

**FAR
NORTH
REGIONAL
PLAN**

Summary
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Minister's foreword



Hon Nicholas Champion MP

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

Acknowledgment of Country

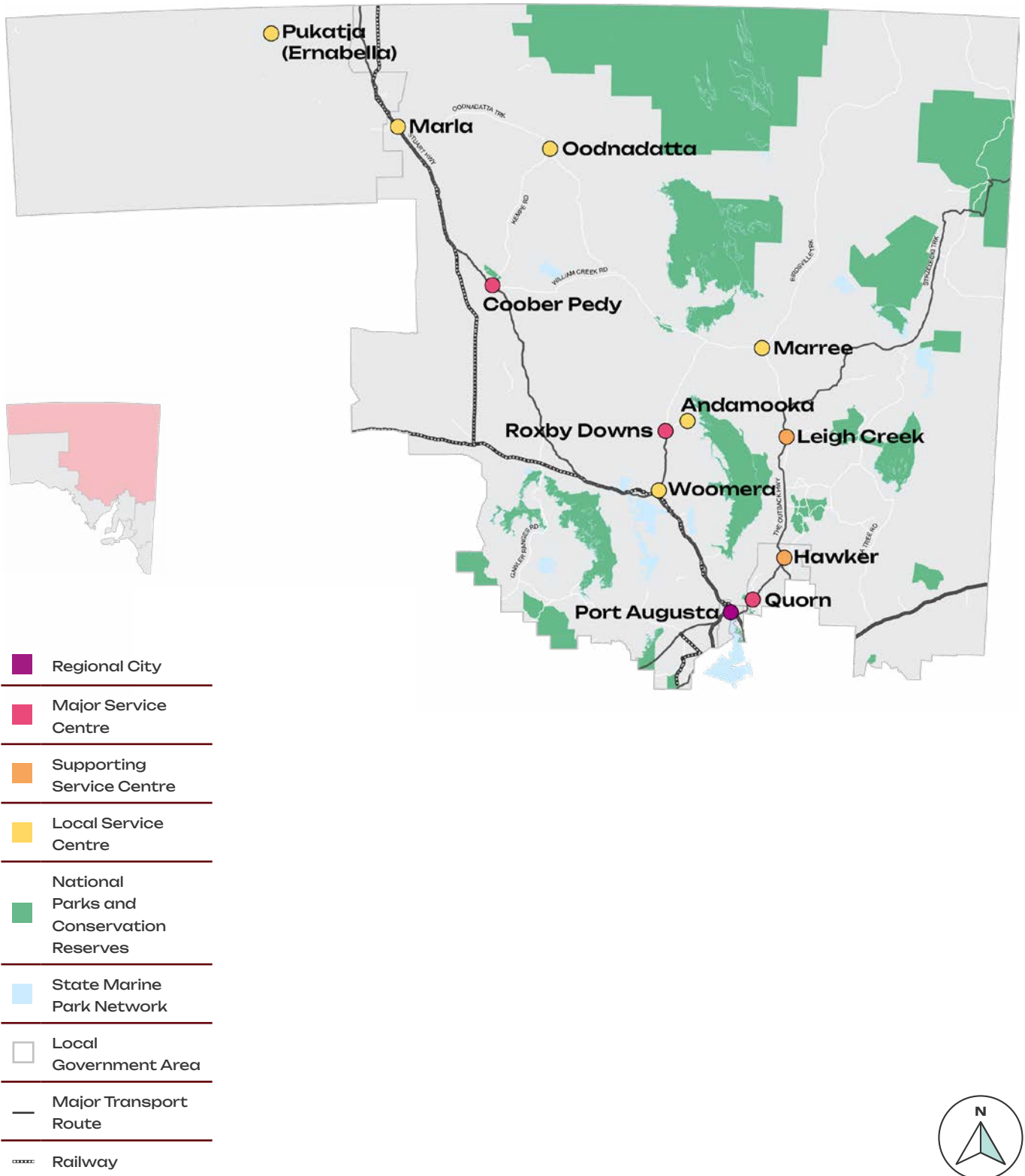
The State Planning Commission and the Department for Housing and Urban Development acknowledges First Nations people as the Traditional Custodians of South Australian land and waters and we extend our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We value and recognise the ongoing cultural heritage,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

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Far North planning region



Introduction

The Far North is South Australia's largest geographical region, covering more than 80% of the state's land mass. Its sparsely settled landscape spans from the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara 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 (the Plan) maps the state government's long-term planning vision for the region to 2051 and beyond. It provides government, businesses, industry and not-for-profit organisations with the data and direction to better plan for and respond to growth and change in our community and towns, while achieving our conservation goals. All within in an electronic platform that can be tailored to the user's requirements.



What is the Far North Regional Plan?

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

It replaces the *Far North Region Plan (July 2010)* and determines how our future urban growth will be managed by investigating and guiding:



Where houses and employment land will go



How housing and population will be serviced



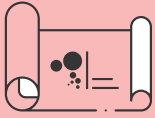
Which areas need conservation and protection



What major infrastructure is needed and how it will be provided

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

Population growth in the region will be concentrated in the key settlements of Port Augusta, supported by established infrastructure and services. Other townships such as Coober Pedy, Roxby Downs, Quorn and Pukatja (Ernabella) will continue to play key roles in accommodating the region's population. These townships currently have a healthy supply of zoned land to accommodate the projected growth over the next 15 years, however, housing must be responsive to changing needs and preferences. The Plan includes long-term investigation areas to provide housing for the 16- to 30-year time horizon period.



A snapshot of the Plan

The Far North region is a unique landscape spanning over 80% of South Australia, from the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands to the stunning Ikara-Flinders Ranges.

The region's population is expected to grow by 1,117 by 2051. The Plan places a strong focus on preserving the region's cultural heritage and natural resources, with a focus on protecting biodiversity, vulnerable species, and Aboriginal heritage sites.

Nearly a quarter of the region is comprised of national parks and protected areas, from the Lake Eyre Basin to the Upper Spencer Gulf. The Plan prioritises biodiversity and habitat conservation, including for 46 vulnerable native species.

There are 26,714 residents in this region, with 52% of the population located in Port Augusta. Other key centres include Roxby Downs, Coober Pedy, and Quorn.

The Plan supports diverse housing options to meet the needs of an ageing population, attract skilled workers, and provide for single-person households, seasonal workers, and tourists, moving beyond the current 89% of detached homes.

The Plan aims to strengthen transport connections throughout the region to provide improved and equitable access to services and community infrastructure.

The region plays a crucial role in renewable energy production, generating over a quarter of South Australia's daily energy needs through wind and solar production.

Mining is the region's largest employment sector, supporting over 6,000 jobs. With further growth anticipated in renewable energy and mineral exploration, the Plan aims to support job creation from Port Augusta up to Moomba.

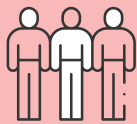
The tourism industry is expected to continue to grow in key areas, particularly ecotourism around the Ikara-Flinders Ranges, with additional accommodation and increased visitation numbers expected if the area gains UNESCO World Heritage status.

The proposed Northern Water project will ensure a climate-resilient water supply, boosting growth in energy, mining, and agriculture, and supporting new job opportunities.



Agriculture is projected to grow, especially as global demand for meat protein rises, with strategic planning to protect prime farmland and address climate change impacts.

The Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan will provide a vision for the built environment and public realm, to support the activation of business and open spaces within the CBD, reinforcing the important role that Port Augusta has in supporting a safe and vibrant regional city that drives economic development in the region.



26k
population
2021



27k
2051 population
projection



720
new homes
required by 2051



Upper Spencer Gulf

The Upper Spencer Gulf region 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. This aims to ensure that career opportunities in traditional and emerging industries are accessible to all.

Key economic features and drivers



Gross State Product

The region contributes approximately \$5.4 billion to South Australia's Gross State Product



Agriculture

Anna Creek is the world's largest working cattle station 24,000km²



Mining

Over 6,000 jobs, almost 33% of total employment within the region



Tourism

In 2024, the Flinders Ranges and outback attracted \$603 million in visitor expenditure, the second highest outside of Greater Adelaide



Energy

Over 800 megawatts of renewable energy produced daily for Australia





A planning vision for the 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.

The Far North region is a vital resource hub, driving innovation in renewable energy generation and sustainable mineral exploration while preserving its unique environmental and cultural identity.

A diverse range of affordable and environmentally sustainable housing options supports varied lifestyles, including individual, shared, family, and intergenerational living.

Aboriginal culture is deeply respected, with Planning with Country models developed in partnership with Elders and cultural leaders to guide regenerative land use and development.

The region's economy is anchored by the resources sector, with major mining operations in the Gawler Craton and Eucla Basin contributing significantly to the state's economic strength and offering employment pathways for younger generations.

Dedicated renewable energy zones position the region as a key power generator for South Australia and beyond, while sustainable agriculture and tourism provide innovative and enriching experiences.

Iconic landscapes such as the rugged outback and Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park support a thriving visitor economy and celebrate Indigenous heritage.

Reliable water resourcing and a resilient transport network, spanning rail, road, and air, ensures connectivity across sectors and communities, including access to essential services in remote areas.

Together, these elements reflect a strategic vision for the Far North built on sustainability, cultural respect, economic opportunity, and regional resilience.

Key themes, priorities and implementation

People, housing and liveability More housing in the right places

Key priorities for the region:

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

How the Plan addresses these priorities:

- Strengthening the relationship between land use planning and our First Nations, through the introduction of cultural mapping and the integration of Aboriginal knowledge in structure planning and the code amendment process.
- High priority code amendments will be initiated to unlock land for housing, including affordable housing and worker's accommodation.
- Reviewing zoning, allotment size and maximum building heights in identified areas to encourage a diverse range of infill housing options, such as Port Augusta.
- Enhancement of the Land Supply Dashboard, providing up to date land availability and rezoning activity.

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

Key priorities for the region:

- Futureproofing the economy by aligning land-use planning with infrastructure, housing needs and workforce attraction.
- Capitalise on key areas such as mining in Olympic Dam, increased renewables, and enhanced ecotourism in Ikara-Flinders Ranges.
- Expanding housing options to support an ageing population and attract younger workers in healthcare and tourism sectors.
- Safeguarding agricultural land and supporting climate-resilient projects like the Northern Water Project to diversify the economy and create jobs.

How the Plan addresses these priorities:

- Update to the land capability mapping of productive land and identification of key primary production assets that should be protected.
- Initiation of code amendments to provide greater protection of employment lands from incompatible land uses.
- Introduces the township hierarchy to guide investment and development in key service precincts.

Natural resources, environment and landscapes

A more climate-resilient and sustainable region

Key priorities for the region:

- Preserving biodiversity, protecting vulnerable species, and managing ecologically significant areas such as Lake Eyre Basin.
- Preparing for the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures, reduced rainfall, and increased frequency of natural hazards such as bushfires, floods, and coastal erosion.
- Incorporating climate risk projections to inform strategic land-use decisions and mitigate the effects of climate change on the environment, economy, and communities.
- Promoting resilience through climate adaptation strategies and aligning the plan with the South Australian Government Climate Change Action Plan.

How the Plan addresses these priorities:

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

Transport and infrastructure

An integrated and connected region

Key priorities for the region:

- Strengthening connectivity for remote townships to improve access to services and social infrastructure.
- Investing in infrastructure to support economic growth and employment opportunities.
- Enhancing public and active transport networks within key population centres to reduce isolation and promote sustainable travel options.
- Addressing freight challenges and logistic needs to support agriculture and mining industries.
- Building climate resilient infrastructure to adapt to hotter, drier conditions.

How the Plan addresses these priorities:

- Integration with key state transport and infrastructure strategies.
- Introduction of publicly available social infrastructure benchmarks.
- Incorporating any planning and land use related outcomes from the 'Remote and Regional Aviation Strategy' relevant to the region.
- High priority code amendment seeking to protect future infrastructure corridors and reserves (e.g. freight, rail, utilities).

Implementation and delivery Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning

Key priorities for the region:

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

How the Plan addresses the priorities:

- Investigation of alternative infrastructure approaches for low-density, off-grid housing.
- Finalisation and implementation of the Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan which will provide a vision for the built environment and public realm, to support the activation of business and open spaces within the CBD.
- Broader strategic planning of the Port Augusta City Council, to plan for future projected housing and employment growth and identify requirements and timing for local infrastructure and services.
- Strengthening processes to profile regional infrastructure priorities.
- Better integration with council led strategic work, for example strategic land use plans, master plans, and growth strategies.



