪ Advocate with Council for quarterly kerbside pick-up of bulk waste 	<p>Council is progressively extending its urban infrastructure to areas of the town currently not serviced but progress is dependent upon funding. Cobar LALC has reported that some on-site wastewater systems are deficient and require to be upgraded or replaced to minimise health risk and safety. If these properties are not to be connected to reticulated sewerage, then replacement of on-site systems is advisable. Council's domestic waste collection service is also constrained by cost: for example, there is no green waste collection. But, on the basis that less frequent bulk waste collection would be both affordable and desirable for amenity and health reasons, then a direct approach to Council for the introduction of a service would be justifiable</p>

11.10 Sector investment

The level of financial commitment required for each strategy is shown in Table 11.12. Projected cost is estimated on the following basis:

- Costs for building-related work are derived from industry standard cost information and/or for project costs for similar work in the Murdi Paaki Region;
- Prices are current to September 2020;
- An index appropriate to locality is applied;
- Building costs assume that construction takes place in accordance with MPS procurement practice. Projections will need to be re-evaluated if training schemes are integrated;
- Allowance for project management has been assumed to be generally between 10% and 15% of the construction budget depending upon the nature of the work involved and the degree of investigative work required;
- Estimates are stated as GST exclusive.

Table 11.12: Probable order of cost, housing and environmental health infrastructure

Strategy	Description	Order of cost (\$)
Housing		
	Planning and development	81,000
	Land acquisition	180,000
	Infrastructure	-
	New house building	7,237,200
	Replacement housing	478,400
	Housing modifications	3,000
	Repair and maintenance	2,545,100
	Sub-total	10,524,700
Environmental health infrastructure		
	On-site septic systems	262,500
Community facilities		
	Emergency accommodation	580,000
Project delivery costs		
	Unquantified risk allowance (5%)	555,300
	Project management (12.5%)	1,388,300
	Programme admin (3%)	333,200
	Total for housing and infrastructure	13,644,000

No costs have been assigned to improvement in and extension of human services as these services

are the subject of government programme planning and resource allocation processes. It is anticipated that MPRA will wish to adopt a regional perspective when negotiating for service improvements at a community level with the objective of establishing a consistent and equitable framework for service procurement, monitoring and performance assessment.

11.11 Funding sources

Funding for the projects identified by the Master Plan will need to be negotiated through the RAHLA as the principal decision-maker on matters of Aboriginal social housing in the Region. Neither ACHP is in a sufficiently robust financial position to contribute to these extraordinary costs from revenue derived from property rents and subsidies and is dependent upon grant funding from governments. Table 11.13 is a notional income/expenditure statement for social housing properties based on typical property information for FY2021-22, Council charges as shown at Table 6.3, and an unimproved land value of \$17,500. The calculation optimistically assumes 100% rent collection.

Table 11.13: Notional income and expenditures relating to Cobar Aboriginal social housing

Amount (\$)		
Income	Rents	662,699
	Subsidy	109,950
	Total revenue	772,649
Outgoings	Rates/charges	103,893
	Administration	145,000
	Property costs	431,350
	Other costs	92,800
	Total outgoings	773,042
	Balance	-393

A fair assessment would be that housing managers would be at or close to breakeven with the current financial structure.

Viability of the service to the Cobar community is subject to the on-going financial support in the form of government grants and subsidies from the Aboriginal Housing Office. Alternative financial investment models such as social impact investing

may provide solutions to funding capital and/or recurrent costs but these have yet to be tested. The *Technical Supplement to support the Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State-significant projects*, October 2020, is very much focussed on the construction of new infrastructure projects and, if indicative of the type of projects which fit the guidelines, then this route to financial support might be feasible.

its CAP. Given the synergies between the two projects, and the ability to use a common administration, conducting a feasibility study to demonstrate viability would be worthwhile.

11.12 Staging of works

Indications are that the community would be willing to consider planning a works programme around a structured enterprise development initiative having the objective of providing local training and employment in building trades. A sustainable new build programme of 2 to 3 new houses a year has been proposed. With the attention of non-Indigenous trades firmly focussed on offering contract services to the mines, obtaining value for money in repair and maintenance works might also be exacting. In view of uncertainties around scope, timeframes, levels of investment, capacity and priorities, drafting of a work plan is deferred pending negotiation and clarification with the RAHLA.

11.13 Value-adding initiatives

Longer term and sustainable construction opportunities which exist outside of the Aboriginal social housing sector, and the opportunities presented by this Master Plan, strongly suggest merit in investigating the potential for a local Aboriginal building team to fill the gaps created by the perceived trades shortage. The challenges facing construction start-ups, and particularly the difficulty of obtaining finance, are well known but an advantage for Cobar is the local presence of Murdi Paaki Services which has the capacity to work with the CWP and other stakeholders to develop a suitable employment and training framework and negotiate its implementation.

Flowing from the creation of a building capability, and allied to it, is the expansion of the Cobar nursery project to offer environmental and landscaping services to the mines and rural industries. The CWP has flagged this aspiration in

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