Coober Pedy

‘OPAL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD’
The Outback town of Coober Pedy lies approximately 850 kilometres north of Adelaide and 690 kilometres south of Alice Springs. In 1915 opal was discovered in Coober Pedy. Within a short time the miners had moved in. It is now the world’s largest producer of opals, with more than 70 opal fields covering almost 5000 square kilometres. For this reason it is sometimes called the ‘opal capital of the world’. With residents from more than 40 countries, Coober Pedy is one of Australia’s most multicultural locations, owing to its opal mining history.

HISTORY OF COOBER PEDY
The area was occupied by Aboriginal people for many years prior to European settlement. It is generally recognised as the traditional country of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people, but other groups also have connections with the area.

Initially the town was named the Stuart Range Opal Field, in honour of John McDouall Stuart, who was the first European to explore the region. It was renamed Coober Pedy in 1920 – an anglicised version of the Aboriginal terms kupa and piti, which have been roughly translated as ‘white man’s hole’.

DUGOUTS
Coober Pedy is famous for its underground dwellings, called ‘dugouts’, which provide comfortable temperatures in an area that experiences both extreme heat and cold. The original dugouts were very basic but the contemporary ones have all modern conveniences and can be quite luxurious.

ATTRCTIONS OF THE AREA
Two natural attractions of the area include Moon Plain, an expansive rocky landscape said to resemble the moon’s surface, and the Breakaways, a series of colourful rock formations. The locations have been featured in a number of films. The Breakaways, among other sites, have much significance for the traditional owners.