



**MURRAY  
MALLEE  
REGIONAL  
PLAN**

**Summary**  
January 2026



---

## Minister's foreword



### **Hon Nicholas Champion MP**

Minister for Housing and Urban Development  
Minister for Housing Infrastructure  
Minister for Planning

**The Murray Mallee Regional Plan (the Plan) is our blueprint for a sustainable, liveable, and well-planned region as we head toward 2051. As our population is projected to grow by 28,000 residents, the Plan ensures our land use and infrastructure keep pace, creating strong, connected communities with the services and amenities they need.**

From planning for population growth to preserving our pristine environment and promoting economic prosperity, the Plan is shaping the future of the Murray Mallee. We are helping to meet future housing demand by ensuring there is sufficient land for new homes, supported by the necessary infrastructure, and providing flexibility for a diversity of housing options that reflect the changing needs of our communities, from young families to seasonal workers and retirees.

The Plan is not just about housing. It plays a vital role in securing South Australia's economic future by ensuring land is available for industry, jobs, and investment. The Murray Mallee's prosperity is built on diverse agriculture, Australia's largest wine-grape region, and a growing tourism sector anchored by the River Murray and Coorong. The Plan safeguards productive farmland, supports innovation in AgTech and food processing, and promotes new employment pathways for younger generations.

Infrastructure will not be delivered all at once but triggered at key points as our communities grow. By planning ahead, we can prevent urban encroachment on farming land, productive and agricultural land, and areas of high conservation value, including Ramsar-listed wetlands and the River Murray, a vital water source and cultural icon. This approach reduces the cost of infrastructure delivery for government and the community.

Through the Plan, we are setting a clear direction for sustainable growth, backed by coordinated, long-term planning across government. Every state agency has a role to play, with a commitment to aligning infrastructure planning with population and land supply projections ahead of the next Housing Roadmap update. The Growth and Infrastructure Coordination Unit will continue to drive this collaboration, ensuring a joined-up approach across government.

Alongside the 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy and the Transport Strategy, these policies will give certainty to the community, local councils, and developers about where long-term growth will occur. This is our plan for a more resilient, prosperous and connected Murray Mallee, one that supports sustainable growth, protects the natural environment, and enhances liveability for generations to come.

## **Acknowledgment of Country**

The State Planning Commission and the Department for Housing and Urban Development acknowledges First Nations people as the Traditional Custodians of South Australian land and waters and we extend our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We value and recognise the ongoing cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship First Nations peoples have with these lands and waters and the continuing importance of this today.

---

# Contents

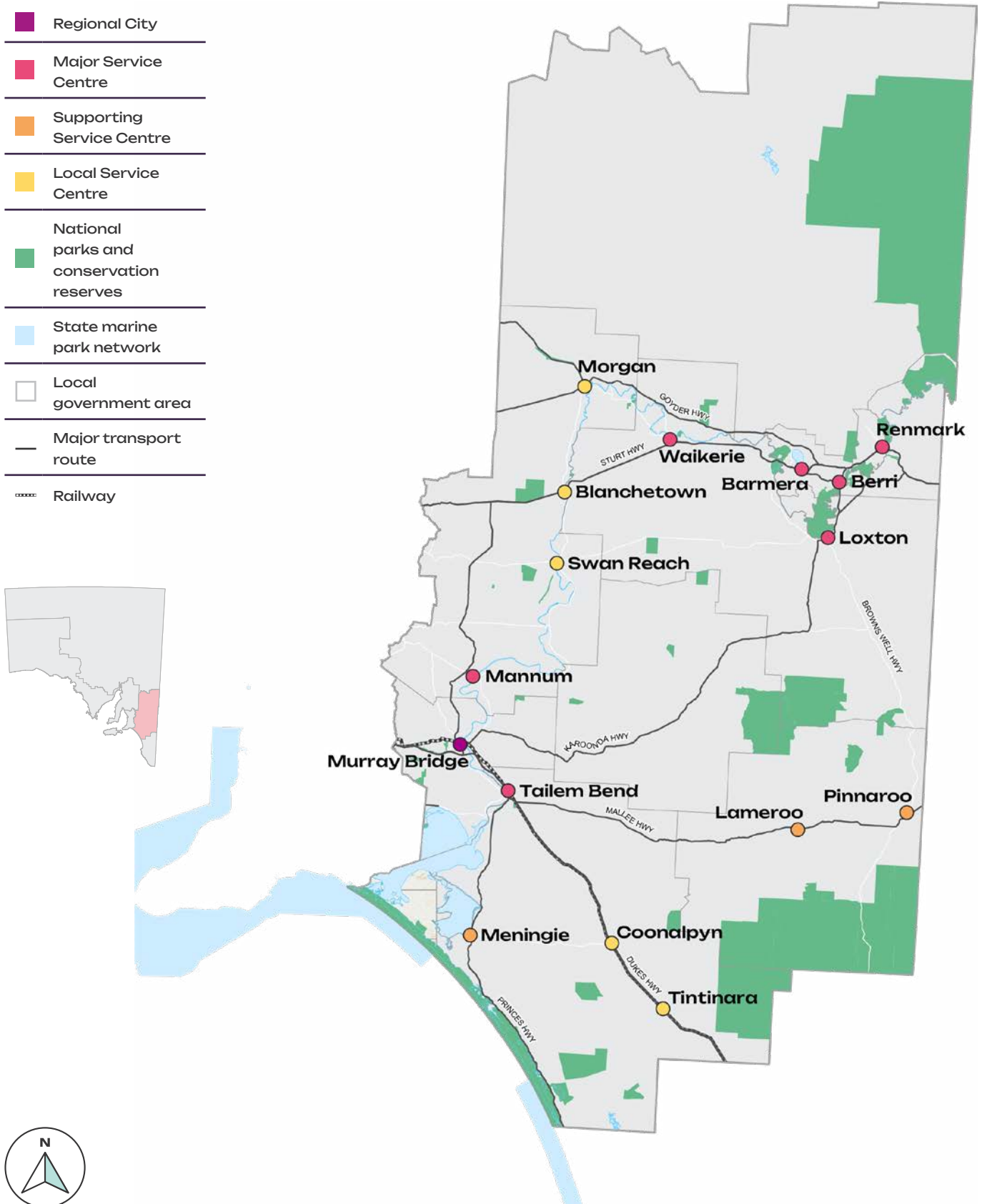
---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What is the Murray Mallee Regional Plan</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A snapshot of the Plan</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Key economic features and drivers</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A planning vision for the Murray Mallee</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Key themes, priorities and implementation</b>	<b>13</b>



Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

# Murray Mallee planning region



---

# Introduction

---

**The Murray Mallee region, spanning about 71,000 square kilometres, stretches from the River Murray's entrance point into the state all the way to the Lower Lakes and river mouth in the Coorong. The region is characterised by a diverse range of landscapes, ecosystems and rich cultural heritage.**

---

The Murray Mallee Regional Plan (the Plan) maps the government's long-term planning vision for the region to 2051 and beyond. It provides governments, businesses, industry and not-for-profit organisations with the data and direction to better plan for and respond to growth and change in our community and towns, while achieving our conservation goals. All within an electronic platform that can be tailored to the user's requirements

---



---

## What is the Murray Mallee Regional Plan?

---

**The Plan establishes a new 30-year plan for the Murray Mallee region, identifying where people will live and work, how they will move around, and where they will access services.**

It replaces the *Murray and Mallee Region Plan (January 2011)* and *Addendum (December 2013)* and determines how our future urban growth will be managed by investigating and guiding:

---



**Where houses and employment land will go**



**How housing and population will be serviced**



**Which areas need conservation and protection**

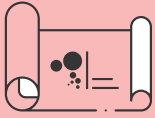


**What major infrastructure is needed and how it will be provided**

---

Regional plans explore how areas are projected to grow, identify land and infrastructure for housing and jobs, while making recommendations about zoning and land development to support sustainable growth over the next 15 to 30 years.

Population growth in the region will be concentrated in the key settlements of growth over this period will be concentrated within the regional city of Murray Bridge and major service centres such as Renmark, Loxton, Waikerie, Mannum, Tailem Bend, Berri and Barmera. These townships currently have a healthy supply of zoned land to accommodate the projected growth over the next 15 years, however, housing must be responsive to changing needs and preferences. The Plan includes long-term investigation areas to provide housing for the 16- to 30-year time horizon period.



# A snapshot of the Plan

**The Murray Mallee region is known for its diverse agriculture, including grain, sheep, and dairy farming, alongside burgeoning wine and horticultural sectors. It offers varied landscapes and natural attractions, supporting significant tourism and recreational activities. With 28,000 extra people in the region by 2051, a growing processing and manufacturing industry will create a strong economic base for growth.**

Growth over this period will be concentrated within the regional city of Murray Bridge and major service centres such as Renmark, Loxton, Waikerie, Mannum, Tailem Bend, Berri and Barmera.

Growth is expected to be driven by job creation in the tourism industry, renewable energy projects, viticulture and agriculture. The Plan aims to future-proof the region's productive economy by identifying and facilitating the land, infrastructure and housing it requires to prosper.

The Plan also identifies strategic land use actions to increase the supply of affordable, accessible and diverse housing options that are well-connected to services. Diversification is crucial to support a range of household types, life stages and lifestyle choices. Ensuring adequate housing and employment opportunities is also important for attracting and retaining younger workers, to respond to the region's ageing workforce.

The River Murray is the state's primary source of water and one of its greatest assets. Much of the primary industry within the region relies heavily on fair, equitable and sustainable access to the river for irrigation. Achieving sustainable levels of demand for water is essential, particularly considering the effects of climate change and the importance of protecting the biodiversity of the river and the region as a whole. These are important considerations of the Plan in responding to projected future growth.

The Murray Mallee region frequently experiences drought, intense storms and is particularly vulnerable to flooding events. The Plan prioritises land use strategies that consider the economic, social and environmental cost of natural disasters. Planning appropriately can safeguard affordability, create more resilient communities and reduce recovery.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Addressing Resilience in Land Use Planning – summary for policy makers, IAG, October 2023

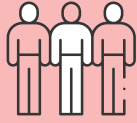
---

The region's diverse and scenic landscape is a key attraction for both South Australian, interstate and international visitors. The natural beauty plays a significant role in the state's tourism economy, supporting vital local employment opportunities.

The region is home to a diverse range of native species, with over 2,000 plants and more than 450 animals.<sup>2</sup> The region includes critically important habitats such as the River Murray, Ramsar listed Chowilla floodplain, the Coorong and Lower Lakes. Approximately 30% of the region is covered by over 40 conservation parks, national parks and reserves. The Plan includes actions to protect these sensitive environments, ensuring the region's long-term wellbeing and liveability.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/native-plants-animals/managing-biodiversity>





**73k**  
population  
2021



**101k**  
2051 population  
projection



**13,900<sup>3</sup>**  
new homes  
required by 2051

## Key economic features and drivers



### Gross State Product

The region contributes approximately \$5.2 billion to South Australia's Gross State Product<sup>4</sup>



### Agriculture

Agriculture, viticulture, meat processing, health, aged care, and social assistance are the region's largest employment sectors<sup>5</sup>



### Wine industry

Australia's largest wine-grape region by tonnage, with over 22,000 hectares of vineyards<sup>6</sup>



### Almonds

The Riverland accounts for over 20% of almond plantations nationally



### Tourism

\$223 million visitor expenditure (2023). Attractions include nature-based tourism, premium food and wine and experiences such as Monarto Safari Park (the largest safari park outside of Africa) and the Bend Motorsport Park<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> An occupancy rate of 2.3 persons per dwelling is based on the current average across the region as reported in the 2021 Census.

<sup>4,5</sup> 2021 Census <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.wineaustralia.com/getmedia/d6861ad2-f9c3-4547-8d28-39df8fc2341/MI\\_Riverland-Region-Snapshot-2023-24.pdf](https://www.wineaustralia.com/getmedia/d6861ad2-f9c3-4547-8d28-39df8fc2341/MI_Riverland-Region-Snapshot-2023-24.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://tourism.sa.gov.au/media/2g3hqz0c/satc\\_value\\_of\\_tourism\\_ye\\_2024\\_murray\\_river\\_lakes\\_coorong.pdf](https://tourism.sa.gov.au/media/2g3hqz0c/satc_value_of_tourism_ye_2024_murray_river_lakes_coorong.pdf)



---

# A planning vision for the Murray Mallee

---

**A diverse, sustainable economy that balances agricultural growth and innovation with environmental stewardship and supports vibrant, resilient communities.**

---

The Murray Mallee region plays a vital role in South Australia's economy and identity. Its prosperity is underpinned by a diverse economic base, including agriculture, food processing, health and aged care, and a growing tourism sector. Agriculture remains central, with the Riverland leading as Australia's largest winegrape-producing area and a major source of almonds, citrus, and vegetables. The region also embraces innovation across emerging sectors like AgTech, social enterprises, and the circular economy, fostering resilience and new employment pathways.

Tourism thrives on the region's natural assets, particularly the River Murray and Coorong, offering houseboating, fishing, and outdoor recreation. Attractions such as Monarto Safari Park, The Bend Motorsport Park, and the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve enhance its appeal. The River Murray is not only a critical water source for communities and agriculture but also holds deep cultural significance for Aboriginal communities and supports rich biodiversity. Together, these elements position the Murray Mallee as a dynamic, inclusive, and environmentally conscious region with a strong and diversified future.

---

## Key themes, priorities and implementation

---

### People, housing and liveability More housing in the right places

#### Key priorities for the region:

- Facilitate a diversity of housing that is affordable and accessible to accommodate an ageing population, smaller household types and temporary workers.
- Ensuring new housing is well-located, connected to infrastructure, and meets the diverse needs of communities, including accommodating different household types (e.g. lone person households, older couples without children).
- Encouraging future housing development to remain within township boundaries to provide diverse, affordable housing options.
- Addressing affordable housing challenges, particularly in growth areas.

#### How the Plan addresses these priorities

- Strengthening the relationship between land use planning and our First Nations, through the introduction of cultural mapping and the integration of Aboriginal knowledge in structure planning and the code amendment process.
- High priority code amendments will be initiated to unlock land for housing, including affordable housing and worker's accommodation. This would include sites identified in the township of Renmark and Loxton in accordance with endorsed Council Structure Plan/ growth strategies.

### Productive economy A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future

#### Key priorities for the region:

- Strengthening primary industries like agriculture, viticulture, and renewable energy to drive economic growth.
- Supporting the development of employment lands to accommodate future workforce needs.
- Promoting innovation in key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and renewable energy.
- Diversifying the regional economy through investment in tourism and events such as the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve.
- Expanding housing options to support an ageing population and attract younger workers in healthcare and tourism sectors.

#### How the Plan addresses these priorities

- Update to the land capability mapping of productive land and identification of key primary production assets that should be protected.
- Initiation of code amendments to provide greater protection of employment lands from incompatible land uses.
- Introduces the township hierarchy to guide investment and development in key service precincts.
- Supporting primary industries including horticulture, viticulture and livestock, through value-adding opportunities and sustainable land management practices.
- Investigating the opportunity for a transport/logistics hub as identified in the Berri Barmera Growth Strategy.
- Undertaking a Code Amendment to rezone land to Strategic Employment as identified in the Loxton Waikerie Growth Strategy.

## Natural resources, environment and landscapes

### A more climate-resilient and sustainable region

#### Key priorities for the region:

- Protecting biodiversity and ecological assets, including Ramsar listed wetlands and coastal ecosystems.
- Preparing for the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures, reduced rainfall, and increased frequency of natural hazards such as bushfires, floods, and coastal erosion.
- Incorporating climate risk projections to inform strategic land-use decisions and mitigate the effects of climate change on the environment, economy, and communities.
- Promoting resilience through climate adaptation strategies and aligning the plan with the South Australian Government Climate Change Action Plan.

#### How the Plan addresses these priorities

- Enhanced mapping of biodiversity, coastal and habitat areas, to identify areas that require greater protection, or that are suitable for development.
- Enhanced hazards mapping including hazardous activities, bushfire, flooding, coastal flooding and storm surge.

## Transport and infrastructure

### An integrated and connected region

#### Key priorities for the region:

- Promoting integrated planning to ensure coordinated land use and infrastructure development.
- Investing in strategic transport infrastructure to improve connectivity across the Murray Mallee region.
- Expanding energy infrastructure to support renewable energy zones and ensure regional energy security.
- Strengthening integrated water management to secure water resources and improve quality.
- Preserving infrastructure reserves and transport corridors for future growth.

#### How the Plan addresses these priorities

- Integration with key state transport and infrastructure strategies.
- Introduction of publicly available social infrastructure benchmarks.
- High priority code amendments seeking to protect future infrastructure corridors and reserves (e.g. freight, rail, utilities).
- Undertaking a transport study for the Murray Mallee to inform area network planning and investment in the region.
- Developing a resilience strategy and framework, that guides projects and initiatives to deliver a resilient transport system that contributes to long-term sustainability and bolsters the Regions overall preparedness for future challenges.

---

### Implementation and delivery Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning

#### Key priorities for the region:

- Ongoing monitoring and adjustment of land-use policies and infrastructure planning to accommodate growth over a 15-30 year period.
- Identifying long-term land supply areas to accommodate permanent and short-term housing needs.
- Ensuring sustainable land supply to support population growth, with zoning for residential expansion aligned with employment areas, health and community services.
- Ongoing collaboration between local, regional and state authorities to ensure infrastructure is in place to support population growth.

#### How the Plan addresses these priorities

- Investigating council infrastructure provision to support growth areas in line with the Coorong Growth Strategy.
- Prepare an infrastructure strategy to underpin growth areas identified in the Berri Barmera Growth Strategy.
- Incorporation of relevant findings of the Mid Murray Council Growth Strategy to inform future updates to the Regional Plan.
- Undertaking a Structure Plan for Wellington East that includes consideration of water supply and connection to the township of Wellington which is located within the Murray Bridge Council area.



