



**city**<sup>2050</sup>

**Alice Springs Master Plan**<sup>2050</sup>

November 2018

## Briefing Document

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This report has been prepared because of the following motion passed by the Alice Springs Town Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

## Report Purpose

*“That Council approach the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments to financially invest in the preparation of a Master Plan for Alice Springs.”*

The report summarises the outcomes of 2 workshops with the Alice Springs Town Council Elected Members and subsequent research. It is designed to:

1. Form the basis of a resolution of Council to move forward with an Alice Springs Master Plan
2. Be used to seek political and financial support from the Northern Territory Government to initiate the project as a joint venturer
3. Inform the project tender required to create both the Master Plan and ongoing process needed to ensure its ongoing success

This report outlines the:

- Desired outcome
- Context as to why this is needed
- Process undertaken
- Aspirations of the council
- Recommendations

The desired outcome, as expressed by the Alice Springs Town Council Elected Members, is to establish a shared ambition between Alice Springs Town Council and the Northern Territory Government to create an Alice Springs Master Plan that includes:

## Desired Report Outcome

- A 30 year Vision for the Town Centre
- A 10 year Master Plan for the Town Centre to coordinate and implement the vision’s outcomes
- A defined process shared by the Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government to ensure ongoing ownership, maintenance and execution of both the 30 year Vision and 10 year Master Plan
- Financial and administrative support of both the Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government to implement this process and ensure its success in the short and long term.

It is envisaged the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> & Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> would both be prepared and owned collaboratively by the Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government to provide a long-term vision that connects today with tomorrow with a practical goals and actions.

The Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> & Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> will articulate a shared community aspiration and ensure a co-ordinated process for enhancing the social, economic and environmental conditions over a time. Its purpose is to motivate and synchronise the efforts, actions and investments of the private sector, all levels of government and the community with a co-ordinated and transformational theme.

## Context

Global urbanisation is upon us and, in response to this and other megatrends, cities and towns around the world are transforming more rapidly than ever before. Alice Springs is no exception, with changes in the local and international economy, plus renewed funding opportunities presenting further challenges and opportunities.

Alice Springs is the heart and soul of Central Australia, an iconic outback town, rich in history and culture, with much to offer and new opportunities on the near horizon. Described as the inland capital of Australia, with significant facilities and more international attention than ever before, further investment in the town is inevitable and must be co-ordinated to achieve the best outcomes.

The town plays a key role in a very large region. Its both a served town for the local community, 260 remote communities, a mining community and large number of tourists. It's catchment doubles the population of the already thriving town.

Alice Springs Town Council has relatively limited powers in the areas of urban planning but does play a key role in the provision and implementation of physical, social and community services. It also it maintains and manages significantly more infrastructure than it implements and aspires to do that as well as possible.

In the interests of the town reaching its potential, the Alice Springs Town Council wishes to play a more strategic role; one that will maximise the efforts of all that contribute to the future of the town which in turn makes the region unique, liveable and productive.

The Alice Springs Town Council believes that success will not happen by accident and that it requires long term strategic planning, coordinated action and sustainable investment. They, as community leaders, aspire to play a proactive role by working in partnership with other levels of Government, and the community, to create and implement a shared vision for Alice Springs and a roadmap for collaborative achievement.

## Process

The following steps have been undertaken to inform this outcomes report:

- Meetings with Alice Springs Town Council Officers
- Meetings with Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Logistics
- Literature & desktop review
- On site familiarisation
- Two x 3 hour Elected Member workshops
- Additional research as required

The workshops undertaken with Elected Members included:

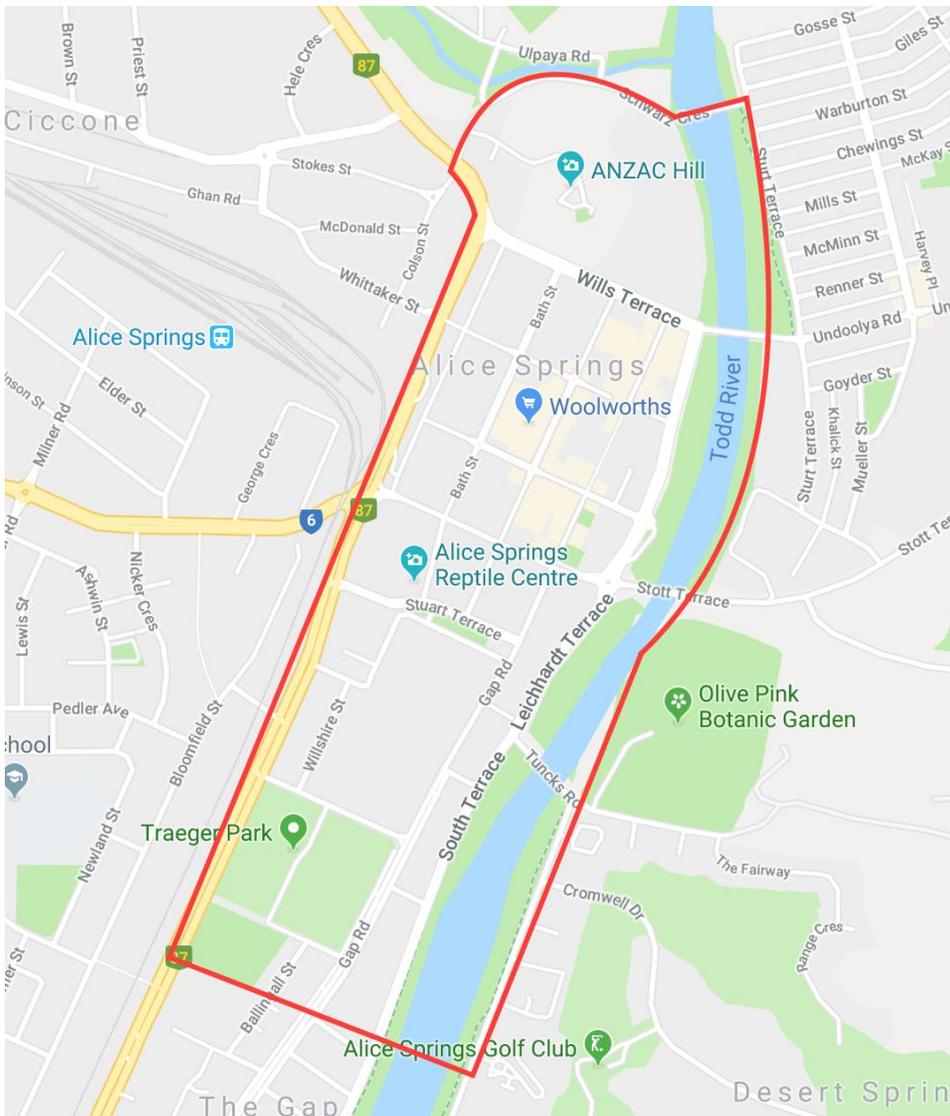
- Facilitation of wide-ranging discussion from all participants
- Professional development discussions on several key topics
- Exploration of town centre's physical, environmental, economic and social infrastructure
- Facilitated discussion of an Alice Springs Vision timeline and goals
- Identification key themes and major opportunities
- Determination of a desired process for implementation
- Exploration of appropriate next steps

## Alice Springs Town Centre

Council is highly aware that both private and public development directly influences the performance and functionality of the Town Centre, and if managed well by all key stakeholders, it can result in a more positive impacts to the community that improve substantially over time. The need for an Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> & Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> has arisen to ensure that this process is not only guaranteed, but also undertaken consistently over time via collaboration of all stakeholders.

For the purposes of this report and future documentation, the Alice Springs Town Council identified the Town Centre as encompassing:

- Schwarz Cres – north
- The Todd River – east
- Speed Street plus the Alice Springs Aquatic & Leisure Centre - south
- Stuart Highway – west



## Alice Springs Town Centre

This area designation is considered important as it encompasses a wide range of important land uses generally considered vital to the effective operation of a Town Centre. It enables the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> & Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> to consider the whole area via a precinct approach that explores the specifics around key topics such as education, sport and recreation, open space, housing, heritage, economic development and government services.

The Alice Springs Town Centre currently provides many health, sporting, recreational, commercial and social services to residents, tourists and the greater central Australian regional population. It is an important meeting place and the defining urban feature of the region that creates a lasting impression to all that visit. It has a unique character that is appealing yet has significant potential to improve over time. Its prosperity is imperative to the economic performance and quality of life of the wider inland Australian region and a clear vision can only help make it the best place it is capable of being.

Whilst having many unique characteristics, development of the Town Centre has resulted in partly adhoc patterns due to prevailing economic pressures and decisions made by successive Alice Springs Town Councils and Northern Territory Governments. Whilst some of this development has contributed positively to the sense of place and character of Alice Springs, there is an opportunity to articulate and co-ordinate future investment in a more cohesive manner that enables Alice Springs to prosper.

Some recent private and public realm development has resulted in a mix of appropriate and inappropriately designed buildings, loss of communal meeting areas and reduced pedestrian amenity. In general, the Town Centre does reflect a consistency with the surrounding natural and built environments however there is substantial room for improvement moving forward.

Some key issues that need to be considered by an Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> & Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> include, but should not be limited to:

- Numerical targets for Town Centre residential and visitor populations
- Three-Dimensional model of the city that articulates a desired pattern, scale and capacity for future development
- Parking and transport vision and actions
- Medium density housing that provides city life and housing choice
- City vibrancy, public life and public realm
- Precinct planning and development that provides the right mix of land uses and community services
- Day time and night time economy
- Smart citizens and digital culture
- Environmental opportunities associated with heat, water, flooding and sustainable energy
- Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government services

A Master Plan that speaks effectively to these issues will in turn be able to respond to, and potentially co-ordinate, short and medium term funding opportunities on the horizon today. This funding, if appropriately invested, will both respond to these issues and maximise future outcomes that will ensure a pro-active Town Centre transformation.

Alice Springs Town Council Elected Members expressed the need for a long-term vision and co-ordinated plan for change for the town with the following vision:

*A vibrant and thriving community that embraces our culture, diversity and environment coordinated and implemented in partnership with all levels of government, the community and key stakeholders.*

A suite of 3 documents, covering the following 3 defined areas, was considered the most appropriate way to articulate an Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup>:

1. Alice Springs Town Centre
2. The Town of Alice Springs - not including, but complementing, the Town Centre
3. The Alice Springs Region - not including, but complementing, the Town

It is recommended these three components be undertaken in stages, with the Alice Springs Town Centre considered the highest priority. Stages 2 and 3 were thought appropriate to prepare once the Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> has been created, tried and tested.

Additionally, the short-term preparation of an Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> will enable immediate consideration of significant environment, social and economic infrastructure proposals and opportunities currently being explored by the Northern Territory Government, Alice Springs Town Council, key stakeholders and the private sector.

The Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> should be used as a reference document to guide the future use and development of land and promote economic vitality within the Alice Springs Town Centre. It should:

1. Assist Alice Springs Town Council, service agencies, the Northern Territory Government and Federal Government in making decisions about future investment in infrastructure, community services and facilities
2. Coordinate Local, Regional and Federal Government investment in Alice Springs
3. Provide guidance for new land use and development activity consistent with the Northern Territory Planning Scheme, Alice Springs Town Council directions and the objectives of the Northern Territory Government
4. Coordinate community & private sector activity and investment in Alice Springs
5. Coordinate action between the various government agencies, interest groups and the greater Alice Springs community

## Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> Themes

A highly effective Town Centre contains a wide number of uses, and subsequently should both be considered as a whole, as well as also being divided into separate precincts based on land use and preferred development patterns for each of the areas.

These different precincts already include a wide range of various land uses, from retail and commercial to service, community and cultural infrastructure. As such, they will subsequently require different strategies to assist development in revitalising and enhancing social, economic and environmental performance of their own precincts and that of the Town Centre as a whole.

In establishing appropriate objectives and strategies, the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> should also establish an overview of the current economic and social conditions within the Town Centre and each of the precincts. The plan should then identify key trends and conditions that will allow effective solutions to be implemented.

An Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> should be visionary, inspirational and aspirational. Some key themes Alice Springs Town Council Elected Members indicated should be explored in the preparation of the document include:

- Aboriginal culture
- Arts, culture & tourism infrastructure
- Community diversity (Youth & Ageing) & safety
- Community facilities, public amenities
- Development and its form, scale & design
- Digital culture, technology & smart town infrastructure
- Economic development
- Education infrastructure
- Flood management
- Heat mitigation, shade & open space
- Housing choice, mixed density, affordability, including town camps
- Medical, health & well-being infrastructure
- NT Government services - Police/fire/emergency
- Public realm & public life
- Residential & daily Town Centre population goals
- Sport, recreation, leisure, entertainment & night time economy
- Street, car parking & integrated transport infrastructure
- Sustainable energy production & efficiency
- Sustainable water management
- Vibrancy, placemaking, events and activities

The result of the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> should be a comprehensive list of strategies and goals for the Town Centre as a whole and each of the precincts. Whilst some strategies and goals may refer to short term projects of significance, the overarching aspiration of the document should be to inform the longer-term transformational ambitions shared by all stakeholders. This will be best achieved through appropriate consultation and Northern Territory Government and Alice Springs Town Council collaboration.

An Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> should be created within the framework of the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup>. It should be a subcomponent of the greater vision that defines tangible goals and actions that inform and implement the direction set by the 30-year vision. Whilst still visionary and aspirational, it should be designed to be a practical and action orientated document able to deliver outcomes for the city today and tomorrow.

An Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> should also both be considered as a whole, as well as also being divided into precincts based on land use and preferred development patterns for each of the areas. It is envisaged such a document would identify goals and actions to implement the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> themes as well as identifying tangible major development projects that are either expected or desired within a 10-year horizon.

Some key themes Alice Springs Town Council Elected Members indicated should be explored in the preparation of the document include priorities for:

1. Art Gallery precinct
2. Bridge infrastructure
3. Digital culture, technology & smart town infrastructure
4. Integrated Transport infrastructure
5. Key placemaking sites
6. Key tourism infrastructure & accommodation
7. Learning Centre/Library precinct
8. Major development sites
9. Medical precinct infrastructure
10. Primary, Secondary, Tertiary & private sector Education infrastructure
11. Retail precinct
12. Sporting precinct infrastructure

The result of the Alice Springs Town Centre<sup>2030</sup> Master Plan should be a comprehensive list of goals and actions that clearly articulate the themes of the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup>. It is envisaged most goals and actions will be specifically focussed on short to medium term deliverable outcomes whilst others may refer to highly ambitious longer-term goals with a view to attracting funding opportunities as they arise.

## Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> Implementation

A fundamental element in determining the success of an Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> will be the extent to which it is adopted and implemented by all stakeholders. Strategies will, over time, require specific action by the relevant national, regional and local agencies and will be most effective when tied to a process of collaborative creation, ongoing reporting, regular review and continuous updating.

Such a process, which should be determined and defined in the process of creating the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup>, would enable such a plan to:

- Have an ongoing role and relevance
- Provide it with authority needed for ongoing decision making of all levels of government
- Ensure the Master Plan is a well-intentioned short and long term investment
- Be owned by future Alice Springs Town Councils and Northern Territory Government as policy and process that ensures all decision makers are informed and held accountable
- Be an adaptable and dynamic document that can and will respond to change and emerging challenges and opportunities over time.

One opportunity is to explore the potential for the shared Alice Springs Town Council/Northern Territory Inland Capital Committee explore ongoing ownership of an Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup>. Other models should also be explored that look at best practice collaboration between local and regional governments using legislation or other types of less formal agreements.

The City of Adelaide Act is one example of a process established between a regional government and local council to ensure effective collaboration between both parties in the interests of an effectively operating and developing a significant city centre.

The Adelaide Capital City Committee exists to promote the strategic development of Adelaide and was established through an Act of Parliament. The Committee is chaired by the Premier of South Australia and includes the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, two state government Ministers and two City of Adelaide Councillors. The Committee's legislative foundation gives a clear signal that the commitment to collaborate is backed by real intentions.

In the process of determining the implementation and administration of the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> it is recommended it include the following key features:

- Be maintained as a living document by both the Alice Springs Town Council and the Northern Territory Government
- Include an on-going process of reporting, reviewing and updating
- Ensure real world outcomes are reviewed against performance targets
- Be used as a tool to gain funding from all levels of government and private sector to implementing proposed goals
- Be a document that is articulated to the wider community regularly to promote awareness of goals and actions and enable private sector and community collaboration

The preparation of a Master Plan, as outlined in this report, will take commitment by all stakeholders, considerable time and financial support. It is envisaged that this project will need to be tendered nationally to fund a suitable team of experts able to undertake this complex but important task.

The preparation of the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> will need to be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced team of professionals that will need to undertake the following project deliverables:

1. Project Governance
2. On site analysis
3. Document review and gap analysis
4. Collection and review of social, environmental, demographic and economic data
5. Preparation of a 3D model
6. Stakeholder engagement & consultation
7. Preparation of an Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> and Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> documents
8. Creating of an ongoing strategic planning process, possibly including legislation

It would be the responsibility of the consultant to propose a methodology that includes a project plan, which will need to include:

- Overall approach to each component of the project and key principles to be considered
- Proposed tasks and their duration
- Disciplines and persons to be involved in each task and level of involvement (e.g. number of hours/days)
- Key milestones and deliverables
- Peer reviews
- Proposed meetings with the project team including inception meeting workshops
- Key presentations to the Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government

Responses should clearly communicate how the methodology will achieve the project deliverables.

**1. Project Governance**

It is proposed that the project will be co-ordinated using the following approach:

- Primary coordination through the nominated Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government Project Managers
- Additional input through an Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government Working Group (to be determined) which will receive presentations from the consultant team at key milestones in the project as detailed in the Methodology.

The consultant will be required to prepare a detailed project coordination strategy, and as part of the submission, should expand on this proposed approach, including number of meetings offered and communication channels.

**2. On site analysis**

An understanding and appreciation of Alice Springs Town Centre is required. It will be achieved by experts undertaking and demonstrating a detailed onsite analysis of the study area.

**3. Document review and gap analysis**

To appropriately develop an Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> a review of relevant documents and a gap analysis is required. This phase of work would consider a comprehensive review of all an Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government strategic documents and any work in progress such as community and infrastructure reports, economic and housing futures, project approvals and articulated possible projects including infrastructure and transport plans.

**4. Collection & review of social, environmental, demographic and economic data**

This phase of work would include reviewing appropriate social, environmental, demographic, economic and development data available for Alice Springs. This would also include analysing projected changes and growth in each of these areas, as well as any current projects occurring in Alice Springs.

**5. Preparation of a 3D model**

A 3D model should be prepared to capture the existing built form, projects under construction, projects approved and seriously entertained projects. It should also be created in a series of layers that also enable the creation of alternative future built form futures that enable stakeholder and community engagement.

This could be a web-based tool that allows Council officers and the community to view the existing and proposed permit applications and developments now and into the future.

**6. Stakeholder engagement & consultation**

The Consultant shall provide a consultation strategy to address, as appropriate, presentations and briefings to the Project Managers and working group, Council and Executive Teams and/or other groups identified as relevant by Consultants and approved via project governance.

Presentations to meetings of the Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government at key stages of the development of the project will be required.

**7. Preparation of an Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> and Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup> documents**

This phase of work would consider the vision for Alice Springs and would involve workshopping the Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government elected members and administrations, as well as input from the broader community and other key stakeholders. This would include a review of all existing strategy, policy and spatial plans.

This phase must focus on the future aspirations for Alice Springs, rather than rationalising what is already happening and approved. This will require an imaginative and open-ended exploration of the full range of aspirations for Alice Springs.

It will be important to understand how the vision is ‘shared’ by the major stakeholders that will be implementing the vision and how it aligns with their strategic objectives.

**8. Creating of an ongoing strategic planning process, possibly including legislation**

It is critical for the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> to be an evolutionary and dynamic process that allow for ongoing assessment of arising opportunities, proposals, innovative ideas, changing trends and partnerships.

A review of best practice processes in place is required that results in an exploration of options for the Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Governments to consider and determine collaboratively.

As a result of the following motion passed by the Alice Springs Town Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the following steps are recommended:

*“That Council approach the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments to financially invest in the preparation of a Master Plan for Alice Springs.”*

1. That the Alice Springs Town Council endorse this report as a working document to initiate discussion with the Northern Territory and Federal Governments.
2. That the Alice Springs Town Council use this report as a working document to initiate discussions with the Northern Territory Government regarding possible funding and governance models to undertake preparation of Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> and Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup>.
3. That this report forms the basis of a contract tender for Alice Springs Town Council and Northern Territory Government to seek registrations of interest to undertake the work required to implement the Alice Springs Master Plan<sup>2050</sup> and Alice Springs Town Centre Master Plan<sup>2030</sup>.