Cobar Shire

Cobar Shire is located in western New South Wales, about 700 kilometres north-west of Sydney and 650 kilometres north of Canberra. Cobar is on the crossroads of three major highways – the Kidman Way linking Melbourne to Brisbane, the Barrier Highway linking Sydney to Adelaide via Broken Hill and the Wool Track linking the Sunraysia area to Queensland.

Cobar Shire is home to around 5,000 people, the majority of whom live in the town of Cobar. The Shire is also made up of grazing leases and villages, with small villages at Euabalong, Euabalong West, Mount Hope and Nymagee. The Shire encompasses a total land area of about 46,000 square kilometres.

The Shire's prosperity is built around the thriving mining - copper, lead, silver, zinc, gold - and pastoral industries, which are strongly supported by a wide range of attractions and activities, that attract around 120,000 visitors to the Shire a year.

Rail and air infrastructure include regular freight trains to Sydney, a recently upgraded airport, a daily bus service to Dubbo and Broken Hill and freight and courier options available for all goods and services.

Cobar boasts a strong and reliable workforce which has a wide range of skills, particularly in mining, manufacturing and supporting industries, trades, retail and agriculture. A good supply of general labour is available to meet the needs of new and expanding businesses.

There is ample land available for development, both serviced and un-serviced. There is a wide variety of housing in Cobar, including town blocks of varying size and zoning, rural residential blocks and rural holdings. There is also abundant land available for development in the villages.

Cobar Shire Council supports the business community and will work with new and expanding businesses to get established and to grow. For further information contact Cobar Shire Council on 02 6836 5888 or mail@cobar.nsw.gov.au.
Cobar’s economy is based on a strong mining sector and pastoral industries. Total output for Cobar Shire is estimated at $1,344.339 million. The major contributor to output is non-ferrous (gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc) mining. The grazing industry is also important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>$M</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>$926.395</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>$85.604</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>$48.923</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$283.416</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
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</table>

Gross Regional Product for the Shire is estimated at $626,000,000 and there are around 420 registered businesses within the Shire. The majority of these businesses are small business and there are strong opportunities in a range of sectors. Cobar is known for their community spirit and the business community is no different. Free assistance to businesses or potential businesses in the Shire is available through the Cobar Enterprise Facilitation project and the Cobar Business Association supports local businesses. Cobar Shire is blessed with low unemployment of just 2.2% and a workforce of around 2,200. Of those employed, 32% work in the mining sector and 10% in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

The main industry sectors continue to dominate in terms of value add. Total Value-added in Cobar Shire is estimated at $624.423 million. The major contributors to value-added are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>$M</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>$438.458</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental, Hiring &amp; Real Estate Services</td>
<td>$33.153</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>$18.599</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$134.213</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
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</table>

There are two local employment agencies and a number of local companies that provide labour hire services. There is a range of accommodation types for both residential and non-residential workers.
Cobar has a highly skilled locally based workforce, with a particularly strong background in trades and construction. Cobar has a resident population of 5,120 which has grown from 4,710 in 2011. The workforce of 2,194 is employed primarily in the mining sector.

Cobar is also quite unique in the region in that the workforce is relatively young. As a result, the median age in Cobar is around 35. The largest population group is the 0-4 year olds and there is a large proportion of young families in the Shire. Consequently there is a focus on providing services to this group to ensure they enjoy their time in Cobar.

There is an abundance of young, motivated and highly skilled workers in the Shire and highly productive industries. Industry has had a strong focus on apprenticeships and training their staff. About half of the workforce works over 50 hours a week, but are rewarded through good incomes. This is reflective of the predominant industries in the Shire.
Over 90% of the workforce is residential with the majority of the remainder from neighbouring Shires.

Cobar’s population has a diverse mix of long and short term residents, nationalities and skills. You won’t find Iron Ringers anywhere else!
Major Industry Profiles


Industrial Businesses
Cobar has abundant industrial and commercial land available and Council is willing work with new businesses to services suitable land not already serviced. The main industrial estate is on the eastern fringe of Cobar.

Mining
There are currently six major mines operating in the Shire. There is also significant exploration activity in the area with strong prospects for future mine development. In addition to their own staff, all mines employ a range of contractors across a variety of trades. Consequently, Cobar supports a strong industrial sector made up of many small to medium sized businesses. There are good opportunities in the mining industry and supply industries to mining in Cobar and a number of local businesses have developed into bigger operations servicing areas around Australia. Cobar is proud of the strength of our industrial businesses.

Cobar Management Pty Ltd – CSA Mine

CSA Mine is an underground copper mine employing around 350 people, operated by Cobar Management Pty Ltd (CMPL) - a wholly owned Australian subsidiary of Glencore International AG (Switzerland). CSA Mine extracts over 870,000 tonnes of copper ore and produces in excess of 150,000 tonnes of copper concentrate per annum. This concentrate is exported to smelters around the world.

CBH – Endeavor Mine

The Endeavor Mine is a major underground zinc/lead/silver mining operation, 46 kilometres north of Cobar that employs 220 staff. Operations commenced in 1983 and comprise an underground mine accessed by both decline and haulage shaft, serviced by a concentrator, drying, storage and rail facilities. The processing plant has been undergoing progressive upgrade and improvements to circuits and can now support a through put rate of 1.4 Mtpa.

Newgold – Peak Mines
[http://www.newgold.com/Properties/default.aspx](http://www.newgold.com/Properties/default.aspx)

A gold and copper mine employing around 300 staff with an annual production of around 100,000 ounces of gold and 13 million pounds of copper. Peak continues to add value to the operation at Cobar through new infrastructure, improved mining methods and mill enhancements.
Manuka Silver Mine and Mount Bobby Gold Mine


Black Oak Minerals own and operate Manuka Silver Mine (120km south of Cobar) and the Mount Bobby gold mine (50km east of Cobar). The Manuka silver mine is Australia's largest ‘pure silver’ resource with a 53Moz indicated resource. Lead is also produced and further development work on the site continues. It is an open pit mining operation. The Manuka mine has its own operational air strip.

Aurelia Metals – Hera Mine

http://www.aureliametals.com/hera-nymagee/

The Hera mine operates on a high grade gold and base metal deposit, about 100kms south east from the town of Cobar. Production at the mine site commenced in December 2014. Aurelia Metals are progressing development and feasibility programs with a view to incorporating the Hera and Nymagee copper ore projects into a combined operation producing gold, copper, silver, lead and zinc. The Mine currently employs around 80 personnel and is serviced by a mining camp.
Agriculture

Cobar Shire covers a large area and incorporates many land and soil types from flat to open plains and much more. There are many agricultural businesses in the Shire, mostly supporting sheep and goat production. Grazing for wool production has contributed significantly to the Cobar Shire for many years. There is also cropping in the southern portion of the Shire. There have been a number of innovative agriculture industries set up in the Shire such as emu production, native brush and biofuel industries.

Sustainable land management is a key feature of agriculture in the Shire. Members of the Buckwaroon Landcare Group have enterprises covering a large section of the Shire around the township of Cobar and have taken out many awards for their sustainable land use practices.

There are a number of services in Cobar supporting the agriculture industry including rural traders, livestock carriers and buyers, farm good suppliers, Livestock Health and Plant Authority and the Local Land Services (LLS).

Cobar Shire Council supports a wide variety of development and encourages new enterprises to the area. There are opportunities in the value-add area around goat production, native brush harvesting and biofuel production.
Retail Businesses
There are many retail opportunities in Cobar to take advantage of a strong CBD area. The CBD area enjoys good patronage from tourist traffic as well as locals as Cobar is a key stop-over point along both the Kidman Way and Barrier Highways due to our geographic location and reputation as a safe and friendly town.

Council supports both shop front and home based businesses. Many new businesses are supported through the Cobar Enterprise Facilitation project which offers free business coaching to established businesses as well as those looking to establish a new business or buy an existing business. Mark Workman is the Enterprise Facilitator and can be contacted on 0417 573 333.

The CBD area has a modern feel that encourages through traffic to stop. There is ample parking, for caravans as well as cars. New drainage, telecommunications and electrical infrastructure was recently installed, along with the beautification of the streets – new paving, street furniture and landscaping. Council hopes this will encourage further retail developments and increase economic activity. There is also a strong home based business sector in Cobar.

All retail businesses in Cobar are small to medium sized operations.

Tourism
It is estimated that tourism is worth around $21m to the Cobar Shire economy with 70% of this activity comes from the accommodation and food services sector. Cobar ‘s reputation as a friendly and safe town, along with good service from businesses such as car repairs, tyre outlets, accessories and gift shops results in strong numbers of tourists staying in Cobar overnight. Cobar boasts and excellently run caravan park, a range of motels, privately run cottages and serviced rooms. There are many opportunities that could be explored to encourage our visitors to stay longer and spend stronger!

Cobar Quids
Cobar Quids have been in use since about 2003, as an initiative of the Cobar Business Association, to encourage Cobar residents to "shop locally". A Cobar Quid is a minted medallion with a face value, to be exchanged for goods and services at a participating local business.
Most local businesses accept the Quids. The Quids are a gift voucher that can be used across Cobar which ensures the money is spent locally - they can only be spent in Cobar. Individuals cannot redeem them for cash, only businesses can. They come in denominations with face values of $5, $10, $25 & $50. The lower ones are particularly popular with the schools, mines and clubs. Council administers the program and there is over $120,000 in Quids given out each year.


What are the Economic Opportunities in Cobar Shire?

Currently over $366m worth of goods and services are brought into the Shire to service businesses here. Whilst some of that is imported from overseas, there are other areas where it may be possible to produce those goods and services within the Shire, growing our business base.

The total expenditure by industry sectors in Cobar Shire on goods and services as inputs into production is estimated at $719.915 million. This includes $157.055 million of regional (local) expenditure, $366.474 million of expenditure on goods and services from the rest of Australia, and $196.386 million from overseas.

Transport

Cobar is on the cross roads of two state highways and the Wool Track. It is a central point in transporting goods across the country. There are a number of opportunities around the transport industry, such as a major refuelling depot/truck stop.

Cobar Regional Airport has ample space for development of a range of flying related activities that could lead to a commercial precinct at the airport, such as maintenance facilities or a flying school. The strip is suitable for large aircraft, aviation gas and jet fuel are available on-site, as is a serviced passenger terminal. Council welcomes a wide range of users to the airport, including charter flights, sight-seeing aircraft and small aircraft refuelling.

Cobar is blessed with excellent rail facilities. The Broken Hill – Sydney line services the southern area of the Shire and Cobar town is serviced by a fully operational and recently upgraded rail line to the port of Newcastle. There are two freight heads along this line in Cobar Shire.
Alternative Energies

Cobar is an energy hungry Shire due to the mining and manufacturing industries. Most new mines developed are off the grid and require electricity generation plants to be installed. There are business opportunities available to service these new operations. Cobar is blessed with copious days of sunshine and large open areas – ideal for solar energy generation. Cobar also has an abundance of native species that can be harvested for biofuel generation.

Industry Site – Ready to Go

There is currently a site serviced by rail including a freight head, electricity and water infrastructure and building infrastructure, ready for redevelopment. There is ample open space and room for development. Zoning is favourable to a wide range of industrial purposes and the site is serviced by a good sealed road network.

For more information, contact Cobar Shire Council on 02 6836 5888.

Tourism

Tourism is an important industry in Cobar that continues to grow. Cobar is blessed with ample land, is enveloped by strong Aboriginal history, boasts a unique landscape and has a reputation of being a safe and friendly place to stay. Cobar is also surrounded by a history of mining, unique Australian characters and a strong pastoral history. Ideally located on the junction of the Barrier Highway, Kidman Way and Wool Track, with an airport and bus services, Cobar is very accessible. The tourism market is largely underdeveloped and considerable opportunities exist in the industry.

Attractions include the excellent Great Cobar Heritage Centre, two national parks, the Bureau of Meteorology station, the Great Cobar Open Cut mine, the Golden Walk at Peak Mine, mining and Aboriginal history at Mt Drysdale, Fort Bourke lookout – watch an operating mine, the Heritage walkway (including interpretive historical signage and information on Cobar’s unique flora and fauna) and much more.

Cobar has excellent conference facilities at the recently renovated Cobar Bowling and Golf Club, the Memorial Services Club, town hall cinema, hotels and government offices. Other unique facilities can be arranged such as shearing sheds, the showground and various outdoor venues. Council and the venue managers offer support when arranging conferences.

The Shire is boarded by the Lachlan River in the south and the Darling River in the north which provide great camping opportunities. The natural beauty of the pastoral leases in the Shire could be explored through farm stay and camping options.
A number of large infrastructure projects are currently underway in Cobar:

- **$8M water treatment plant replacement.** This is being undertaken on a new site with an 8ML plant being built. The old site will be decommissioned. The old plant needs replacement and the new one will double the amount of water Council can process daily.
- **$10m water storage upgrade at the Bogan water storages.** This will significantly reduce the water losses in the system, ensuring Cobar receives a more reliable water supply.
- **$10.5m upgrade of the pumping stations and pipeline in the Nyngan to Cobar twin pipeline.** One pipeline has reached the end of its asset life. Improvements to the pumping stations will reduce the cost of water supply to Cobar.
- **$2.5m upgrade to the Cobar Regional Airport – pavement and lighting.** This will allow larger aircraft to land at the airport and improve the safety of night time operations.
- **$2.1m upgrade and expansion in the sewer system around Cobar –** this will improve the infrastructure in the east Cobar industrial estate and rejuvenate the sewer infrastructure.
- **$15m upgrade of the Cobar Hospital and Lilliane Brady Village (aged care) to a multipurpose health service.**
- **$4.25m upgrade to the Kidman Way, south of Cobar.** The shoulder widening project will improve the safety of this much used stretch of state highway.

All these projects will improve the infrastructure and service delivery in the town of Cobar.
What Makes Cobar A Great Place to Live?

Health Services in Cobar

Cobar has a great range of well serviced and accessible health service providers, from GPs to allied health and alternative health service providers who all have short waiting lists, excellent knowledge, experience and service and a love for our town and people.

General Health Services
Cobar is serviced by the Cobar Primary Health Care Centre which operates with a minimum of 3 general practitioners and a wide range of allied health care professionals, five days a week and a private doctors practice run by Dr Karalasingham six days a week. There is an excellent range of allied health services provided through the Cobar Primary Health Care Centre which would be difficult to match outside the large regional centres.

The Cobar Community Health Centre operates five days a week offering a wide range of services such as mental health workers, child health nurses and more.

The Cobar District Hospital is a 29 bed acute care hospital open 24 hours a day with a medical emergency department. Two ambulances are also located in Cobar.

Cobar Dental and Hearing operates 5 days a week and offers both general and specialist dental care and services. Charlie and his team offer a first rate and very accessible service.

The John Mitchell Pharmacy provides all pharmaceutical care and products five and a half days a week.

A range of other medical services are provided in Cobar, including optometrists, chiropractors, masseuses and meals on wheels.

Aged Care
Cobar has an excellent nursing home at the Lilliane Brady Village. The Village is operated by Council as a non-profit 34-bed facility. The centre is a co-located Hostel and Nursing Home both of which are certified and accredited.

Alternatively, self-supported aged accommodation is available at the Bill Brennan Centre. The Centre is a retirement village located close to the CBD. There are 15 individual units with a large dining hall.
There may be opportunities around the provision of alternative aged care accommodation, such as independent living villages.

**Education**

**Pre-school Aged Children**

- Cobar Pre-School Centre provides quality educational programs for children 3 to 5 years of age.
- Ngalll Pre-school run a preschool for indigenous and low income families that operates two days a week.
- Kubby House Child Care Centre is a 29 place long day care centre for all children up to school aged.
- Cobar Mobile Children's Service offer educational play sessions for children from birth to 6 years of age. The Service travels to properties in the Shire and runs a Monday and Wednesday playgroup at their depot.
- Far West Family Day Care Services offers a child care service for children aged 0 - 12 years. FWFDCS also administers the In-home Care program.
- The Cobar Youth and Fitness Centre operates a playgroup for 0-5 year olds each Tuesday morning.
- The Cobar and District Mothers Association operates a playgroup Monday and Wednesdays from the Uniting Church Hall for all interested parents.
Schools
Cobar is well serviced with schools. There are two primary schools and one high school. St John's is a small Catholic parish primary school - co-educational with classes from Kindergarten to Year 6. Cobar Public School has been providing a quality primary education to the boys and girls of Cobar for the past 125 years. Cobar High School caters for students from Years 7-12, providing a range of subjects and opportunities to students.

The Cobar Outside of Hours Service (COOSH) offers after school care for up to 30 students five days a week.

TAFE
Cobar College, as part of the Western Institute of TAFE, provides vocational education and training that enhances the productivity of the workforce. Training can be delivered in many flexible ways including workplace training.

Recreation
Cobar town has excellent sporting infrastructure, including an 18 hole golf course, bowling greens, tennis courts, race course with horse sports and rodeo arenas, show grounds, football fields, cricket grounds complete with state-of-the-art night cricket lights and netball courts with lights suitable for night competitions. A new private gym of the highest standard is available.
The Cobar Youth and Fitness centre incorporates a brand new, high quality and challenging skate park, comparable to any in metropolitan areas, squash courts, an indoor basketball stadium, an outdoor basketball/tennis court, fully equipped gym and a dance/aerobics area. The very modern aquatic centre incorporates a 50m pool, multipurpose pool, no-depth splash park, new water slide, BBQs, beach volley ball court, various exercise classes and extensive lush lawns.

The Newey Water reserve boasts walking paths, bird watching opportunities, fishing and other water sports, the Old Reservoir is a popular water and recreational area and there are extensive common areas surrounding Cobar town for use by all.


Major Events
There are a number of major annual events held in Cobar. These include the annual Festival of the Miners Ghost, agricultural show, Cobar races, Cobar rodeo, monthly market days, Australia Day celebrations, Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services and activities, and town street Christmas party. More information on events in Cobar can be found at [http://www.cobar.nsw.gov.au/news-and-info/events-calendar](http://www.cobar.nsw.gov.au/news-and-info/events-calendar).