



# Cobar's CBD Masterplan

## Engagement Outcomes Report

Cobar Shire Council

16 November 2022

→ The Power of Commitment

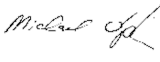



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## Acknowledgement of Country

GHD acknowledges the Ngiyampaa Wangaapuwan people, Karulkiyali (stone country people), and Pilaarrkiyalu (Belar tree people), the traditional custodians of Cobar and surrounds.

GHD also acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land, water and sky throughout Australia on which we do business. We recognise their strength, diversity, resilience and deep connections to Country. We pay our respects to Elders of the past, present and future, as they hold the memories, knowledges and spirit of Australia. GHD is committed to learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the work we do.



# Executive summary

Cobar Shire Council (Council) has engaged GHD to prepare a Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan and supporting Business Case, to encourage more business, increase pedestrian activity, and improve the public open space. The aims of the CBD Masterplan are:

- To make Cobar more liveable and provide economic opportunities in a vibrant CBD
- To have a plan that is vibrant and consistent for the CBD

To meet the aims of the CBD Masterplan, the key objectives have been established as:

- Encourage more business
- Increase pedestrian activity
- Improve open space
- Increase indoor and outdoor dining opportunities
- Establish and reinforce connectivity between existing and proposed key attractors
- Opportunities in the Grand Precinct to reinforce connectivity
- Review cohesivity of building facades to increase streetscape harmony

A community-informed CBD Masterplan can assist in achieving aspects of liveability and pride of place through bolstering areas such as aesthetic and practical amenity, outdoor and green space, connectivity, and walkability.

## Engagement activities and outcomes

To inform the development of the CBD Masterplan, GHD carried out community and stakeholder engagement activities during October 2022, to understand community aspirations for the CBD and Grand Precinct.

Engagement activities included two key stakeholder workshops, two community drop-in sessions (which included an embedded primary school aged children workshop), two high school student sessions, and workshops with Council staff and Councillors.

Engagement feedback from these activities has been collated and discussed in this report, where common topics have been drawn out and then consolidated into seven key themes. The seven key themes will inform the development of the CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan, to incorporate local context, identify, and assess constraints, issues, and opportunities, consider the community and key stakeholder's vision and objectives for the area. The seven key themes are:

- Outback identity at a crossroads
- “Grand” designs
- Places to rendezvous
- Shade and greenery
- Empowered tenants and landlords
- A place for everyone
- Cobar is “going places”

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project background

Cobar Shire Council (Council) has engaged GHD to prepare a Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan and supporting Business Case, to encourage more business, increase pedestrian activity, and improve the public open space. The aims of the CBD Masterplan are:

- To make Cobar more liveable and provide economic opportunities in a vibrant CBD
- To have a plan that is vibrant and consistent for the CBD

To meet the aims of the CBD Masterplan, the key objectives have been established as:

- Encourage more business
- Increase pedestrian activity
- Improve open space
- Increase indoor and outdoor dining opportunities
- Establish and reinforce connectivity between existing and proposed key attractors
- Opportunities in the Grand Precinct (see Figure 1.1) to reinforce connectivity
- Review cohesivity of building facades to increase streetscape harmony



Figure 1.1 Grand Precinct - retail presentation near the former Grand Hotel

To inform the development of the CBD Masterplan, GHD carried out community and stakeholder engagement activities during October 2022, to understand aspirations for the CBD and Grand Precinct area. A community-informed CBD Masterplan can assist in achieving aspects of liveability and pride of place through bolstering areas such as aesthetic and practical amenity, outdoor and green space, connectivity, and walkability.

As demonstrated in Figure 1.2 below, engagement feedback will be collated and discussed in this report, where common topics will be drawn out and then consolidated into seven key themes. The seven key themes will inform the development of the CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan, to incorporate local context, identify, and assess constraints, issues, and opportunities, consider the community and key stakeholder's vision and objectives for the area.



Figure 1.2 Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept plan development

## 1.1.1 Engagement objectives

During the development of the Masterplan for the Cobar CBD and Grand Precinct concept plan, engagement objectives were to:

- Engage early so that any aspirations, options, and constraints are understood up front and provide transparency about how they have been considered in the Cobar CBD and Grand Precinct Concept Plan.
- Demonstrate how community and stakeholder issues and feedback are being captured.
- Elevate local knowledge and garner support for the Cobar CBD and Grand Precinct Concept Plan.

## 1.2 Purpose of this report

This report provides a summary of the feedback received from community and key stakeholders resulting from the engagement program, as described in section 2.3. The report first describes the engagement activities carried out as part of the engagement program, and the key stakeholders identified to be engaged throughout this process.

The report then presents the outcomes of these activities, drawing out common topics that emerged from the engagement activity, which are then consolidated into key seven themes. These key themes will inform the development of the Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan, to incorporate local context and bring a spotlight to the priorities of the community.

## 1.3 Scope and limitations

This report: has been prepared by GHD for Cobar Shire Council and may only be used and relied on by Cobar Shire Council for the purpose agreed between GHD and Cobar Shire Council as set out in section 1.2 of this report.

GHD otherwise disclaims responsibility to any person other than Cobar Shire Council arising in connection with this report. GHD also excludes implied warranties and conditions, to the extent legally permissible.

The services undertaken by GHD in connection with preparing this report were limited to those specifically detailed in the report and are subject to the scope limitations set out in the report.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the date of preparation of the report. GHD has no responsibility or obligation to update this report to account for events or changes occurring subsequent to the date that the report was prepared.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on assumptions made by GHD described in this report (refer section(s) 1.2 of this report). GHD disclaims liability arising from any of the assumptions being incorrect.

## 1.4 Assumptions

The following are assumptions and limitations in place for the purposes of the report:

- Individuals that provided feedback or participated in any of the engagement activities have the authority to represent their respective organisation and/or community.
- Key themes identified in this report have been developed from various engagement activities (community drop-in sessions and stakeholder workshops). These results are the views of those that participated in the engagement activities.



## 2. Approach and activities

GHD developed a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) to guide the engagement program. The CSEP was developed in close collaboration with Council and in line with Council's key objectives to successfully facilitate the development of the CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan.

The CSEP outlined the specific actions and timing to be used to communicate with different stakeholders at each stage of the project. It also identified appropriate channels to allow for feedback from stakeholders and the wider community. It includes key project messages, and a schedule of engagement activities to provide consistent, meaningful engagement with key stakeholders and the community.

Meaningful engagement undertaken at the early stages of the preparation of the CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan has allowed valuable feedback to be captured and analysed. This engagement process has demonstrated the importance of community involvement and input and its contribution toward shaping a future vision and framework for the Cobar CBD. Once the CBD Masterplan has been prepared it will be presented to Council and key stakeholders for comment and feedback, to determine the final option for the CBD Masterplan.

### 2.1 Engagement approach

At the commencement of the process, Council and GHD proposed a clear, broad approach to engaging with the community and stakeholders. This approach is based around the principles of regular, two-way communication and active listening:

- Stakeholders were given the opportunity to express their values, views, and insights
- Being responsive to all stakeholders
- Providing information about the CBD Masterplan and the process to develop it
- Explaining how community feedback is used
- Providing ongoing opportunities for feedback

### 2.2 Promotion

Promotion of the engagement activities to provide input on the CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan were carried out via the following channels:

- Facebook advertisements and promotional videos (see Figure 2.1).
- Newspaper advertisements: the community drop-in session was promoted in The Cobar Weekly, as shown in Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3 below.
- Letter invitation to CBD business owners for workshop sessions (provided in Appendix A).



Figure 2.1 Facebook "story" video promotion

weekend expected to be partly cloudy and 23 on Saturday while Sunday should be slightly warmer with a top of 23.  
Monday will be cloudy with a top of 24.

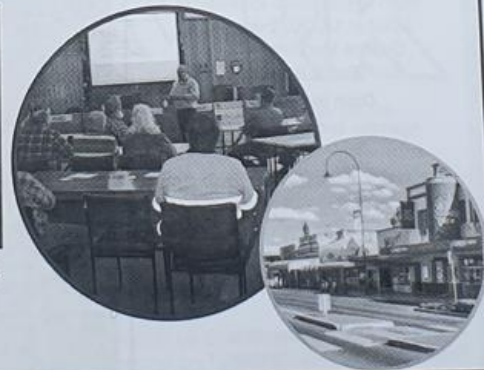
service, State Emergency Service, VRA Rescue NSW, Marine Rescue and the predecessor organisations who have lost their lives in voluntary service. While there, Mr Martin paid his respects to Neil Hudson who is listed on the memorial. Mr Hudson, a Cobar resident, was killed fighting bushfires in 1975. • Photo contributed

## Cobar CBD Master Plan Community Consultation



Cobar Shire Council has recently received funding through Resources for Regions to develop a masterplan and business case for the Cobar CBD area. This document will pave the way for future upgrades within the Cobar CBD and help Council apply for future funding to be able to undertake the improvements in the main street area.  
Council has engaged GHD Architects to do the masterplan and business case and, as part of this process, they will be facilitating community consultation sessions in Cobar on Thursday October 13, 2022.

**Community sessions to be held at the  
Cobar Youth and Community Centre,  
1 Harcourt Street, Cobar on:  
Thursday October 13 at 9am – 11am  
Thursday October 13 at 6pm – 8pm**



Cobar Shire Council encourage all members of the community to attend and provide feedback and input into the future plans.

Wednesday October 12, 2022 *The Cobar Weekly* Page 3

Figure 2.2 Cobar CBD Masterplan Community drop-in sessions - advertisement placed in *The Cobar Weekly* on October 12, 2022

hat mals can be found at the Local Land Services website, [www.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au).

settings such as healthcare and aged care facilities.

## What would you like to see in the CBD?

### What changes and improvements would you like to see in Cobar's CBD?

Do you think the main street and surrounding streets need more shade, more seating, more parking spots, more trees, more tourist information signs or does the CBD need a full re-design?

Cobar Shire Council wants to hear the community's thoughts and, in particular, the thoughts of the key stakeholders in the CBD, our shop owners and business operators.

Council's Director of Finance and Community Services Kym Miller said council has recently received funding through the Resources for Regions program to develop a masterplan and business case for the Cobar CBD area.

"This document will pave the way for future

upgrades within the Cobar CBD and help council apply for future funding to be able to undertake the improvements in the main street area," Mr Miller explained.

"Council has engaged GHD Architects to do the masterplan and business case and as part of this process they will be facilitating consultation sessions in Cobar."

In addition to community sessions being held at the Cobar Youth and Community Centre next Thursday (see Page 7 for meeting times), additional consultation sessions will also be held next Wednesday and Friday specifically to hear from main street/CBD business owners and operators, government agencies and services that are currently located within the CBD area.

Figure 2.3 Article featured in the *Cobar Weekly* dated Thursday 6 October, 2022

## 2.3 Summary of engagement activities

Figure 2.4 below shows a summary of the engagement program, which involved the following activities:

- One Council staff workshop
- One Councillor presentation
- Two community drop-in sessions, including a workshop session for primary school aged children
- Two high school workshops
- Two key stakeholder sessions, including one workshop for business owners

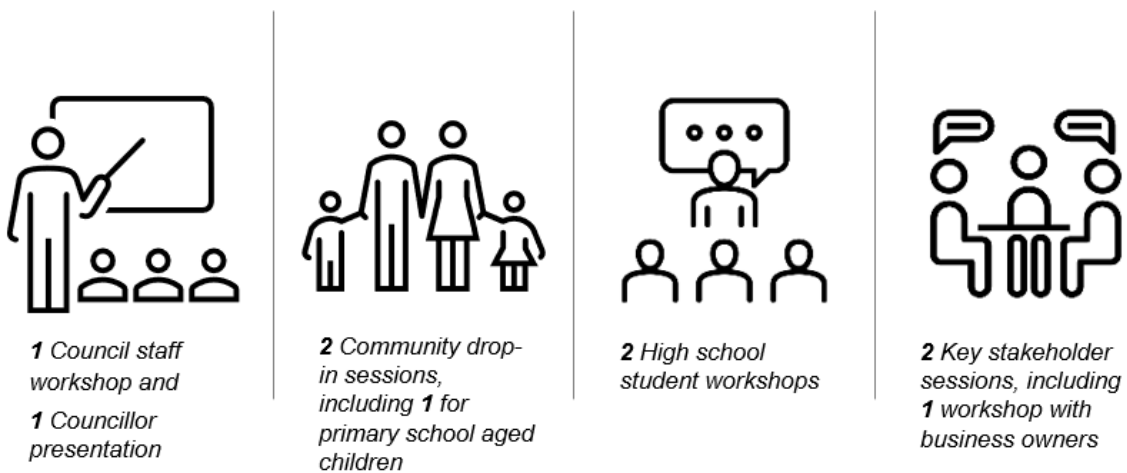


Figure 2.4 Summary of engagement activities

## 2.3.1 Key stakeholders

A stakeholder list was developed to identify key stakeholders, their interest in the Cobar CBD Masterplan and the most suitable way to engage them. This list is provided in Table 2.1 below, indicating how these groups were engaged through the engagement program.

**Table 2.1** Stakeholder list identifying potential interests and engagement activities

Category	Stakeholders	Issues of interest (examples only)	Engagement activity
Local Government	Cobar Shire Council staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Community views and perceptions</li> <li>– Economic development &amp; tourism</li> <li>– Public amenity</li> <li>– Community benefits</li> <li>– Heritage &amp; culture</li> </ul>	Workshop – held 12 October 2022
	Cobar Shire Mayor Peter Abbott and Councillors		Presentation – held 13 October 2022
Cobar Community	Cobar residents Cobar kids (primary school aged children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Access and wayfinding</li> <li>– Environmental impacts</li> <li>– Aesthetic and other amenity</li> <li>– Community benefits</li> <li>– Employment</li> </ul>	Community drop-in sessions (x2), including (x1) kids' workshop – both held 13 October 2022
Cobar Business Community	Business owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Economic development &amp; tourism</li> <li>– Public amenity</li> <li>– Access and wayfinding</li> <li>– Aesthetic and other amenity</li> <li>– Community benefits</li> </ul>	Key stakeholder sessions (x2) – held 12 October 2022 and 14 October 2022
School Community	Cobar High School students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Aesthetic and other amenity</li> <li>– Community benefits</li> <li>– Economic development &amp; tourism</li> <li>– Public amenity</li> <li>– Educational / youth benefits</li> </ul>	Student workshops – both held 13 October 2022

## 2.3.2 Engagement activities

Engagement activities and a description of each activity and timing is provided in Table 2.2 below.

**Table 2.2** Engagement activities – description and timing

Activity	Activity detail	Tools	Location	Date and time
<b>Council staff workshop</b> Council staff were invited to a brief presentation and workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using a slideshow presentation, GHD presented desktop findings to Council staff.</li> <li>Council staff were encouraged to provide input to confirm and further findings thus far.</li> <li>Discussion was encouraged to draw out local knowledge and orientate prior to community engagement.</li> </ul>	PowerPoint Presentation	Cobar Shire Council Building	12 October 2022 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
<b>Stakeholder session #1 and #2</b> Workshop for key stakeholders, such as business owners, community group representatives, and other representatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants were briefed on the project and objectives using a PowerPoint slide show presentation.</li> <li>Using maps, posters and sticky notes, stakeholders were asked to workshop ideas in small groups to achieve the CBD liveability objectives (see Figure 2.5).</li> <li>Stakeholders were asked to discuss and then prioritise ideas and initiatives through a ranking process (see Figure 2.6).</li> <li>Results were collated in a visual manner and displayed on the walls to encourage discussion, including at the following community drop-in session.</li> </ul>	Posters Maps PowerPoint Presentation	Youth Centre, 1 Harcourt St, Cobar NSW 2835	12 October 2022 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, and 14 October 2022 10:00 am – 11:00 am
<b>Student session #1 and #2</b> Workshops for students from Cobar High School.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants were briefed on the project and objectives using a PowerPoint slide show presentation.</li> <li>Students were asked to draw or illustrate ideas on a poster for the CBD and “Grand Precinct” area.</li> <li>Students were able to choose from themes and objectives.</li> <li>Posters were collected for display in the later community drop-in session.</li> </ul>	Posters Maps PowerPoint Presentation	Cobar High School, Wetherell Crescent, Cobar NSW 2835	13 October 2022 11:30 am – 12:15 pm, and 12:15 pm – 1:00 pm
<b>Community drop-in session #1 and #2</b> Drop-in sessions for the broader community, with one “kids” workshop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendees were briefed on the project and objectives using a PowerPoint slide show loop.</li> <li>Two drop-in sessions were held over the morning and evening for the wider community, including one workshop with primary school aged children.</li> <li>Community members were invited to view results from the earlier workshops and invited to comment or rank preferred ideas or initiatives.</li> <li>All other feedback was encouraged via contribution to posters and maps, via sticky notes, drawing and discussion.</li> </ul>	Posters Maps PowerPoint Presentation	Youth Centre, 1 Harcourt St, Cobar NSW 2835	13 October 2022 9:00 am – 11:00 am, and 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
<b>Councillor presentation</b> Present early project findings to Councillors, garner feedback to inform the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 20-minute presentation to Councillors on the CBD Masterplan process, including key findings, engagement activities, and key outputs, such as the Masterplan and business case.</li> <li>Encouraged verbal feedback on findings, and discuss any other areas of interest, key challenges or constraints.</li> </ul>	PowerPoint Presentation	Youth Centre, 1 Harcourt St, Cobar NSW 2835	13 October 2022 2:00pm – 3:00pm



Figure 2.5 Key stakeholder session 1 - groups workshop ideas to achieve the objectives of the CBD Masterplan

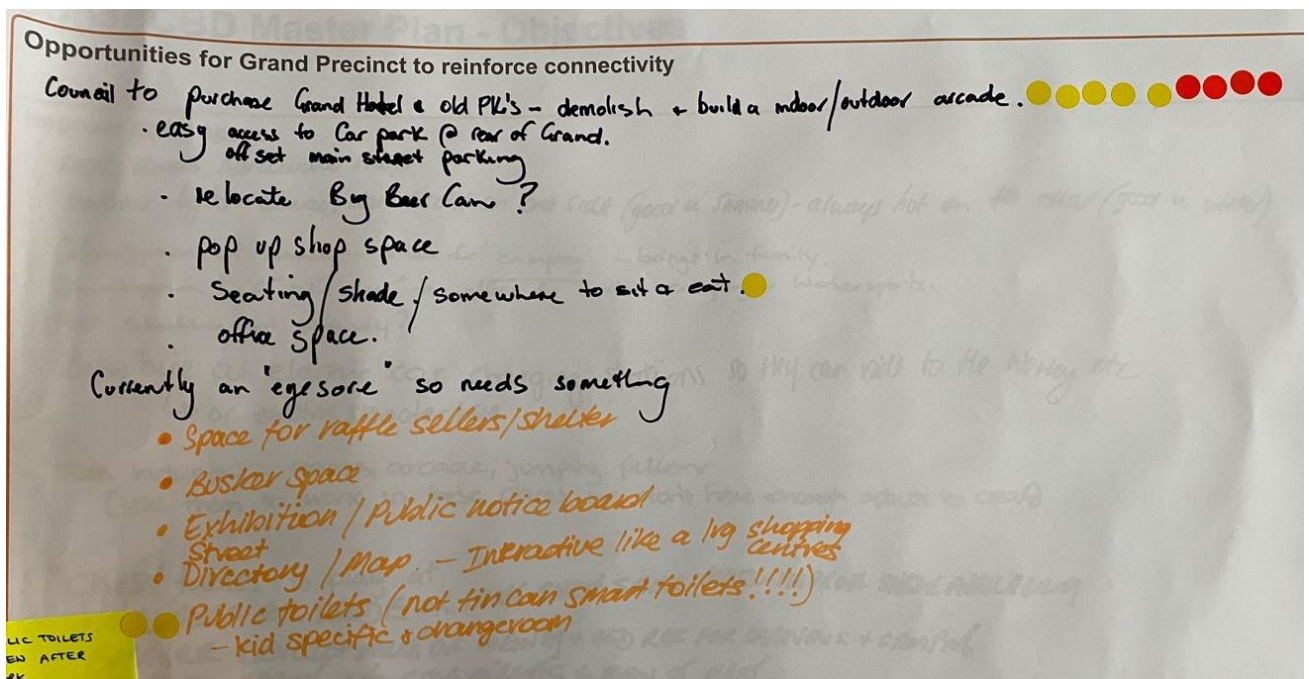


Figure 2.6 Key stakeholders and community members ideas for the CBD Masterplan, and vote for highest priorities

### 3. Engagement outcomes

Reviewing the input provided by the community and key stakeholders, such as contributions to discussions and posters, several key topics emerged. The following sections discuss these key topics as they arose from engagement activities with each of the stakeholder groups. These key topics are then analysed and consolidated to seven key themes for consideration in the CBD Masterplan, which is presented in the next section (section 4).

#### 3.1 Key stakeholder sessions

Two key stakeholder sessions were held to generate ideas for the project from stakeholder groups such as businesses, community group representative and other representatives. During the first session, held on 12 October 2022, key stakeholders were asked to form small groups to workshop ideas to achieve the objectives of this project. During the second session, held 14 October 2022, key stakeholders were invited to attend a short, informal session to debrief, discuss ideas and confirm some of the findings from previous days. The ideas and feedback from both sessions are presented in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Topics and areas – key stakeholders

Topic and/or area	Description
<b>Grand Precinct specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Council should purchase the Grand Hotel and PK’s café buildings, and these should be demolished and redeveloped. Some wanted to keep the façade and incorporate it into the new use.</li> <li>– Council should purchase the Grand Hotel and PK’s café buildings.</li> <li>– Council should finish the pavements along Marshall Street.</li> <li>– The area out the front of IGA on Marshall Street is well used.</li> <li>– Improve street front/entry to the library.</li> <li>– Connection between the carpark behind the Grand Hotel and Marshall Street could also double as a plaza/arcade for dining, seating and/or retail.</li> <li>– Relocate the “Big Beer Can”.</li> <li>– Should provide space for raffle ticket sellers in Grand Precinct area.</li> <li>– Should provide space for buskers in Grand Precinct area.</li> <li>– Provide a public exhibition / public notice board in Grand Precinct area.</li> <li>– Provide an interactive directory/map.</li> <li>– The “Big Beer Can” could be re-used for a tourist photo opportunity.</li> <li>– Would like to see more greenery on Marshall Street.</li> <li>– Should reduce posted speed limit to 40 km/hour on Marshall Street.</li> </ul>
<b>Shade, seating, and dining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There is a lack of shade in the Grand Precinct, more shade is needed.</li> <li>– Shade should be provided by structures that are not just trees and vines, should include art-like structures/sculptures.</li> <li>– Seating material choice – something that will not retain heat on hotter days, and should be shaded.</li> <li>– Shade should be provided for parking along the north-south running roads (i.e. Barton street and Linsley Street).</li> <li>– Without shading, the orientation of the buildings on Marshall Street is a constraint for outdoor dining.</li> <li>– Public seating should be provided within the CBD, so that you do not have to be a patron at a café to have a seat, i.e. bench seating to just stop and relax.</li> <li>– Anti-skateboard devices should be used on benches and other similar surfaces. For both skateboard and scooters.</li> <li>– Al-fresco dining is desirable, and should be accessible for all, including those with a wheelchair, a pram, or mobility scooter.</li> <li>– Opportunity at Empire Hotel for outdoor dining is limited due to its orientation to the sun – faces west.</li> </ul>

Topic and/or area	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alcohol free zones should be removed/reduced by Council to improve use of outdoor space in the CBD and reduce restrictions during events.</li> <li>- Copper City Motel – has al-fresco dining that doesn't get used.</li> <li>- The location of the former Gecko Café – this should include courtyard and street seating.</li> </ul>
<b>Town identity and character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a disconnect between Cobar and the FIFO/DIDO population.</li> <li>- There were differing ideas about the town's identity as a mining town and as an agricultural town.</li> </ul>
<b>Building aesthetics, ambience and presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The town looks "tired" – building facades and awnings need refreshing.</li> <li>- Shop owners should be responsible for the presentation and cleanliness of their shop fronts and immediate footpath area, i.e. sweeping and de-weeding.</li> <li>- Shop fronts are inconsistent, they are a "mish mash" of styles and colours.</li> <li>- Should consult with the Council's heritage plan when refreshing the shop fronts.</li> <li>- Facades should be cohesive and updated.</li> <li>- Landlords are responsible for helping shop owners refresh shops to help the town come "alive" again.</li> <li>- The Great Western should be renovated and updated.</li> <li>- To improve facades, property owners could coordinate works for a combined quote/works package, or combine to apply for a grant.</li> <li>- Dress-up vacant shops, i.e. could have pictures of local attractions.</li> <li>- Suggest to educate and remind shop owners or landlords to re-vamp shop every few years.</li> <li>- Need to encourage heavy vehicles to use the bypass, perhaps by improving the road, to reduce their numbers along the main street.</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those living at mining camps (FIFO) and DIDO workers don't often visit the CBD and spend wages.</li> <li>- There is a perception that it is difficult to get a business going, i.e. Council approvals, and this is a deterrent to locals to start a business.</li> <li>- There are staff shortages in Cobar.</li> <li>- There is a lack of office space, hot-desks are desired for those who own small businesses.</li> <li>- Content of the shops is more important than the presentation. Diversity of retail and dining offering is important. Would like to see more diversity in children's clothing, clothing, restaurants, and cafes.</li> <li>- Desire for activity based businesses in CBD, i.e. a paint and sip.</li> <li>- Young people could get mentored by existing business owners, i.e. open a pop-up to start their experience.</li> <li>- Provide <i>Cobar Quids</i> to select people to encourage patronage in the CBD, i.e. to those living on mining camps, school students, visitors.</li> <li>- Promote local attractions in shop windows using signage.</li> <li>- Attractions and businesses should be cross promoted.</li> <li>- Vacant shops should display opportunities to start a pop-up in that space.</li> <li>- A Business Chamber should be set up for the region.</li> <li>- Improve facilities at truck stops, to increase time spent and spending in the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The town needs to explore more opportunities to encourage tourism in the area to diversify the local economy, and relieve dependency on mining.</li> <li>- We need to encourage those "passing through" Cobar to stay one or two more nights. Most people realise this when they are here, and wish they had planned to stay longer.</li> <li>- Need a central position for tourist information.</li> <li>- Provide market events in the main street to increase pedestrian activity.</li> </ul>



Topic and/or area	Description
<b>Access and connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parking is needed out the front of businesses – people will not visit the business if they can't park out the front. "People don't like to walk".</li> <li>- Staff should be redirected to park elsewhere (i.e. behind buildings) so they do not take up customer parking.</li> <li>- Accessibility should be provided for wheelchairs, prams etc., i.e. provide enough clearance between buildings and outdoor dining arrangements.</li> <li>- Connection should be provided from the carpark behind the Grand Hotel and Marshall Street.</li> <li>- Parking should be provided for larger vehicles (i.e. campervans) and longer vehicles (i.e. cars with caravans) that is in close proximity to the CBD, to encourage patronage from these motorists.</li> <li>- Suggest better connection from Broomfield Street to Marshall Street.</li> <li>- Need smarter connections between spaces, with improved footpaths, provide shared paths, etc.</li> <li>- Better connections needed between CBD and the swimming pool.</li> <li>- Provide more cycle tracks and linkages, with good wayfinding for visitors. For example, link CBD to swimming pool, and caravan park to swimming pool.</li> <li>- Encourage active transport with bubblers and shaded resting areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Wayfinding and signage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signage for the current heavy vehicle bypass is not effective at diverting these vehicles out of the main street.</li> <li>- Retail banners could be used to promote shops and their offering, i.e. "feather flags".</li> <li>- Signage for the location of parks, amenities etc. would improve usage.</li> <li>- Signage should be provided to promote heritage / historic buildings, and provide relevant information. QR codes could help bring up the relevant historic information on phones, could even be narrated by locals.</li> <li>- Display rules and conditions of the free camping on the street.</li> <li>- Improve signage for the location of campervan and caravan parking near the CBD, at both ends of town (on the Barrier Highway route).</li> </ul>
<b>Amenity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More public toilets should be provided, not just smart toilets. There needs to be children specific toilets and a changeroom.</li> <li>- Toilets are good to attract those who may have driven through otherwise.</li> <li>- Toilets should be open after dark.</li> <li>- Music could be brought into CBD, like the way the library has done. Music should be refined to suit the use of the space, i.e. music suitable for dining.</li> </ul>
<b>Open space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mixed sentiment towards providing additional parks and gardens. Some see as a positive, whereas some believe there are already enough parks and gardens, and these should be better maintained. Some feel it may not be worth the cost of maintenance.</li> <li>- Provide a stage in open space area, like the one at Griffith.</li> <li>- Benches and other seating should be provided in open space and should be well maintained.</li> <li>- Solar panels should power any electrical amenities in a park/open space, i.e. smart toilet.</li> <li>- Parks should have shade/shading structures/trees</li> <li>- Suggest better utilising the open space in front of the Great Cobar Museum, i.e. for events.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a lack of quality housing in town to encourage people to live in the area.</li> <li>- There is an opportunity to revive the old theatre on Barton Street, repurpose use for something else or to revive it as a movie theatre.</li> <li>- Landlords are absent and not invested in the presentation or condition of shops.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Community drop-in sessions

Two drop-in sessions were held for the broader community to learn about the project and provide feedback and ideas for the future Cobar CBD and Grand Precinct area. The drop-in sessions were held on 13 October 2022, welcoming the general community to drop-in and share ideas through posters, post-it notes and general discussion. These ideas are presented in Table 3.2 below. An email submission was received from a community member providing ideas for the CBD masterplan, which is also summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Topics and areas – Cobar community

Topic and/or area	Description
<b>Grand Precinct specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A stage should be used for events/parages/markets etc.</li> <li>– Break up hard surfaces (i.e., concrete slabs, pavements) with grass patches.</li> </ul>
<b>Shade, seating, and dining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Desire for outdoor dining.</li> <li>– Provide on street outdoor dining to showcase patronage at eateries in CBD.</li> <li>– Provide shade and seating throughout Marshall Street.</li> <li>– Because there is extreme weather, both hot and cold, need to be able to balance shade to get the optimum amount depending on season.</li> <li>– Could use fruit trees for shade/greenery – fruit can be picked and eaten.</li> <li>– Provide powered public seating i.e. for charging devices.</li> <li>– Plan for space designated for trees only.</li> </ul>
<b>Town identity and character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Council should engage with local Aboriginal community to incorporate heritage and cultural identity.</li> </ul>
<b>Building aesthetics, ambience and presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide more art/murals, i.e. the tile mural outside the library is attractive and people stop to look.</li> <li>– Should extend pavement to side streets and Marshall Street in the east.</li> <li>– Provide greenery/colour by using hanging pot plants along poles on the streets.</li> <li>– Provide loans to landlords to incentivise shop front updates, especially heritage features and verandahs.</li> <li>– Incentivise shop front updates by Council providing guidance on the planning and approvals process.</li> <li>– Provide shop owners access to heritage trades people to consult on shop front updates.</li> <li>– Incentivise shop owners to update shop fronts by demonstrating benefit of investment and Councils plans to activate the CBD surrounding their premises.</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Knock down the hardware shop.</li> <li>– Need for items in shops to be more affordable and relevant for local shoppers.</li> <li>– Provide a café at the Miners’ memorial.</li> <li>– Improved and amenable streetscape and seating could attract more business to the empty shops.</li> <li>– The site of the new IGA is in the sightlines of the CBD entrance, and could face aesthetic issues for those entering from the east. Suggest trees be planted as part of the consent of approval.</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Campervans should not be allowed to use carparks on main street, should be diverted to the Newey Reserve area.</li> <li>– The “Big Beer Can” should be made into a photo opportunity for tourists.</li> <li>– Generally need more things for children and teenagers to do around town.</li> <li>– Suggest a “treasure hunt” style activity for children, i.e., “Tiny doors” in Mandurah – children use a map to find locally made doors around town.</li> <li>– Provide areas for kids to draw with chalk.</li> <li>– Provide camping amenities at the Newey Reserve.</li> <li>– Promote water sports and fishing at the Newey Reserve.</li> <li>– Provide bike hire near the electric car charging stations (behind the Grand Hotel), so people can ride down to the Newey Reserve.</li> <li>– Provide chess tables for public use.</li> </ul>

Topic and/or area	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide a nocturnal zoo.</li> <li>– The history of the town is a key draw-card for the visitor economy.</li> <li>– Aboriginal culture is an often overlooked area of interest for tourists.</li> </ul>
<b>Access and connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide more connectivity between Marshall Street and: the Catholic Church, swimming pool, and Golf Club. Use of footpaths and laneways.</li> <li>– Suggest connecting Prince Street to Marshall Street, next to police station.</li> <li>– Upgrade Little Morrison Street, including pavement and lighting. Keep the laneway tidy and free of rubbish and weeds.</li> <li>– Provide children friendly cycling tracks around town.</li> <li>– Provide safer crossing to the Great Museum.</li> <li>– Provide a gravel track around the Newey Reserve.</li> <li>– Cycling tracks could be main road adjacent, not on the main roads, to not conflict with traffic.</li> <li>– Link the Cobar Town Monument and the Great Museum with updated, more attractive pathway.</li> </ul>
<b>Wayfinding and signage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Walkways and cycleways should be well signed to assist navigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Open space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide a stage in Drummond Park. It could be themed, i.e., mining themed. Stage could be used by community, school, sports groups, and church.</li> <li>– Provide improved area outside library, that could be used for busking, or fund raising pop-up BBQ.</li> <li>– The Cornish Rest Stop (across the road from the Great Museum), should be improved, it is bland as it is. Could include trees, garden, and even small play area.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There is a housing shortage in Cobar.</li> <li>– Provide solar panels to charge electric vehicles. Chargers could be located so they encourage parking in a side street.</li> <li>– Council should set up community led action groups, to advocate for the needs of the community and link the community to the actions set by the CBD Masterplan.</li> <li>– Provide a sealed road up to the Sound Chapel</li> </ul>

### 3.2.1 Primary school student session

The morning community drop-in session doubled as a workshop with primary school aged children, where they drew on maps, posters and used sticklers to demonstrate ideas for the CBD. The ideas from this workshop are presented in Table 3.3 below.

**Table 3.3** Topics and areas – primary school students

Topic and/or area	Description
<b>Grand Precinct specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Put a petting zoo on Marshall Street</li> <li>– Provide air hockey tables for public use</li> <li>– Plant flowers and bottle brushes along Marshall Street (see Figure 3.1)</li> <li>– Provide space for buskers in the main street</li> <li>– Keep “Big Beer can”, and match it with a giant thong or football</li> <li>– Knock down the Grand Hotel and put in an arcade</li> </ul>
<b>Shade, seating, and dining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide shade</li> <li>– Shade should not cover/hide buildings</li> <li>– Provide trees in the middle strip of Barton Street</li> </ul>

<b>Topic and/or area</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Building aesthetics, ambience and presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fix signage at Gumnuts (see Figure 3.1)</li> <li>– Repaint Subway to a “nice” green (see Figure 3.1)</li> <li>– Make the top of buildings more neat, repaint (see Figure 3.1)</li> <li>– Deter large vehicles from the main street</li> <li>– Improve sidewalks aesthetics</li> <li>– Plants on median strips / pedestrian islands</li> <li>– Marshall Street should be decorated for all holiday events, not just Christmas</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Turn the old hardware store into a K-mart</li> <li>– Fill in vacant stores with restaurants (see Figure 3.1)</li> <li>– More diversity of businesses, i.e., lolly shop, toy shop, more restaurants (especially fast food), souvenir shop</li> <li>– Provide space for dog training, doggy day care, or pet day care</li> <li>– Build a mall</li> <li>– Cafes to provide free Wi-Fi</li> <li>– Provide food stalls/ stands</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide a pool at the caravan park</li> <li>– Provide air hockey tables</li> <li>– Re-open the movie theatre</li> <li>– Turn the carpark next to the old theatre into a drive-in cinema</li> <li>– Provide in-floor, walk on piano</li> <li>– Provide a pianola</li> <li>– Provide a giant chess board</li> <li>– Hold markets in the park</li> <li>– Provide a gaming arcade</li> </ul>
<b>Access and connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide parking for trucks across the road from the Shell</li> <li>– Need better pedestrian and cyclist access throughout the CBD, connecting key places</li> <li>– Provide more parking</li> <li>– Fix pathways</li> <li>– Provide cycles for hire</li> </ul>
<b>Amenity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide water fountains</li> </ul>
<b>Open space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide a stage in Drummond Park for community events</li> <li>– Provide a splash park</li> <li>– Provide a pond with fish in the park</li> <li>– Provide a mini golf course. Suggestion to theme the golf course with historic scenes/items from Cobar. Suggest to locate it behind Lew Street carpark.</li> <li>– Provide camping area with toilets behind Lewis Street carpark</li> <li>– Provide a river in the park</li> <li>– Provide more benches and tables in Drummond Park</li> <li>– Plant more trees at the Newey Reserve</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Invest in advertising to promote tourism in Cobar</li> </ul>

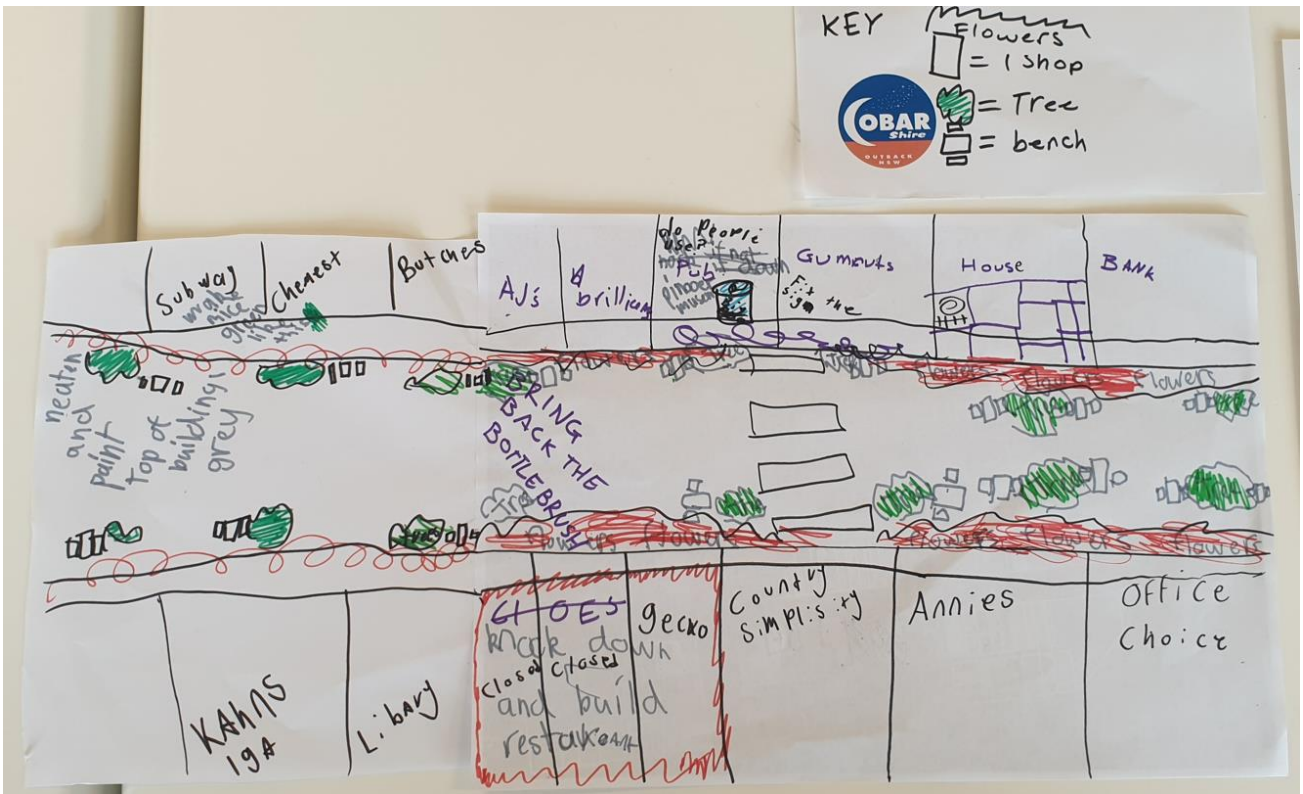


Figure 3.1 Grand Precinct area feedback - mapping completed by primary school aged children



Figure 3.2 Developing ideas for the Grand Precinct – workshopped by primary school children

### 3.3 High school student sessions

Table 3.4 Topics and areas – high school students

Topic and/or area	Description
<b>Grand Precinct specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Repurpose “Big Beer Can” as a tourist sight or street art, i.e. remove from building as display in an arcade in the area where the Grand Hotel used to be (see Figure 3.3)</li> <li>– Reduce the speed limit on Marshall Street</li> <li>– Provide live music on Marshall Street on weekends</li> <li>– Knock down the Grand Hotel (see Figure 3.3)</li> <li>– Link Marshall Street to the car park behind the Grand Hotel</li> </ul>
<b>Shade, seating, and dining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide more indoor and outdoor dining</li> <li>– Provide bigger outdoor eating areas</li> <li>– Provide more shade, using trees and umbrellas (which can be taken down in cooler months)</li> <li>– Provide seating at the Miners’ park</li> <li>– Provide water misters for hotter months near seating</li> <li>– More shade at the Youthie</li> </ul>
<b>Town identity and character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Retain heritage character</li> <li>– War memorial near the existing “poppy fence” on the eastern entry via the Barrier highway (across the road from the RSL)</li> <li>– Display Aboriginal artworks in the CBD area</li> </ul>
<b>Building aesthetics, ambience and presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Contract local artist to provide artwork around town</li> <li>– Repaint buildings in CBD</li> <li>– Clean up the streets</li> <li>– Provide more greenery</li> <li>– Line up the awnings</li> <li>– Improve aesthetics of public toilets</li> <li>– Could use local sporting club colours for colour scheme around the CBD</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Many students expressed desire for more takeaway restaurants, where some suggested to avoid this because it would cause locally owned businesses to lose trade</li> <li>– Food eating competition</li> <li>– Expand Gumnuts café and shop</li> <li>– Provide more cafes</li> <li>– Provide a self-serve dog wash</li> <li>– Provide more shops that appeal to locals, rather than tourists</li> <li>– Demolish old/disused hardware store and build a new one</li> <li>– More family friendly eateries</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide a toboggan track</li> <li>– Provide upgrades to the Cobar Memorial Services Club - to provide a beer garden and performance space out the back on the vacant land for live music and local bands</li> <li>– Provide area for gaming</li> <li>– Provide various clubs, i.e., for sports and gaming</li> <li>– Provide more space for caravans</li> <li>– Provide free camping near Youthie</li> <li>– Provide a splash park</li> <li>– Provide a giant swing</li> <li>– Updates to supermarket, or provide new ones, i.e. Woolworths</li> <li>– Provide free camping</li> <li>– Provide a movie cinema (see Figure 3.3)</li> </ul>



## 3.4 Council staff and Councillors

A workshop with council staff was held on October 12, 2022, and a presentation and discussion with Councillors was held on October 13 2022. Table 3.5 below provides a summary of the topics and areas that emerged from these activities.

Table 3.5 Topics and areas – Council staff and Councillors

Topic and/or area	Description
<b>Grand Precinct specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Desire to gauge interest in purchasing the Grand Hotel and PK's Café, and identify what the community would like done with that space</li> </ul>
<b>Shade, seating, and outdoor dining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Trees are important for locals mostly for shade, and important for visitors mostly for aesthetics</li> <li>– It is noted that tourism drops with increased heat in Cobar</li> <li>– Shade can be provided by trees, vines and/or other shade structures</li> <li>– Trees would need to be chosen to not have imposing roots, be water efficient, or be planted in planter boxes above ground, to be manageable and affordable</li> <li>– Shading could be provided along the mid-strip parking on the side streets (i.e. Barton Street and Linsley Street)</li> <li>– Mixed sentiment toward whether vehicles near dining areas on main streets would be unappealing</li> </ul>
<b>Town identity and character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The town has been historically linked to its mining roots, however, there has been some tension in moving away from this image, especially with the prospect of reaching peak mining in the next few decades. There is also an agricultural base in Cobar, and this conflicts with the "mining town" identity. It is preferred to be viewed as an "Outback Town".</li> <li>– Cobar has a characteristic "country town" look</li> <li>– The CBD should represent the character and identity of the town</li> <li>– Aboriginal culture should be more present in the CBD, including imagery any animal totems</li> <li>– The local community's aspirations should be the priority of the CBD Masterplan</li> </ul>
<b>Building aesthetics, ambience and presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tenants are restricted by rental agreements to the work they can do to improve presentation at their shops. Landlords may not be willing to pay for improvements.</li> <li>– Feel more colour is needed on the main street in general</li> <li>– Some relief, like a buffer, from the main street may be needed for pedestrians/diners</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Retail businesses in the town are challenged by the popularity of online shopping</li> <li>– Shops in Cobar are struggling with staff shortages</li> <li>– Providing hot desks would support those who have small businesses and need office space time to time. This would also encourage local spending near these locations.</li> <li>– Labour shortages in the town is seen to be in direct competition with the nearby mines</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The visitor economy is supported by events such as Grey Mardi Gras and Festival of the Miner's Ghost</li> <li>– There are two key attractors known as "the bookends": The Great Cobar Museum at the eastern end of Marshall Street, and the Cobar Caravan Park at the western. Need ideas to draw people from the bookends, especially the caravan park, into the main street.</li> <li>– Events could be held on side streets (i.e., those perpendicular to Marshall Street)</li> <li>– Events held in Drummond Park could be better connected to the CBD, to encourage foot traffic along this space</li> <li>– Feel like Cobar could benefit from providing photo opportunities / "Instagram moments", i.e. "Photo op cut out" props</li> </ul>



Topic and/or area	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The town attracts campervans, where there are parking spots available in highly visible parts of the town. Campervan presence needs to be managed better</li> <li>- When people stop for the toilet or for food, they need to have other things to keep them there or be made aware of what there is to do in town</li> <li>- Astro-tourism is a draw card for the town</li> <li>- Fly-in / fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in /drive out (DIDO) worker arrangement at the mines, which include miner's camps, has been problematic for the town's economy, as they do not need to leave these camps to meet their needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Access and connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The town is known as the crossroads for the Kidman Highway and the Barrier Highway – state highways with a lot of freight</li> <li>- These Highways bring in a lot of freight traffic. The Barrier Highway (Marshall Street) is the main street in Cobar, so the CBD sees a lot of heavy vehicles.</li> <li>- Parking is ample in Cobar CBD</li> <li>- Would like to see connectivity from the carpark behind the Grand Hotel to the main street (Barrier Highway/Marshall Street)</li> <li>- There should be a heavy vehicle redirection from the main street (Marshall Street / Barrier Highway), including a full Cobar bypass or redirection down Louth Street</li> </ul>
<b>Wayfinding and signage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signage for local amenities should be improved – more and better quality</li> <li>- Signage in windows to cross-promote other businesses/attractions etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housing is in demand, and this is an issue if we want to encourage growth in the area</li> <li>- Water security is an issue for Cobar</li> </ul>

## 4. Summary of engagement key themes

Community members and key stakeholders were asked to prioritise ideas presented by their peers (see Figure 2.6), using a ranking system. The highest-ranking ideas include:

- Council should purchase the Grand Hotel and PK's café buildings, and these should be demolished and redeveloped. Some wanted to keep the façade and incorporate it into the new use.
- There is a lack of shade in the Grand Precinct, more shade is needed.
- Shop owners should be responsible for the presentation and cleanliness of their shop fronts and immediate footpath area, i.e., sweeping, and de-weeding.
- Connection between the carpark behind the Grand Hotel and Marshall Street should be created by demolishing the Grand Hotel. This space could also double as a plaza/arcade for dining, seating and/or retail.
- Al-fresco dining is desirable, and should be accessible for all, including those with a wheelchair, a pram, or mobility scooter.
- Seating material choice – something that will not retain heat on hotter days and should be shaded.
- There should be a heavy vehicle redirection from the main street (Marshall Street / Barrier Highway), such as a full Cobar bypass or redirection down Louth Street.
- There is a perception that it is difficult to get a business going, i.e. Council approvals, and this is a deterrent to locals to start a business.
- Signage should be provided to promote heritage / historic buildings and provide relevant information. QR codes could help bring up the relevant historic information on phones, could even be narrated by locals.
- A Business Chamber should be set up for the region.
- Council should finish the pavements along Marshall Street.
- More public toilets should be provided, not just smart toilets. There needs to be children's specific toilets and a changeroom.

Other ideas that emerged from engagement activities that were regularly repeated include:

- Those living at mining camps (FIFO) and DIDO workers don't often visit the CBD and spend wages.
- Greater diversity of food and retail offering in the CBD, especially for youth.
- There are staff shortages in Cobar.
- Landlords of the shops in the CBD should be incentivised to refurbish/update the shops.
- Shade should be provided for parking along the north-south running roads
- Public seating should be provided within the CBD, so that you do not have to be a patron at a café to have a seat, i.e. bench seating to just stop and relax.
- Attractions and businesses should be cross promoted.
- Vacant shops should display opportunities to start a pop-up in that space.
- Parking should be provided for larger vehicles (i.e. campervans) and longer vehicles (i.e. cars with caravans) that is in close proximity to the CBD, to encourage patronage from these motorists.
- Signage for the current heavy vehicle bypass is not effective at diverting vehicles from the main street.
- Alcohol free zones should be removed/reduced by Council to improve use of outdoor space in the CBD and reduce restrictions during events.
- Provide safer crossing to the Great Museum.
- Re-open the movie theatre.
- Provide a stage in Drummond Park for community events.
- Provide a splash park.
- Provide space for buskers in the main street.
- There is a housing shortage in Cobar.

Understanding the key values, priorities and aspirations as expressed by members of Cobar’s community is fundamental for planning their CBD and Grand Precinct. As such, Table 4.1 below presents the key themes that will form the basis for the development of the CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan.

**Table 4.1** Key themes to inform the CBD Masterplan

<b>Key theme</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Outback identity at a crossroads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Connect with Cobar’s Aboriginal culture, of the past and the present, through genuine cultural presence in the CBD. Consult and co-design with local Aboriginal groups and representatives to seek appropriate opportunities to represent Aboriginal culture in the CBD.</li> <li>– Elevate Cobar’s outback town identity by honouring both the agricultural and mining histories of the town through appropriate representation in the CBD.</li> <li>– Being strategically located at a crossroads of the Barrier and Kidman highways, the CBD should seek opportunities to embrace the visitor economy into its identity by attracting travellers along these highways, both freight and visitors, to stop, stay, and shop.</li> </ul>
<b>“Grand” designs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Activate the Grand Precinct as an exciting town attraction, with high quality, well designed new buildings.</li> <li>– Grand Hotel and PK’s Café sites should be repurposed to provide connection from Marshall Street to the existing off-street parking.</li> <li>– There are opportunities within the Grand hotel and PK’s Café sites to provide retail, pedestrian links, and a courtyard/public gathering space.</li> <li>– Appropriate use of fresh and complimentary colours for buildings, street furniture and other structures.</li> <li>– Repurpose or reappropriate the “Big Beer Can” as a tourist attraction, i.e. provide a photo opportunity.</li> </ul>
<b>Places to rendezvous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide appropriate and varied public space for people to gather across the CBD.</li> <li>– Seek opportunities for gathering space in areas such as footpaths, eateries/dining areas, open space and in arcades.</li> </ul>
<b>Shade and greenery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Shade should be provided for seating and gathering space, where some shade should be modifiable to moderate levels of shade depending on hot or cool weather.</li> <li>– Provide relief from the weather to encourage active transport through the provision of a mix of trees and shade structures along footpaths and shared pathways.</li> <li>– Greenery and gardens can improve street aesthetics with additional colour, as well as break up large areas of concrete and other hard surfaces.</li> </ul>
<b>Empowered tenants and landlords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Incentivise landlords to invest in upgrading shops and shop frontages, i.e., through promoting benefits, seeking funding, or providing loans.</li> <li>– Incentivise business owners (tenants) to keep shop and shop frontages presentable and clean, i.e., through promoting key benefits.</li> <li>– Promote benefits of investing in property (current and future landlords and tenants), and how this would fit into plans for the CBD and Grand Precinct area.</li> <li>– Cross-promote business throughout the CBD and wider township, through window signs, stocking of local products and general awareness of the local offering.</li> <li>– Advise and educate on the Council’s heritage plans, to seek consistency in shop upgrades, that represents the heritage and country character of the town.</li> </ul>
<b>A place for everyone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide accessible and inclusive space.</li> <li>– Encourage youth, in particular teenagers, to spend time in the CBD by providing desired activities and attractions.</li> <li>– Seek and support commercial opportunities that are geared towards the interests of locals of all ages, including opportunities in retail, recreation, and leisure. Music and dance were mentioned more than once.</li> <li>– Host youth programs, services and events in the CBD and Grand Precinct area, such as at the library or Drummond Park.</li> </ul>

Key theme	Description
<b>Cobar is “going places”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Connect key attractors, such as retail and eateries, parks, swimming pool and accommodation via safe, shared paths.</li> <li>– Encourage active transport through providing amenities such as water fountains, rest areas and toilets.</li> <li>– Provide useful signage for visitors, pedestrian, cyclists, or motorists, to navigate amenities and attractions in Cobar.</li> <li>– Improve signage to raise awareness of heavy vehicle detours to relieve Marshall Street of heavy vehicle movements.</li> <li>– Provide traffic calming measures to relieve heavy and/or fast vehicles along Marshall Street/Barrier highway.</li> </ul>

Some of the ideas that emerged from these discussions are outside of the scope of the Cobar CBD Masterplan, such as the desire for a Cobar Bypass (see Figure 4.1). However, it is important to understand these ideas as a representation of the priorities expressed by attendees, and to reflect upon these in identifying key themes to inform the CBD Masterplan and present these to Council for future planning. Those key ideas are presented in Appendix B.

- Town cohesion and integration – more interaction with FIFO and DIDO workers in the mining camps
- Cobar Bypass to redirect heavy vehicles (see Figure 4.1)
- Housing – more, and better quality, housing supply in Cobar
- Seek solutions to existing staff shortages in Cobar

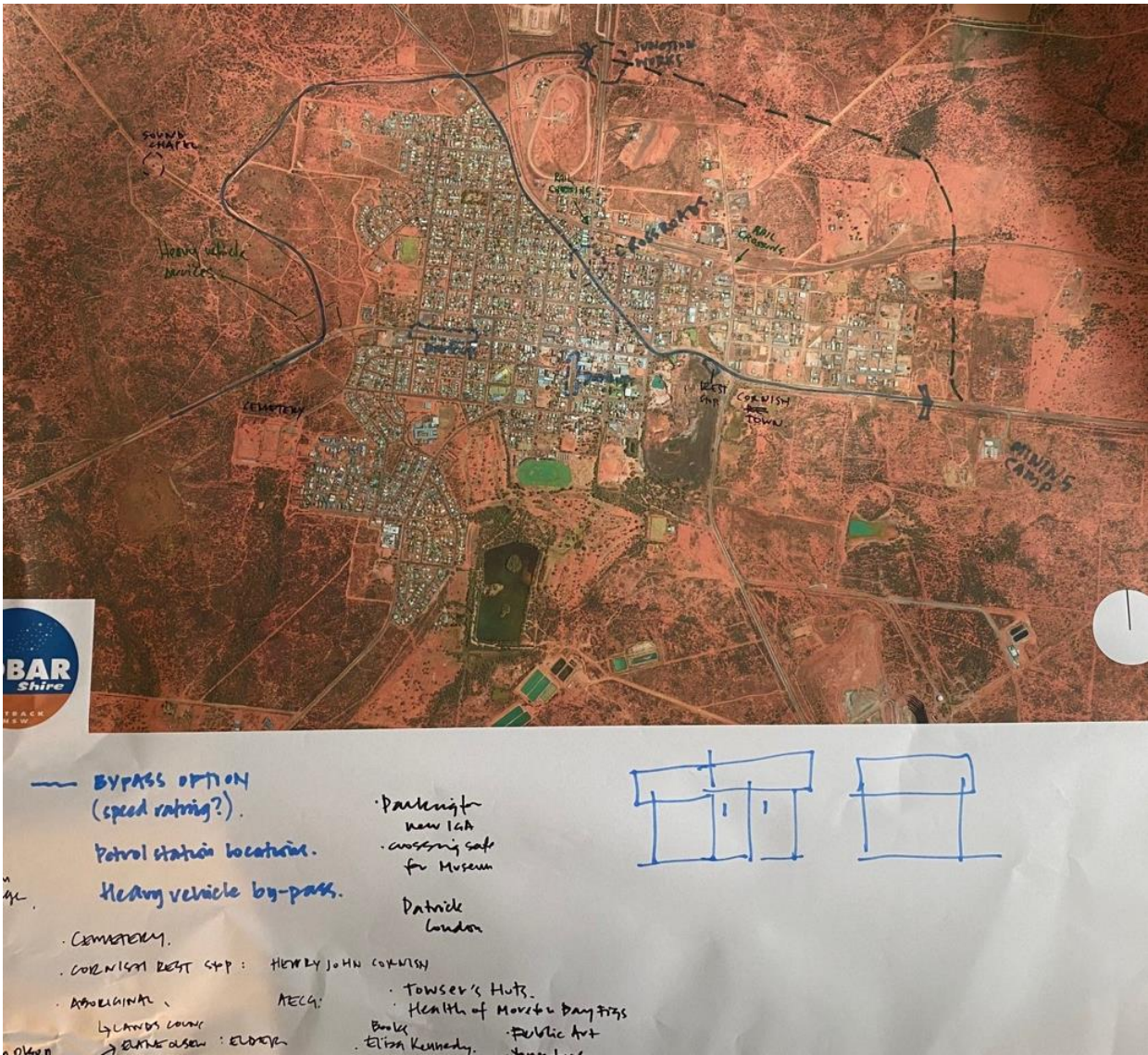


Figure 4.1 Indications for potential Bypass routes as suggested by community members

# 5. Conclusion

Throughout the engagement process the community and key stakeholders who attended the workshops and sessions were highly engaged and invested in the future of the Cobar CBD and Grand Precinct.

The community and key stakeholder feedback captured in this Engagement Outcomes Report has informed the development of seven key themes. These seven key themes will inform the preparation of a Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan, and will detail the following:

- A summary of the engagement activities and how the community and key stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan.
- Discussion of the key themes raised during the engagement process.
- How the Council can achieve the objectives set out for the Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan.

## 5.1 Next steps

Key next steps in the Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan process, are shown in Figure 5.1 below, and includes:

- Acknowledge the contribution made by community and key stakeholders' who participated in the engagement activities.
- Draft the Cobar CBD Masterplan and develop two options for the Grand Precinct Concept Plan.
- Present the Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan options to Council and key stakeholders for feedback.
- Finalise the Cobar CBD Masterplan and identify the preferred option for the Grand Precinct Concept Plan.
- Provide cost-benefit analysis in a Business Case for the components of the CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept Plan, to inform strategic implementation and decision making.



Figure 5.1 Cobar CBD Masterplan and Grand Precinct Concept plan development

# Appendices

# **Appendix A**

**Key stakeholder sessions - letter of invitation**



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In your reply please quote:  
Ref:



Cobar Shire Council Offices  
36 Linsley Street  
COBAR NSW 2835

ABN: 71 579 717 155

*"Regional Centre in Western NSW"*

BS:KM  
Ref: B3 -3 -2

30 September 2022

Dear Business/Resident,

Cobar Shire Council has recently received funding through Resource for Regions to develop a masterplan and business case for the Cobar CBD area. This document will pave the way for future upgrades within the Cobar CBD and help Council apply for future funding to be able to undertake the improvements in the main street area.

Council has engaged GHD Architects to do the masterplan and business case and as part of this process they will be facilitating consultation sessions in Cobar.

Key stakeholder sessions will be held at the Cobar Youth and Community Centre, 1 Harcourt Street Cobar.

- Wednesday 12 of October 2022 6:00pm – 8:00pm
- Friday 14 of October 2022 10:00am – 11:00am

Council encourages all business owners and residents who reside within the CBD to attend one of the above sessions to provide feedback and input into the future plans for the Cobar CBD.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us on 02 6836 5888 or [mail@cobar.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@cobar.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely,

Kym Miller  
Acting General Manager

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***Cobar – On the crossroads of the Kidman Way and the Barrier Highway***

# **Appendix B**

**Ideas outside the scope of the CBD  
Masterplan**

## Additional suggestions towards objectives for the CBD Masterplan

### Electric Vehicles and charger locations

Cobar currently has two electric vehicle charging stations, installed by the NRMA. EV owners are tentative about travelling long distances when there are so few chargers available, and when they are of only one or two styles. For example, a Tesla owner would need to bring an adapter with them, to charge from the two NRMA-supplied chargers.

Electric vehicles are the fastest growing vehicle type in Australia today, a phenomenon that has occurred only in the last couple of years.

Manufacturers around the world are increasing the number of electric makes and models available, and some have announced that they will no longer be manufacturing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles in a few years.

Cobar has an easy and cheap opportunity to attract more EV drivers, and this can also help dictate where they park. By installing a few chargers in a few side streets, you will be directing traffic a little further away from the main street parking areas. EV drivers are less likely to mind, as they will often have to wait a while to charge their vehicle, particularly if they are passing through from Dubbo (the next closest chargers) or similar, as they'll need a good charger to get to the next town.

If the chargers are close to local shops, the park, museum or similar tourist-friendly spots – then those spots are more likely to be frequented by the drivers and their families while they wait for the vehicles to charge.

### Pump track / mountain biking track(s)

One recent phenomenon that we became aware of while visiting Cobar, is the change in demographic of tourists. The 'grey nomads' have been joined by another cohort of travellers, being couples and families with children. COVID-19 restrictions appear to have changed peoples holidaying habits and also given rise to more people taking long-service or other leave, to see Australia.

Many travellers with camper trailers, camper vans and the like, bring bicycles on the back. One way to encourage people to stay an extra day or more, is to give them something easy to do, especially to get the kids moving around after a long stint in the car.

Cobar Caravan Park is on the edge of town, and close to undeveloped blocks of land. With some basic design and the use of some earth moving equipment (perhaps assisted by the mines) a small pump track could be constructed that makes the difference between staying another night or moving on.

Electric Vehicle Uptake in Australia, 2011 - September 2022



Sources: National Transport Council, Electric Vehicle Council, Vfacts, Nissan, Tesla, Vedaprime shipping data

THE DRIVEN

Of course, for the adults or those wanting more adventure, a larger mountain bike track would be ideal, and could attract people from a long distance, or give them an extra activity whilst in Cobar. Mountain biking of a larger scale requires at least a decent hill, some good design and construction work, but has reinvigorated towns such as Dungog NSW.

*See also wayfinding below*

### **Wayfinding & Connectivity**

Cobar has some great activities and facilities. To encourage people to stay and use them, signage and wayfinding can play a part. From the caravan park it is around 500m to the Cobar Memorial Pool, or the Bowling and Golf Club. Families could cycle that distance in a few minutes, or drive a little further to Drummond Park, or the newly refurbished Youthie with its skate park. A little colourful signage that points out the attractions, and shows how to get there – such as via a designated cycle-friendly route, makes it easier



### **Heavy vehicle bypass**

We have heard the truck bypass discussed from a variety of perspectives. There seem to be many positives for progressing a heavy vehicle bypass, and few downsides. We make the following points:

- the bypass route described to us is a little longer than going through town, it is unlikely to direct all traffic away from the CBD
- Cobar is 300km from the next town, most touring motorists will want to call in for a break
- trucks that need fuel will still stop, but those that do not stop are not likely to in town anyway, so not there would not be lost revenue from this perspective
- improved amenity and improved (actual or perceived) safety within the Cobar township

### **Staff shortages**

Many people mentioned the issues around the staffing of shops and restaurants etc. We understand that this is a common issue around regional centres and even in capital cities. We have one idea that might be worth trying. Ask visiting grey nomads and the new younger cohort if they'd like to do a day or two's work. This would most likely only be suitable for less skilled roles, however many people may have worked in retail or hospitality. Many unskilled components of jobs could be taught quickly, provide a welcome break and add a level of interest for a traveller.

Young and old alike travel around to pick fruit (and so on) in various locations at different times of the year. Letting visitors to the town know that there are short-term jobs available, from stacking shelves to check-out to food service and labouring, at least gives people an opportunity to supplement their income and get to know the town.

### **Connecting with mining operators and staff**

Many community members noted the lack of integration between FIFO/DIDO workers with Cobar township and its community. This was reported to have impacts on social cohesion as well as business impacts, where workers aren't spending wages at local shops and eateries.

We recommend Council to set up a relationship with the main mining operators. By allocating contacts at these operators, discussions can help establish ideas to increase DIDO/FIFO interactions in the town, improve social cohesion, identify opportunities for the operators to contribute to community (such as community benefit schemes), and manage other social and economic impacts, in order to achieve liveability goals, as set out by Council.



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→ **The Power of Commitment**