FAR NORTH REGIONAL PLAN

Version FN2026.1
29 January 2026

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 people have with these lands and waters and the continuing importance of this today.

Minister's foreword

Hon Nicholas Champion MP

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

The Far North Regional Plan (the Plan) is our blueprint for a sustainable, liveable, and well-planned region as we head toward 2051. With a population set to grow by 1,117 and 720 new homes needed, the Plan ensures our land use and infrastructure keep pace, creating strong, connected communities from Port Augusta to Innamincka and across to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

From planning for population growth to preserving our natural landscapes and promoting economic prosperity, the Plan will shape the Far North's future. 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 housing diversity to meet the changing needs of our communities, including single-person households, seasonal workers, and ageing residents.

The Plan is not just about housing. It is a key driver of South Australia's economic future by ensuring land is available to support industry, employment, and investment. The Far North Region is a leader in mining, the area's largest employer, and in renewable energy, contributing more than a quarter of the state's daily energy supply. Celebrated for its striking natural landscapes from the rugged Ikara-Flinders Ranges to the vast arid outback, these environments are deeply valued by both locals and visitors. The Plan safeguards these iconic areas, along with Aboriginal heritage and vital biodiversity.

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 productive or agricultural land and areas of high conservation value, safeguarding the region's unique biodiversity and cultural sites. 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 Group will continue to drive this collaboration, ensuring a joined-up approach across government.

Alongside *South Australia's 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy 2025* and *South Australia's 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 Far North, one that supports sustainable growth, protects the natural environment, and enhances liveability for generations to come.

Contents

Vision

The Far North Regional Plan delivers a planning vision for the region through to 2051.

The Far North is South Australia's largest geographical planning region, covering more than 80% of the state's land mass. Its sparsely settled landscape spans from the remote Aṉangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands to the awe-inspiring, ancient Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Featuring most of the state's valuable mineral resources, the region is also at the forefront of renewable energy projects, generating over a quarter of the state's daily energy needs.

The Far North Regional Plan maps the Government of South Australia's 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 align, plan for and respond to growth and change in our community and towns, while achieving our conservation goals.

For the first time, the Plan is delivered within an electronic platform – the Regional Planning Portal – rather than as a static written document. The Regional Planning Portal delivers the Plan as a series of interactive maps, dynamic data, spatial plans and drop-down boxes outlining the key themes, subthemes and actions for the region. This electronic delivery of information allows for the Plan to be updated and evolve over its life.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

The Far North Regional Plan supports future communities by planning:

Where houses and employment land will go

How housing and population will be serviced

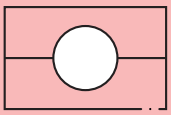
Which areas need conservation and protection

What major infrastructure is needed and how it will be provided

The region is home to 26,714 people (2021) and covers almost 800,000 square kilometres, comprising distinct geographic areas, including the vast outback and the ancient Flinders Ranges; two of Australia's tourism icons. The Regional City of Port Augusta is the gateway to these areas. As the largest city in the Far North it services the widespread and diverse communities found across the region. Major Service Centres are located at Roxby Downs, Coober Pedy, and Quorn, with several smaller Supporting Service Centre townships dispersed across the region.

The region contains remote unincorporated areas serviced by the Outback Communities Authority. The remainder of the Far North Region is administered by the following local governments:

- District Council of Coober Pedy
- Municipal Council of Roxby Downs
- Port Augusta City Council
- The Flinders Ranges Council.



The APY Lands

Located in the northwest of the state, the APY Lands accounts for a large portion of the Far North Region. It is a sparsely populated local government area for Aboriginal people.

Some of the Aṉangu people of the Western Desert cultural bloc, in particular Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra peoples, inhabit the Lands and have freehold title and certain rights over more than 103,000 square kilometres. This allows the Traditional Owners to determine how the land is managed, in accordance with the *Aṉangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act 1981* (APYLRA), whereby an elected executive board reports to the Premier of South Australia.

There are seven main communities within the Lands and around 20 homelands. These support over 2,500 Aṉangu people who have a deep cultural and spiritual bond with their Country. Pukatja (Ernabella) is the main locality, with the administration centre located at Umuwa. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is responsible for administering the APYLRA.

Township hierarchy

Regional City

A Regional City is the primary commercial, business, retail and service centre, generally serving a regional population of approximately 10,000 to 30,000 people. Regional Cities provide major employment opportunities, retail, commercial, administrative, entertainment, education and health services.

Port Augusta is strategically located at the top of the Spencer Gulf, offering a unique blend of coastal living and access to the outback and Flinders Ranges. As a thriving Regional City, it will continue to provide diverse employment and housing options, attracting a range of industries and adapting to the evolving needs of its community. Port Augusta will also serve as a regional hub for the surrounding outback, delivering essential services, retail opportunities, and strong transport links.

Major Service Centres

Major Service Centres provide for local and regional needs, generally serving a population of up to 10,000 people. These centres generally provide employment opportunities, retail, commercial, administrative, entertainment, education and health services.

Coober Pedy will continue to serve as a Major Service Centre, acting as a key regional hub for essential services delivered by government agencies, health providers, and social support organisations. Its distinctive landscape and renowned opal fields remain a strong drawcard, with tourism and hospitality continuing to play a vital role in supporting the local economy.

Roxby Downs is a respected mining town at the gateway to the outback that will continue to play a pivotal role as a Major Service Centre for the region. It delivers essential services to support a dynamic and youthful community, made up of both permanent residents and a transient mining workforce.

Quorn is known for its rich blend of heritage, natural beauty, and community spirit. As the Major Service Centre of the southern Flinders Ranges, Quorn provides essential services including healthcare, education, childcare, aged care, and the Quorn and District Memorial Hospital. The town will continue to support tourism in the form of accommodation options, the iconic Pichi Richi Railway, and access to walking trails and conservation parks.

Supporting Service Centres

Supporting Service Centres service the needs of its centre and immediate catchment area. They serve a population of approximately 1,000 people. These centres generally provide local employment opportunities, retail, commercial, administrative, education, community and/or allied health services.

Hawker's function as a Supporting Service Centre in the southern Flinders Ranges will continue to be important, providing essential amenities like fuel, mechanical repairs, postal services, and supplies to nearby communities and travellers. Its strategic location and reliable services make it a key hub for both locals and visitors exploring the outback.

Leigh Creek is ideally placed to become a key Supporting Service Centre, offering essential infrastructure and services to remote communities across the northern Flinders Ranges. Once a thriving mining town, Leigh Creek will transition into a sustainable regional hub to support long-term regional needs and serve as a tourism gateway to the outback.

Our biggest priorities

Increasing diverse housing types

Growth areas planning for climate change and global trends

Integrated planning approach

Ensuring land supply

Learn more about the biggest priorities facing the Far North

The key priorities for the Far North Region include increasing housing supply and choice, advancing sustainable energy and mineral resource production, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, ensuring food and water security, and cultivating a skilled workforce that drives innovation.

Housing

In the context of the national housing crisis, it is more critical than ever to ensure the timely and adequate supply of land for a variety of housing types and tenures. This will help meet the changing needs of communities, support economic growth, and attract and retain essential workers across the region.

Environmental sustainability

Mining and construction remain the backbone of the region's economy, while its rugged and arid landscapes support national parks and habitats for rare and endangered species. It is essential to safeguard both agricultural land and natural ecosystems from encroachment by incompatible land uses, while maintaining flexibility to adapt to evolving economic and environmental conditions.

The unique natural environment of this vast region is both essential to the economic stability and environmental health of its communities. Protecting and enhancing this asset strengthens climate resilience, boosts productivity, and contributes to the overall wellbeing of the region.

Coordinated infrastructure

Integrated planning aligns land use with the necessary services and infrastructure to support growth in suitable areas. While large sections of land across the region are appropriately zoned, the infrastructure needed to enable development has not yet been delivered. Coordinated infrastructure investment – led by both state and local governments – is essential to support strategic residential and employment growth.

Outback Communities Authority - Strategic Blueprint for Outback SA

The *Strategic Blueprint for Outback SA* identifies the issues that affect the lives of people who live in the region, and outlines strategies for improved facilities and services over the next 10 years. It will serve as a guide for advocacy, investment, and partnerships.

By building a comprehensive profile of the environmental, social, cultural, economic, and infrastructural issues facing Outback SA, the Blueprint aims to improve community liveability and wellbeing, protect and enhance culture and heritage, help communities mitigate the effects of climate change, and support housing and economic growth.

Learn more about the *Strategic Blueprint for Outback SA* here.

A planning vision for Far North

Rich in both cultural and natural assets, the Far North's strong economy is supported by new technology in sustainable energy production, mineral resourcing and agri-business. Progressive tourism, food and water security and a skilled workforce drive innovation.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

The Far North Region is a resource hub for renewable energy generation and advancement in sustainable mineral exploration. The region maintains its valued characteristics, while integrating new practices and technologies which enhance livelihoods and visitor experiences.

Active, social and affordable housing policy which encourages government and private sector involvement to deliver safe and secure housing is considered a fundamental right. A diversity of affordable and environmentally sustainable housing options is available across the region. This includes individual households, shared living arrangements, families and intergenerational living.

Aboriginal culture is respected and celebrated. Planning with Country models have been developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders and cultural leaders to enable the delivery of a regenerative approach to planning and development.

The region's economy is strong with the resources sector and demand for minerals playing a significant role. The Olympic Dam and Gawler Craton region, Prominent Hill and Carrapateena mines, and the Jacinth-Ambrosia mine in the Eucla Basin, all provide local employment opportunities and pathways for the younger generation.

Dedicated renewable energy zones identify the region as a significant power generator for the state and the nation. Sustainable agriculture practices and tourism industries provide innovative and unique experiences.

The rugged outback of the Far North and the Flinders Ranges National Park, known by its Adnyamathanha name of Ikara meaning 'meeting place', provide some of the most dramatic and beautiful landscapes in South Australia. Indigenous Protected Areas and national parks continue to support the state's sustainable visitor economy.

Water resourcing is secure, equitable and reliable throughout the region. A safe and reliable transport network provides a gateway for regional employment, with rail, road and air connecting the primary industry, mining and renewable energy sectors and enabling quality healthcare to remote communities.

Far North Regional Plan outcomes:

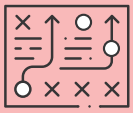
The Plan aims for the following outcomes:

Outcome 1:
More housing in the right places

Outcome 2:
A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future

Outcome 3:
A more climate-resilient and sustainable region

Outcome 4:
An integrated and connected region



Outcome 5:
Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

Digital innovation

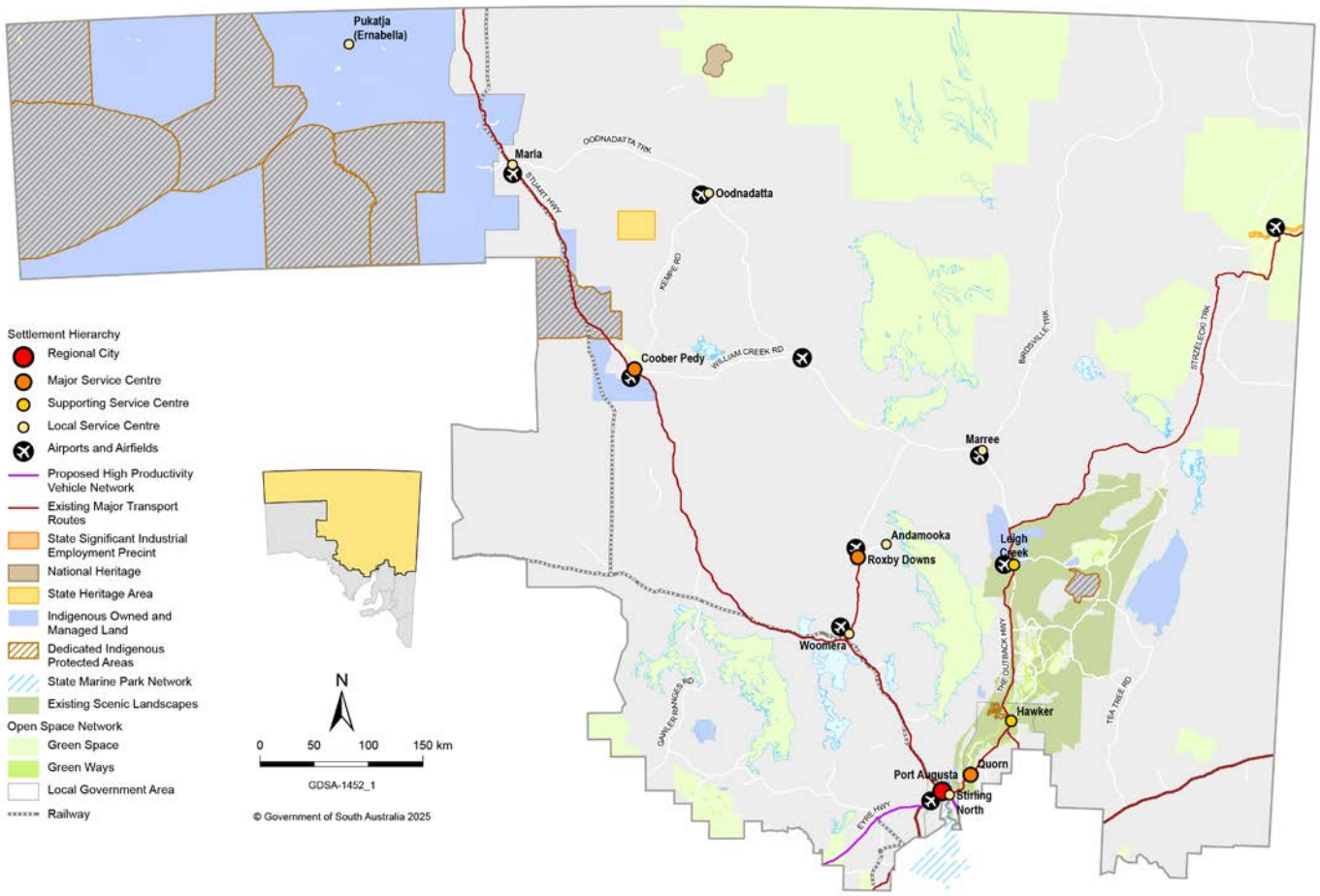
South Australia is the first state to have a fully digitised planning system, and this innovation now includes another Australian first – a fully digitised Regional Planning Portal.

This gives unprecedented access to the government's long-term vision for sustainable growth and change across the region. It plays a critical role in identifying appropriate land for future housing, employment, open space, jobs and the necessary supporting infrastructure.

The previous Far North Regional Plan, developed under the repealed *Development Act 1993*, contained both high-level strategic directions and regionally specific policies and their spatial application in the one static document. The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) separates these in two separate planning instruments – the state's strategic planning directions, which are set out in the state planning policies, and the regional strategies and maps, which are set out in the regional plans.

The benefit of this approach is clear and consistent overarching direction for the state or region. In addition, a digital regional plan can be easily updated with current data and information. This provides for greater adaptability in how overarching directions are applied at the regional, subregional and more local level.

The Regional Planning Portal dramatically improves the coordination of land use and infrastructure and the ability to monitor and quickly respond to changing conditions. This transforms how we plan for long-term growth.


Pukatja
(Ernabella)
Maria
Oodnadatta
Coober Pedy
Marree
Andamooka
Roxby Downs
Leigh
Creek
Woomera
Hawker
Quorn
Port Augusta
Stirling
North
OODNADATTA TRK
STUART HWY
KEMPE RD
WILLIAM CREEK RD
BIRDSVILLE TRK
STRZELECKI TRK
GARIELER RANGES RD
THE OUTBACK HWY
TEA TREE RD
EYRE HWY
Settlement Hierarchy
Regional City
Major Service Centre
Supporting Service Centre
Local Service Centre
Airports and Airfields
Proposed High Productivity Vehicle Network
Existing Major Transport Routes
State Significant Industrial Employment Precint
National Heritage
State Heritage Area
Indigenous Owned and Managed Land
Dedicated Indigenous Protected Areas
State Marine Park Network
Existing Scenic Landscapes
Open Space Network
Green Space
Green Ways
Local Government Area
Railway
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Population

Context

Recent population change

The Far North is home to 26,714 people, which is approximately 1.4% of the state's population.

- Approximately 52% of these people live in Port Augusta, with the remainder mostly living in or around the towns of Roxby Downs, Coober Pedy and Quorn.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population represents 23% of the region's total population, the highest of any planning region in the state and substantially higher than the state average of just 2.4%.
- Other than English, Pitjantjatjara is the second most widely used language at home (6.5%).

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

Learn more about projected population to 2051

Population projections provide a picture of the likely population growth and demographic change anticipated in the future.

Understanding the likely range for population growth and demographic change across the state provides a strong foundation on which to base planning for the future of the region.

The Plan uses the state's adopted high-growth projections from the 2021 Census.[1] This high-growth scenario is used by state and local government to evaluate residential and employment supply. It is noted however, that in many outback locations, census data collection relies on individuals visiting designated service centres. Therefore, the 2021 census data may not accurately reflect the population of very remote communities in the region.

The region is expected to see an increase of 1,117 permanent residents (excluding seasonal workers and tourists) by 2051, an average annual growth rate of 1.1%. This equates to a demand for approximately 720 additional dwellings.

Key demographic challenges for the region, include significant projected growth in the 80+ age cohort and small decreases in total persons in the 5 to 17, 25 to 34 and 50 to 64 (working age) cohorts.

These demographic trends are important as they have practical implications for land use and infrastructure planning, particularly around the types of housing and services need to support future communities in the region.

For more information on population change and projections, see Population | PlanSA.

Population summary

Scenario	Medium	High
Total population		
2021	26,714	26,714
2051	27,055	27,831
2021-2051 Total change	341	1,117
2021-2051 (%) Average annual change	11 (0%)	37 (0.1%)

Projected population to 2041 – local government area

The tables below highlight key statistics relating to current population projections in the *Local Area (SA2 and LGA) Population Projections for South Australia, 2021 to 2041*. They highlight how population change in local areas is much more uncertain, and more difficult to predict, than at the state or regional level. For this reason, a shorter time period has been used, from 2021 to 2041.

Aṉangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

Scenario	Medium	High
Total Population		
2021	2,554	2,554
2041	2,596	2,646
2021-2041 Total change	42	92
2021-2041 (%) Average annual change	2 (0.1%)	5 (0.2%)

District Council of Coober Pedy

Scenario	Medium	High
Total Population		
2021	1,622	1,622
2041	1,569	1,616
2021-2041 Total change	-53	-6
2021-2041 (%) Average annual change	-3 (-0.2)	0 (0.0%)

Municipal Council of Roxby Downs

Scenario	Medium	High
Total Population		
2021	4,109	4,109
2041	4,129	4,202
2021-2041 **Total change**	20	93
2021-2041 (%) **Average annual change**	1 (0.0%)	5 (0.1%)

Port Augusta City Council

Scenario	Medium	High
Total Population		
2021	14,448	14,448
2041	15,029	15,262
2021-2041 **Total change**	581	814
2021-2041 (%) **Average annual change**	29 (0.2%)	41 (0.3%)

The Flinders Ranges Council

Scenario	Medium	High
Total Population		
2021	1,686	1,686
2041	1,494	1,535
2021-2041 **Total change**	-192	-151
2021-2041 (%) **Average annual change**	-10 (-0.6%)	-8 (-0.5%)

Unincorporated SA

Scenario	Medium	High
Total Population		
2021	3,105	3,105
2041	3,068	3,151
2021-2041 **Total change**	-37	46
2021-2041 (%) **Average annual change**	-2 (-0.1%)	2 (0.1%)

Housing trends and land supply

The planning system can help meet future housing demand by facilitating sufficient supply of serviced land, flexibility in zoning and policies to allow for housing diversity.

A 15-year supply of appropriately zoned and serviced land is critical to ensure that housing supply and affordability (for both prospective homeowners and renters) is maintained. This will ensure the region can meet competing housing demands for permanent residents, short-term holiday rentals, key workers and temporary/seasonal workers.

Source: Greg Brave- Shutterstock

Analysis of housing land supply

A review of land supply across the region indicates there is currently a 15-year supply of land zoned for housing in Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, Roxby Downs and Quorn, with new residential growth areas identified to cater for housing demand in locations such as Hawker.

While Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, Roxby Downs, Quorn and local Supporting Service Centres generally have a sufficient supply of zoned residential land to accommodate projected growth, not all supply is 'development-ready'. This means it may not be serviced by infrastructure, be affected by hazards and native vegetation, or the landowner/s may not intend to develop their land.

Where a short fall exists, the Department for Housing and Urban Development will work closely with council to assist in mapping areas to secure 15-year land supply to cater for the long-term projected housing demand.

The table below shows current housing development activity in the Far North Region.

Housing snapshot

Total dwellings	14,519
Occupied dwellings	11,132 (77%)
Avg persons per occupied dwelling	2.3
Avg dwellings built annually (10 years to 2024)[2]	29

Projected housing demand and land supply

Region

Projected housing demand and land supply	
Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031	28
Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2051	720
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	893
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	288
Undeveloped zoned	6,464
Zoned total	7,645
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	25
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	12
Undeveloped zoned	3,048
Zoned total	3,085
Future residential land supply – (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	1,680
Rural living	49

Local government areas

Port Augusta City Council

Projected housing demand	
Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031	22
Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041	359
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	219
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	288
Undeveloped zoned	3,588
Zoned total	4,095
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	25
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	12
Undeveloped zoned	3,002
Zoned total	3,039
Future residential land supply – (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	4
Rural living	-

The Flinders Ranges Council	
Projected housing demand	
Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031	0
Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041	0
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	130
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	182
Zoned total	312
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	46
Zoned total	46
Future residential land supply – (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	432
Rural living	49

District Council of Coober Pedy	
Projected housing demand	
Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031	0
Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041	0
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	183
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	1,565
Zoned total	1,748
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	-
Zoned total	-
Future residential land supply – (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	623
Rural living	-

Municipal Council of Roxby Downs	
Projected housing demand	
Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031	3
Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041	41
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	9
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	721
Zoned total	730
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	-
Zoned total	-
Future residential land supply – (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	621
Rural living	-

Employment trends and land supply

A prosperous economy requires us to have employment land that will accommodate current and future industries, is appropriately serviced and well connected to a skilled workforce.

The planning system can support employment growth in the region by making sure there is enough land in the right places that is supported by the necessary infrastructure. It can also provide flexibility in zoning and policies to allow for diverse business models.

Unlike residential land where demand can be reasonably forecast using population projections, the demand for employment land is more difficult to predict. An appropriate strategy is to ensure that there is a sufficient zoned supply of employment land in appropriate locations that could accommodate future growth.

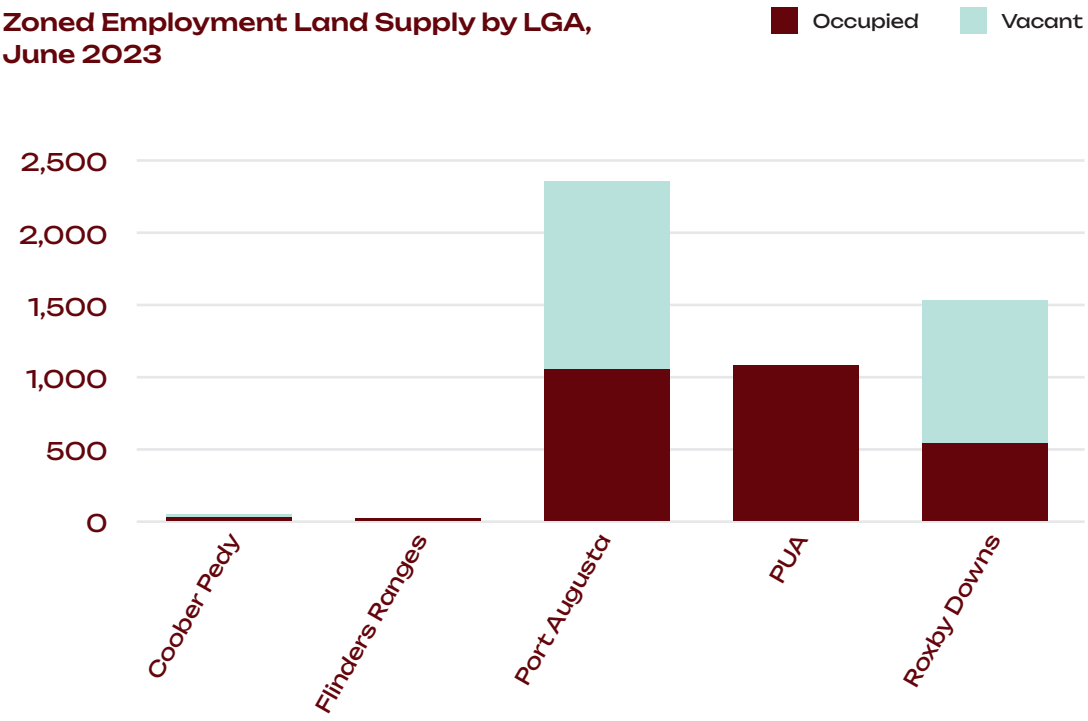
Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

Analysis of employment land supply

The region comprises over 5,108 hectares of zoned employment land, which for the most part is evenly distributed across the region's local government areas. The majority of zoned vacant land sits within the Port Augusta City Council and Municipal Council of Roxby Downs.

In addition, there is a significant amount of zoned employment land that is currently used for primary production, which has the potential to be converted to industrial employment land but is typically void of significant site improvements. As this land is currently being used for other purposes it is not technically classified as 'vacant'.

Zoned Employment Land Supply by LGA, June 2023



Learn more about employment sectors and land use mix

Development trends

Between 2022 - 2023, 86 hectares of employment land were developed in the region.

Should this trend continue, the region's vacant zoned supply is likely to be consumed within the next 25- to 30-years, noting that some employment land is not serviced or in a location that meets current needs. The figure above is also slightly skewed due to land in and around the Port Playford site in Port Augusta changing 'status' over the reporting period, which heavily influenced the consumption rate.

In addition, there is currently a significant amount of employment land used for primary production, which has the capacity to be converted to industrial employment land in the short- to medium-term. This land is not reported as vacant as it is actively being used for other purposes.

Vacant land consumption (annual)	86 ha

Employment land use

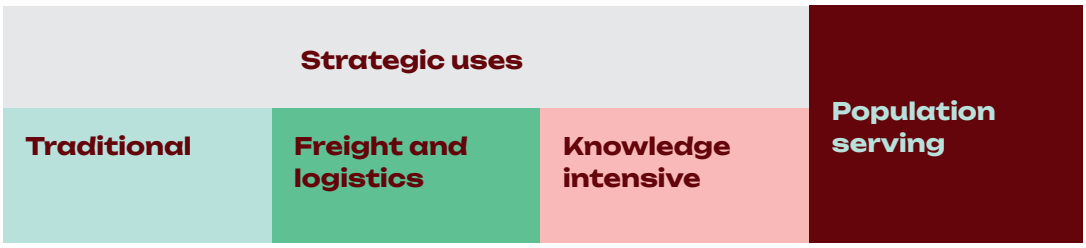
Zoned land within the region is predominantly used for traditional employment activities, which includes activities such as industrial, mining, primary production and various forms of public utilities (i.e. electricity generation and wastewater treatment). These uses typically utilise large parcels of land compared to other broad industry categories (BICs)[3], such as knowledge intensive industries like healthcare and population serving industries like retail.

Learn more about broad industry categories

Broad industry categories (BICs) have been created as a way of identifying an industrial employment precinct's strategic purpose and infrastructure needs, which then dictates the role and responsibility for network planning and delivery.

There are four categories:

- **Traditional employment lands** are areas for industrial, mining, primary production and jobs involving various forms of public utilities (i.e. electricity generation and wastewater treatment).
- **Freight and logistics employment lands** are areas used for jobs involving transportation of bulk goods, manufacturing and warehousing.
- **Knowledge intensive employment lands** are areas for jobs that need high skills, research, or innovation, like tech, education, and advanced manufacturing.
- **Population serving employment lands** are areas used for jobs and services that support the everyday needs of nearby residents, like shops, schools, and healthcare.



Broad Industry Categories (Source: TSA Industrial Employment Land Strategy)

Employment sectors

Mining and mineral exploration particularly in copper, uranium, and gold are significant contributors to the Far North Region. BHP's Olympic Dam mine is a major player, with plans for expansion including its copper smelter, refinery facilities and future exploration in the area. The region is also seeing growth in the provision of renewable energy projects, like the Goyder South wind farm for Olympic Dam as well as the Oak Dam Underground Access Project. Both sectors will generate demand for employment and subsequent housing from Port Augusta to Moomba.

The tourism and hospitality sector continues to grow and specialise in key areas such as nature-based ecotourism experiences particularly around the Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Visitation numbers are likely to increase with the Flinders Ranges potential UNESCO World Heritage nomination.[4]

Growth in the agriculture sector is also expected, due to increasing international demand and export opportunities particularly for Australian meat protein. This will be supported by primary production opportunities for innovation and value-adding, however access to adequate water supply will be critical to growing this sector.

Further insights are explored in the productive economy theme.

Workforce

The Far North Region, while having an ageing population, also has a relatively young workforce, with the largest age group of workers between 25 to 34 years old. This could be attributed to the mining sector and fly-in-fly-out workforce.

The ageing population is forecast to increase the demand for professional services, particularly in the areas of aged care and related professions. This will increase the proportion of the region's workforce employed in the healthcare and social services sector.

Learn more about employment land supply

Employment land supply - Region

Employment land use mix	Hectares
Traditional	1885
Freight and logistics	458
Knowledge intensive	44
Population serving	330
Employment land supply	**Hectares**
Occupied	2797
Vacant	2312
Future supply	602

Local Government Areas

Port Augusta City Council

Employment land use mix	Hectares
Traditional	595
Freight and logistics	233
Knowledge intensive	33
Population serving	140
Employment land supply	**Hectares**
Occupied	1074
Vacant	1292
Future supply	591

The Flinders Ranges Council

Employment land use mix	Hectares
Traditional	23
Freight and logistics	3
Knowledge intensive	2
Population serving	5
Employment land supply	**Hectares**
Occupied	32
Vacant	13
Future supply	11

District Council of Coober Pedy

Employment land use mix	Hectares
Traditional	14
Freight and logistics	0
Knowledge intensive	3
Population serving	15
Employment land supply	**Hectares**
Occupied	40
Vacant	15
Future supply	0

Municipal Council of Roxby Downs

Employment land use mix	Hectares
Traditional	150
Freight and logistics	222
Knowledge intensive	5
Population serving	170
Employment land supply	**Hectares**
Occupied	546
Vacant	991
Future supply	0

People, housing and liveability

Theme:

Outcome 1: More housing in the right places

Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is one of the most fundamental human needs. Housing provides the basis for stability and security in many social, cultural and economic aspects of individual and family life.[5]

Most of the region's population live in the Regional City of Port Augusta and Supporting Service Centres of Roxby Downs, Coober Pedy, Hawker and Quorn. A portion of the region's population resides outside of these service centres, in communities with populations of less than 500 people. This presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities due to the local population being so dispersed.

The Far North's population is projected to grow by approximately 1,100 permanent residents over the next 30 years.[6] This growth will be concentrated in Port Augusta with other townships such as Coober Pedy, Roxby Downs, Quorn and Pukatja (Ernabella) playing key roles in accommodating the region's population.

Population growth in the Far North is expected to be driven by job creation in mining and mineral resources, renewable energy production, innovative horticultural and agricultural production, and the service, tourism and retail sectors.

While population growth has slowed in recent years, additional land supply is required to support future population demand. This is particularly important for the mining and renewable energy sectors where the provision of local and affordable housing is critical to attracting and retaining workers for construction phases and ongoing operations.

Future housing supply

Meeting future demand will require not just more housing, but a greater diversity of housing options.

Currently, detached dwellings make up 85% of the housing stock in the region, highlighting the need for more flexible and inclusive housing models. This includes homes suited to older residents, smaller households, seasonal workers and transient populations.

Notably, unoccupied dwellings are high across the region at 26.3% – well above the state average of 10.8%. This may reflect abandoned homes, ageing or poor-quality housing, and economic barriers to renovation. The Plan prioritises revitalising existing housing stock in well-located areas before expanding into new development zones.

To support sustainable development, the Plan encourages housing consolidation within existing township boundaries wherever possible. This approach enhances the viability of local services and infrastructure, reduces exposure to natural hazards such as bushfires and flooding, and helps prevent urban encroachment into environmentally sensitive or high-value agricultural land.

Source: Greg Brave - Shutterstock

Affordable and social housing

The region faces challenges such as social isolation, limited transport access, and growing demand for aged care.[7]

Increasing the supply of community and social housing is a priority, with over 800 properties managed by providers such as the South Australian Housing Trust, Housing Choices South Australia and UnitingSA.

Well-located housing designed to meet the changing needs of the communities will also assist with feelings of loneliness and isolation by fostering environments that encourage social interaction, accessibility, and a sense of belonging.

Key worker housing

To further support the region's housing needs, the Office for Regional Housing is delivering projects under the Regional Key Worker Housing Scheme. This initiative aims to provide suitable housing for government workers such as police officers, teachers, and healthcare professionals.

Office for Regional Housing – Regional Key Worker Housing Scheme

To support essential services, the Regional Key Worker Housing Scheme facilitates the development of new key worker rental housing, including in Port Augusta.

The Office for Regional Housing will, where possible, help to facilitate housing projects identified by local governments, regional employers, the development industry and other peak bodies that provide strategic affordable and key worker housing for police, teachers, and health professionals. This will help to retain critical workers in regional communities.

Learn more about the Office for Regional Housing.

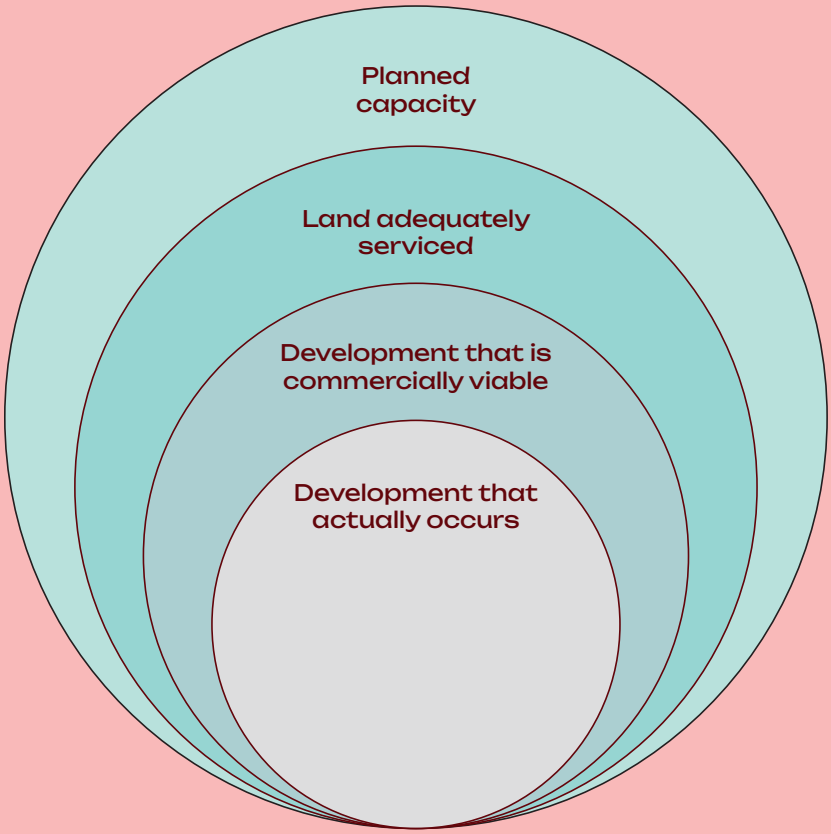
Identifying enough land for the dwellings we need

The Plan aims to identify enough land across the region to meet projected housing demand in each local government area. This assessment accounts for a range of factors that influence the delivery of housing to market, including zoning, infrastructure capacity, and development readiness. However, the process of bringing land to market is complex and influenced by considerations beyond the planning system – such as landowner intentions, construction costs, and broader economic conditions.

Not all land identified for growth will be developed. A significant portion may be constrained by servicing limitations, environmental factors, or lack of market interest. As a result, the volume of land that is actually developed is often substantially lower than the theoretical supply, as articulated the figure below.

Factors Influencing Development Outcomes

Source: The Auckland Plan, Quantify Strategic Insights



Coordinated infrastructure planning and flexible policy settings allows us to respond to changing conditions and support housing delivery where it is most needed.

Housing supply and diversity

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Provide an adequate supply of development-ready and zoned land that can accommodate housing and employment growth over a 30-year period.
2. Investigate new rural development typologies and infrastructure solutions including off-grid rural neighbourhoods to deliver more housing supply in rural communities.
3. Concentrate development within identified townships and settlements to coordinate housing growth with infrastructure.
4. Support the needs of a diverse range of people with more opportunities for well-located and well-designed housing.
5. Monitor land supply and demographic trends to ensure sufficient land is available to support a growing population.
6. Support adaptive re-use of existing buildings for new housing, including commercial, industrial and heritage places.
7. Support the provision of worker's accommodation in locations close to employment.

Meeting housing demand is vital for the region's prosperity and liveability. It is a key priority for local and state governments, underpinning efforts to attract and retain a strong workforce and support thriving communities.

Source: Isaac Forman

The Housing Roadmap

The *Housing Roadmap* introduces a series of measures, including the largest ever land release, the abolition of stamp duty on new homes, enhanced rights for renters, expanded workforce training, faster home construction, significant infrastructure investment, and an increase in public housing. In alignment with the state government's Housing Roadmap, the Plan prioritises opportunities to enhance housing diversity, availability, accessibility, and affordability in the region.

The *Housing Roadmap* recognises the needs and preferences of different household types, life stages and lifestyle choices, including the unique needs and additional housing barriers faced by Aboriginal people.

Learn more about the Housing Roadmap.

A diversity of housing supply, supported by physical and social infrastructure such as education and childcare facilities and quality health services, will help meet the needs of future residents.

Improving housing security for older women

It is recognised that older single women are at greater risk of housing insecurity than those who are partnered or living in multiple income households. The government's *Improving Housing Security for Older Women Recommendation Report, South Australia's Plan for Ageing Well 2020–2025* and the *State Disability Inclusion Plan* aligns three broad themes with respect to housing needs:

- Accessible supports that make existing homes more flexible to people's changing needs and wants over time.
- Models and options for creating homes that suit a greater diversity of needs and aspirations.
- Affordable and accessible homes.

Population growth in the Far North Region will be mostly concentrated in Port Augusta, with limited growth anticipated in Coober Pedy. Port Augusta has sufficient appropriately zoned land to accommodate projected growth over the next 15 years, particularly in areas east of the CBD, Port Augusta West, and Stirling North.

Although population growth is not currently forecast for all townships, locations such as Hawker and Quorn may require zoning changes to support demand for land in each township. In Hawker's case, its role as a gateway to the southern Ikara-Flinders Ranges and the presence of the Hawker Memorial Hospital, may contribute to unanticipated demand. This forward-looking approach ensures that key townships are well positioned to respond to emerging opportunities or shifts in population and service needs.

Providing greater housing choice, both in typology and tenure, can help attract construction workers as well as key workers, seasonal workers and young families to the region. This also supports changing demographics, particularly the ageing population who are looking for housing options that enable downsizing, ageing in place or are seeking a 'sea or tree change'.

Rural living and off-grid rural neighbourhoods

Rural living development presents challenges from an environmental, social and economic perspective. While often appealing from a lifestyle perspective, these kinds of development require greater cost and challenges in providing infrastructure. Land use conflicts and unsustainable locality patterns mean that historically, local governments have had a cautious approach.

Allowing development in rural areas can also limit growth of urban areas, it can fragment primary production land and use infrastructure inefficiently. This is a legitimate concern in Regional Cities and higher growth localities where denser urban development and conventional infrastructure approaches are warranted.

However, in the context of the current housing crisis, high cost of infrastructure provision, and ongoing engagement with regional councils, rural living or off-grid rural neighbourhoods may offer a legitimate and locally appropriate housing option, particularly where infrastructure limitations (like higher augmentation costs, high labour costs, low volume) make conventional housing development less feasible.

New rural living and off-grid rural neighbourhoods

Understanding demand, current township land supply and rural living land supply, is critical when considering new proposals. It is also important to ensure townships can accommodate long-term growth and this is not jeopardised by rural living development at its edges.

Ideally, planning should provide for multiple growth fronts that do not rely on one landowner bringing land to market (i.e. not rely on landowner intentions). The impact on high-value primary production land is also a key consideration as rural living development has the potential to take viable agricultural land offline or create interface issues with primary production.

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that in locations where there is high demand for lifestyle blocks and where no rural living land is available, that high-value primary production or horticultural land (such as vineyards) is being purchased and is no longer used for productive purposes.

All forms of housing and development require infrastructure provision, however the service levels for rural living development are lower than traditional residential estates and evolving technologies will continue to make off-grid or decentralised solutions more viable.

Typically, the local road network is either graded or spray sealed and only above-ground stormwater systems are provided. Solar and battery technologies mean that off-grid solutions may be viable, and on-site waste systems (including solutions that prevent wastewater entering surface or ground water in sensitive areas) are also viable.

Water tanks, access to bore water and/or buying water provide alternative approaches to water use. This does present risks if water runs out, particularly as result of our changing climate, and these risks vary based on location and environmental conditions.

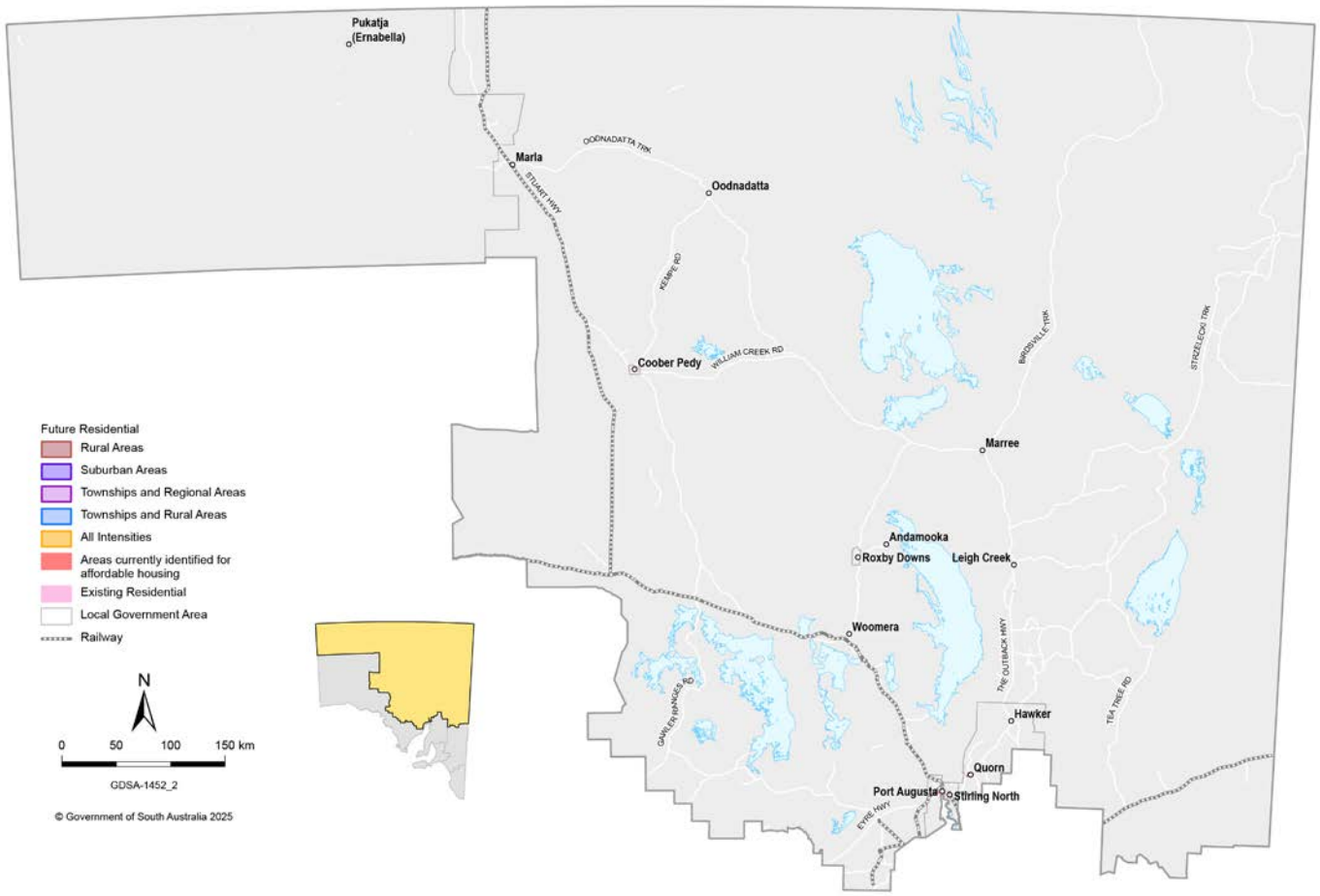
Source: Elise Cook

The establishment of new rural living or rural neighbourhoods should consider:

- Impact of future township expansion and ensuring there are long-term urban growth options for townships or localities (particularly higher-order localities such as Regional Cities or Supporting Service Centres).
- Utilisation of existing land supply (both within township and existing rural living land supply) have been investigated, and the logical expansion of existing rural living or rural neighbourhood have been explored.
- Avoiding environmentally sensitive areas (such as coastline and native vegetation), impact on valued landscapes and highly productive agricultural land or compromise rural activities or economic assets.
- Appropriate management of hazard risks such as bushfire.
- Evaluating the impact and demand on community infrastructure, such as the impact of locating new estates and localities away from township and resources to service in relation to waste and resource recovery, community services, firefighting equipment, etc.
- The cost and benefits of delivering and maintaining infrastructure on community and landowners, to ensure the upfront and ongoing costs to community and homeowners is not an unreasonable burden (through maintenance costs, rates, taxes and other charges).
- Feasibility, costs and benefits of alternative and decentralised infrastructure solutions for the provision of basic infrastructure such as power, water and wastewater.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Workers Accommodation	Investigate amendments to the Planning and Design Code to facilitate workers accommodation in regional areas that meet the housing needs of short-term and permanent long-distance commuter workers associated with key local industries.	2028	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide
Infill Investigation Areas - Port Augusta	Investigate and identify where minimum residential allotment size and maximum building height Technical and Numeric Variations could be amended within existing built up neighbourhoods in Port Augusta to encourage a diverse range of infill housing options.	12/2025 - 12/2030	Port Augusta City Council	Port Augusta



Housing supply and diversity

Township land supply

Regional City:

Port Augusta

Recent housing activity	
Average annual dwellings built 2015-24	23.3
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	219
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	288
Undeveloped zoned	3,588
Zoned total	4,095
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	18
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	12
Undeveloped zoned	3,002
Zoned total	3,032
Future residential land supply (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	4
Rural living	-

Major Service Centres:

Coober Pedy

Recent housing activity	
Average annual dwellings built 2015-24	0.6
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	183
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	1,565
Zoned total	1,748
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	-
Zoned total	-
Future residential land supply (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	623
Rural living	-

Roxby Downs	
Recent housing activity	
Average annual dwellings built 2015-24	0.2
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	9
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	721
Zoned total	730
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	-
Zoned total	-
Future residential land supply (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	621
Rural living	-

Quorn	
Recent housing activity	
Average annual dwellings built 2015-24	1.2
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	86
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	168
Zoned total	254
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	46
Zoned total	46
Future residential land supply (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	331
Rural living	27

Supporting Service Centres:

Hawker

Recent housing activity	
Average annual dwellings built 2015-24	0.4
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	19
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	3
Zoned total	22
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	-
Zoned total	-
Future residential land supply (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	101
Rural living	22

Leigh Creek	
Recent housing activity	
Average annual dwellings built 2015-24	0
Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	18
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	-
Zoned total	18
Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)	
Vacant	-
Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions)	-
Undeveloped zoned	-
Zoned total	-
Future residential land supply (allotments)	
Neighbourhood and township	-
Rural living	-

Aboriginal cultural heritage and values

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage and areas of significance for the benefit of current and future generations.

2. Engage with Aboriginal people early and on an ongoing basis in land use planning processes about Country.

3. Recognise and value traditional knowledge in promoting sustainability, resilience, and healthier communities.

4. Investigate ways to ensure that Aboriginal groups perspectives, values, cultural information and intellectual property is respected and protected in planning processes.

South Australia's cultural heritage reflects the diversity, unique features and key moments in our state's history. It contributes to our community's understanding of its sense of place and identity. The enduring, living, spiritual and cultural connection to the land by South Australia's First Peoples is recognised and acknowledged as a vital part of our shared heritage.

Aboriginal people followed a complex system of land management and the reciprocal relationship between people and land underpinned all aspects of life. Aboriginal cultural sites and areas of significance must be recognised and protected, to provide present and future generations with a sense of identity and connection to Country.

The government has committed to a state-based implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This began with the implementation of a First Nations Voice to the South Australian Parliament. This commitment provides an opportunity to embed Aboriginal voices and cultural knowledge in the planning system through deeper engagement and partnership.

First Nations Voice to Parliament

South Australia's First Nations Voice is a representative, legislatively created elected body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the state.

The Voice is made up of two levels – six Local First Nations Voices and a State Voice.

Through the Voice, First Nations people can have their say at the highest levels of decision-making in South Australia on matters, policies and laws that affect them.

The First Nations Voice to Parliament is supported by the First Nations Voice Secretariat, located within the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation division of the Attorney-General's Department.

Learn more about the First Nations Voice.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* protects all Aboriginal sites, objects and remains from excavation, damage, disturbance, or interference unless authorised or approved by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs under the Act. A person or entity with an interest in developing their land is strongly encouraged to first talk about their plans directly with Aboriginal people, either through Recognised Aboriginal Representative Bodies or relevant native title organisations and/or any relevant Aboriginal organisation for the area to understand potential impacts and avoid harm.

Early engagement helps identify risks to Aboriginal heritage before plans are finalised, allowing for changes that avoid or appropriately manage impacts. It also builds relationships and creates pathways for knowledge sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The central archives provide an indicative location of known Aboriginal heritage and contact details for Traditional Owner groups within a search area. Where impacts to Aboriginal heritage are unavoidable, authorisation or approval must be sought.

The *Community Engagement Charter* (Charter) guides public participation in planning processes, including rezoning proposals. Recent updates to the Charter emphasise inclusive and respectful engagement with Aboriginal people. Future guidance should ensure that all entities – including state agencies, private proponents and local governments – undertake culturally sensitive engagement when proposing changes to planning instruments.

Where there is higher risk of impacting culturally significant sites and disturbing Aboriginal heritage, upfront cultural heritage surveys should be conducted with Aboriginal people to inform Code amendment proposals or impact-assessed development applications.

Aboriginal sites and objects

Certain landscape features are more likely to be Aboriginal sites and/or contain evidence of Aboriginal occupation. These landscape features pose a higher risk for the discovery of Aboriginal sites and objects. Examples of some landscape features and the type of Aboriginal sites that they are often associated with are provided below:

- Clay pans, lakes, rivers and estuaries may contain stone artefact scatters, shell middens, rock art, campsites and stone arrangements.
- Rocky outcrops may contain quarries, rock art, rock holes, stone arrangements, ceremonial sites and stone artefact scatters.
- Dunes and sand hills may include stone artefact scatters, campsites and burials.
- Craters and sink holes are often cultural sites.
- Areas close to the coast may include campsites, stone artefact scatters, shell middens and burials.
- Areas close to creeks, rivers, watercourses, lakes, waterholes, rock holes, wells and springs.
- Areas which have been less developed, including parks, open land or road verges, may still contain artefact scatters or subsurface archaeological material such as burials and earth ovens.

Places bearing Aboriginal names, or place names which are English translations of Aboriginal names, or indications of Aboriginal interaction with the landscape may indicate previous Aboriginal connection to that location and may have significance to Aboriginal people.

Predictive cultural mapping to identify areas of higher risk will be investigated with Aboriginal people for incorporation into regional plans.

Information about known Aboriginal heritage within an area and Aboriginal heritage groups who should be consulted can be obtained through undertaking a search of the central archives. This will provide an indicative location of known Aboriginal heritage and contact details for Traditional Owner groups for the search area.

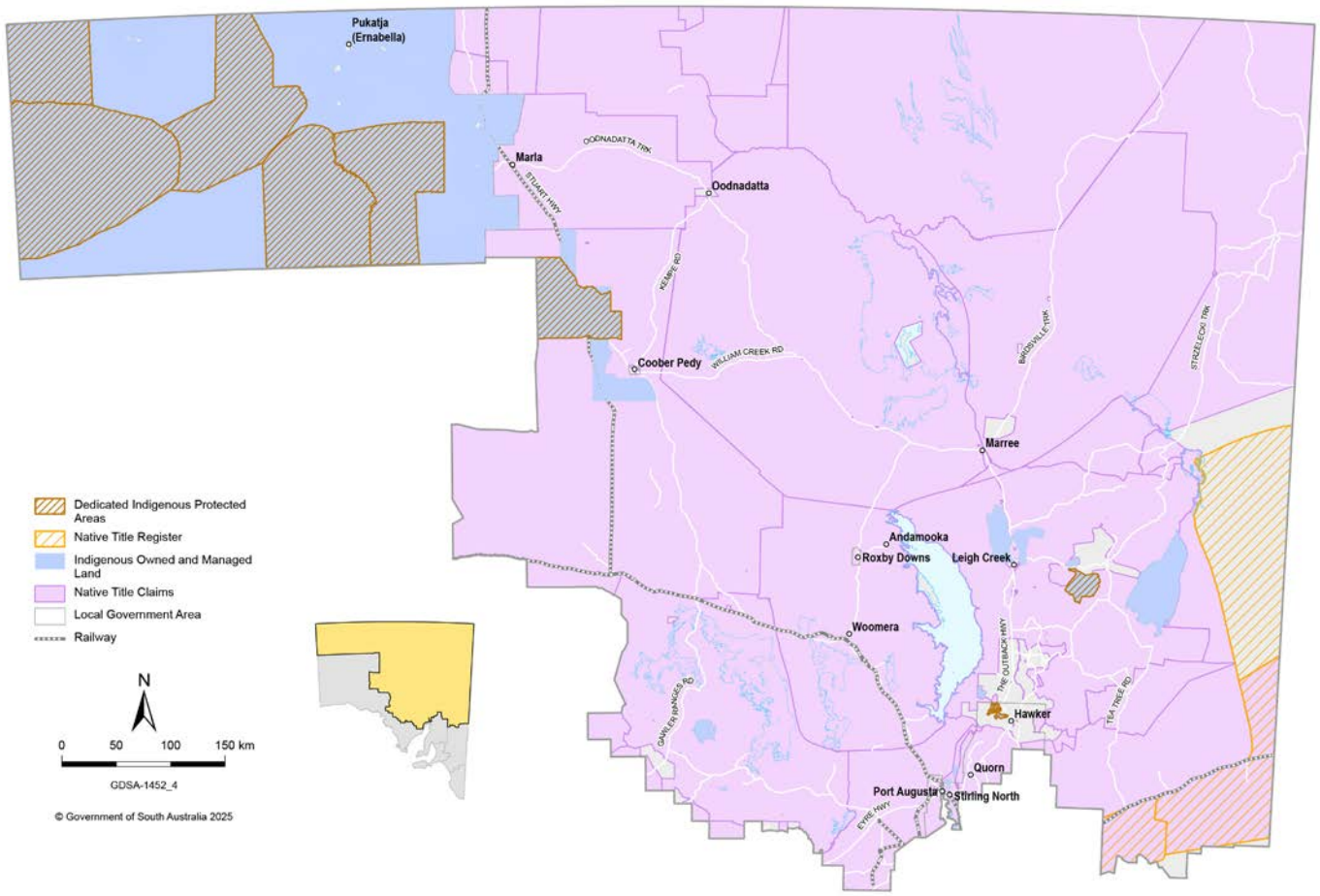
Request for searches can be made at taawika.sa.gov.au.

Partnering with Aboriginal communities and applying appropriate principles in the structure planning and rezoning phases can help to create unique and responsive developments. Reading Country with Aboriginal people will help to uncover the prominent parts of the cultural landscape that should be protected and embedded into the spatial planning. This might inform development orientation, open space network, road typologies, active transport network, density allocation and areas for protection.

Engaging with Aboriginal representatives to consider how cultural information and interests should be incorporated into planning processes will be critical. This will ensure that Aboriginal groups cultural information, values and intellectual property is respected and protected throughout planning processes, including working with representatives on cultural mapping.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Cultural Mapping	Amend the Plan to incorporate cultural mapping to identify potential significant landscapes and other culturally significant areas in conjunction with First Nations representatives.	2028	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide
Aboriginal Engagement	Prepare a guideline in collaboration with First Nations representatives to assist proponents of Code amendments with the sensitive and respectful engagement of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal peoples and update the Code Amendment Toolkit.	2027	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide
Planning with Country	Develop Planning with Country guidelines that support the integration of Aboriginal knowledge in structure planning and rezoning proposals.	2028	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values

State and local heritage

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Support a legislative framework for heritage that provides consistency, clear governance responsibilities, supports expert advice in the decision-making process, enables transparency and accountability, and facilitates community engagement at the right time.

2. Maintain a comprehensive register of heritage places and areas with appropriate heritage protections.

3. Promote the use of the South Australian Heritage Register, Statements of Significance, conservation management plans, Heritage Standards and guidelines that assist applicants and communities in understanding the values of heritage places and areas.

4. Promote the adaptive re-use of buildings that enhance areas of cultural or heritage value, capitalise on existing investment and/or contribute to vibrant and liveable places.

5. Unlock creative design solutions, and land use outcomes by providing flexible planning policies that enable the adaptive re-use of heritage places.

6. Promote the heritage values of National, State and Local heritage listed places.

7. Protect the local historical attributes and themes that are important to local communities through council-led identification and listing of Local Heritage Places.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

The Far North's State and Local Heritage Places reflect the region's rich and diverse history, contributing to a strong sense of place and regional identity. Their conservation and protection should be central to planning policy, ensuring these assets are preserved for future generations.

In South Australia, the *Heritage Places Act 1993* recognises and protects the heritage values of specific buildings and areas across the state. These places may include buildings or areas that represent a range of heritage values significant to all South Australians.

In the Far North, two State Heritage Areas are recognised:

- Arckaringa Hills, known as the Painted Desert, is located north of Coober Pedy and noted for its geological significance; and
- Innamincka/Cooper Creek along the Strzelecki Track, valued for its natural beauty and historical association with the Burke and Wills expedition.

Coober Pedy, Andamooka, Beltana and Blinman are also unique heritage-rich towns. They contain historic buildings and structures that tell the story of overland transport, mining, and pastoral industries in outback Australia. Oodnadatta, Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks, and the Ikara-Flinders Ranges also feature non-Aboriginal items of historical significance. Within the Planning and Design Code (the Code), listed buildings and areas of State Heritage significance are covered by the State Heritage Place Overlay and the State Heritage Area Overlay, respectively.

Flinders Ranges UNESCO World Heritage bid

The Flinders Ranges World Heritage bid is seeking to gain UNESCO World Heritage Status for the extraordinary fossils and geology, which display the history of our planet and the evolution of life on Earth.

In April 2021, a significant milestone was achieved, with UNESCO accepting Australia's inclusion of the Flinders Ranges on its *World Heritage Tentative List*. This was an exciting and significant first step in pursuing World Heritage Listing, expressing Australia's commitment to nominate in the future.

The nomination highlights the region's exceptional fossils and geology, particularly the Ediacaran fossils which are the oldest known evidence of animal life. The bid also emphasizes the strong connection between the Adnyamathanha people, the Traditional Owners, and the Land.

Source: Department for Environment and Water - Nomination status

Local heritage is protected through the PDI Act and are covered by the Local Heritage Place Overlay in the Code. The government is considering transitioning Local heritage protections to the *Heritage Places Act 1993,* to consolidate all heritage protections under a single legislative framework. This reform will require comprehensive legislative and policy updates. Careful management of these sites brings history to life, fosters identity, and distinguishes the region within the national context.

Adaptive re-use

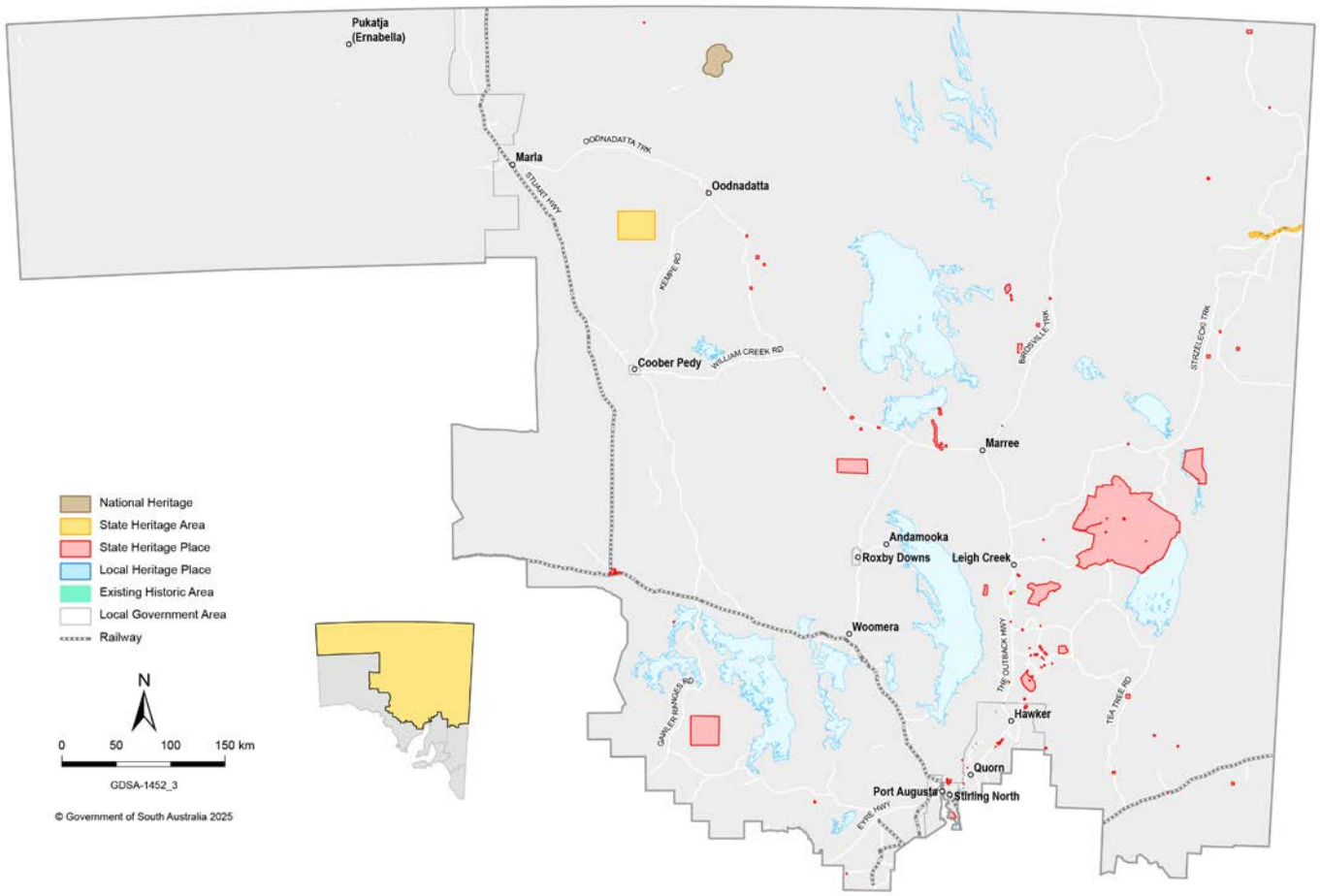
Opportunities exist across the Far North for respectful adaptive re-use of heritage places.

Adaptive re-use is the process of repurposing existing underutilised buildings and structures for new and ongoing functions. Providing flexible policies to allow the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings has a range of social, environmental and economic benefits.

It is recognised that adaptive re-use of underutilised heritage buildings or the restoration of streetscape facades is an important part of retaining and maintaining heritage in South Australia. It can play a major role in revitalising key precincts that reflect our cultural values and reinforce a sense of place.

Adapting older heritage buildings can bring challenges that stem from the building code requirements, as some buildings require upgrades to adhere to modern safety and accessibility provisions, and renovations to suit evolving business needs.[8]

The current planning system has made significant progress in supporting the adaptive re-use of existing buildings through recent amendments to building standards, as well as policy improvements and incentives through the Code, however, it is acknowledged there is scope to better assist and enable this form of redevelopment.



National, state and local heritage

Landscape and township character

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Recognise the unique character of areas by identifying their valued physical attributes in consultation with communities.

2. Maintain or enhance the scenic amenity of important natural coastal landscapes, views and vistas.

3. Investigate sensitive design approaches for infill and new development in established townships, focused on retrofitting original housing, retaining and enhancing streetscape amenity and tree canopy cover and natural values.

4. Provide additional housing opportunities ensuring that design is sensitive to, recognises and complements the important characteristics of a place.

5. Provide an equitable and diverse range of high-quality green public open spaces including recreational and sporting facilities for the community.

6. Maintain separation between townships and localities to safeguard rural character and maintain and strengthen unique township identity.

Source: Tyrone Ormsby

The character of an area contributes to a community's sense of identity.

All places have character, although the value placed on this character may vary. The concept of character can be applied to both natural landscapes and built environments, and the character of local areas is generally protected through policies within the Code. Future development should reflect the unique character and identity of townships, preserving valued built and natural qualities.

Heritage and character have different meanings and applications. Heritage refers to the historical and cultural significance of a building or place. Character describes the look and feel of a place and the relationship between built form, vegetation, topography and other features.

Protecting character does not mean preventing development. It is about ensuring that design is sensitive to the valued characteristics of a place. Protecting heritage sites and adapting buildings for reuse can also strengthen sense of place, character and connection to the local environment. Contemporary approaches to design which consider environmental challenges are also important.

Landscape character

Scenic rural and natural landscapes surround many townships in the region, contributing significantly to local identity and supporting the visitor economy. These high-quality landscapes are often protected through a combination of legislative and planning policy mechanisms. However, there is opportunity to enhance their recognition and protection through more deliberate spatial planning. By identifying and mapping these valued landscapes within the planning framework, councils and communities can better guide development, preserve visual amenity, and unlock tourism and cultural interpretation opportunities that celebrate the region's unique character.

Neighbourhood character

Neighbourhood character refers to the look and feel of a place, shaped by built form, vegetation, topography, and other features. It differs from heritage, which is embodied in the physical fabric and setting of a place. Protecting character involves ensuring new development is sensitive to and complements the defining features of the area.

Master plans and public realm investment

Several master plans have been undertaken across the region, which employ strategies to enhance urban form and public realm.

Master plans are encouraged to guide where and how development should occur. They provide a clear vision, support investment certainty and enhance character and placemaking in key precincts such as town centres, foreshores or parklands. Master plans also seek to reintroduce vegetation into the township landscape enhancing amenity and assisting in combating climate change.

Examples of master plans and public realm initiatives in the Far North include:

Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan

The Port Augusta City Council in conjunction with the Department for Housing and Urban Development are developing the *Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan* which will deliver a vision for the CBD and focus land use planning and investment in key areas such as the foreshore, activity centres and recreational precincts. This investment into the public realm will lead to increased accessibility and walkability in the township, addressing pedestrian and vehicle conflict and improving safety and overall amenity. This in turn supports vibrancy and boosts confidence in the local business community.

Flinders Ranges Streetscapes Masterplan

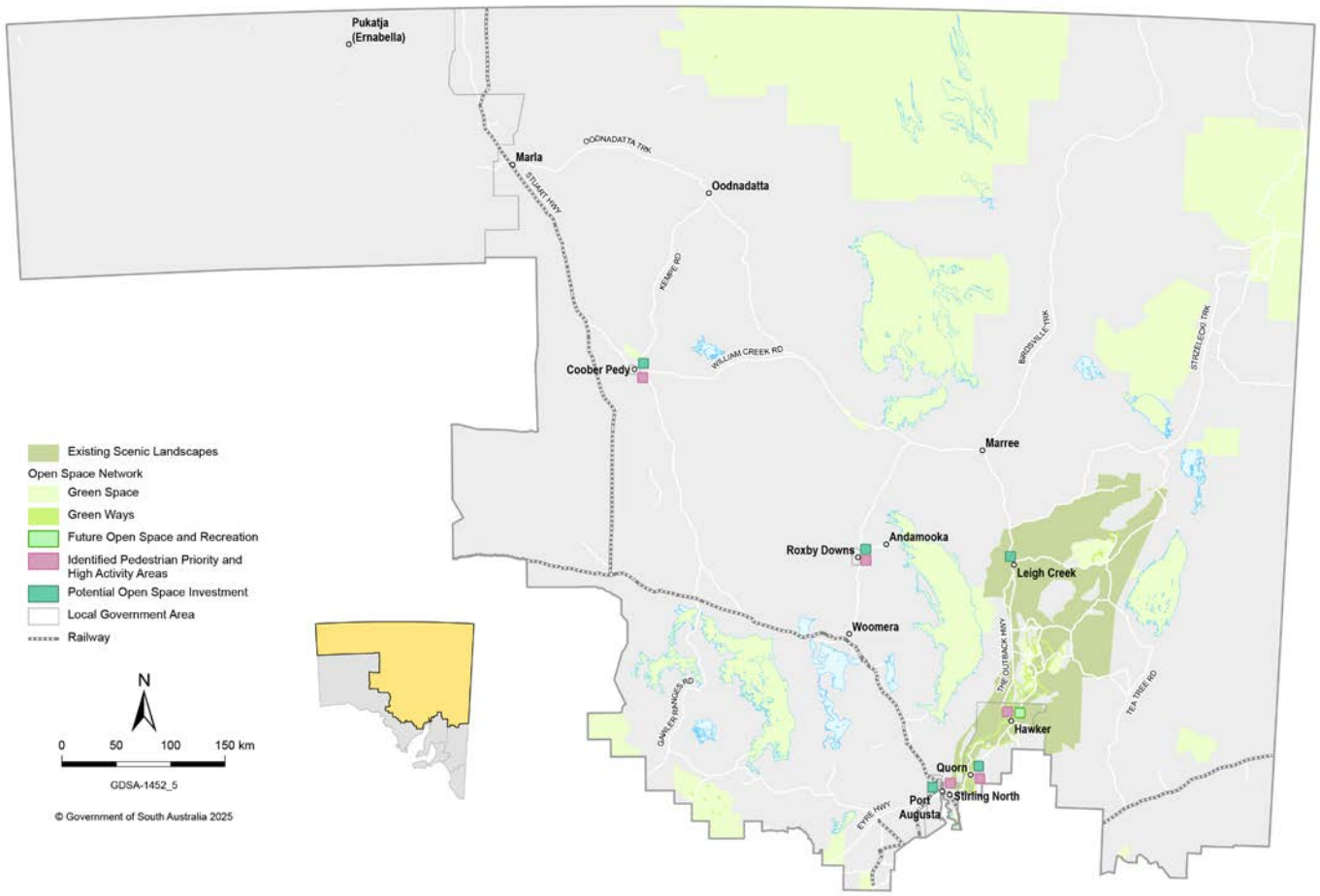
The master plans for Quorn, Hawker and Cradock are planning and design frameworks that describes a vision for the townships and provides a guide for future development over time. The master plan retains the distinctive character of the townships as individual entities, whilst proposing new ideas and improvements that contribute to the attractiveness and function of the towns and the greater Flinders Ranges region.

Quorn Silo Light Show

The Quorn Silo Light Show is an automated display featuring animated stories about the region co-created with regional artists and animators, along with photographs and artwork contributed by community members of the Flinders Ranges. The light show projects every night from sunset and the show, in two parts, lasts over three hours.

Public realm improvement initiatives being advanced in Quorn and Hawker demonstrate the benefit of community participation in public realm planning. This work helps to identify pedestrian priority areas within established town centres, activity hubs, and foreshore precincts. Public realm improvement efforts are aimed at enhancing pedestrian safety, stimulating local economic investment, and activating key civic spaces.

An enhanced emphasis on tree planting and green infrastructure initiatives across the region will also deliver benefits to local communities. In addition to promoting biodiversity, these efforts will contribute to a cooler, healthier environment and offer valuable recreational spaces. The presence of green infrastructure enhances the amenity and aesthetic appeal of towns, fostering a greater sense of wellbeing and community pride. Furthermore, it will help to mitigate the impacts of climate change and support more resilient, sustainable development.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Leigh Creek
Woomera
THE OUTBACK HWY
TEA TREE RD
GAWLER RANGES RD
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Productive economy

Theme:

Outcome 2: A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future

The Far North Region contributes approximately $5.4 billion (3.8%) of South Australia's Gross Regional Product (GRP). Mining, healthcare and social assistance and education and training are the largest employment sectors in the region, generating the highest per capita GRP than any of the other South Australian country regions.[9]

The government is committed to developing a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy which is tailored for the future, ensuring a high standard of living for all South Australians. This forms the basis of the *South Australian Economic Statement* (Economic Statement).[10]

Supportive planning policies, investment in infrastructure, expansion of local training opportunities and attraction of skilled labour will all be critical to realise Far North's economic potential.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

Top 3 employing industries

1. Mining (33%)
2. Construction (11%)
3. Healthcare and social assistance (8%)

Source: ABS, 2021

Economic drivers

Mining and construction are the backbone of the region's economy. Mining is the largest employment sector in the region, supporting over 6,000 jobs.[11] Over 20% of these jobs are based in Roxby Downs and associated with the Olympic Dam mine, which contains one of the world's most significant deposits of copper, gold, silver and uranium. The largest age group of workers in the region is between 25- to 34-years old, and most of this work force is part of the 'fly-in-fly-out' sector.

The **resource sector** also plays a significant role in the state's economy, with strong market demand for minerals coming from the north of the region. Some of these projects account for the largest mineral exploration programs ever undertaken in the state and are at the forefront of supporting the sustainable exploration and delivery of high-grade copper to Australia and the world. It is essential these key resource sites remain protected from incompatible development.

The burgeoning renewable energy sector is a key contributor to the region's economic profile. The sector is well facilitated through the abundance of open space, sunshine and ambient wind levels across the region. Advances in clean energy generation technologies within the region, such as wind-solar hybrid networks and innovative sustainable green industry, are globally recognised.

The **tourism and visitor economy** in the Far North's outback and Ikara-Flinders Ranges, provides significant employment opportunities as well as rural business diversification and value-adding, in the form of farm stays, eco-tourism and unique visitor experiences. Balancing the economic benefits of tourism with environmental protection and respect for the natural landscapes and sites of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual significance is critical.

Defence and aerospace facilities are strategically important to the state, being one of the largest employers in the country. The Far North Region is enhanced by the defence economy, expanding and investing in facilities around Woomera and Cultana.

Woomera Prohibited Area and Cultana Training Area

The Woomera Prohibited Area, including the Woomera Range Complex (WRC) which incorporates the RAAF Base Woomera and the Woomera Test Range, are unique and highly specialised key national assets critical for the development, test and evaluation of advanced defence capabilities. The National Defence Strategy directs defence to pursue accelerated capability development and the acquisition of advanced weapons systems. Defence test and evaluation demand for the WRC will substantially increase over the next decade as the advanced capabilities begin to come online.

The Cultana Training Area (CUTA), located in both the Far North and Eyre and Western Planning Regions, provides year-round large scale training activities. The recent expansion of the area and continued investment allows the Australian Defence Force to raise, train and sustain the land force and prepare for operational service through lifelike training activities reflecting current and expected future operational environments. Defence is also planning future investment in guided weapons and explosive ordnance storage facilities at CUTA.

Source: Department of Defence

Continued growth is expected in the healthcare and social services sector, especially non-essential medical and social assistance, as the region's ageing population will require increasing care from specialised health professionals. However, this growth is dependent on the region's ability to retain and attract the required healthcare workers.

Investment opportunities lie in areas of innovative technology, particularly in agricultural production. For example, greenhouses which use leading technologies such as solar thermal energy and solar seawater desalination to grow food. Premium organic livestock production offers strong investment potential as demand for animal protein continues to grow internationally.

Future workforce

For any sector to succeed, it needs a skilled, reliable, and supported workforce. Many jobs in the Far North's key sectors of mining, mineral extraction, renewable energy and defence, will require post-school qualifications as a minimum. Additional training opportunities must be created to address skill gaps, sustain growth and meet future workforce demands.

The Port Augusta Technical College, which opened in August 2025, provides students with direct pathways to jobs such as electricians, engineers, boilermakers and gas fitters.

The $21 million Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) health and research centre, also to be constructed in Port Augusta, will help to attract a health workforce for the Far North, including doctors specialising in remote healthcare delivery.[12] Once built, the centre will support up to 25,000 patient consultations every year.

Upper Spencer Gulf

The Upper Spencer Gulf is a significant contributor to South Australia's economic prosperity and key to the state's efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Boasting world-class wind and solar resources, along with abundant deposits of copper, magnetite, and other critical minerals vital for industrial decarbonisation, the region is a key focus for investment in Australia's sustainable future.

By becoming a central hub for sustainable industries, the Upper Spencer Gulf will help South Australia's transition to a cleaner, more innovative, liveable and diverse economy.

Key to this is the state's first *Upper Spencer Gulf Workforce Strategy*, developed with input from industry, local communities and stakeholders, aims to ensure career opportunities from traditional and emerging industries are accessible to all.

Supporting the people that live in the region, the Strategy brings together investments in education, skills and training, such as fee free TAFE, the Port Augusta Technical College and Port Augusta Regional Skills Centre, and outlines a framework to achieve strategic outcomes.

Learn more about the Strategy here.

Employment lands

Long-term strategic objectives

1. **Protect and expand well-serviced and strategically located employment land to support economic growth and productivity.**

2. **Support the growth of local employment precincts through strategic planning, policy and investment.**

The planning system plays a critical role in supporting the ambitions of the *South Australian Economic Statement* by ensuring enough land is available to accommodate current and future industries, and that it is in the right location and serviced by infrastructure.

Attracting and retaining a skilled, educated workforce is essential for driving economic growth in the region. To support both industry and employment, there must be a readily available supply of employment land, equipped with appropriate infrastructure. This is critical for enabling local job opportunities and accommodating a growing population.

Source: Flinders Power

Well-connected employment lands linked to freight corridors, telecommunications, and essential infrastructure are critical to regional growth and population sustainability. To maximise their value, they must be integrated with local industries, protected from residential encroachment, and able to expand as needed.

Broad industry categories (BICs) have been created as a way of identifying an industrial employment precinct's strategic purpose and infrastructure needs, which then dictates the role and responsibility for network planning and delivery.

Employment land supply and demand

The Far North Region comprises over 5,108 hectares of employment land, which for the most part is evenly distributed across the region's local government areas. However, a significant portion of this land is currently used for primary production purposes, and as a result is mostly void of significant site improvements.

Port Augusta will continue to be the region's primary employment precinct, with Port Paterson playing a supporting role in future employment growth, particularly for the Port Playford export facility.

Northern Water project

The Northern Water project would provide a sustainable, secure and reliable climate-resilient water supply for the Far North Planning Region and the eastern areas of the Eyre Peninsula. This project, contingent on gaining approvals and a final investment decision, will generate employment during its construction phases. The future supply of water will support growth in the energy, mining, pastoral, and supply chain sectors, leading to job creation and a more diverse regional economy.

State significant employment precincts

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Identify, maintain, support and protect state significant operations from encroachment by incompatible and/or more sensitive land uses to ensure their long-term and uninhibited operation.

2. Support and grow employment land precincts through strategic planning, additional policy and investment identification.

Protecting existing traditional industrial, freight and logistics employment precincts is crucial to preserve their contribution to regional job opportunities and economic prosperity. Precincts that support these activities and align with state economic policy are to be designated as State Significant Industrial Employment Precincts (SSIEP).

SSIEPs are precincts of (actual or potential) scale, where current and future activities are strongly linked to the strategic and economic objectives of the state. They accommodate a critical mass of economic activity and employment. For example, SSIEPs:

- Align with transport and trade networks.
- Present opportunities for the growth of knowledge precincts.
- Are of a scale that can accommodate many workers and support a significant share of the state's economic activity.

Planning policies in the Planning and Design Code can protect SSIEPs from incompatible development through the application of the Strategic Employment Zone (or similar) and the Significant Interface Management Overlay.

A key example is Port Playford in Port Augusta, which has been identified as a SSIEP, as it plays a critical role in the handling and transportation of over 5 million tonnes of iron ore from across South Australia to export markets around the globe.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission


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THE OUTBACK HWY
GAWLER RANGES RD
Hawker
TEA TREE RD
Quorn
Port Augusta
Stirling North
EYRE HWY
State Significant Industrial Employment Precinct
Future Employment
Rural Areas
Suburban Areas
Townships and Regional Areas
Suburban Areas and Township and Regional Areas
Townships and Rural Areas
Existing Major Transport Routes
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Activity centres and retail

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Maintain a township hierarchy that encourages investment in activity and township centres that aligns with the role, function and form of each township.

2. Enable activity and township centres to support access to local employment, diverse and affordable housing, essential services, and amenities, tailored to the scale and character of each township.

3. Promote strategic investment in activity and township centres across the region to ensure equitable access to economic, employment, and business opportunities, particularly in smaller and remote communities.

4. Strengthen connectivity between consumers, workers, and businesses within and between townships, supporting a productive and resilient regional settlement pattern.

5. Optimise the distribution of retail and service businesses through a well-planned network of activity and township centres that enhances liveability, convenience, and choice for regional populations.

6. Foster social cohesion and community identity by positioning activity and township centres as focal points for civic life, cultural exchange, and social interaction.

7. Design and enhance activity and township centres to promote healthier and more sustainable communities, reducing the need for long-distance travel and encouraging active transport options where feasible.

Activity and township centres in regional and country areas shape the form and function of townships, acting as hubs for civic, social, and economic life. They provide convenient access to shopping, administrative, cultural, entertainment, and essential services, often within a single trip. The scale and mix of activities vary according to the township hierarchy, ensuring that each centre reflects the needs and aspirations of its community.

Encouraging investment that aligns with the township's designated role and function – whether as a Regional City, Major Service Centre, or Supporting Service Centre – helps ensure that growth is appropriately scaled, economically viable, and responsive to local context. This approach supports the delivery of infrastructure and services that match community expectations and regional development goals.

Local activity and township centre planning

Across the region, local and township centres must evolve in response to changing retail and service demands. In growing townships, this may involve the development of new commercial floor space. In slower-growing or transitioning communities, the focus may shift toward adapting existing spaces to meet evolving consumer preferences – or even consolidating retail footprints to better align with local needs.

Local governments, with their deep understanding of community dynamics and responsibility for local infrastructure planning, are best positioned to lead this strategic response. Empowering councils to guide activity centre planning ensures that decisions are locally informed and responsive. This approach supports investment that is not only economically viable but also socially and spatially appropriate.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

Tourism and events

Long-term strategic objectives

1. **Co-locate new tourism development with complementary uses and supporting infrastructure.**

2. **Support expansion of unique visitor experiences, including nature-based activities where impacts on agricultural productivity, the environment and scenic amenity can be successfully managed.**

The tourism industry is an important contributor to the state's economic activity, generating jobs and export dollars by attracting interstate and international visitors. With high visitation numbers, the industry is flourishing. The government is committed to growing the state's visitor economy to $12.8 billion by 2023 and increasing South Australia's appeal as an Australian tourism destination from 6th to 3rd.[13]

The *South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030* highlights the economic benefits of tourism and events through its links to employment across the hospitality, retail, transport and construction sectors. By facilitating growth in tourism activity and supporting appropriately designed and located tourism facilities in our planning system, this enables the diversification of small and medium enterprises and assists in the preservation of our valuable environment and food production areas.

The Far North has a significant tourism industry, underpinned by the remote outback and Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Cradled by ancient mountain ranges on the edge of the desert, Wilpena Pound is considered the crowning jewel of the Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Kati-Thanda Lake Eyre is the largest inland lake in Australia, attracting visitors from far and wide.

The region is culturally significant and with outstanding sightseeing opportunities, with tourism generating $603 million in visitor expenditure in the year ending 2024. This strong figure was driven by 556,000 day trips and 699,000 overnight visitors. Tourism currently provides 2,500 direct jobs in the region.

The region's tourism is impacted by the seasons, with 61% of overnight stays occurring over winter and spring (cooler months), compared to 39% recorded in summer and autumn (warmer months).

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

The South Australian Tourism Commission projects tourism expenditure for the Flinders Ranges and outback area to reach $638 million in 2025 and $804 million in 2030. These figures highlight the need to provide services, develop new and improved visitor experiences and accommodation as well as other land uses to support this growing visitor demand. A strong focus will be on increasing overnight stays via regional and cross-regional collaboration on touring routes and events. Strategic experiences include nature-based experiences, pastoral and station stays, astro-tourism and Aboriginal-led experiences.

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park

Located in the heart of Australia's arid interior, Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre National Park is a place of dramatic contrasts, where salt-crusted plains can transform into an immense wetland teeming with birdlife after heavy rains. As Australia's largest salt lake and the continent's lowest point at 15.2 metres below sea level, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre has filled to capacity only three times in the past 160 years. Its ancient red dunes, rare wildlife, and rich Aboriginal heritage make a visit a truly memorable experience.

In 2025, water from flooding events in southwest Queensland and northeast South Australia has made its way to the lake, transforming what is often a dry salt bed into an oasis. When the waters rise, a huge variety of species – many of them rare – spring to life or are drawn to the lake.

Source: South Australia's guide to Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre | South Australia

Nilpena Ediacara National Park

The Nilpena Ediacara National Park and immersive visitor centre on the edge of Lake Torrens is a recent addition to the region and is expected to contribute to increased tourism numbers. This recognises the demand for authentic experiences in the region.

Arkaroola Dark Sky Sanctuary

In July 2023, Arkaroola became only the second certified Dark Sky Sanctuary in Australia and the first in South Australia. An International Dark Sky Place is a place that has been acknowledged for its exceptionally dark and starry night skies. Different from Dark Sky parks or reserves, sanctuaries are more remote with exceptional star visibility and nocturnal environment.[14]

Pathways for tourism development

Planning plays a vital role in facilitating sustainable tourism development and supporting infrastructure by protecting, enhancing and promoting the qualities that attract tourism and are of value to the whole community.

The planning system provides an impact assessed pathway for large-scale tourism enterprises, being the highest level of development assessment. It is reserved for projects which cannot be properly considered under existing pathways (such as an assessment under the Code). This may be due to the nature, scale and extent of their potential impacts, where the effects of those impacts are unknown or uncertain, or in situations where the environment is considered sensitive.

The State Planning Commission is undertaking a review of policies within the Code that relate to tourism development.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that policies are contemporary and meet current market demands for high-quality tourism accommodation and development. This includes agri-based tourism that diversifies rural business development. These activities should be considered where impacts on agricultural productivity, the environment and scenic amenity can be successfully managed.

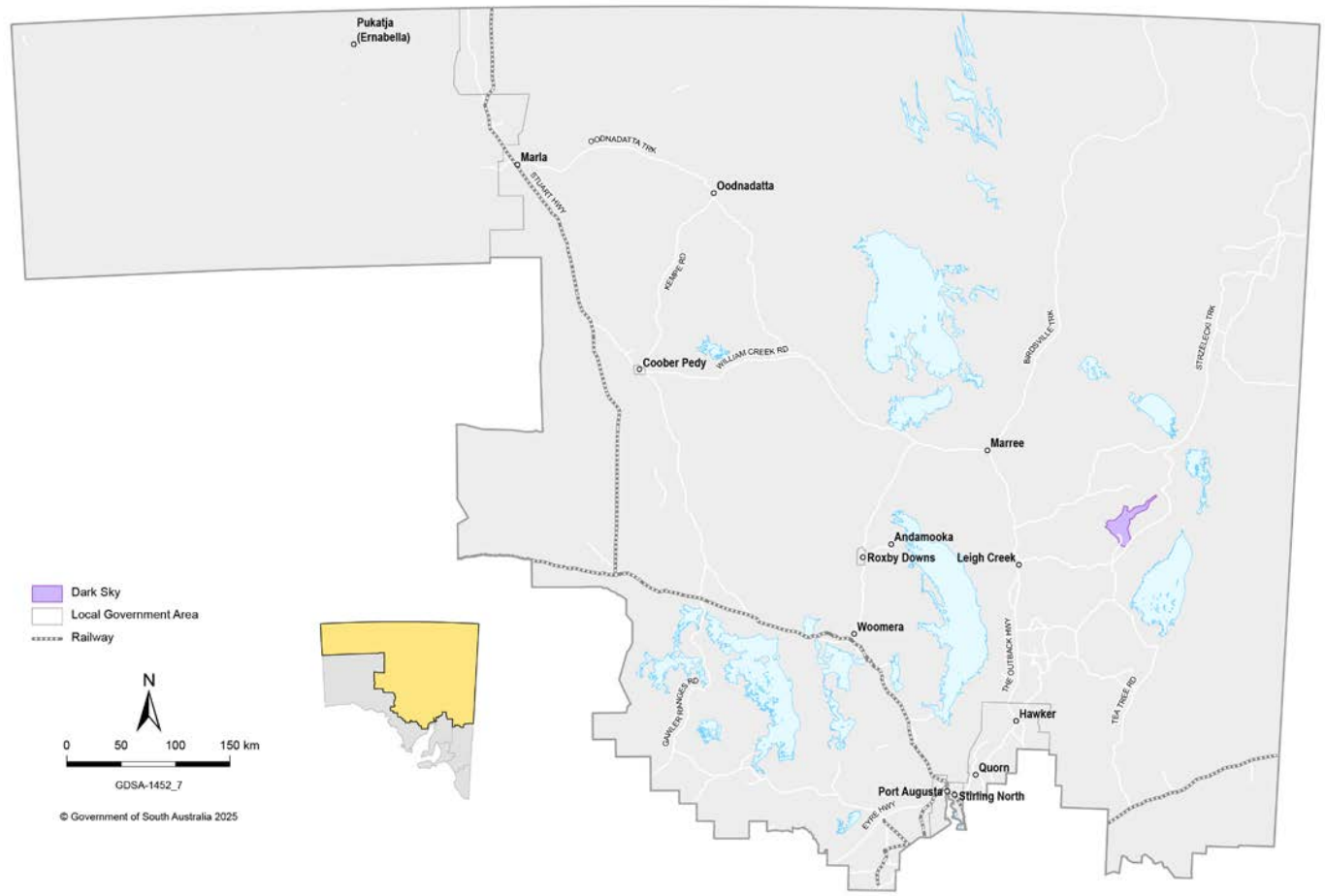
Cultural and Heritage Tourism

The Far North is rich is indigenous culture and outback history. This region supports opportunities for cultural tourism that celebrates Aboriginal heritage and contemporary Aboriginal cultural experiences, as well as our mining heritage tourism that tells the story of the region's central role in the development of our economic and community identity.

tourism such as the colourful opal mining history of Coober Pedy.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Tourism Development	Undertake a Code amendment to facilitate appropriate tourism development within wine regions and protect valued landscape character.	01/2025 - 01/2027	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide



Tourism and events

Primary industry

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Support the region's primary industry sector as dynamic, innovative and diverse through technology adoption, sustainable intensification of production systems and recognition and protection of its unique advantages.

2. Safeguard and enhance water security and quality to support the growth, diversification and resilience of the region's primary industry sector, recognising the critical role of reliable and sustainable water supply in underpinning agricultural productivity and investment confidence.

3. Facilitate value-adding and rural business diversification within the region and associated ancillary land uses such as storage, warehousing and logistics.

4. Ensure valuable primary production land remains viable through protection from fragmentation and encroachment from inappropriate or conflicting land uses.

5. Protect and enhance the region's critical infrastructure, natural resources, and ecosystem services that underpin current and future opportunities for primary industry development.

6. Identify opportunities to promote region-wide soil protection and regenerative agricultural practices to enhance long-term agricultural sustainability, food security, and biodiversity.

7. Equitably manage the interface between primary production and other land use types.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

Retaining and protecting primary production land across the region is a priority to support long-term growth and prosperity. Sustainable agricultural practices, value-add opportunities, improved technology, and land management practices will support a diverse regional economy.

Value-adding and diversification through new business models will provide greater prosperity for the region's agribusiness sector and increase its contribution to the Gross State Product.[15]

Pastoral leases cover a significant portion of the Far North Region and are managed by the Pastoral Board under the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989*. Pastoral leases are government-granted rights to use Crown land for grazing livestock, which can be expanded to include value-adding activities like carbon farming and conservation, with the approval of the Pastoral Board.

Livestock production systems in rangelands continue to flourish in the region including Anna Creek Station, the world's largest working cattle station. The adoption of emerging ag-tech and innovative production practices will be important for global competitiveness in the context of high production costs as well as climate and water challenges. The *Regional Development South Australia Infrastructure Prioritisation Report* identifies a multispecies livestock transhipping hub in Port Augusta as a high priority project for the region.

The region's remoteness continues to offer unique advantages for green and organic livestock production, while the use of innovative agricultural technologies, such as the use of solar thermal energy and solar seawater desalination for irrigation, heating, and cooling, remains at the forefront of sustainable farming practices.

Biosecurity

Strong biosecurity systems are crucial to protect primary industry and natural resources from pests and diseases, safeguarding local production and the natural environment, while securing continued access to high value global markets. The *South Australian Biosecurity Policy 2024-25* aims to reduce pest and disease impacts, maintain food safety and support responsible agricultural chemical use. Comprehensive measures ensure economic, environmental and social assets, and public health are protected.

Carbon farming

Carbon farming, through increasing carbon sequestration or reducing emissions, supports the management of climate change risks and the meeting our state's net zero commitments. Recent changes to the Pastoral Act, coupled with the state government's *Carbon Farming Roadmap for South Australia*, strengthens opportunities for the region to sustainable practices as well as access potential income through carbon offsets and environmental markets.

Value-adding

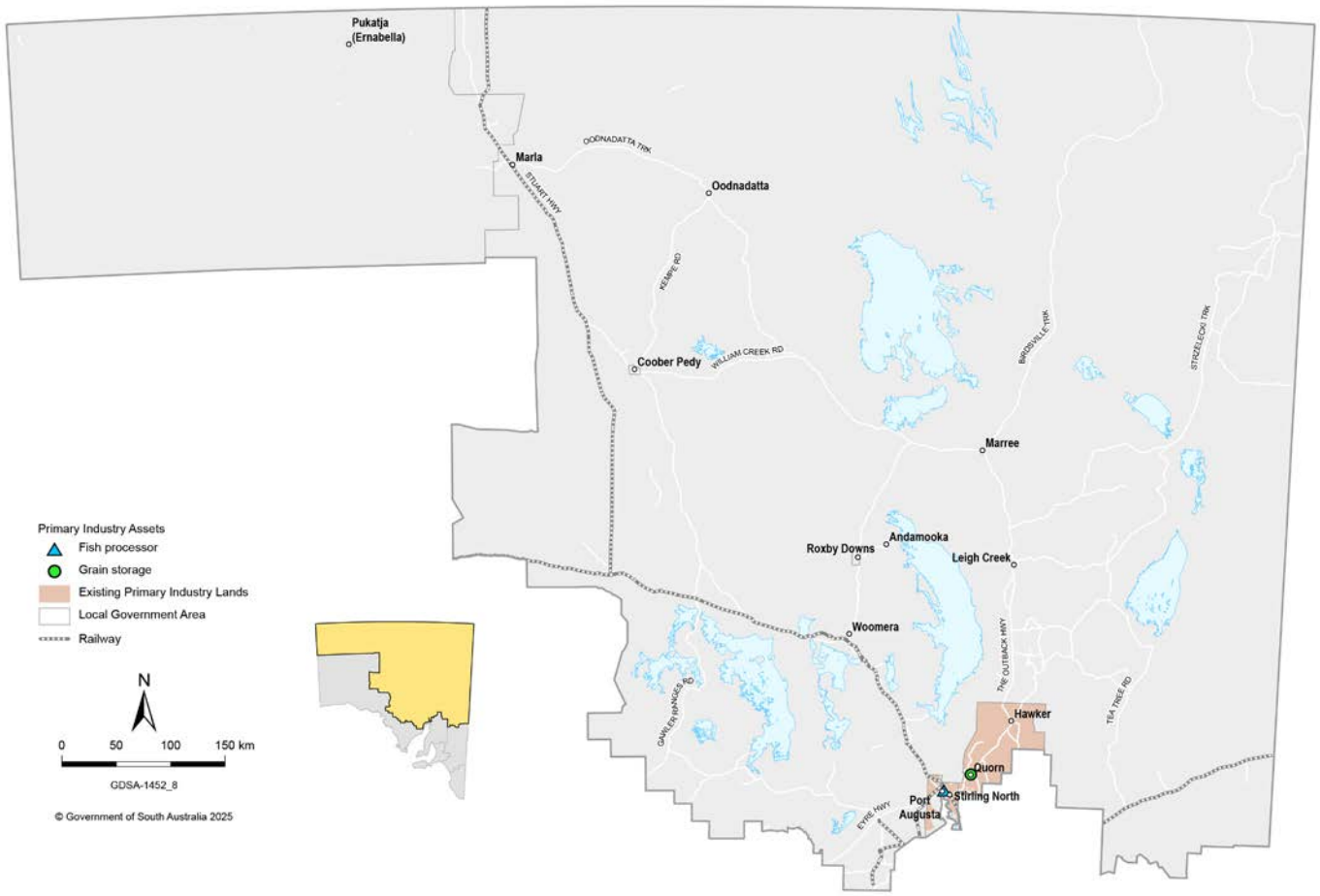
The Code introduced a more facilitative policy framework to enable appropriate small-scale value-adding uses that are complementary to rural areas and existing land uses. For example, the Productive Rural Landscape Zone promotes agriculture, horticulture, value-adding opportunities, farm gate businesses, the sale and consumption of agriculturally based products, tourist development and accommodation. This flexibility enables the expansion of the region's economic base and promotes its regional identity.

A new Rural Intensive Enterprise Zone was also introduced into the Code. This zone supports clusters of diverse, high-intensity agricultural operations. It integrates production, processing, and related support industries, which serve as key drivers of economic growth and employment for the state.

Opportunities exist to further apply the Rural Intensive Enterprise Zone to key rural industry sites and clusters to protect and foster the growth of these economic assets.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Productive Land Value Mapping	Maintain contemporary productive land value mapping and identify key primary production assets that should be protected.	11/2025 - 11/2030	Department of Primary Industries and Regions	State-wide
Interface between rural and urban lands	Review interface management policies in the Planning and Design Code to ensure the ongoing viability of primary industries at the edge of urban areas and undertake a Code amendment as necessary.	11/2025 - 11/2030	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide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Primary Industry Assets
Fish processor
Grain storage
Existing Primary Industry Lands
Local Government Area
Railway
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Waste and resource recovery

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Provide an appropriate supply of land for waste and resource recovery facilities and other circular industries, including building material banks, to maximise resource use, support economic growth and service our communities.

2. Future-proof the operations of new and existing waste and resource recovery facilities by managing the interface and the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

3. Promote best practice waste management (including segregated collection systems) in residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use developments to support resource recovery activities.

4. Promote the adaptive re-use and retrofitting of existing building stock as well as designing new buildings for adaptability and/or disassembly.

5. Promote circular economy principles in the planning system to support a circular built environment.

As South Australia's population continues to grow, waste generation will also follow.

The regulation and management of waste and resource recovery is primarily the responsibility of the state government. The *Environment Protection Act 1993* (EP Act) establishes the primary legislative framework for this, while the *Green Industries SA Act 2004* requires Green Industries SA to develop a waste strategy for the state every five years. This waste strategy aims to reduce the disposal of material to landfill and support the growing transition to a 'circular economy' – an economy that realises the best or full value from products and materials produced, consumed and recovered in South Australia.

Circular economy principles

South Australia is transitioning to a circular economy to improve and sustain our environment, increase our wellbeing, and grow our economic prosperity in a sustainable way. Changing from a 'take-make-waste' linear economy to a circular economy requires a collaborative approach across government, business, industry and the community.

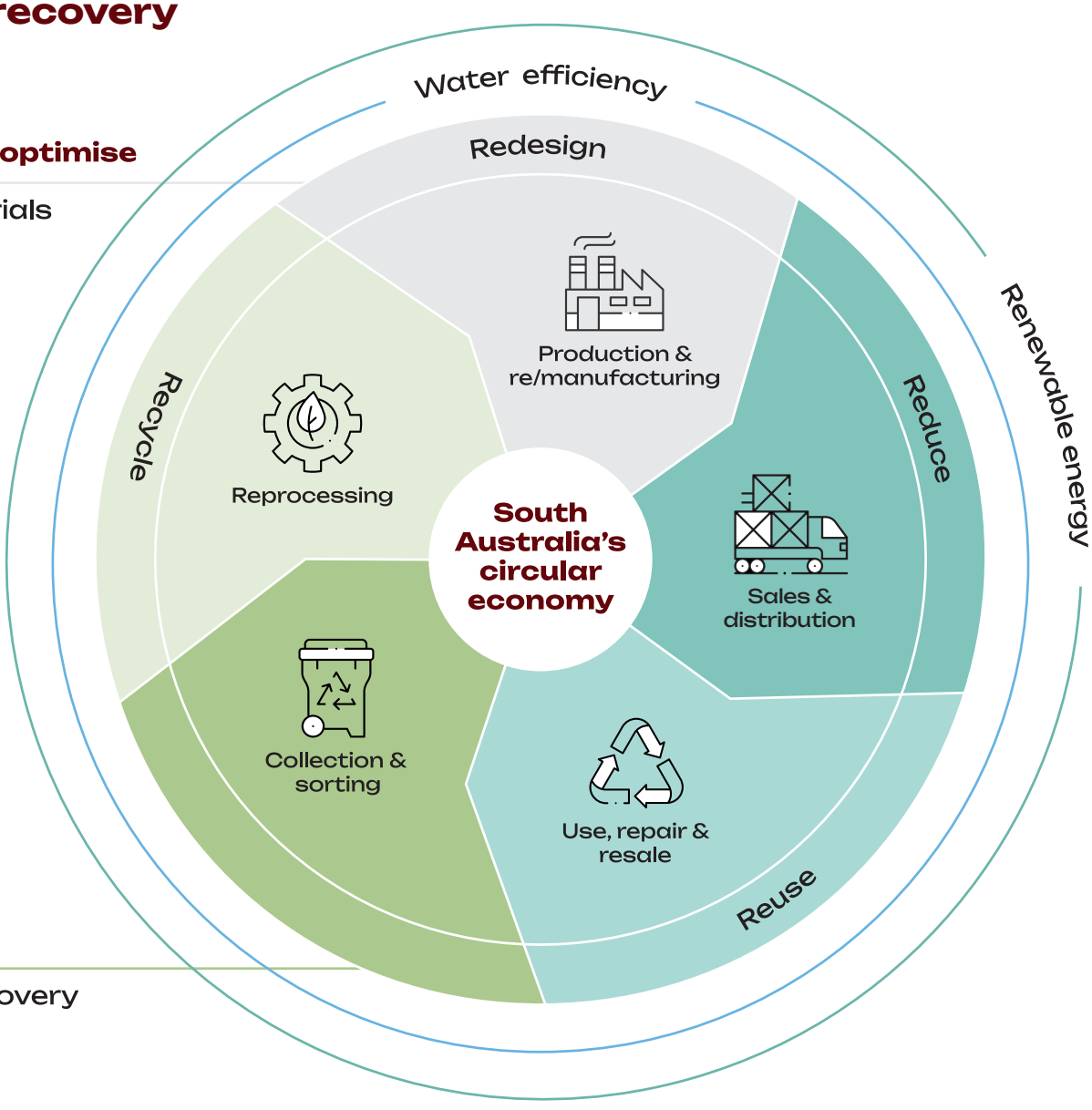
The three key principles of a circular economy are:

1. **Reduce** – design out waste and pollution.
2. **Preserve** – keep products and materials in use and at their highest possible value.
3. **Regenerate** – regenerate natural systems and natural capital.

Waste recovery

Avoid and optimise

Raw materials



Minimise

Energy recovery
Disposal

Source: GISA

Land for waste and resource recovery

The capacity of South Australia's waste processing and recovery centres will need to grow in step with population growth to handle the increasing amount of waste generated, and ensure these resources are repurposed rather than being simply sent to landfill. Land for these industries should be considered during structure planning processes for growth areas.

Waste and resource recovery facilities should be appropriately located and measures put in place to manage the interface with sensitive land uses to ensure new and existing facilities can operate without impediment. Associated mapping identifies key waste and resource recovery locations, together with appropriate buffer distances, to assist in planning for future employment and residential lands.

Where practical, regional-scale waste and recycling solutions, including initial processing of materials to increase transport efficiencies for secondary processing and markets in other locations should be considered.

Leigh Creek Resource Recovery Centre

After opening in April 2024, the Leigh Creek Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) has been accepting recyclables like cardboard, soft plastics, milk bottles and other household recyclables so that they can be diverted from landfill. Prior to the development of the RRC, most waste in the area ended up in landfill which has environmental impacts as well as financial impacts on the communities that need to manage that waste. A grant from Green Industries SA will enable the RRC to be able to take a wider range of waste in the future.

Supporting a circular built environment

The building sector is one of the biggest emitters of greenhouse gas emissions (globally responsible for half the world's raw material use and 40% of landfill waste), with the largest contribution coming from the use of concrete, steel and aluminium. Extending the use of buildings and adapting them for different purposes could reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 1.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year in 2050.

The planning system can promote the adaptive re-use and retrofitting of existing building stock as well as designing new buildings for adaptability and/or disassembly.

This approach avoids waste creation, reduces the need for new building materials, and preserves the embodied energy of existing structures, leading to significant environmental and financial savings. It fosters innovative design, retention of buildings that may be important to the character of local areas, and the overall enhancement of sustainability outcomes.

Adaptive re-use and reuse of materials supports delivering on actions across industry and government policy areas including *Australia's Circular Economy Framework* (2024), *Accelerating SA's transition to a circular economy: South Australia's waste strategy 2025–2030* and the *Circular economy in South Australia's built environment – Action Plan* (2023).

Circular Economy Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan

Green Industries SA is currently developing a Circular Economy Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan. This new plan will build on *South Australia's Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan* (2018) and the 2020 addendum, expanding the scope to support a more comprehensive circular economy approach. It aims to guide investment over the next 20 years and broader the focus to include emerging waste streams, circular precincts, community circularity hubs, placed-based assessment and higher-order waste hierarchy options such as reduction, reuse and report. Planning and land use considerations will need to take into account relevant characteristics of circular infrastructure and different requirements for its zoning, for example, flexibility of land size, minimum required buffer zone and proximity to employment or residential zones.

There are intersections between addressing climate change and reducing waste from our building and construction industry by promoting circular economy principles. The government has committed to exploring how the planning system can advance the circular economy by reusing materials and designing for less waste, alongside waste treatment and management policies that consider climate change and urban infill scenarios.

Waste collection services

Councils provide services to residents such as household waste and recycling collection and disposal services, with many offering a three-bin system (general waste, co-mingled recyclables, and organics). Green Industries SA provides support to councils to implement new services through grants, incentives and education resources. Waste management systems provided in townships and regional areas should be considered early in the planning process along with other space, infrastructure and activity requirements and minimum requirements in the *National Kerbside Collections Roadmap*.

Mineral and energy resources

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Protect key infrastructure, including associated strategic access routes, transport corridors and pipelines, that contribute to the region's economy.

2. Establish infrastructure corridors that support infrastructure such as transport, pipelines and energy infrastructure provision to key resource areas.

3. Minimise the impacts of encroachments by incompatible land uses to manage risk to public safety, the environment and security of energy supply.

4. Maintain adequate separation distances between mining activities, housing and other incompatible development.

5. Facilitate appropriate post-mining land uses.

6. Encourage co-existence and equitably manage the interface between mining and other land uses, including environmental protection and carbon farming.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

South Australia has considerable in-demand commodities including critical minerals which underpin the state's economy and export activities. This strong demand for minerals is met in the Far North Region at key major mines like Olympic Dam, Prominent Hill and Carrapateena in the Gawler Craton and the Jacinth-Ambrosia mine in the Eucla Basin.

There are also numerous prospective sites, including the Oak Dam prospect which represents one of the newest mineral exploration programs undertaken in the state. BHP is establishing an integrated copper 'province' or collective in the region by combining the production of Prominent Hill and Carrapateena mines with Olympic Dam production for processing purposes.

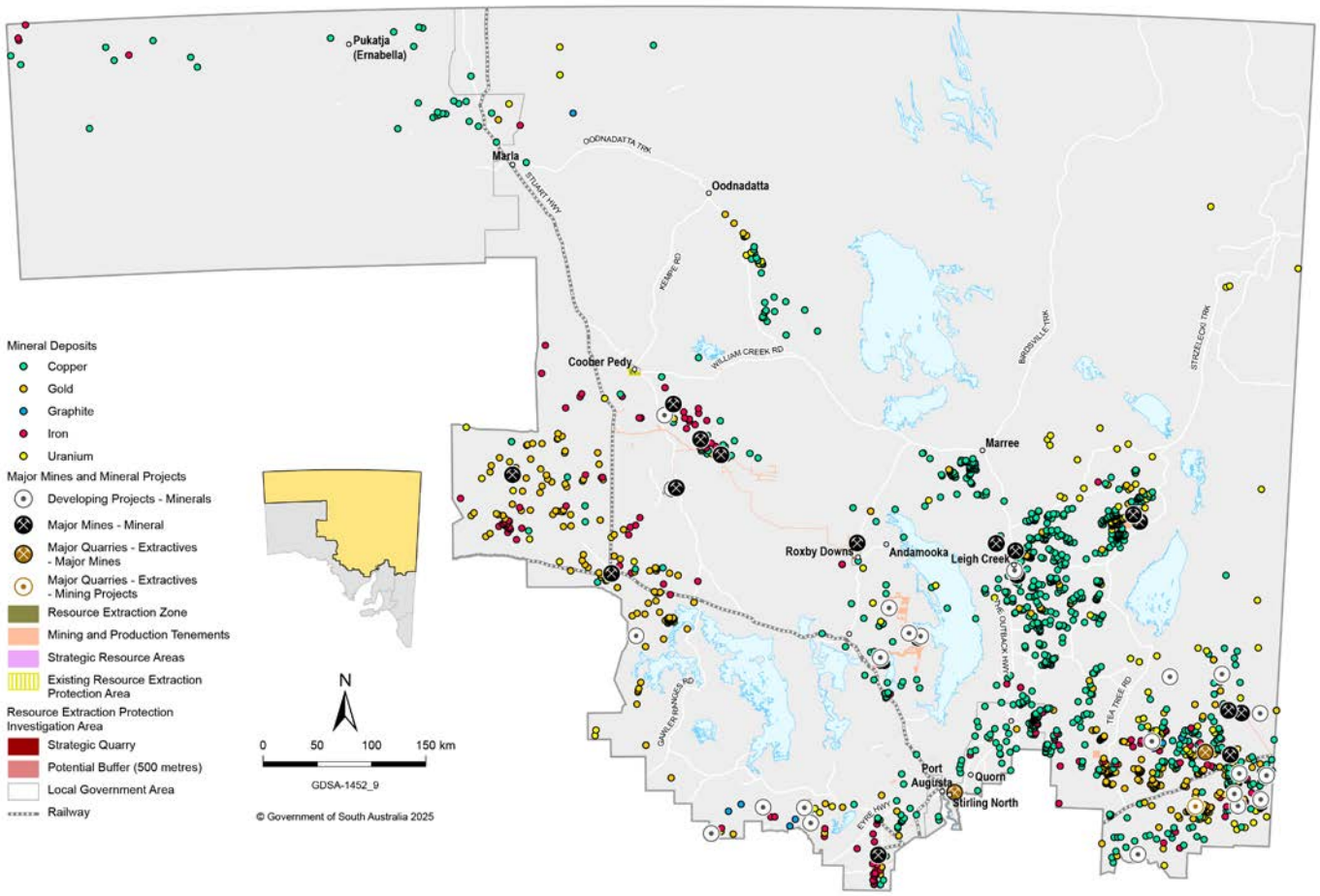
South Australia's share of the nation's mineral resources includes 68% of copper, 26% of gold, 67% of graphite, 10% of iron and 82% of uranium. Copper is a fundamentally important mineral as the world electrifies and shifts away from fossil fuels. These sites will continue to be at the forefront of supporting the sustainable exploration and delivery of these products to Australia and globally.

These key resource areas and associated infrastructure, including strategic access routes, transport corridors and pipelines should be protected from the encroachment of incompatible development. This will manage risks to public safety, the environment and security of energy supply.

The Code contains policy frameworks to manage challenges related to mineral and energy resources in regional areas. These are the Resource Extraction Zone and the Resource Extraction Protection Area Overlay.

This overlay aims to maintain the long-term availability and productive capacity of extractive resource lands. The opportunity exists to investigate and consider the application of these policy frameworks to licenced activities across the region.

In the long-term, the Plan can play a role in the planning of appropriate post-mining land uses. It will provide up-to-date regional data and strategies, facilitating a path for collaboration between mine operators, government and regulators.



Mineral and energy resources

Natural resources, environment and landscapes

Theme:

Outcome 3: A more climate-resilient and sustainable region

Our future prosperity, the liveability of our cities and towns, the health and wellbeing of our communities and the resilience of our built and natural environment all depend on how well we adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

The Far North Region is renowned for its natural environment, from the rugged Flinders Ranges to the arid outback landscapes, which are highly valued by residents and visitors. The land and water hold significant cultural and historical importance for Aboriginal people, with sites and objects throughout the Ikara-Flinders Ranges, coastal areas, dunes, and inland waters protected by legislation.

The region is home to 18 national parks, each with diverse flora and fauna. These parks and other areas of environmental significance cover nearly a quarter of the region and play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity. Currently, 46 native species (25 animals and 24 plants) and two ecological communities in the South Australian Arid Lands landscape are nationally listed as vulnerable or endangered.[16]

Coastal, estuarine and marine assets of the Far North include:

- Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre - one of the world's largest internally draining systems
- Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park - a Ramsar wetland of international importance
- Upper Spencer Gulf wetland system - which serves as a fish nursery and provides coastal protection.

The land use planning system plays a vital role in safeguarding these ecosystems to ensure their ongoing health.

Water resources are critical to both the region's ecological health and the viability of its pastoral, mining, and tourism industries. Communities in the Far North rely on groundwater and infrequent rainfall to recharge surface water catchments. However, yearly rainfall is predicted to decline in the foreseeable future. The Northern Water Project will provide an alternate, sustainable water supply to eastern Eyre Peninsula and the Far North regions, supporting growth while reducing reliance on the River Murray, Great Artesian Basin, and local groundwater.

The extreme effects of climate change on urban environments are well established. Future liveability and wellbeing are dependent on how well the region adapts to and mitigates the impacts of climate change, noting there are also significant consequences for remnant native vegetation and native animals that must also be considered. Changing patterns in rainfall and the impact on growing seasons must not be overlooked. South Australia is projected to experience increased average temperatures, reduced average rainfall and rises in sea level. This is coupled with an increased frequency and intensity of extreme natural events such as heatwaves, bushfires, and flooding, all of which place people's health, livelihoods, property and surrounding natural environment at risk.

New development will need to be carefully planned to locate it away from areas of high risk, with more vulnerable and sensitive uses located away from potentially hazardous areas. This also includes industrial emissions and hazards to protect community and environmental health.

Biodiversity

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Identify areas where biodiversity conservation and restoration should be prioritised.

2. Identify areas of high biodiversity value and determine what types of sensitive development, if any, they could accommodate.

3. Encourage sensitive development with minimal impact and protect areas with recognised biodiversity value, native vegetation and habitat so that critical life-supporting functions can be maintained.

4. Protect and enhance native vegetation, habitats and areas of high biodiversity value and that provide ecological services.

5. Implement guidelines and pathways that minimise and offset unavoidable impacts.

6. Identify and protect modified landscapes that have significant environmental value and can co-exist with other land uses such as primary production and tourism.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

The Far North Region is home to a diverse range of ecosystems and ecological communities that exist in inland, coastal, estuarine, and marine environments. Habitats include gibber and gypsum plains, dune fields, sand plains and mountain springs. These habitats are the most intact in the state, being areas of almost continuous native vegetation. Many of the diverse species found in the area are unique to the South Australian arid lands. Areas of high biodiversity value must be recognised, with future development located and designed to prevent their loss, degradation or any fragmentation of native vegetation or habitat.

Known in Pitjantjatjara as mamu tjanpi or tjanpi kura – devil grass or bad grass – buffel grass is now recognised as one of the worst environmental threats in Australia's arid rangelands and can affect biodiversity, natural and cultural heritage, communities and infrastructure.

Indigenous Protected Areas play a vital role in supporting the region's biodiversity. The four Indigenous Protected Areas include Mount Willoughby in the far north, Nantawarrina in the Flinders Ranges, and Walalkara and Watarru in the APY Lands which contain some of the highest diversities of reptile species found anywhere in the world and support populations of rare and endangered species.

Native vegetation and biodiversity should be protected, and where impacts cannot be avoided, these will be minimised or offset by reintroducing habitat into landscapes that have been previously modified through urban development or primary production.

Native vegetation legislation

South Australia's native vegetation is currently protected by the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* (NV Act) and the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2017*. The Act prevents broad-scale clearance and minimises smaller-scale clearance, enhances and restores the state's native vegetation, and outlines certain procedures and assessments that need to be undertaken before any clearance of native vegetation can proceed.

Where the Act applies, approval from the Native Vegetation Council must be sought in addition to approvals under the PDI Act.

In March 2024, the government agreed to investigate a recommendation of the Expert Panel for the Planning System Implementation Review to review and refine the intersection between the PDI Act and NV Act to remove confusion within the community and development sector- to ensure native vegetation is retained.

As part of a more holistic review to streamline current legislation and enhance biodiversity protection, the government has passed its first ever Biodiversity Act. The *Biodiversity Act 2025* once in operation will absorb the entirety of the existing NV Act and wildlife provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. This is considered the best opportunity to create a clearer and simpler framework to enhance biodiversity protection and restoration in South Australia.

Links to the PDI Act and future updates to the Plan could enable earlier consideration of biodiversity in decision making processes by, for example:

- Publishing spatial priorities for conservation and restoration.
- Consolidating state biodiversity data and making it publicly available for proponents and others.

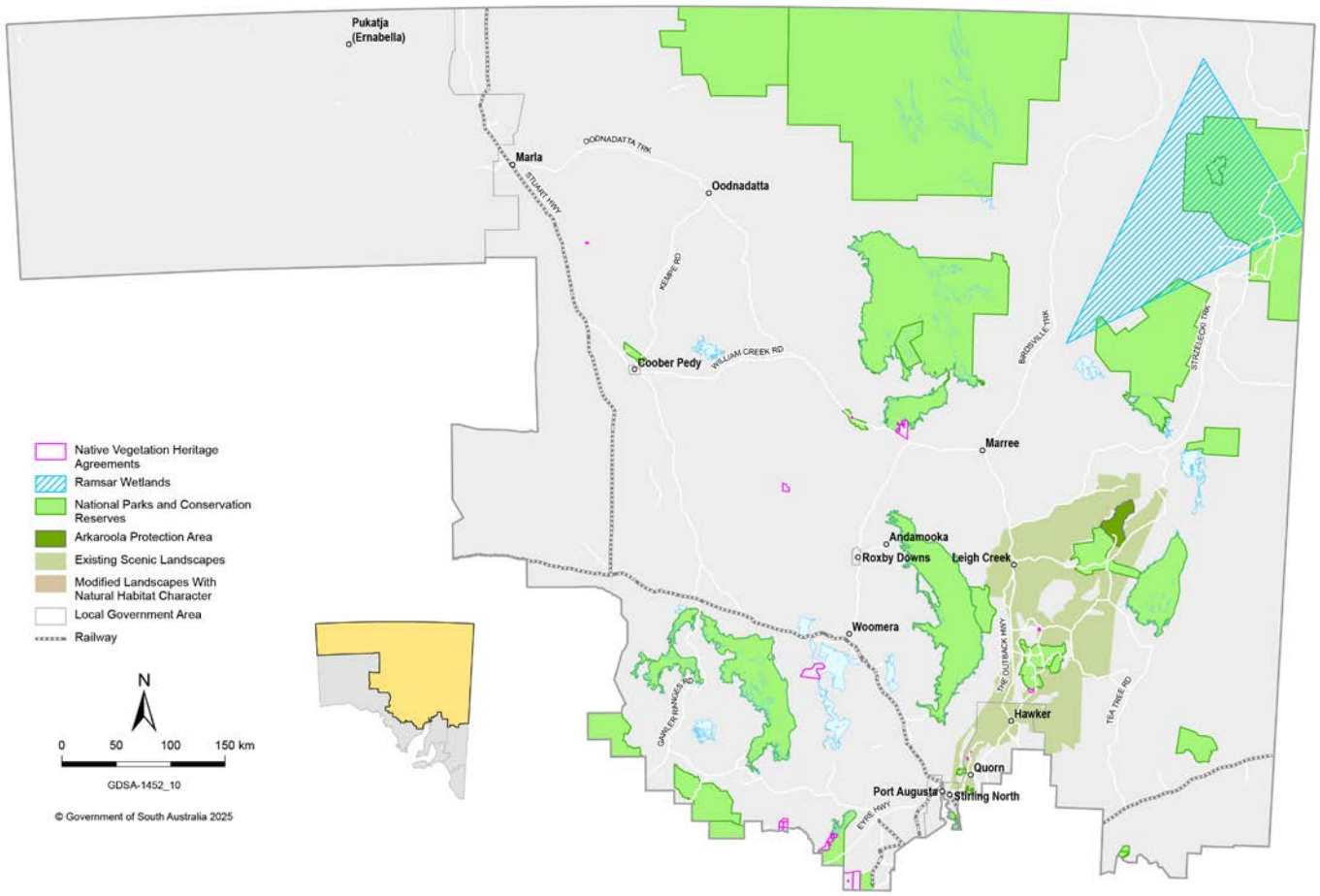
The Arkaroola Protection Area comprises most of the Arkaroola Pastoral Lease and includes the Mawson Plateau region of the Mount Freeling Pastoral Lease. The area includes the Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary, a pastoral lease that has not been stocked for over 30 years and is primarily managed for conservation and tourism. It is the home of a vast range of bird species, reptiles and mammals, including the endangered and vulnerable Yellow-Footed Rock-Wallaby. The Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary is considered one of best places to see these rare marsupials in their natural habitat.

Endangered flora such as Arckaringa Daisies and Salt Pipewort can also be found in the region.

The Plan is an important part of gaining a better understanding of the current landscape, including linkages (biodiversity corridors) and refugia (biodiversity islands), through improved spatial mapping. This can highlight where areas of remnant native vegetation and threatened ecological communities of national environmental significance are located.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Biodiversity Mapping	Incorporate new biodiversity and habitat mapping that provides clear guidance on which areas need protection, which areas may be appropriate for development, and which areas need caution to provide greater certainty about regional biodiversity priorities.	2028	Department for Environment and Water	State-wide


Pukatja
(Ernabella)
Marla
OODNADATTA TRK
STUART HWY
Oodnadatta
KEMPE RD
Coober Pedy
WILLIAM CREEK RD
BIRDSVILLE TRK
STRZELECKI TRK
Marree
Andamooka
Roxby Downs
Leigh Creek
Woomera
GAWLER RANGES RD
THE OUTBACK HWY
TEA TREE RD
Hawker
Quorn
Port Augusta
Stirling North
EYRE HWY
Native Vegetation Heritage Agreements
Ramsar Wetlands
National Parks and Conservation Reserves
Arkaroola Protection Area
Existing Scenic Landscapes
Modified Landscapes With Natural Habitat Character
Local Government Area
Railway
N
0 50 100 150 km
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Climate change

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Evaluate the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, and identify and implement risk mitigation measures when planning for future growth.

2. Encourage low or net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions development in the region, including within townships and settlements.

3. Ensure development is climate-ready to support a resilient economy, community and environment.

4. Consider decarbonisation investment and climate change adaptation strategies in the early planning of master planned neighbourhoods and established townships.

5. Promote opportunities for green technologies and industries that reduce reliance on carbon-based energy supplies.

6. Actively investigate, monitor and review the impact of climate change on hazard risk, and update hazard overlays and other measures within the Code.

7. Create policies, schemes, education and incentives to support market transition and promote low or zero net emissions and climate resilient buildings.

8. Protect and enhance areas that provide biodiversity and ecological services, and maximise opportunities for natural carbon sequestration.

9. Ensure developments avoid or minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions to align with SA's climate targets.

The Far North Region faces challenges from climate change including more frequent and severe heatwaves, reduced average rainfall, droughts, bushfires and floods. In 2050, the South Australian Arid Lands region is projected to experience increased average temperatures of 1.8 degrees Celsius and 10% less annual rainfall[17]. This will likely impact agricultural production, public health, community wellbeing, natural landscapes and wildlife habitats, and public and private infrastructure. New technology and value-added opportunities will be critical to support the region's economic base and to maximise productivity.

Source: Emile Ristevski

Guide to climate projections for risk assessment and planning in South Australia

	Projected Change	Associated Risks
 **Higher Temperatures**	• Higher average daily maximum temperatures • Longer, hotter and more frequent heatwaves.	• Reduced agricultural productivity • Changes in distribution and abundance of pest plants and animals • Increased risks of heat related illness and death.
 **Drier with more time in drought**	• Reduced average annual rainfall • Reduced spring rainfall • More time spent in drought.	• Increased stress on water resources • Reduced condition of water dependent ecosystem • Reduced agricultural productivity.
 **More dangerous fire weather**	• More days of dangerous fire weather • Longer fire seasons.	• Increased risks to public health and safety • Increased damage or destruction of assets, infrastructure and the natural environment.
 **More intense heavy rainfall events**	• More rain falling in extreme rainfall events • More frequent extreme rainfall events.	• Increased flood risk • Increased damage to assets, particularly roads and bridges • Increased damage to food crops.
 **Rising sea levels**	• Increasing average sea levels • Increased height of extreme sea level events.	• Increased coastal flooding • Increased erosion of beaches and damage or destruction of coastal assets.

The government is committed to restoring a safe climate by transforming the economy to net zero emissions by 2050. This includes a target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and achieve 100% renewable electricity generation by 2027.[18]

With a 55% decrease from 2004-05 levels recorded in 2022-23, a further 5% net emissions reduction is needed to meet the interim 2030 target. While emissions from the energy generation sector are reducing, greater efforts are needed to address other major sources of emissions. For example, transport is the largest contributor to emissions in the state, responsible for 39% of all emissions.[19]

Consistent with the government's approach, the South Australian planning system aims to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation. Through planning policies and mechanisms, we can deliver tangible climate change outcomes as well as co-benefits including cost savings, energy conservation and improved community connection.

Long-term land use decisions should consider the most up-to-date climate projections in alignment with *South Australia's Net Zero Strategy 2024-230, South Australian Government Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Actions*, and the *Climate Ready Government Initiative*. This includes increased intensity of natural disasters, reduced rainfall and changing rainfall patterns, increased temperatures and sea level rise.

Improving the resilience of the region's community, economy, buildings, and natural environment means understanding the risks associated with climate change and planning accordingly.

The Plan supports housing supply that is responsive to a hotter and drier climate with more extreme weather events, for example 'climate ready' development that minimises emissions, is energy efficient and adapts to a changing climate. Cost-effective innovative infrastructure solutions (e.g. renewable energy, independent water systems, communications) for remote housing is encouraged.

Industries and technologies that reduce reliance on carbon-based energy supplies and directly or indirectly reduce emissions should also be supported. The region presents an opportunity to recycle waste from primary production to generate energy from biomass, noting that nutrient and carbon recovery should be prioritised over energy-only uses.

Development in the region should avoid high-hazard areas or, where unavoidable, ensure risks to people and property are mitigated.

The Code contains several hazard overlays which include policies to recognise sea level rise, bushfire (development siting, asset protection) and flood hazard, as well as the important role native species plays in sustaining biodiversity and responding to climate change. Recent work to update overlays and other policies in the Code for flood and bushfire hazard will contribute to our climate change resilience.

There are opportunities for further investigations to update the Plan and guide improvements to the Code, Design Standards or other components of our planning system.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Embodied Carbon Policy	To aim for carbon neutrality, investigate policy approaches that enable the consideration of embodied carbon.	11/2025 - 11/2030	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide
Regenerative Planning Framework	Develop a regenerative planning framework and toolkit to assist state government, local government, and the private sector in applying regenerative approaches to planning.	11/2025 - 11/2030	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide

Coastal environment

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Maintain and enhance public access to open space along the coastline.

2. Protect and enhance coastal and marine environments for their contributions to biodiversity, open space, economic productivity, and hazard risk mitigation.

3. Protect the high blue carbon storage values of areas such as salt marshes.

4. Recognise and continue to protect and enhance the natural coastal environment including environmentally important features, such as estuaries, marine-protected areas, and sand dunes.

5. Protect key coastal areas where critical infrastructure is at risk from sea level rise, coastal erosion and storm surges, and ensure new coastal development incorporates appropriate adaptation measures, including nature-based solutions.

6. Maintain and enhance the scenic amenity and nature values of important natural coastal landscapes, views and vistas.

Coastal areas support important ecological systems and environments. They also play a key role in the state's economy through aquaculture, recreation and tourism, transport and industry.

The coastline can be a contested space. Legislation provides high-level guidance and policy for a balanced approach to the range of competing interests for development while recognising its environmental, cultural and economic significance.

High conservation value coastal areas

Much of the coastline of the Upper Spencer Gulf is protected by a strip of open space or Conservation Zone within the Coastal Areas Overlay. This zoning preserves the open nature of the coast, promoting public access and limiting the development of structures. The region is also adjacent to the Upper Spencer Gulf Marine Park, identified in the *Special Legislative Scheme – Marine Parks Act 2007*. It is home to some of the most important fish nurseries in South Australia, including significant mangrove forests, seagrass meadows and areas where whiting, squid and snapper gather to spawn, along with dolphins which also congregate to feed and breed.

Future development should preserve and enhance the natural coastal environment and avoid impacts on natural coastal processes including sea level rise, flooding, erosion, and dune drift, to avoid the need for public expenditure on protection of the environment and development.

Learn more about the legislative framework

The legislative framework for the management of South Australia's coast includes:

- *Coast Protection Act 1972*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1993*
- *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.*

The Coast Protection Board (CPB) is the statutory authority responsible for administering the *Coast Protection Act 1972.*

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has a responsibility through the *Environment Protection Act 1993* to ensure water quality and discharge into coastal waters are appropriate and will not cause environmental harm or nuisance.

Blue carbon

Blue carbon is the carbon captured and stored in coastal ecosystems including seagrass meadows, saltmarshes and mangroves. These ecosystems are carbon sinks, accumulating and retaining carbon in the plants themselves and in the soils below. Much work has been done to investigate blue carbon potential across South Australia. This work has identified the benefits of tidal reconnection and coastal wetland and seagrass restoration. The protection and realisation of the values of blue carbon will also involve enhancing the biological and ecosystem services which these areas provide.

Coastal storms and sea level rise

Climate change is expected to increase the frequency, intensity and impacts of some weather events, such as coastal storms. Sea level rise leads to increased frequency and depth of flooding in coastal areas.

Therefore, it is important to identify areas that are likely to be affected by storm events to determine the most appropriate management strategies such as avoid, retreat, accommodate or do nothing. Sea level rise and the risk of coastal flooding and erosion is a major risk to existing and future infrastructure and development in proximity to the coastline. Code amendments should consider sea level rise implications (for erosion and flooding) to the year 2100, noting that ongoing sea level rise beyond this point is expected.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Coastal Areas Overlay	Initiate a Code amendment to amend the Coastal Areas Overlay, to update coastal flooding policy and associated finished ground and floor level Technical and Numeric Variations.	2028	Department for Environment and Water	State-wide
Coastal Processes and Hazard Mapping	Update coastal processes and hazard mapping including coastal flooding and storm surge, dune drift and coastal mangrove and saltmarshes to inform spatial amendments to the Coastal Areas Overlay and Coastal Flooding Overlay.	2028	Department for Environment and Water	State-wide

Natural hazards

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Avoid locating future growth and sensitive developments (such as hospitals, major transport infrastructure and critical services) in areas of high natural hazard risk where the mitigation strategies are unable to bring risks to an acceptable level.

2. Maintain contemporary data and mapping for areas that are at risk of natural hazards including bushfire, flooding, acid sulphate soils, erosion and other hazards.

Source: ABC - Spud's Roadhouse

South Australia's climate and geography place our people and property in the path of natural hazard events. Our land use planning system needs to be dynamic and continue to evolve to safeguard our communities, infrastructure and environments as the frequency and intensity of natural disaster events increases due to climate change.

Natural disasters can have significant financial and social impacts on individuals, communities and businesses. The economic, social and environmental cost of disasters can be reduced by prioritising consideration of the impact of natural disasters in land use strategies and planning for them appropriately. This will safeguard affordability, create more resilient communities and reduce recovery timeframes.[20]

The Far North Region frequently experiences drought, intense storms, and is particularly vulnerable to flooding events. The risks associated with these events will intensify as our climate continues to change. With the increased threat to property and life, sensitive land uses in high-risk hazard areas should be avoided where possible.

Introducing a consistent, state-wide approach in the planning system for identifying, modelling and spatially representing natural hazards, particularly flood and bushfire, will support strategic planning, provide direction on suitable locations for essential infrastructure, and inform key land use policy decisions around suitable growth areas. Work currently underway can be seamlessly incorporated into the Plan. For example, the state-wide Flooding Hazards Mapping Update Code Amendment is looking to utilise section 71 of the PDI Act to enable the updated flood mapping data to be reflected in the Code, which can also be linked to the Plan.

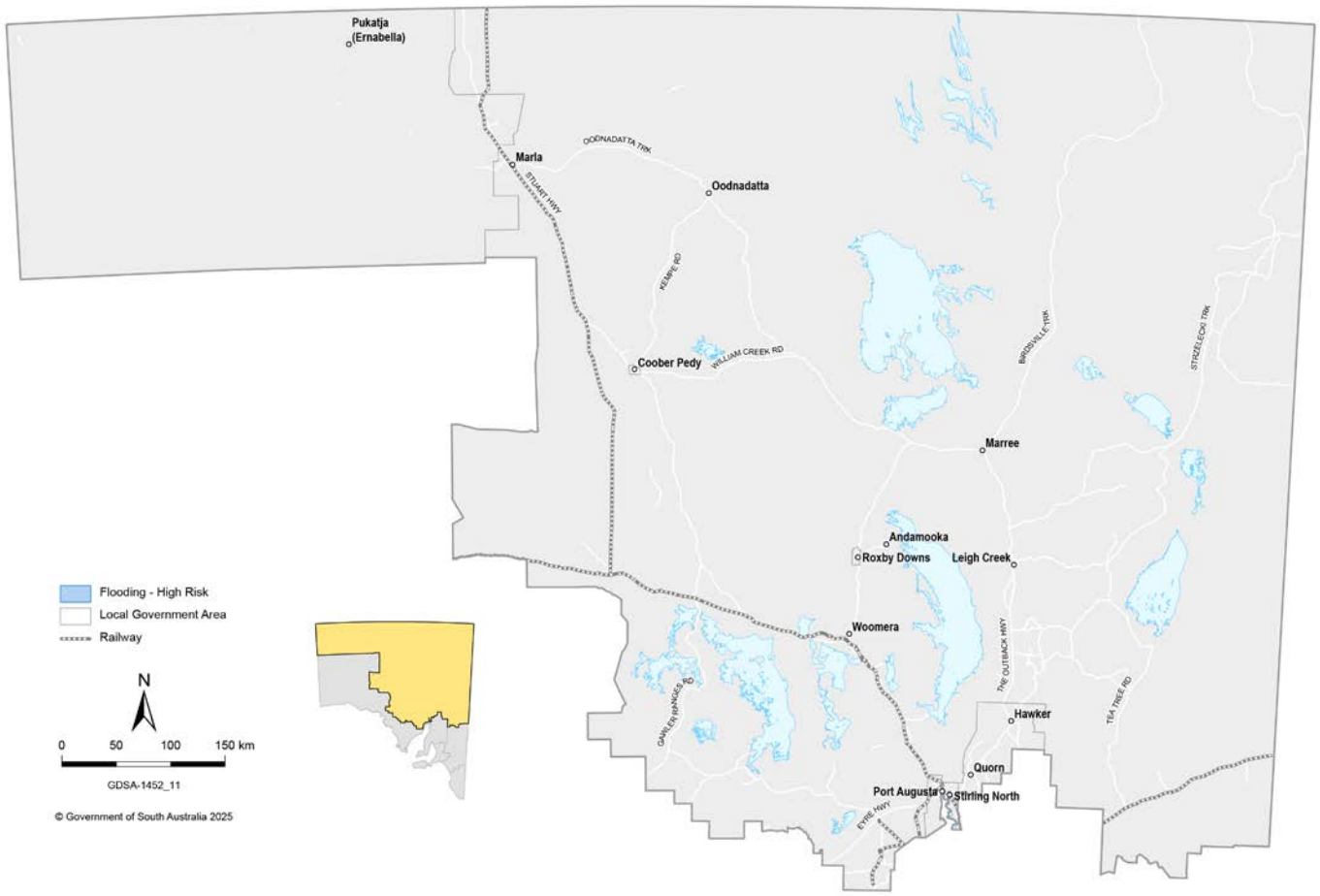
Providing a planning framework that is adaptable and responsive to changing conditions including the role of development in mitigating impacts will ensure that the appropriate level of risk is addressed through planning and development. This involves decision-making to be informed by contemporary, evidence-based climate science to reduce the need for future adaptive responses.

Resilience improvements for infrastructure (such as roads and rail) in areas of greatest flood risk is important. Roads and rail most at risk of flooding include the Stuart Highway, Oodnadatta Track, Kemp Road, Birdsville Track, Maree to Coober Pedy, Oodnadatta to Coober Pedy, Carlton Parade Extension Road, Deport Creek Road and Blinman to Parachilna, and the Port Augusta to Tarcoola railway section.

The location and design of future development will adopt a risk hierarchy of 'avoid', 'accommodate' and 'adapt', and where possible, will avoid locating people and essential infrastructure in locations identified as high hazard risk.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Bushfire Mapping	Update the bushfire mapping in the Regional Plan to align with the finalisation and publication of the Statewide Bushfire Hazards Overlay Code Amendment.	2026	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide
Flood Hazard Mapping	Finalise the state-wide Flooding Hazards Mapping Update Code Amendment and update floodwater mapping in the Regional Plan to align with the finalisation and publication of the Code amendment.	2027	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide


Pukatja
(Ernabella)
Marla
OODNADATTA TRK
Oodnadatta
STUART HWY
KEMPE RD
Coober Pedy
WILLIAM CREEK RD
BIRDSVILLE TRK
STRZELECKI TRK
Marree
Andamooka
Roxby Downs
Leigh Creek
Woomera
THE OUTBACK HWY
GAWLER RANGES RD
TEA TREE RD
Hawker
Quorn
Port Augusta
Stirling North
EYRE HWY
Flooding - High Risk
Local Government Area
Railway
N
0
50
100
150 km
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Emissions and hazardous activities

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Protect communities and the environment from risks associated with emissions and hazardous activities.
2. Protect coastal and marine environments from encroachment and significant development impacts.
3. Support state significant operations and industries and protect them from encroachment or incompatible land uses and sensitive receivers.
4. Assess and manage risks posed by known or potential site contamination to enable the safe development and use of land.

Emissions and hazardous activities, including air and noise pollution and site contamination, may result from lawfully operating industries and operations that make significant contributions to our economy.

Environment Protection Authority (EPA) licenced activities relate to the mineral resource extraction sector, resource recovery, waste and disposal, hydrocarbon and chemical-related activities.

Our planning system seeks to protect communities and the environment from risks associated with these emissions and hazardous activities, whilst ensuring industrial development can continue to operate through:

- Supporting a compatible land use mix through appropriate zoning controls.
- Appropriate separation distances between industrial sites that are incompatible with sensitive land uses.
- Controlling or minimising emissions at the source, or where emissions or impacts are unavoidable at the receiver.

Ensuring suitably zoned land with required infrastructure is available for a range of industrial and infrastructure uses provides greater certainty for industry, helps to safeguard our air, water and soil quality, and protects communities from unacceptable noise and/or other emissions.

Similarly, the location of future residential or employment growth land should be identified with a view to ensuring appropriate separation from established industries that may give rise to adverse noise and air quality impacts. The identification of growth areas will be guided by best practice policy and updated mapping with respect to established and designated industrial areas which may cause emissions or involve hazardous activities.

The Interface Management Code Amendment will further strengthen planning policies in relation to the management of interfaces between sensitive land uses and existing industrial and employment activities.

Communities and the environment should be protected from any hazards or risks associated with industry. The location of future residential or employment growth land should be identified with a view to ensuring appropriate separation from established industries that may give rise to adverse noise and air quality impacts. The identification of growth areas will be guided by best practice policy and updated mapping with respect to established and designated industrial areas which may cause emissions or involve hazardous activities.

Site contamination

The Code provides means by which relevant authorities can assess and manage risks posed by known or potential site contamination to enable the safe development and use of land.

It is critical that site contamination issues are identified and addressed to safeguard communities and the environment. Land should not be developed for more sensitive uses unless site contamination risks have been investigated and where necessary, appropriate fit for purpose remediation measures put in place.

With scientific understanding and technologies to assess and remediate site contamination constantly improving, the Commission seeks to oversee targeted improvements to site contamination policy and practice, where site contamination investigations and assessment are undertaken commensurate to the level of risk.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Interface Management	Identify significant lawfully operating industries that may benefit from improved interface policy such as the application of the Interface Management Overlay or Significant Interface Management Overlay.	2029	Environment Protection Authority	State-wide

Transport and Infrastructure

Theme:

Outcome 4: An integrated and connected region

Land use planning that is successfully integrated with transport, essential services and social infrastructure allows for more sustainable and coordinated growth, supporting economic productivity.

Source: Josh Geelen

Infrastructure refers to the physical assets and structures that enable the services necessary to sustain or enhance the economy, environment and liveability of South Australia.[21]

Effective infrastructure planning and delivery has a range of benefits. It can reduce commercial barriers, increase market access, and boost supply chain productivity. It also promotes social inclusion through improved connectivity and accessibility which can foster opportunity and enhance placemaking and amenities.

Transport

The region's transport networks are essential for moving resources and freight, while also providing access to goods, services, employment, education, and social opportunities. With its strategic geography, connecting four other states and territories, the Far North Region is a national freight hub. Transport by sea, road, rail, and air supports diverse industries. Given the significant distances, an efficient, safe, and reliable transport network is critical for liveability and future economic growth. Ensuring the extensive road network is maintained and there is a strategic approach to road investment is critical for a region that is reliant on road transport for freight, tourism and connectivity, including for remote pastoral communities.

Within the Far North, the Stuart Highway, sections of the Eyre and Lincoln Highways, the east-west rail line, Tarcoola and Darwin rail lines, and Crystal Brook to Broken Hill rail line serve as part of the National Land Transport Network. Outside these routes, the Birdsville Track, Strzelecki Track, Oodnadatta Track and William Creek Road are all key for transport between economic nodes and other key destinations. When these routes are closed due to extreme weather events, the remote communities and economic sites relying on these routes can have their land access severed or closed, leading to food security and production supply chain disruptions.

Rail is the dominant transport mode for freight movements between the eastern seaboard and Perth. It is projected to provide for over half of the freight tonnage from Sydney and Melbourne to Perth by 2030, and 63% of freight tonnage from Adelaide to Perth.[22] Port Augusta is a key intersection for road and rail from New South Wales to Western Australia, and South Australia to the Northern Territory. The Tarcoola to Darwin railway is a critical link that provides the only railway line connecting the Northern Territory to other parts of Australia. Spencer Junction in Port Augusta will continue to be one of Australia's busiest rail junctions.

Port Playford, located at Port Augusta, is the only proposed port in the Far North Region. Currently inactive, the proposal seeks to establish a new iron ore export port at the former Port Augusta power station site. The iron ore export port is being designed to handle and transport up to 5 million tonnes per annum of iron ore from mines in South Australia bound for the export market. Iron ore will be transported to the port using the existing rail line and stored in stockpiles prior to shipment at the new wharf.

Airports and airstrips provide essential services, healthcare and transport for workers in regional and remote employment areas. Primary airports include Port Augusta, Olympic Dam, and Coober Pedy, with additional airstrips like Marla, Roxby Downs, and Wilpena Pound supporting scenic flights.

Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure is comprised of the facilities, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities.

The provision of social infrastructure is delivered by Commonwealth, state and local governments, as well as the private sector. It can vary considerably in function and scale, such as a local swimming pool or a major regional hospital. Locating social infrastructure where it is needed most means planning and reserving land ahead of need. Accessibility should be integral to site selection and design.

In the region, growth should be focused in areas where existing social infrastructure such as schools, sporting and recreation facilities, and open space is already established to support ongoing viability. Increased and more accessible healthcare services (both traditional medicine and allied health) are needed to support existing communities and future growth.

Reserving land for essential services such as power and water is also critical to ensuring the ongoing productivity, health and wellbeing of our communities. Designing infrastructure with a view to the future, including climate change adaptation and carbon reduction, will help create robust and resilient places.

Telecommunications

Advancing telecommunications connectivity and access is a key priority for the region. Given the remoteness of some communities in the Far North, digital connectivity is important to ensure access to services necessary to daily life. However, access to quality telecommunication infrastructure currently varies across the region.

Improvements to mobile and broadband connectivity has the potential to generate new efficiencies for existing and emerging businesses throughout the region. With a growing dependence on digital connectivity and telecommunications to support the tourism industry, enhancing broadband and mobile connectivity will provide a significant opportunity for economic growth. Pukatja township, Leigh Creek Area School and Marree Aboriginal School will benefit from increased digital connectivity, which will also enhance connectivity for workers, residents and tourists. Expanding telecommunications from Hawker to Leigh Creek and Marree is a priority.

Strategic transport networks

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Enable a transport system that connects people and goods with opportunity, ensuring access to services, jobs, and markets across the region.

2. Strengthen regional connectivity by enhancing service quality and expanding travel choices, supporting inclusive communities and improving wellbeing.

3. Facilitate a transport system that drives regional prosperity, enabling economic growth, innovation, and productivity.

4. Identify and protect areas for future strategic transport infrastructure to meet growing demand for passenger and freight movement.

5. Advance an integrated and efficient transport network that boosts capacity, minimises disruption, and supports a more productive South Australia.

6. Support a transport system that is resilient, environmentally responsible, and financially sustainable.

Source: Heidi who photos

Transport is the backbone of South Australia's economy and lifestyle. It provides the linkages to support business activity, employment and trade,[23] and connects people with friends, family and the unique destinations across the region.[24]

The transport system is made up of a variety of transport modes that work together to move people and goods throughout the state and to interstate and international gateways. The government invests in, operates, and maintains a range of road, rail, public transport, cycleway and marine networks.

South Australia also relies on an efficient and reliable aviation sector and seaports. Aviation plays an essential role in tourism and provides critical transport, medical, business, education, social and other services to interstate and regional areas. Seaports, in conjunction with our freight road and rail lines and intermodals, are critical to the state's resource and mining sectors.

South Australia's Transport Strategy

South Australia's Transport Strategy prepared by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), is an overarching strategy document with a 30-year horizon that guides how infrastructure investment decisions will be made, justified and explained.

South Australia's Transport Strategy has been designed to:

- set the direction for future transport planning
- guide decisions on which projects to prioritise and invest in
- help ensure that our transport network is ready for the future
- ensure South Australia remains a great place to live and do business.

To facilitate integrated planning across government, *South Australia's Transport Strategy* sits amongst a suite of key long-term planning documents that work to define the aspirations and future direction of the state, including the *South Australian Economic Statement, South Australia's Net Zero Strategy 2024–2030*, *South Australia's 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy 2025*, and the *Greater Adelaide Regional Plan*.

As a seminal piece, *South Australia's Transport Strategy* guides and is supported by sub-strategies including the *Freight and Supply Chain Strategy* and *Road Safety Strategy* to 2031.

Read the *South Australia's Transport Strategy* for more information.

The region's strategic transport network is central to economic growth, providing fundamental linkages to support business activity, employment and trade. This network incorporates major national highways and strategic freight routes alongside key transport facilities including airstrips, seaport, intermodal and bulk handling facilities.

Port Augusta is at the crossroads for both rail and road linkages from Sydney to Perth and Adelaide to Darwin. These transport systems are of strategic significance and are therefore planned, delivered and protected differently to the local transport networks.

Road network

Approximately 92% of the region's roads are unsealed, limiting connectivity to national and international markets. Flood events regularly close key unsealed routes, impacting oil and gas facilities and basic access for passenger vehicles. Resilience upgrades, particularly to the Stuart Highway, Oodnadatta, and Birdsville Tracks, are vital for freight efficiency, tourism, and pastoral industries. The Strzelecki Track plays a key role in supporting the movement of commodities and is currently undergoing a $215 million full-length sealing and upgrade as a priority.

Road renewal, corridor duplications and overtaking lanes will strengthen the network, improving safety and productivity.

Freight and supply chain networks

South Australia's freight task is managed through intrastate, interstate and international supply chains, with most of the freight travelling via road (>77%),[25] followed by sea, rail and air.

Freight demand will continue to grow as population and industry grows. A well-functioning freight and supply chain sector relies on a physical network that can safely support the current and future freight task. Improving freight and supply chains improves efficiency and contributes to economic growth.

Intermodal facilities support the transfer of freight between different modes. The Port Augusta intermodal features 24/7 operation, semi-trailer access, handling capacity of 3,000 containers per annum, and provides greater synchronisation of land transport, providing benefits for the agriculture, mining and renewable energy sectors in the Upper Spencer Gulf.[26]

An agreement between mining companies and rail freight providers to transport copper concentrate and cathode from mining operations in the region's north via rail between Pimba and Port Adelaide will see a major shift to an integrated rail, road, and port logistics solution. This outcome will effectively replace an estimated 11,000 truck movements from South Australian roads per year.[27]

The strategic use and integration of intermodal exchanges improves the efficiency of freight transport by maximising the ability to combine appropriate freight modes for each section of a freight journey.

Strategic planning must facilitate growth, improve safety outcomes and promote greater cohesion between competing land uses by ensuring freight networks are accommodated and appropriately incorporated into the built environment.

Enhancing electric vehicle charging infrastructure and investigating potential battery swap networks for freight vehicles along key freight routes will encourage the transition of freight and passenger vehicles to zero emission technologies. These upgrades should focus on the Lincoln, Eyre, Stuart, Barrier and Olympic Dam Highways. Continued improvements to the road transport network are seen as essential to supporting industry growth, particularly to accommodate future increases in visitation from southwest Queensland.

High Productivity Vehicle Network Project

The High Productivity Vehicle Network Project led by DIT comprises a corridor from the South Australian and Victorian border through to the South Australian and Western Australian border. This includes the Eyre, Sturt, Augusta and Dukes Highways as well as connecting routes around Greater Adelaide and to Outer Harbour.

The project is focused on improving freight productivity on existing corridors by moving more freight with less vehicles, enhancing safety for all road users.

Learn more about the project: High Productivity Vehicle Network Project - Department for Infrastructure and Transport - South Australia

Local transport networks

Local transport networks are planned for at the local government level and include roads, cycling and walking routes. These networks feed into and support the strategic transport networks provided by the Australian and state government, and are crucial to linking people with the places they live, work and visit.

Different roads and corridors have different functions that should be understood at the local-level and influence long-term planning. The Movement and Place approach recognises that the function of transport connections can be the movement of people (Movement), or act as a destination in their own right (Place).

From a planning perspective, Movement and Place often compete. Great Movement corridors are fast, efficient and minimise travel time, whereas great Places encourage us to linger, stay and extend our time in an area. Establishing the right balance between the two is vital. The *Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan* will also include opportunities to better manage these competing functions.

Understanding the envisaged functions of transport networks is essential to guide infrastructure investment and urban design approaches that support local movement. Central to the Movement and Place methodology is a two-part classification system that categorises a street or its segment according to its strategic importance as a conduit for Movement and as a destination. This methodology is further explained in *South Australia's Active Travel Design Guide*.

Air transport

Given the sparse nature of the Far North Region, the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) and other service providers rely on maintained and accessible airstrips for coverage to respond to emergencies and provide goods and services to townships and localities. While there are no regular passenger transport flights to Port Augusta, the airport is a hub for 'fly-in-fly-out' operations to many mines in the north of the state and is as an important base for the RFDS. It is important that development close to the airport does not compromise ongoing operations.

With a combination of sealed and unsealed airstrips scattered throughout the region providing for both private and emergency use, developing a hierarchy of airstrips and sealed emergency airstrips is a priority.

The Australian Government has committed $50 million in the 2024-25 Budget to the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program, with previous funding supporting upgrades to Nipapanha (Nepabunna) Angepena and Blinman Airstrips in the region.

Public transport

The use of public transport in the Far North Region is low. Buses are the only form of public transport available, with long distance connections between Port Augusta and Adelaide and selected routes continuing through to Alice Springs, Broken Hill and Copley. Services - also run from Alice Springs to the APY Lands. Community services are provided by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport within Port Augusta.

Public Transport Strategy

The development of *South Australia's Transport Strategy* will be followed by an accompanying *Public Transport Strategy* to inform strategic prioritisation and investment in the state's public transport network, including how we:

- support population and economic growth
- strengthen connections to our regions
- respond to changing demand and travel patterns.

This Strategy is currently being developed and is expected to be finalised by 2026.

Source: Public Transport Strategy - Department for Infrastructure and Transport - South Australia

Planning for transport infrastructure

Planned and existing transport infrastructure should be supported by the planning system. There are a range of statutory instruments that support the creation and protection of transport corridors, including the identification of infrastructure corridors and reserves in the regional plans. In addition, section 129 of the PDI Act sets out a process to reserve land and streamline approval processes for infrastructure through the creation of an 'infrastructure reserve' in the Code.

There are four stages of infrastructure delivery where different planning approaches can be used:

1. **Potential infrastructure** is the least certain in terms of infrastructure delivery. It is future or potential infrastructure, identified as required in an approved state policy or strategy and eventually will be identified in the Plan. Planning should ensure that the ability to deliver this opportunity is maintained.

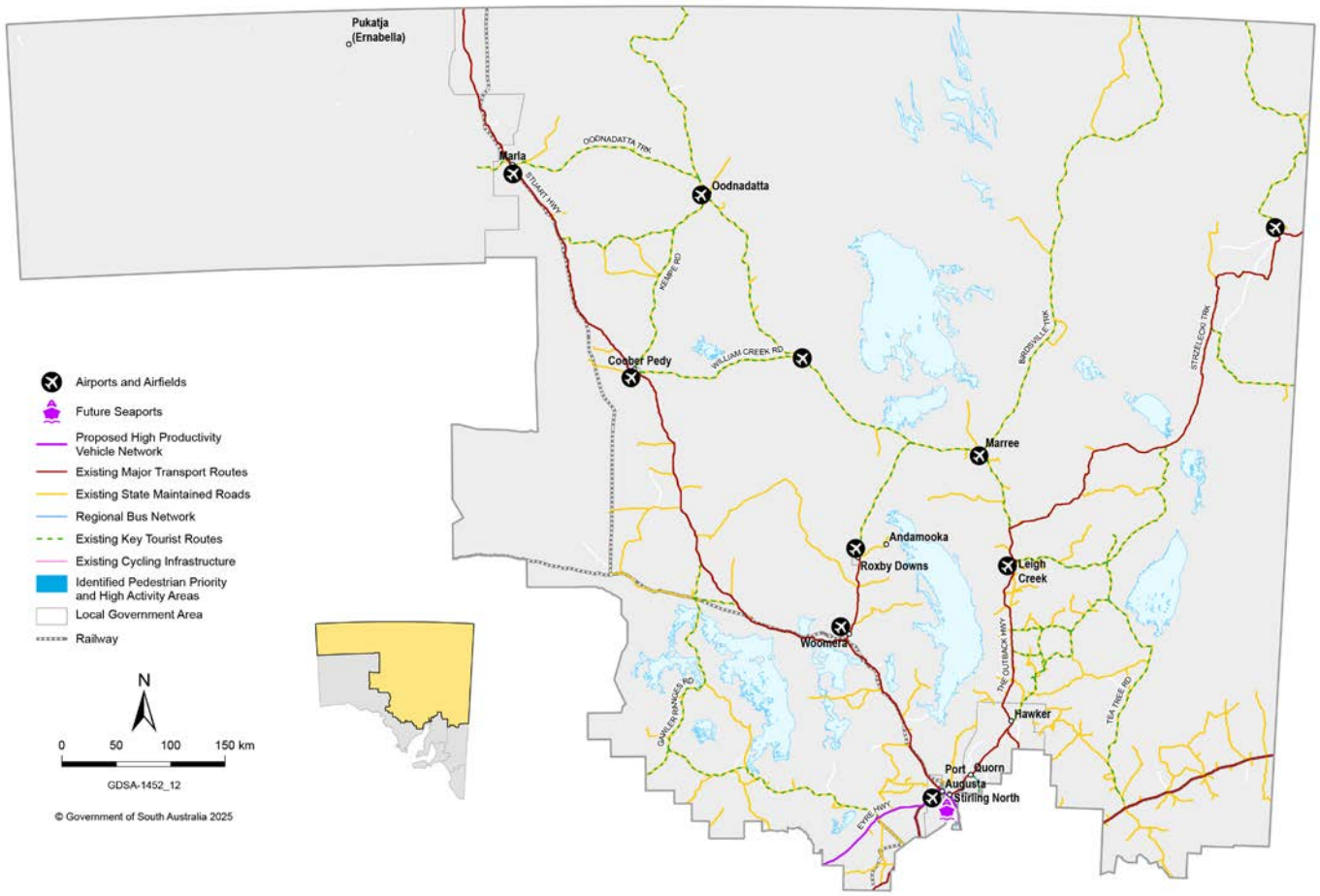
2. **Planned infrastructure** is land reserved through identification in the Plan and the Code.

3. **Infrastructure in delivery** is infrastructure that is under construction with planning controls in place to support delivery. Overlays within the Code should be used to protect this infrastructure from inappropriate development (i.e. to control access).

4. **Built infrastructure** is the most certain for planning purpose and the response is generally to protect and improve infrastructure that is already available. This may include strategically planning for growth to capitalise on the opportunity.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Remote and Regional Aviation Strategy	Incorporate any planning and land use related outcomes from the Remote and Regional Aviation Strategy such as any Code amendments.	2028	Department for Infrastructure and Transport	State-wide



Strategic transport networks

Integrated water management, security and quality

Long-term strategic objectives

1. The Far North Region's water resources support a healthy environment, vibrant communities and a strong economy.

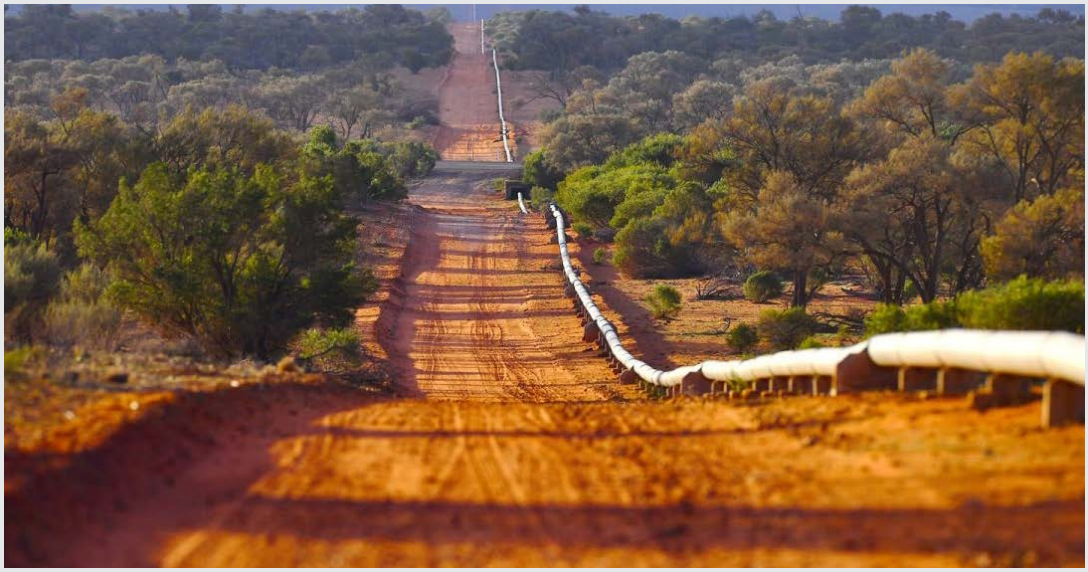
2. The region's water sources and supporting infrastructure are resilient and meet the needs of the population and economy while balancing affordability.

3. An adaptive planning approach supports clearly defined benchmarks for investment in water and wastewater system options.

4. Water and wastewater systems use integrated and innovative solutions to support housing and employment growth.

5. Urban areas utilise water sensitive urban design principles to integrate the water cycle into the built environment and enhance the urban environment through the sustainable use and treatment of water.

There is increasing pressure on scarce water resources to support growing towns and localities, and expansion of industrial and mining operations in a changing climate. Adaptive solutions are required to meet the needs of the Far North Region while also conserving water-dependent ecosystems and respecting the water-related cultural values of the Aboriginal peoples of the region.



Source: SA Government/Office of Northern Water Delivery

The Far North Region faces unique water security challenges associated with the vast geographic area and arid environment.

Water for human and economic uses in this region is primarily sourced from the River Murray (Port Augusta) and groundwater systems, including the Great Artesian Basin. Some communities are supplied drinking water through groundwater desalination systems, where local groundwater sources are too saline for drinking purposes. Surface water in this region is associated with ephemeral watercourses which are extremely variable in volume and quality.

Olympic Dam (BHP)[28] and Roxby Downs[29] are a significant economic activity presence in the region and are both reliant on the Great Artesian Basin for their water security.

The allocation of Great Artesian Basin water in South Australia is in accordance with the Far North Prescribed Wells Area (PWA) Water Allocation Plan[30] and the Indenture Act that relates to the Olympic Dam mining operation. The Water Allocation Plan is developed by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board and implemented by the Department for Environment and Water.

Water from the River Murray is treated to drinking water standards and supplied to Port Augusta via the Morgan-Whyalla Pipeline, which transfers water through this region and beyond - as far as Ceduna in the state's far west. SA Water is replacing sections of the pipeline to maintain the reliability of the water network and ensure demand for safe, clean drinking water now and into the future is met.

Key water demands across the region are associated with mining, industrial activity and primary production.

Planning for future water

Planning for future water needs requires projections of both supply and demand as they change over time. Both are influenced by variables such as climate change, population growth, demographics and economic conditions.

Modelling this can indicate the volume of water required to meet the projected needs under different plausible scenarios. It is also important to ensure that water supply can be maintained during extreme events such as drought, bushfire, or flood events and can maintain the health of our natural environments. Projections of future water demand also inform the design of water treatment and distribution infrastructure.

There is often a high cost associated with building resilience into water systems and long lead-in times required for options to have their desired impact. An adaptive planning approach is required with clearly defined triggers for decision-making to enable the identification and evaluation of alternative adaptative pathways rather than committing to a fixed long-term plan.

The Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program, an Australian Government initiative, has developed the *Outback SA Drought Resilience Plan* for the Far North and Outback,[31] covering sections of Eyre and Western and Murray Mallee Regions (but excluding the APY Lands). It identifies actions to prepare for future droughts and consider needs and priorities to inform future investment.

The proposed Northern Water Supply project[32] is currently at business case preparation stage. Should this project ultimately proceed, its current primary aim is to provide a new, climate-independent water source to support industrial and mining growth in the Upper Spencer Gulf and the Far North regions of the state. If this project were to proceed, it could present water security opportunities for locations along the proposed pipeline's alignment.

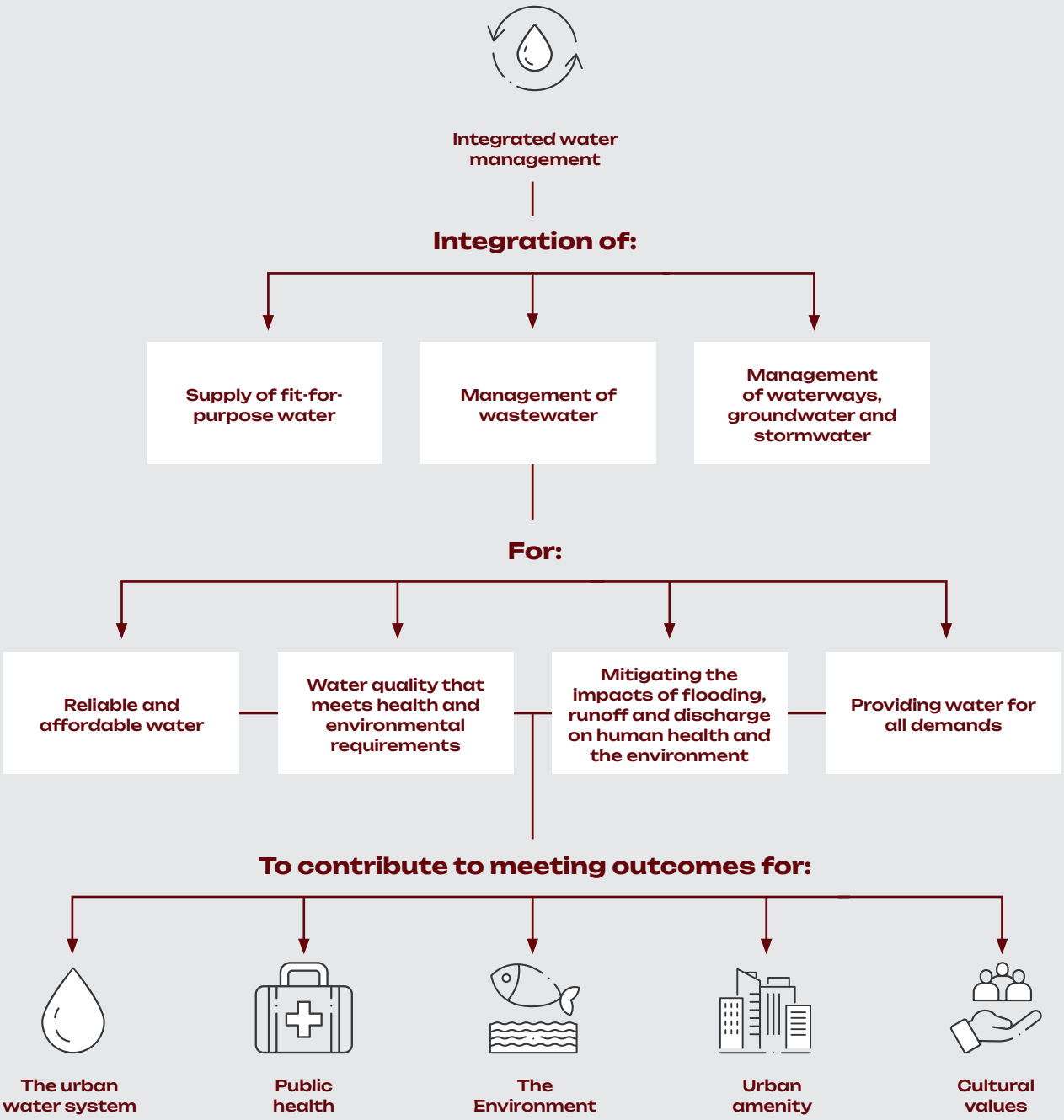
Integrated water management

Integrated water management considers how the delivery of water, wastewater and stormwater services can contribute to water security, public and environmental health and urban amenity.

All water sources will need to be considered to support future growth in a drying and warming climate. These sources include surface water (e.g. River Murray, reservoirs and dams, rainwater), groundwater, desalinated water (sourced from seawater or groundwater), stormwater harvesting, recycled water and purified recycled water.

Enhanced cooperation in the delivery of water, wastewater, recycled water and stormwater services is required to support water security, public health, environmental, urban amenity and cultural outcomes that South Australians value and expect.

Integrated water management overview[33]



Case study: Sewer mining to source recycled water for sport field irrigation, Port Augusta

A major water recycling challenge is the need and cost of transporting water from wastewater treatment plants to places where the recycled water can be used. Sewer mining largely avoids the need for major pipe networks. Sewer mining involves tapping into a sewer line to divert or extract wastewater, which is then treated extensively to produce high-quality water that can be used locally. Advances in sewer mining and sewage treatment technologies mean that sewer mining is becoming an increasingly efficient and potentially more cost-effective way of supplying water suitable for irrigation of parks, sports fields and golf courses.

The Port Augusta City Council is a proven leader in water reuse, driven by its desire to provide the best parks and gardens it can for the community. The Council began investigating the possibilities of water reuse in the late 1990s and in 2006 opened its wastewater treatment plant at Central Oval. This plant uses a sewer mining process to access untreated wastewater from the nearby SA Water sewage pump station. Once treated, the water is available for irrigating green spaces such as the Central Oval, foreshore, and other parks and gardens.

In addition to River Murray supply to Port Augusta, SA Water maintains groundwater supply systems (with and without desalination) to towns in the Flinders Ranges and beyond, including Quorn, Hawker, Parachilna, Marla, Maree and Oodnadatta. Quorn is one of three priority townships in the state identified for an improvement in drinking water aesthetics, in SA Water's long-term planning for regional drinking water supplies.[34] This is also supported by the *Regional Development South Australia Infrastructure Prioritisation report* as a high priority.[35] Timing for improvements to drinking water aesthetics will be determined as part of investment prioritisation in future planning cycles.

In the Aṉangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands and Maralinga Tjarutja Lands, SA Water provides water supply and wastewater management services that enable ongoing connection to Country for these most remote of localities in South Australia. These water supply systems also rely on local groundwater. Similarly, many self-supplied Aboriginal communities[36] and pastoral operations across the region also rely on groundwater.

A reticulated wastewater system provides better environmental and public health outcomes (compared with on-site disposal) and provides a coordinated collection system for easier water recycling.[37]

The supply of wastewater from SA Water wastewater treatment plants and local government Community Wastewater Management Schemes (CWMS), together with stormwater capture and reuse, are all becoming increasingly important to meet water demand and reduce environmental impact. However, on-site solutions, including new technologies that avoid wastewater entering surface water or ground water will continue to be viable, where new large-scale infrastructure or augmentation is not cost effective.

Stormwater management, from large scale capture and reuse schemes (managed aquifer recharge), through to street scale infrastructure, plays an increasingly important role in managing the quantity and quality of urban runoff, alongside realising urban greening and cooling benefits. Through day-to-day development planning and implementation of stormwater management plans by councils, the risks arising from stormwater and floods can be managed, alongside realising the aforementioned opportunities and benefits of stormwater capture and reuse at multiple scales.

Water sensitive urban design

The region's low rainfall and long, hot, dry summers mean that water availability is potentially a limiting factor for successful urban greening that can meaningfully mitigate high temperatures. Unless carefully planned for, many trees and other vegetation planted in today's climate may not thrive, or even survive, without significant irrigation water. The careful selection of plant species, with a particular focus on species that are native to the area, will improve the viability of urban greening initiatives.

Urban environments often disrupt the natural relationship between water and vegetation. Hard surfaces like conventional roads, rooftops and other hard surfaces prevent rainwater from infiltrating the soil, while conventional stormwater systems rapidly channel runoff into natural water bodies. For example, in Port Augusta, water drains directly into the Upper Spencer Gulf. This not only reduces water availability for plants but also introduces pollutants and alters flow regimes, putting pressure on aquatic ecosystems.

To address these challenges, it is essential to:

- Reduce impermeable surfaces to improve stormwater infiltration.
- Retain soil moisture and expand space for vegetation.
- Mitigate the urban heat island effect.
- Enhance biodiversity.
- Protect existing trees and enhance planting diversity.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) is a holistic approach to the planning and design of urban environments that integrates all elements of the water cycle (including drinking water, wastewater and stormwater) with the built and natural landscape.

By capturing rainfall and stormwater at the source, filtering it through natural systems, and reintegrating it back into the environment via passive irrigation or reticulated supply, WSUD contributes directly to the community's goals for urban greening and climate resilience. These blue-green assets including wetlands, biofilters, infiltration systems, permeable paving can transform the urban landscape, enhance the area's biodiversity and create spaces for the community to connect with nature.

This integrated approach also delivers significant ecological benefits, including enhanced health and resilience of local waterways and coastal ecosystems.

The planning system plays a pivotal role in shaping WSUD outcomes. Through thoughtful design, new developments can safeguard mature trees, increase site permeability, and provide adequate space and infrastructure for urban greening.

Integrating WSUD into residential and commercial projects, including carparks, can improve water quality, support vegetation growth, and enhance community resilience.

To strengthen the region's response to urban greening and cooling, a coordinated approach is needed. This includes:

- Policy improvements.
- Community education and advisory materials.
- Incentives for best practices.
- Evidence-based decision-making supported by robust data.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Water Infrastructure Strategy	Development of a water strategy for the Far North Region which will address the demands of SA Water's existing and potential future customers and consider all sources of water, and long-term master planning to support the planning of key growth areas	11/2025-01/2029	SA Water	Far North

Social infrastructure

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Co-locate shared facilities in mixed-use areas within townships that combine health, education and social facilities with residential and commercial development to drive collaboration, job creation, learning and innovation.

2. Provide opportunities for compatible non-residential uses such as education, health, recreational and community services near where people live.

3. Focus new population and housing in locations where there is access to services and where population will support the ongoing viability of social infrastructure.

4. Provide easy access to social infrastructure benchmarks to enable the consideration of priority areas for additional social infrastructure capacity.

5. Support the expansion and upgrading of mobile and broadband networks across the region to ensure reliable digital connectivity for residents, businesses, and essential services, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

6. Facilitate the development of digital infrastructure that supports emerging industries, smart agriculture, regional entrepreneurship, and innovation hubs.

Equitable and inclusive social infrastructure involves the thoughtful planning, design, and delivery of community facilities, spaces, and services that are accessible and beneficial to all residents, regardless of background or circumstance. It seeks to address historical and systemic inequalities, fostering social inclusion, community wellbeing, and sustainable urban development.

Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure is the interdependent mix of facilities, places, spaces, programs, projects, services and networks that maintain and improve the standard of living and quality of life in a community. Examples of Social Infrastructure Assets include schools, universities, hospitals, prisons and community housing.

Demand for social infrastructure will increase significantly over the next 15- to 30-years in the region, driven by population growth, an ageing population, and migration. These factors will also change the expectations that people have for the variety, quality and accessibility of social infrastructure services and assets.[38] While these changes present challenges, advancements in technology offers opportunities to enhance the utility and accessibility of services for individuals and communities.

Delivery of social infrastructure

The government is responsible for planning, regulating, funding and operating the state's largest social infrastructure assets. This includes social housing, education facilities, health services, and justice and emergency services. Private and not-for-profit providers also play a significant role in service delivery.

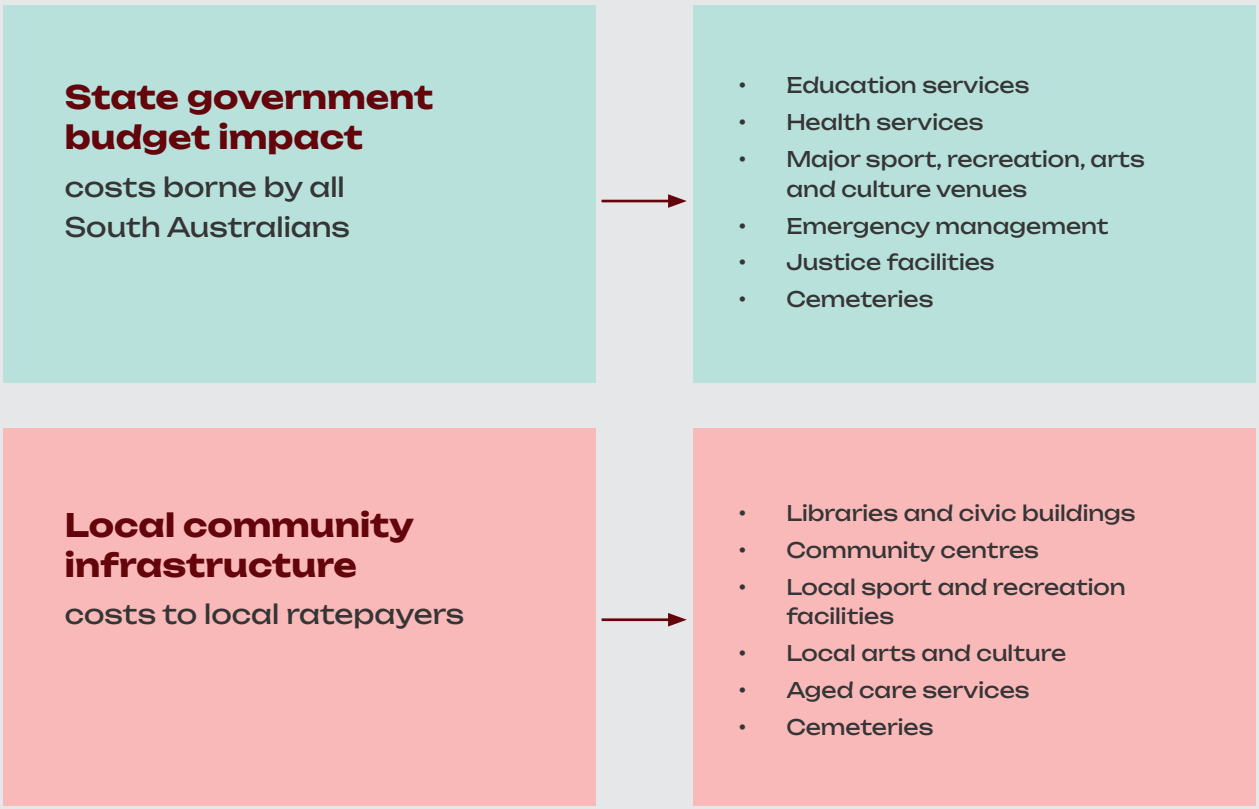
Accessibility and quality of social infrastructure can vary for different types of social infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable groups. Often, the planning and delivery of social infrastructure lags behind the demand for housing.

The Plan's strategic direction recognises the need for integrated planning and can inform social infrastructure planning to support the region's growing and changing communities. Effective strategic planning can reduce barriers to access, improve social inclusion, support employment, and enhance resilience, whilst recognising that the planning and management of social infrastructure is complex.

Government and inter-regional partnership's ability to share capacity may assist some locations. However, interventions are required to provide more spaces in aged care facilities, improve community care infrastructure, and establish specialised healthcare assets which facilitate treatment and rehabilitation services for disabled people.

Responsibility for policy development, funding and service delivery lies across all levels of government, while the role of private and not-for-profit providers is also recognised.

Responsibilities for social infrastructure provision



Future housing and employment land for the region will be prioritised to maximise the use of existing, committed, and planned utility and transport infrastructure. These areas also make the best use of existing and planned social infrastructure, including schools, hospital and aged care facilities, and recreational facilities.

Education services

Education infrastructure is the buildings, facilities and campuses which support learning for both children and adults, including:

- early childhood education
- primary and secondary education
- tertiary education.

The number of school-aged children will increase by over 18,000 over the next 20 years, placing increased demands on existing education facilities.[39]

The average building age across public schools, pre-schools and children centres is approximately 44 years old in South Australia, with 75% of education assets projected to be at or beyond end of life by 2052.[40]

Fregon Aṉangu School in the APY Lands is undergoing a $33.2 million facility upgrade, due for completion in 2025. The upgrade plans include the construction of new buildings and food technology and administration facilities, with external works and landscaping also set to be delivered. The Port Augusta Technical College, which opened in 2025, will provide modern facilities for hundreds of school students each year to train with employers for careers in key industries in the region.

Consideration will need to be given as to how to best upgrade and increase capacity of existing assets in different contexts, based on land holding constraints and demand.

TAFE SA and public universities

Port Augusta TAFE SA campus offers courses that have been developed in collaboration with industry to ensure the training and education needs of the local community is met.

Uni Hub Spencer Gulf is a not-for-profit, community-owned and driven tertiary education facility that brings educational opportunities to people in the Spencer Gulf region. With Centres in Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Kadina, Port Lincoln and an outreach service in Roxby Downs, the Uni Hub provides the opportunity for people to study a range of tertiary courses without the need to relocate to a metropolitan area.

Health services

Health services are delivered by a variety of public and private providers in a range of settings and includes illness prevention, health promotion, the detection and treatment of illness, rehabilitation and end-of-life care.[41]

Our growing and ageing population places increased pressures on health systems. Our health infrastructure faces challenges due to its scale, age, complexity and fragmented nature.[42]

Different areas across the region have varying levels of healthcare needs. Consideration will need to be made over time regarding how the health system can provide more distributed community health services to reduce pressure on the state's hospital system and provide improved access to healthcare, particularly in regional areas,[43] while recognising that some health services require a critical population mass to operate efficiently.

Notable projects in the region include upgrades to Port Augusta Hospital and the new $2 million RFDS virtual emergency telehealth centre in William Creek. The centre is an example of integrated planning in a remote and sparsely populated area. It will connect the community and tourists passing through on the Oodnadatta Track or visiting Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre with a doctor in Port Augusta or Adelaide via video link, and coordinate transport by an RFDS plane to these cities if required.

Justice and emergency facilities

Justice and emergency services infrastructure comprises the buildings and facilities which protect and support the safety of our communities.

Justice infrastructure includes police stations, courts, correctional facilities, and forensic health facilities.

Other emergency services infrastructure includes fire and ambulance stations, and other state and local emergency response facilities, such as state emergency services.

Planning for and managing risks from natural hazards is critical to ensuring the ongoing liveability, resilience and safety of our communities. This includes ensuring we plan and provide future capacity for emergency services, such as the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS), the South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS) and South Australian State Emergency Service (SES).

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) ensures that volunteers and employees across the fire and emergency services sector are provided within the resources and support they need to conduct vital emergency services work.[44]

Recreation and sport facilities

While local government is typically the major provider for community-scale recreation and sport facilities, the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing sets out strategies to support state places and spaces, including:

- Supporting the delivery of the state's significant active places and spaces.
- Optimising the utilisation of places and spaces for active living.[45]

As the population in the region continues to grow, the need for communities to have access to appropriately sized and fit-for-purpose open space including sporting facilities becomes increasingly important.

Having services in place in advance of fully realised demand is a challenge. Given this, it is important that engagement between developers (if involved), councils, state sporting organisations and state government occurs early in the land use planning process.

Many sporting facilities across the region are ageing and in need of major redevelopment, or in some cases replacement, to remain fit-for-purpose and sustainable to operate and maintain.

There are opportunities to identify current or new sites for the development of multi-use community sporting hubs which are designed and programmed to meet a broad range of community services of not only sport and recreation, but other services such as childcare centres or allied health services.

Social housing

Social housing is the umbrella term for public and community housing. Currently there are around 43,000 households living in social housing in South Australia.[46]

The South Australia Housing Trust's (SAHT) public housing services are part of a greater social housing support system. Public housing provides housing to those most in need in our communities, and who are at greatest risk of becoming homeless. The Trust delivers a range of public housing services, including low rental housing options and housing for Aboriginal peoples.

Other social housing options include community housing provided and managed by organisations who are independent of government. They have strong links to their community and provide housing to specific groups in the community.[47]

National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness

Discussions are continuing with the Australian Government about housing initiatives and seeking further funding to support public and social housing.

As part of the new *National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness*, the Australian Government will provide the state government with $67 million to enable infrastructure to expediate housing development and new social housing.

Source: HousingRoadmap.pdf (treasury.sa.gov.au)

Telecommunications

Digital connectivity is critically important in the region due to its role in bridging geographic isolation, supporting economic development, and improving access to essential services.

In the Far North where communities are widely dispersed and transport options are limited, reliable digital connectivity is a lifeline. It enables residents and businesses to access online services, participate in remote education and telehealth, and engage in e-commerce and digital agriculture. For farmers and producers, connectivity supports precision agriculture, real-time market access, and supply chain coordination. It also enhances emergency response capabilities and community resilience by allowing timely communication and access to critical information.

Mobile Black Spot Program

The Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) is an Australian Government initiative that invests in telecommunications infrastructure to improve mobile coverage and competition across Australia.

Under the MBSP to date (Rounds 1 to 7), the government's commitment has generated a total investment of more than $1 billion, to deliver up to 1,400 new mobile base stations across Australia.

Rounds 1 to 7 have been supported by co-contributions from a range of third parties including state and local governments, and telecommunications industry grantees that are national mobile network operators and mobile network infrastructure providers.

The Far North Region has benefited from several mobile network upgrades through the MBSP, aimed at improving connectivity in remote and underserved areas. These upgrades were part of multiple funding rounds, with Round 4 delivering coverage to locations such as Arkaroola Village, Cadney Park, Cradock, Wirreanda, Flinders Ranges Way, Lyndhurst and Pichi Richi; and Round 5 adding Farina to the list.

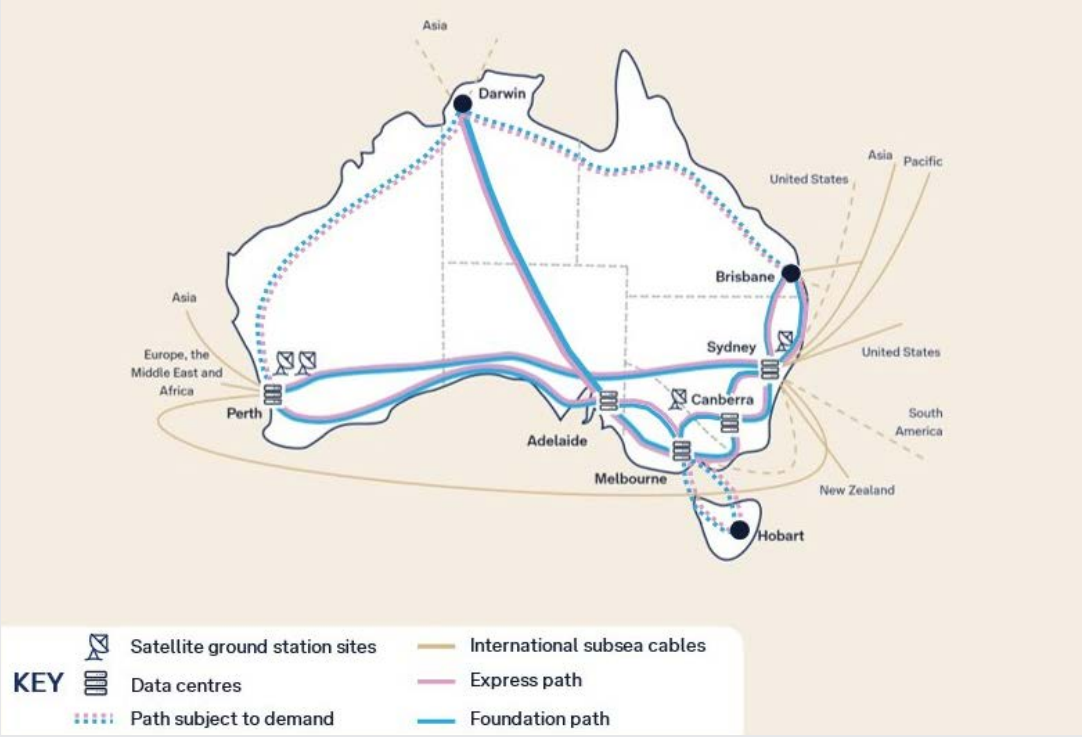
These initiatives are designed to enhance mobile coverage for residents, businesses, and emergency services, supporting both safety and economic development. The upgrades are particularly valuable for agriculture, tourism, and regional communities that rely on reliable digital access.

As the region transitions toward smart infrastructure and zero-emission technologies, digital networks will be essential for managing electric vehicle charging, freight logistics, and data-driven planning. Without strong digital infrastructure, the region risks falling behind in competitiveness, innovation, and social equity.

Intercity Fibre Network

The Intercity Fibre Network is an Australian Government initiative that invests in Telstra's intercity fibre network. It is a major infrastructure project designed to meet Australia's growing demand for high-speed, high-capacity internet. Built by Telstra InfraCo, the network features ultra-low latency fibre technology and will span nearly 14,000 kilometres, connecting major cities across the country and extending access to regional and remote areas. This initiative aims to future-proof Australia's digital connectivity for the next two decades, ensuring that as more people and industries rely on data-intensive services, the network remains fast and reliable.

Currently under construction in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory, the network includes key routes such as the upcoming Darwin to Adelaide connection, set to begin in 2025. Over 2,000 kilometres of fibre have already been laid, with additional builds planned in high-demand regions like the Pilbara. The sectors expected to benefit most include telecommunications, cloud services, finance, healthcare, education, logistics, and agriculture—particularly in data-heavy areas like mining and rural development.



Social infrastructure benchmarking

To facilitate early planning for future social services and assets, Infrastructure SA, in conjunction with state agencies, have prepared benchmark principles based on cost and population for expansion of social infrastructure.

The social infrastructure benchmarking, as well as population projections, will form the initial basis for considering thresholds and capacity. Additional engagement with agencies and local government throughout the structure planning process should inform the specific needs of a locality.

Thresholds will be maintained for state-level social infrastructure by the Growth and Infrastructure Coordination Unit to ensure transparent infrastructure planning benchmarks inform state, local and private planning processes.

The use of agreed growth projections and monitoring and agreed infrastructure thresholds will be critical for alignment of land use planning and infrastructure delivery.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Social Infrastructure	Establish and maintain publicly available social infrastructure benchmarks to assist with planning for new growth areas.	2026	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide

Energy

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Support the ongoing provision of sustainable, reliable and affordable energy options that meet the needs of community, business and industry, and that takes advantage of South Australia's success in renewable electricity generation and transition to a decarbonised economy.

2. Identify the appropriate location and types of infrastructure assets required for future energy requirements for housing business and industry growth.

3. Minimise the impacts of encroachments by incompatible land uses near energy supply infrastructure and corridors taking a risk-based approach that supports public safety and security of energy supply.

4. Minimise the encroachment of energy supply infrastructure into productive agricultural land, areas of remnant native vegetation.

5. Provide electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure that is readily available and accessible to users.

6. Facilitate renewable energy generation and storage including small-scale decentralised energy supplies to support agriculture, industry and communities in isolated locations.

Source: SCLifestyle - Adobe Stock

The provision of sustainable, reliable and affordable energy is essential in meeting the basic needs of communities and ensuring the long-term supply of housing, businesses, services, economies and future enterprises. Renewable and sustainable energy supply is also critical to a successful decarbonised economy in mitigating the impacts of climate change (refer to Climate change).

South Australia is at the forefront of change, with the highest per-capita percentage of rooftop solar photovoltaic installations in Australia and the second largest wind-to-load ratio in the world (2024). While these emerging technologies and economic factors are contributing to a reduction in the energy consumed from the grid, the transmission and distribution network will continue to play a vital role into the future.

South Australia's renewable energy generation

South Australia generates more than 70% of its electricity from renewable sources. By 2025-2026, this is projected to reach 85%, with a target of 100% net renewable energy by 2027.

Clean electricity is essential to South Australia meeting its commitment to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030 (compared to 2005 levels).

Off-grid energy systems generate electricity for homes, businesses, communities and towns. They can be standalone or mini grids.

Standalone systems usually generate electricity from solar photovoltaic panels, wind turbines or diesel generators, and store it using battery or fuel cell technology.

Mini grids, also called micro-grids, comprise a set of electricity generators and may include energy storage systems connected to a distribution network. The energy is provided to a local group of consumers.

Source Our electricity supply and market | Energy & Mining (energymining.sa.gov.au)

Electricity infrastructure

Strategic electricity infrastructure including substations, transmission lines, and distribution networks require ongoing protection from incompatible land uses. Collaboration with electricity infrastructure providers is needed to identify future strategic corridors that will meet the region's long-term energy needs.

As highlighted in ElectraNet's 2024 *Network Transition Strategy*, the development of major transmission assets typically requires five to seven years from initial planning to delivery. Failure to plan adequately can potentially delay development and increase costs.[48]

The construction of South Australia's component of Project EnergyConnect, a new high-voltage interconnector between South Australia and New South Wales, was completed in December 2023.

The project will ultimately help improve the security and resilience of the state's power system and enable more renewable energy development exports.

Decentralised renewable energy generation could also supplement the region's current electricity network, particularly in isolated locations where small-scale generation can support agricultural operations, industry, tourism development, small-scale residential communities and workers' accommodation.

While the majority of the region is connected to the electricity grid, the state government's Remote Area Energy Supply (RAES) scheme supplies remote towns and Aboriginal communities across APY Lands. Independent owner-operators supply electricity to customers in Andamooka and Coober Pedy. Renewable energy has been developed in Umuwa, servicing a section of APY Lands, Oodnadatta, Coober Pedy (through EDL Energy and the District Council of Coober Pedy) and Manna Hill.

Off-grid energy

An off-grid project is defined as one requiring a power supply of more than 10 kW that is not connected to one of Australia's large-scale electricity grids: the National Electricity Market, the South West Interconnected System or the North West Interconnected System.

Off-grid energy systems enable households, businesses, communities and towns to become self-sufficient. They are particularly valuable in remote areas were establishing a mini grid may be cheaper than connecting to a large-scale grid.

Off-grid energy systems present a great opportunity for self-sufficient generation, storage and consumption of renewable energy, particularly in remote areas in the region.

Source Off-grid energy | Energy & Mining

Future energy innovation

Looking ahead, the development of smart, energy-efficient buildings will be essential. These buildings can optimise energy use and participate in demand-side flexibility programs, shifting consumption to times when electricity is more abundant and affordable. The government's Energy Masters collaboration with SA Power Networks to trial and demand flexibility and home energy management technologies is a good example of these new innovations.

The planning system can further support this evolving energy landscape by accommodating emerging green technologies, battery storage (including community batteries), electric vehicle infrastructure, and future innovations that will arise alongside urban growth and regional development.

Infrastructure corridors and reserve

Long-term strategic objectives

1. **Identify and set aside land required for future strategic infrastructure corridors and facilities, including to accommodate growth, new technologies and changing demands.**

2. **Plan and coordinate infrastructure reserves to service multiple uses including opportunities for regional open space and recreation opportunities.**

3. **Reserve land to facilitate new essential and social infrastructure through structure planning and establishing infrastructure reserves in the Code.**

To support growing communities, it's essential to plan infrastructure needs early. By reserving land before development begins, we can ensure that critical infrastructure is delivered efficiently and with greater certainty. This proactive approach helps future-proof regions and the state by securing space for key infrastructure such as:

- Electricity generation, distribution, and transmission.
- Gas transmission pipelines.
- Water and sewerage infrastructure.
- Transport networks (roads, ports, wharfs, jetties, airports, and freight-handling facilities).
- Digital connectivity infrastructure.
- Health, education, community, police, justice, and emergency services.
- Coastal hazard adaptation infrastructure.

Section 129 of the PDI Act provides a streamlined approval process for essential infrastructure proposed within an infrastructure reserve. Infrastructure agencies and service providers are encouraged to use this mechanism to:

- Reserve corridors or sites for future infrastructure.
- Plan for the replacement or upgrade of ageing assets.
- Align long-term infrastructure planning with projected growth.

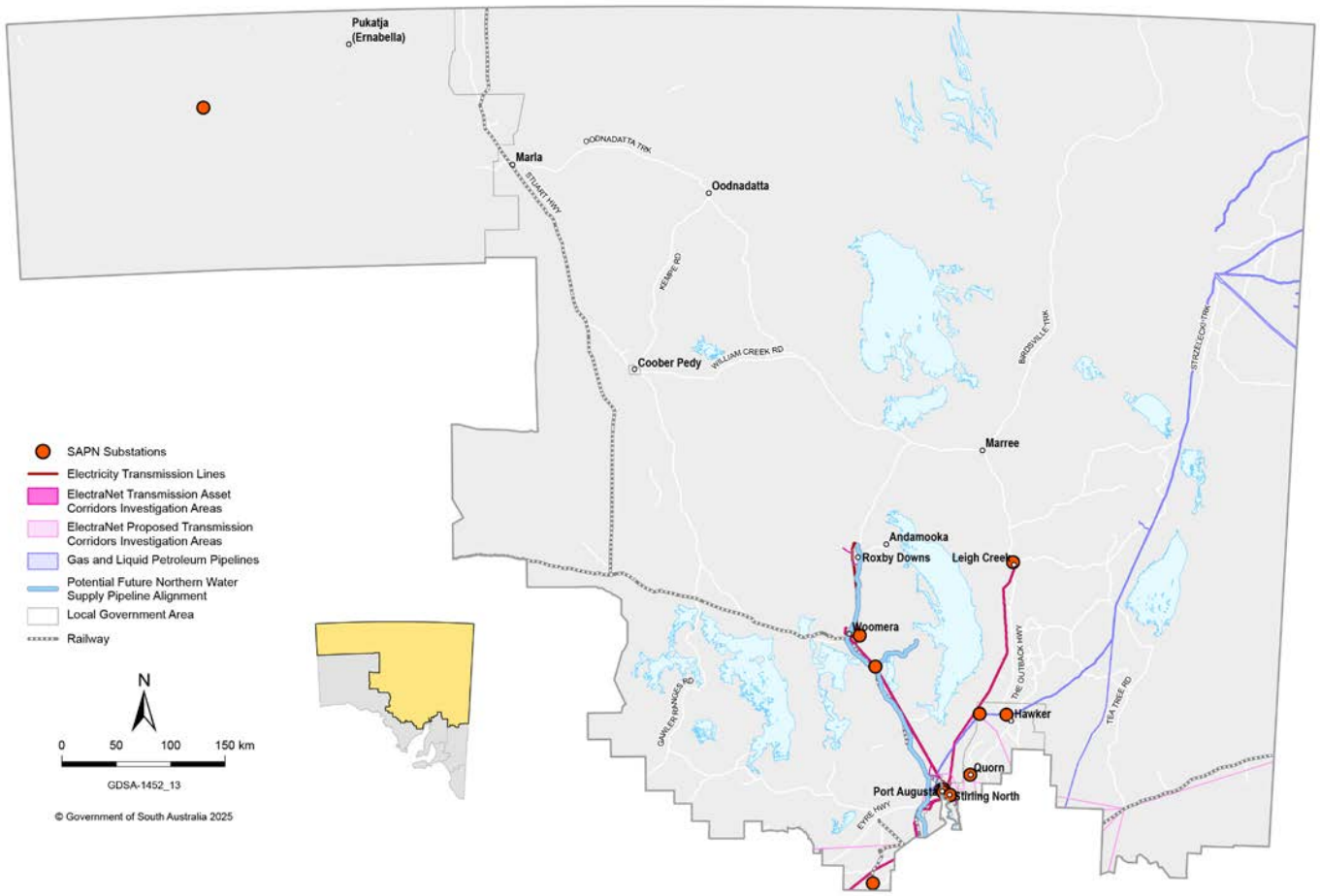
A range of factors will drive the need for new infrastructure and infrastructure corridors. For example, significant future growth in demand for electricity due to electrification (including electric vehicles) and potential desalination plants to provide water security.

Different categories of infrastructure will have different needs and these will need to be understood when infrastructure reserves are established.

A future example in the region of a multi-use infrastructure corridor is the Northern Water Supply pipeline, with the main transfer pipeline (approximately 600 kilometres in length) linking eastern Eyre Peninsula, Whyalla, Port Augusta, Woomera, Carapateena, Roxby Downs, Pimba, and Olympic Dam.[50]

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Future Infrastructure Corridors and Reserves	Undertake a Code amendment to introduce policy seeking to protect future infrastructure corridors and reserves (e.g. freight, rail, utilities).	03/2025 - 03/2027	Department for Housing and Urban Development	State-wide



Infrastructure corridors and reserves

Implementation and delivery

Theme:

Outcome 5: Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning

Regional planning is an essential step in the line of sight between the state planning policies with locally tailored strategies, ensuring that land use and infrastructure decisions are coordinated, responsive, and community focused.

The successful delivery of the Plan requires several important elements to be in place:

- Improved coordination of planning and implementation processes.
- Effective governance arrangements.
- Fit-for-purpose funding mechanisms.
- A schedule for monitoring, measuring and reporting progress.

Source: Adwo - Shutterstock

Implementing successful land use and infrastructure planning requires an iterative approach to align assumptions, planning and asset management.

This iterative approach requires the ongoing collaboration and coordination across government, councils and the private sector acknowledging that there are numerous processes occurring simultaneously, typically at different stages and with different horizons.

New governance arrangements within the Department for Housing and Urban Development, including the Growth and Infrastructure Coordination Unit and the Infrastructure Coordination Group, are central to coordinating infrastructure investment and facilitating well-serviced, strategically located developments.

New digital tools in the state's new planning system will keep government, industry and councils up-to-date with trends in land supply, housing demand and employment land use and enable faster responses to these changes.

Integrated planning will enable the timely provision of services that communities expect and require for quality of life. It may also help avoid previous pitfalls where development was not supported by adequate infrastructure planning and financing and is now experiencing an infrastructure backlog.

The alignment of the Plan with key infrastructure strategies, including *South Australia's 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy 2025* and *South Australia's Transport Strategy*, present an opportunity to deliver a truly integrated plan.

The PDI Act also provides the tools to implement some changes quickly, while other initiatives will need investigation and investment.

Online delivery, reporting and measuring progress

Digital regional plans have been developed to provide all South Australians access to a state-wide planning and infrastructure framework that provide:

- **Interactive planning tools**
  Use dynamic maps, spatial plans, and live data to support land use, transport, and public realm targets.
- **Enhanced data quality**
  Improve decision-making with accurate, up-to-date projections, statistics, and analysis for integrated land use and infrastructure planning.
- **Agile implementation**
  Respond swiftly to housing and employment needs by streamlining zoning changes and accelerating strategy delivery.
- **Whole-of-government integration**
  Align regional plans with broader government strategies and mapping datasets, ensuring consistency and relevance across agencies.
- **Collaborative amendments**
  Enable infrastructure providers and government bodies to update planning instruments in line with long-term strategies.
- **Council support**
  Guide local councils in zoning sufficient land to meet projected growth pressures and community needs.

Actions

An up-to-date implementation plan will be maintained to guide delivery of the Plan's priorities. This plan will include rolling five-year actions and dynamic reporting to track progress by theme, location, and responsible entity.

Actions are designed to be specific, measurable, and outcome-focused, and include recommendations about the amendment or establishment of other planning instruments, such as:

- **Code amendments** — changes to the Code's policy wording, spatial application of overlays, or both.
- **New mapping or datasets** — to inform future updates and versions of the Plan.
- **Guidelines and toolkits** — to help practitioners apply strategic directions and planning processes.
- **Infrastructure schemes or charging mechanisms** — to support service delivery.
- **New benchmarks** — to measure the success of development areas.

All actions and their implementation status will be visible in the Plan's dashboard, alongside other key metrics including:

- **The Land Supply Dashboard**
- **The Code Amendment Tracking System**
- **The Performance Indicators Scheme (for development assessment)**

This ensures transparency across the planning system—for government, industry, and the community.

Actions that are relevant to specific locations in each region are identified in mapping layers. Region-wide and state-wide actions can be viewed in the Implementation Plan section of the Regional Planning Portal.

Recommendations

A regional plan must include recommendations about the application and operation of the Planning and Design Code in the relevant region or area.

Complying Changes to the Planning and Design Code

Regional plans can recommend streamlined Code amendments under Section 75 of the PDI Act, known as Complying Changes. These allow the Minister for Planning to fast-track changes to the Code, such as zoning or overlays, to support the development of new growth areas or make other changes identified in regional plans.

The Minister may agree to an amendment to the Code if it is consistent with a recommendation in the relevant regional plan. For a Code amendment to qualify as a Complying Change, the regional plan recommendation must clearly and expressly identify the appropriate changes through the use of specific maps or other spatial information and specific information about the changes that are considered appropriate.

Recommendations relating to the change to a boundary of a zone or subzone or application of an overlay are generally expressed via mapping layers that will be identified in full in the digital portal that will be launched in late-January 2026.

Coordination and delivery

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Infrastructure capacity analysis and planning is developed and maintained in collaboration with state agencies, local government and utility providers to refine and prioritise growth areas.

2. Adopt contemporary benchmarks and trigger points for infrastructure investment to inform planning and investment decisions.

3. Create a transparent land supply and infrastructure prioritisation plan(s) that can be digitally represented with clear plans describing land supply, serviceability and infrastructure requirements, in Regional Cities, Major Service Centres and Supporting Service Centres.

4. Consider priorities for future growth against upfront and ongoing costs to communities including an orderly sequence of land development that enables the cost-effective and timely delivery of infrastructure investment.

5. Develop and implement structure plans for key localities that integrate long-term land use planning and infrastructure planning and delivery.

6. Increase the capacity of key infrastructure such as community wastewater management systems (CWMS) and potable water to support population and tourist growth and industry expansion.

7. Consider seasonal population fluctuations and tourism and other economic drivers when planning for services and infrastructure provision.

8. Enable alternative infrastructure models in areas where conventional servicing is cost-prohibitive or impractical.

9. Develop actions to underpin development and infrastructure planning that is low emissions, climate resilient and environmentally sensitive.

Access to quality infrastructure directly supports community wellbeing, lowers living costs, and helps create greener, safer, healthier, and more prosperous places to live.

Land rezoning should be guided by the timely and coordinated delivery of infrastructure. This means either:

- delivering new or upgraded infrastructure alongside new housing, or
- prioritising housing development in areas where infrastructure capacity already exists.

This approach reduces costs for the community and ensures people have access to vital services like water, power, healthcare, education, and reliable public transport.

Coordinated and integrated planning is about proactively identifying and planning for the housing and population thresholds that will require new and upgraded infrastructure across our cities as they grow, and ensuring infrastructure is operational when triggers are met.

Essential infrastructure such as power, water and sewer should be provided upfront, while other infrastructure such as health and education facilities can follow, based on housing and population triggers as a new suburb establishes.

Infrastructure benchmarks prepared by Infrastructure SA in conjunction with state agencies will form the initial basis for considering infrastructure thresholds and capacity. Additional engagement with agencies, utility providers and local government throughout the structure planning process should inform the specific needs of a locality.

Ongoing engagement with utility providers, councils, and other agencies during structure planning will ensure infrastructure reflects the specific needs of each locality.

Port Augusta Infrastructure for Growth Strategy 2025

Regional Development Australia Far North and Port Augusta City Council (along with the Local Buying Foundation and the Port Augusta Business Centre) have developed a strategy which outlines important infrastructure priorities and investment-ready projects that will benefit the region's economy, population growth, and liveability. Investment in infrastructure that delivers on liveability is the number one priority for the strategy.

The strategy has a vision and sets several actions over a 5-year period within the three key themes of Liveable, Connected and Growing.

For more information visit *Port Augusta Infrastructure for Growth Strategy*.

Planning roles and responsibilities

Delivering the Plan's housing and land supply targets requires a collaborative, whole-of-government effort.

The role of key planning entities is identified below.

Role	Responsibility
Infrastructure planning	**State agencies and infrastructure providers** will align their long-term plans with the priorities in the Plan.
Infrastructure coordination	The **Department for Housing and Urban Development** is responsible for coordinating the infrastructure planning that is undertaken by state agencies.
Infrastructure benchmarking	The **Department for Housing and Urban Development** is responsible for maintaining benchmarks to guide planning for new growth areas.
Local area planning	**Councils** are responsible for planning how their area can meet the housing targets in the Plan considering local character, housing needs, infrastructure and Living Locally principles.

Structure plans

Structure plans assist in implementing the housing and employment land projections established in the Plan.

Structure plans can be incorporated into the Plan via an amendment to a regional plan undertaken by the state or local government to inform infrastructure delivery schemes and unlock fast-tracked rezoning processes under section 75 of the PDI Act. They can also be incorporated into the Plan where they form part of an approved infrastructure scheme.

Structure plans should:

- Provide guidance on specific land uses and their locations including land for housing, employment, activity centres, open space networks and infrastructure (including social infrastructure such as education and recreation).
- Identify infrastructure needs (including social infrastructure requirements) to inform agreements and the preferred funding mechanism.
- Identify land that should be reserved for infrastructure (including health, education, transport) which can be incorporated into the Code as an Infrastructure Reserve.
- Identify specific spatial recommendations to amend the Code that could be incorporated into the Plan and implemented through a section 75 complying rezoning process (subject to community engagement and infrastructure agreements being finalised).

Aboriginal community structure plans

Aboriginal community structure plans contain the framework for land use planning and development considerations in South Australia's Aboriginal communities. They provide each community and the land-holding authority with a guide to manage future growth and development, particularly housing, infrastructure and other integrated development. The plans also guide the assessment of development proposals by the State Commission Assessment Panel.

APY Lands community structure plans exist for the following communities: Pipalyatjara, Watarru, Amata - Tupal and Katjikuta, Pukatja, Nyapari, Kanpi, Mimili, Indulkana, and Yunyarinyi.

Source: Aboriginal community structure plans | PlanSA

Andamooka Structure Plan

The developed in 2013, the Structure Plan guides the future design and planning of Andamooka to help ensure that development is responsive to the aspirations of the community.

Source: *Andamooka Structure Plan* | PlanSA

Council strategies

Councils play a vital role in strategic planning. Strategic planning at a local level should consider projected levels of growth and identify requirements and timing for local infrastructure and services.

Under the PDI Act, councils have been identified as designated entities that can amend regional plans, giving them a stronger voice in shaping the future of their communities.

Alignment between revised population, housing and employment projections and council strategic management plans required under the *Local Government Act 1999* will also establish greater whole-of-government coordination.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan	Implementation of the Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan to improve the design quality of the built environment and public realm, to support the activation of business and open spaces within the CBD, by identifying priority actions, any Code amendments and projects for future funding applications.	11/2025 - 03/2027	Port Augusta City Council	Port Augusta
Remote Township Plans	Investigate and prepare township plans for remote townships within the Pastoral Unincorporated Area focused on future housing and employment and identify requirements and timing for local infrastructure and services to inform updates to the Far North Regional Plan. This may include Andamooka, Blinman, Innamincka, Leigh Creek, Marree, Oodnadatta and Yunta.	11/2025-11/2030	Outback Communities Authority	Far North Region
Upper Spencer Gulf Cities Land Supply Dashboard	Update the Land Supply Dashboard to include tracking of Upper Spencer Gulf Cities to provide more timely, accessible, transparent data in an interactive online platform.	11/2025 - 11/2026	Department for Housing and Urban Development	Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Whyalla
Housing Strategy - Port Augusta	Prepare a local area plan, including the requirements and timing for local infrastructure and services, to inform updates to the Far North Regional Plan.	12/2025 - 12/2030	Port Augusta City Council	Port Augusta

Infrastructure charging

Long-term strategic objectives

1. Strengthen the integrated use of infrastructure funding and delivery mechanisms including infrastructure schemes and deeds and fixed charges in Regional Cities, Major Service Centres and Supporting Service Centres where scale and governance structures enable effective delivery.

2. Use structure planning of future growth areas to identify infrastructure priorities and inform infrastructure the selection of appropriate infrastructure funding and delivery mechanisms

3. Develop models where infrastructure and services can be delivered by third parties to expedite projects, while maintaining quality control of engineering, construction and maintenance standards.

4. Facilitate innovative and flexible infrastructure delivery approaches in regional and remote communities.

Infrastructure charging provides a transparent and equitable mechanism to fund augmentation works and support land supply. However, traditional models often place disproportionate financial burdens on regional developments, where high servicing costs, fragmented planning, and misaligned priorities between government and service providers can constrain delivery. These challenges are compounded by user-pays frameworks that struggle to support smaller-scale developments, limiting housing supply and economic growth.

To maintain fairness and sustainability, infrastructure charging mechanisms must be strategically applied to reflect the diversity of development contexts, including urban, regional, and remote areas, and ensure that costs are shared equitably among developers, governments, and the broader community. In some cases, local governments have assumed developer roles to address market failure, despite the financial risks involved.[50]

A renewed approach to infrastructure funding and delivery is needed. It should enable timely provision of essential services, support long-term social and economic returns, and promote equitable outcomes across the state. This could include:

- Reforming regulatory frameworks to de-risk investment and enable third-party delivery models.
- Improving strategic coordination across agencies and service providers.
- Increasing government funding support where traditional servicing is cost-prohibitive or impractical.
- Facilitating innovative and flexible infrastructure models tailored to regional and remote communities.

By evolving infrastructure planning and funding approaches to better reflect regional realities, new opportunities for growth, resilience, and liveability can be unlocked across the Far North Region.

Strengthen infrastructure mechanisms for regional growth

Mechanisms such as infrastructure deeds and basic and primary infrastructure schemes can provide a structured and predictable framework for funding essential services like water, sewerage, electricity, and transport, in Regional Cities, Major Service Centres and Supporting Service Centres. These tools should continue to be used and refined to ensure they remain responsive to local conditions and development pressures in a regional context.

To support effective delivery, third-party infrastructure provision should also be enabled where appropriate. This can accelerate project timelines and reduce pressure on public agencies, provided that quality assurance frameworks are in place to uphold engineering, safety, and maintenance standards.

Integrate infrastructure planning into strategic growth planning

Infrastructure planning must be integrated into the broader strategic planning process to ensure that land use decisions are informed by long-term servicing needs and investment priorities. Early identification of infrastructure costs and delivery requirements will enable more accurate and equitable charging mechanisms, while improving certainty for developers, infrastructure providers, and communities. Transparent cost analysis linked to housing type, location, and density will support better decision-making and help align infrastructure investment with broader social, environmental, and economic goals.

Enable innovation and flexibility in infrastructure delivery

In areas where the funding and delivery of infrastructure is cost-prohibitive or impractical, particularly in low-density or remote localities, alternative infrastructure models should be considered. These may include off-grid systems, shared community infrastructure, modular servicing solutions, or infrastructure-light development zones. Such models can reduce reliance on traditional networks while supporting sustainable housing growth.

The planning framework should evolve to support these approaches, with flexible zoning, streamlined approvals, and performance-based standards that enable low-impact development. Government support will be critical to demonstrate the viability of these models through pilot projects, financial incentives, and development templates tailored to regional and remote contexts. These innovations will help unlock housing supply in areas that would otherwise remain constrained.

Actions

Title	Action Description	Timing	Lead	Spatial application
Alternative Infrastructure Approaches	Investigate the opportunity for low-density, off-grid housing utilising alternative energy, water, and waste systems to reduce reliance on public infrastructure investment and unlock housing development in regional locations.	2026	Infrastructure South Australia	State-wide

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Government of South Australia
Department for Housing
and Urban Development