

# OPAL TOWN BOOM TIME

By Les Rochester

Andamooka is reaping the rewards of the expected boom in population growth ahead of the BHP Billiton expansion to its Olympic Dam operations.

Unique Accommodation Pty Ltd a wholly South Australian, privately owned company has announced multi-million dollar plans for a 200 unit village in the opal mining town.

The first group of 40 units is expected to be completed by July this year, and they'll incorporate cutting edge technologies and environmentally friendly systems into their design.

The company has appointed L.J.Hooker in Adelaide as the leasing agents for the units.

Its principal, Peter Coltman said as part of Unique Accommodation's commitment to service provision to rural Australia, it has undertaken research and development into the provision of minimal environmental footprint, self sustained, mining accommodation solutions.

Work on the first 40 unit village will start within weeks at the site, north of the Andamooka Post Office.

The units are designed in village style pods of 40 units, with each group constructed around a central common area.

The central common area consists of a large communal building containing a commercial grade kitchen, recreational facilities, lounge area and laundry.

Mr. Coltman said the buildings are not pre-fabricated living units created in isolation, but are rather a holistic modular living environment and services package.

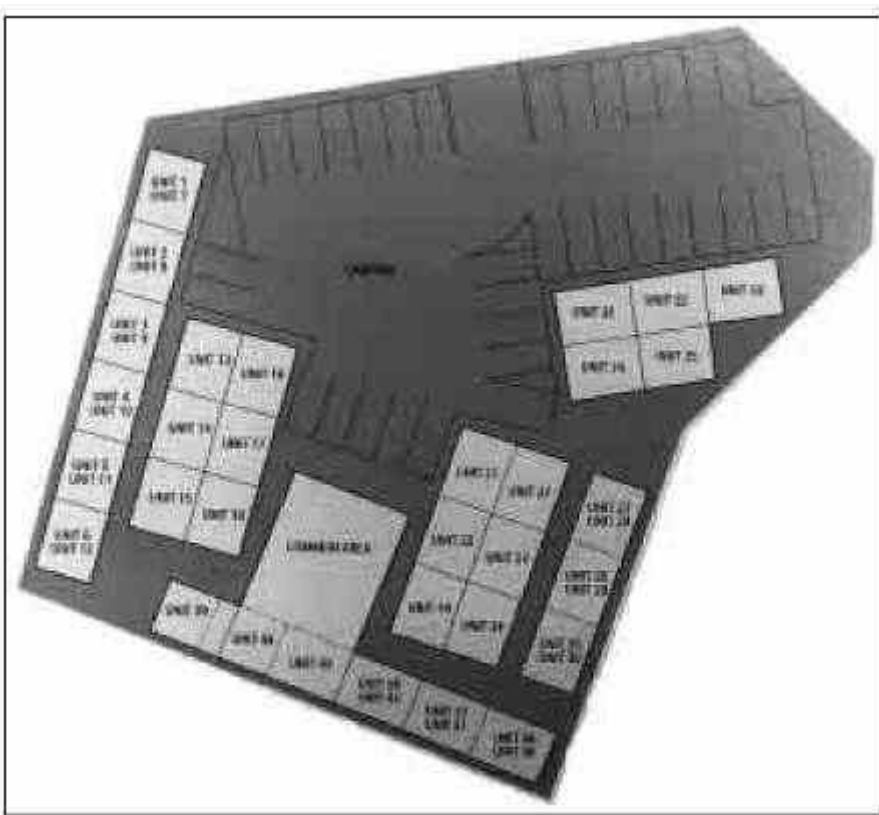
"They are specifically designed to operate at full efficiency within the isolated and harsh environments of many Australian mining operations while offering significantly reduced ongoing maintenance costs and tightly controlled consumable expense," he said.

Units are designed in either single story or double story blocks to suit the available land. Unit design is focused around maximum insulation, ventilation and durability. Unit shell construction is primarily of pre-cast concrete, treated with an additive that enhances insulation capability.

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Above: Volunteers wanted... Joey Scouts practice raising the flag ahead of upcoming ANZAC Day celebrations. See page 11



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Laminated timber flooring, high ceilings and high level opening windows create optimum air circulation.

Iron roofing with sizzling and internal insulation provide a highly specked climate barrier.

Electronic sensors fitted throughout each unit also provide an automatic management system to monitor and optimise electricity consumption.

When operating as designed, the integrated water management system is able to achieve an 80% recycling rating.

Mr. Coltman said the system utilized is of an approved standard to pass all State Health Regulation requirements throughout Australia.

“There are more innovations planned for the site such as solar heating and wind

powered generation, with up to 50% of electricity for the village generated in this manner,” he said.

The company will not lease the units to individuals.

It wants to lock in long term contracts with mining companies and contractors servicing the expansion project, by offering blocks of 10, 15 and 20 units to each contractor or company.

“In this way the company or contractor has an assured accommodation stream for their workforce.

“They don’t have to go down that expensive route of Fly In, Fly Out,” Mr. Coltman said.

Another four such villages, bringing the total of accommodation units to 200, will be built as demand increases.