



TRURO COMMUNITY PLANNING REPORT

June May + June 2022

DOCUMENT PURPOSE

This document is designed to:

- Capture the information provided by participants that attended one of three community planning workshops in Truro.
- Provide Truro District Community Association (TDCA) with a foundation to create a strategic plan to guide their activity over the next 3 – 5 years.

OVERVIEW

The South Australian Government has announced its plan to redirect the Sturt Highway and bypass the town of Truro. This is a major infrastructure project for the state valued at \$202m, with funding joint funding coming from the Federal Government also. Based on SA Department of Infrastructure and Transport website, the project is scheduled to commence early in 2023 and be completed by 2025 (https://dit.sa.gov.au/infrastructure/road_projects/truro_bypass_project).

This initiative is expected to have a major impact on the township of Truro and is the catalyst for the TDCA to develop a strategic plan for their community and proactively address both the challenges and benefits of the project. Many businesses rely on the regular through traffic provided by the Sturt Highway and community members have long had to deal with the difficulties of being situated on a major inter-regional transport corridor. A consistently high-volume of traffic travels through Truro on the Sturt Highway including large B-Double Trucks / Road Trains.

Truro has a range of both strengths and weaknesses – many of which are relevant in the context of the Highway bypass. It is well situated to take advantage of its geographic location but it is a very small

community – with a limited commercial presence and low-population. The following gives a sense of Truro’s character and provides an overview of the town’s strengths and weaknesses. It also outlines key opportunities for the TDCA to focus on – both independently and in partnership with others. As a small community association, it has limited resources to invest in transformative projects – it can however advocate and demonstrate where opportunities lie and work collaboratively with all levels of government. Funds have been allocated by the State Government as part of the bypass project to support Truro as it transitions and this process is an important step to ensuring the needs and wants of the community are a key consideration.

ABOUT TRURO

Truro has a population of approximately 400 people, situated on the western edge of Mid Murray Council. Geographically it is positioned just north-east of the Barossa Valley Region and south-west of the Riverland. Nearby towns include Nuriootpa, Kapunda, Eudunda and the regional communities of Dutton and St Kitts, which are largely rural localities less than 7kms to the north of Truro. The drive from Adelaide City along the Northern Expressway and Sturt Highway will take just over an hour and less than 30 minutes to reach the capital’s northern suburbs.

The town was established in the 1840’s.. Whilst it is largely known both historically and in the current day as an agricultural area the nearby Wheal Barton mine was a key industry when the town was settled with many Cornish miners making it their home. It was also the terminus for Truro railway line from 1917 until the 1980s and its low rainfall makes it ideal for dry grain crop farming and livestock.

The undulating landscape of the Mount Lofty Ranges offers Truro adds to the appeal of the town, which is ideal for camping and it has long been known as a rest spot for travellers passing through. The main street which is the Sturt Highway boasts a number of businesses including a service station, town hall, second hand / bric-a-brac stores, a pub and the Bakery is a very popular place for food and coffee. There is a large tract of open green space adjacent to the main street and there are residential properties and a few empty shopfronts / premises also. The recreation park / oval has long been used for sporting activities and community gatherings and the TDCA is working to promote the venue as a “free camping” location, recently installing an RV dump-point.



STRENGTHS + WEAKNESSES

The following includes the strengths and weaknesses provided by the attendees at the community planning sessions. Some of these are significant in terms of inhibiting future growth to compensate the negative impact of the bypass.

Strengths

- Beautiful natural landscapes
- Close to nearby tourism regions including the Barossa, and Murray land / Riverland – gateway community
- Existing pig-market – well known and regular.
- Nearby racetrack
- Accessible to Adelaide – commutable on high-quality transport infrastructure
- Pro-active community and leadership through TDCA
- Big housing blocks
- Plenty of room to grow
- Local history knowledge and interest
- Reputable local businesses including the Op-shop and the Bakery
- Bypass will make the town more walkable and safer for people, particularly children crossing the road
- History of hosting great events at the local hall
- Managed to get past the stigma of the wrongly assigned Truro murders – which happened 20+kms for Truro.
- Village feel and considerable town pride
- A lot of people on the same page, wanting the same things and willing to collaborate
- Easy place to stop and park and enable kids, pets and drivers to stretch their legs etc.
- Affordable in terms of housing.

Weaknesses / Challenges

- The impact of the bypass is an unknown and is causing some uncertainty in the town – particularly in relation to the viability of local small businesses. Most likely much less traffic.
- Infrastructure / Services challenges – water and electricity supply
- No public transport
- No NBN fibre and limited local TV reception – TV being accessed comes at an additional cost and includes content not relevant to the region / state
- Limited / no social services – GP, childcare, aged care / retirement services etc.
- On the edge of the Council and often “forgotten” or not invested in
- Lack of access to groceries / staple retail
- Services and infrastructure challenges limit growth potential
- Low primary school enrolments and risk of losing school
- Limited opportunities for community social connection
- Limited tourism other than those passing through and “family + friends” visitation
- Lack of visitor information available to visitors
- Challenge getting finance – banks see the region as presenting higher level of risk
- Not a particularly strong relationship with Council.
- Low population and no rental accommodation.
- Challenging to age in place.

OPPORTUNITIES + IDEAS

Whilst there are challenges there plenty of opportunities to leverage of existing strengths and address weaknesses – particularly those that limit growth. The following reflects the ideas and opportunities presented by workshop participants.

- **Residential development**

Whilst a strong business presence and growth in population are somewhat of a “chicken + egg” scenario Truro offers considerable value in terms of residential growth. In order to realise this vision some effort would need to be put in to ensure infrastructure and essential services are improved but a growth in population would increase the size of the local economy and help to grow local business and potentially bring services to town. The desire would for growth to be well-managed sustainable and steady – rapid change is unlikely but also not desirable.

In terms of the opportunity to develop residential property, Truro offers:

- A great position in terms of being a commutable distance from Adelaide and other nearby regions – utilising high-quality transport corridors.
- Suitable land identified in three main locations – edge of railway land, end of The Esplanade and large area of land between the Esplanade and Quarry Road.
- Attractive and affordable location for hybrid workers or home-based enterprises with access to Adelaide if partly working from a CBD location or needing to meet with metropolitan based clients. This could leverage the recent “regional migration” that started during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- A solution to diminishing developing opportunities on the Barossa Valley floor.
- An opportunity to create a regional / rural residential development of the future – sustainable, connected, working with the local landscape, hobby farmers etc. Rather than creating a carbon copy of what already exists and draws some criticism and presents long-term sustainability issues, piloting a new style of development might be attractive for developers, Council, universities, philanthropic etc.

- **Boundary Realignment**

Lobbying for re-defined local government boundaries that would see Truro including in the Barossa Council area rather than in Mid-Murray. The local perception is that the town gets a “raw deal” from Mid Murray Council because it is a long way from the main centre of the Council area in Mannum. Being more closely aligned with the Barossa Council in terms of branding may be of benefit also.

The effort to make this happen should be carefully weighed up with the likely outcome in terms of increasing service delivery from local government. There are potentially other ways to address the issue in terms of lack of representation, response and investment from Council.

- **Urban Design Framework – Development + Implementation**

With the removal of large volumes of traffic – particularly large-scale freight there is an opportunity to upgrade the main street and surrounds to beautify, encourage pedestrian movement and develop precincts. This will help to attract both residents and visitors and encourage people to explore the town. This could also include signage interpreting local heritage / stories and linking to broader trails (e.g., Kidman, Heysen). There is opportunity to also reclaim some public land potentially for development as public / social space, commercial, residential development etc. A high-quality children’s playground might also be an attractor as well as offer benefit for locals.

- **Main Street Renewal + Activation**

The need to retain and attract suitable business to the main street is essential. This opportunity incorporates a number of ideas that both offer benefit and may possibly address some local challenges. The acquisition of local spaces such as the Mogas site, railyards and former fire station provide a good canvas for activation and the first step to this might be an audit of all the properties that are vacant and documenting ownership, strengths and limitations for each property.

This opportunity includes:

- Working with local property owners to implement a **“renew” based program** where businesses can get access to property on short-term leases for pop-up type activities – this could be retail, dining, exhibition / workshops etc. For example, the original Council offices could be repurposed.
- **Business incentive program** – with access to public land as mentioned above in Urbans design low or no rent property could be provided for the development of a small business. This could be by EOI with the expectation that the business would cater to local needs as well as be an attraction for visitors. Applicants would need to have a business plan in place that reflects the viability of a business over 2 – 4 years with rent increasing as the business becomes more viable. A fresh produce exchange / café / second hand bookshop / artisan wares type business could all be possibilities. This is similar to the above “renew” program but it does not rely on the goodwill of property owners and is designed to encourage long-term business. Grants to support a project of this nature may also be possible.
- **A fresh produce community co-operative** that is established in a new premises or alongside an existing business e.g., the op-shop. It would rely on some volunteer labour to support and ensure affordability but would increase access to essential groceries by the local community including local produce and other staple items. This could possibly be developed in conjunction with The Barossa Co-Op.
- **Community Business Development** – Joint community investment and fund raising to support the sustainability of struggling businesses such as the pub. For example, like the Tanunda Clubhouse and the Vine Inn the business could transition to a not-for-profit community run business.

- **Development of an annual events program**

Given the size of the community and its potential volunteer base the development of an annual events

program would need to be very strategic and align with local capacity. Probably 3 events per year as Seed funding could support to get this off the ground in the first instance and provide an opportunity to trial different things. In terms of the nature of the events, the focus should focus on gaps and unique possibilities that might be of interest to visitors.

Suggested events include:

- A camping-based event, perhaps with some live music or traditional family camp activities.
 - An annual market which focuses on a particular type of offering such as bric-a-brac, books, vintage clothing or it could be a car boot sale.
 - Billycart race event – both amateur and enthusiast billy cart races – workshops to build billy carts out of found / recycled materials followed by series of races and celebration.
 - A community celebration – this could centre on a local annual milestone and be shaped in a variety of ways with the idea of keeping it simple and focused on community connectedness. A local talent quest, blokes BBQ competition or bake-off, winter bonfire, annual Christmas party are all possibilities.
- **Increase in visitor collateral**
To some extent this is already happening with the TDCA already working on a range of projects to attract visitors and bolster tourism collateral.

Current and possible initiatives include:

- Establishing the recreation park as an attractive “free camping” location.
- Promoting the recreation part as suitable “camping venue” for social and special interest groups including caravanning clubs, scouts and hiking / cycling groups etc.
- Interpretive signage throughout the town – existing heritage collateral could be improved on and better utilised.
- Currently working with consultant Jane Ferrari to collect town stories and develop ideas for possible events
- Tangible links to existing tourism regions and trails e.g., Barossa, Cycling Trails, Heysen and Kidman Trails, Dark Sky reserve etc. This could be achieved by working with visitor centres, tourism bodies to get some hard-copy brochures and digital platforms or the development / trialling of experiences e.g., working with the SA Astronomical Society to host Dark Sky Reserve nights.
- Town signage – currently being finalised.
- Wayfinding signage – from the bypass that directs people to Truro and promotes attractions.

- Connection to state mining heritage – Kapunda, Eudunda, Burra etc. with the local mine’s significance and history being highlighted.
 - Developing a strong sense of the local identity and using this to develop a consistent brand for locals and visitors.
 - Development of a visitor information point – within a local business and possibly adjacent signage directing people and providing information.
 - First Nations tours / experiences – perhaps seasonal and acknowledgement of Ngadjuri in local and proposed signage.
 - Electrical vehicle charging point.
 - WIFI Hotspot
- **Community strengthening**
Effort to ensure the community is looking after each other and connected is also important to the community – particularly in the context of a rapidly changing world but also the bypass. Suggestions to develop community celebrations (see above), activate shared spaces for community gatherings and strengthening connections to sport for all ages and abilities are suggested.

STRATEGIC PILLARS + A VISION FOR TRURO

The strategic plan should have a strong vision and to provide focus the ideas and actions could be categorised into strategic pillars. The following provides a draft vision for Truro and some examples of strategic pillars for TDCA to consider.

Vision: *Truro is a vibrant town that is socially connected, environmentally sustainable and prosperous. It is a place where local residents and visitors to the region enjoy natural beauty, heritage and a great rural lifestyle.*

Key Strategic Pillars:

Town activation: Focusing on the local economy, innovation, business renewal and tourism.

Advocacy and leadership: Focusing on the Truro community’s capacity to influence decision makers, form partnerships and attract investment.

Social Connectedness: Ensuring that Truro is resilient and that people in the town feel supported and connected and can access the necessary services.

Town Pride: Focusing on heritage preservation and beautification of the town – public art, green space, interpretation etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY ACTIONS

The list of ideas and opportunities above as a whole is ambitious, and it will be important for the TDCA to prioritise and be strategic in terms of planning and implementation. The following provides some recommendations in developing the strategic plan and in realising the town's vision more broadly to be sustainable, connected and prosperous.

1. Circulate this report to community and invite feedback, which will help shape the strategic plan. Ensure the strategic plan is staged with achievable milestones identified within each key area. Don't try to do everything at once and whilst it is important to document all the possibilities – prioritise and identify what TDCA can do independently and what depends on investment and influence of others.
2. Form the Truro Activation and Renewal Group which includes representation from RDA and Council and DTI. In the short term, this might be what the TDCA transitions in to, but the focus of this group will be to realise the strategic vision and transformation of Truro in the context of the bypass in collaboration with key partners. Partnerships are integral for many of the ideas and suggestions detailed above.
3. In lieu of forming the activation group detailed in Point 1 above. TDCA should have an advocacy focus where it actively seeks to influence the investment and support from government.
4. Ensure the Master Plan for Truro is not just about infrastructure and includes tangible activation activities. It is easy to focus on the way a town looks and upgrade gutters, footpaths and plantings etc when it comes to master-planning, but it should include some of the other renewal and activation opportunities identified above. This will ensure the \$1million allocated to Truro for the transition, master plan implementation is invested in action, not just hard infrastructure.

CREDITS

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