# MURRAY MALLEE REGIONAL PLAN

Version MM2026.1
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 Murray Mallee Regional Plan (the Plan) is our blueprint for a sustainable, liveable, and well-planned region as we head toward 2051. As our population is projected to grow by 28,000 residents, the Plan ensures our land use and infrastructure keep pace, creating strong, connected communities with the services and amenities they need.**

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

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

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

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

Alongside *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 Murray Mallee, one that supports sustainable growth, protects the natural environment, and enhances liveability for generations to come.

# Contents

# Vision

## The Murray Mallee Regional Plan delivers a planning vision for the region through to 2051.

Covering approximately 71,000 square kilometres, the Murray Mallee Region extends from the River Murray's entry point into the state to the Lower Lakes and the Coorong, encompassing a rich mix of landscapes, ecosystems, and cultural heritage.

The River Murray is central to the region's identity. It functions as a vital ecological corridor and a popular destination for recreation, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. This natural attraction supports tourism and a range of industries.

The region is a major contributor to South Australia's agricultural output, producing a quarter of the state's dairy and pig products, a quarter of the nation's crushed wine grapes, and more than half of its horticultural crops. These strengths are supported by a well-established processing and manufacturing sector, which adds value to primary industries and reflects the region's adaptability and innovation.

The Murray Mallee Regional Plan builds on the region's unique assets to shape a future to 2051 and beyond that is inclusive, resilient, and prosperous. It outlines the Government of South Australia's long-term planning vision for the region, providing the government sector, businesses, industry, and not-for-profit organisations with the data and direction needed to respond to growth, change, and ecological priorities across our communities and towns.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

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.

## The Murray Mallee 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 more than 73,000 people (2021 Census). It features an ageing demographic spread across a vast geographical area which includes local farming communities and Major Service Centres such as Loxton, Renmark, and Barmera and the Rural City of Murray Bridge, which is home to about 25% of the region's total population.**

## The Murray Mallee Region is administered by the following local governments:

- Berri Barmera Council
- Coorong District Council
- District Council of Karoonda East Murray
- District Council of Loxton Waikerie
- Mid Murray Council
- Rural City of Murray Bridge
- Renmark Paringa Council
- Southern Mallee District Council.

It is important to recognise that the Rural City of Murray Bridge is also located within the Greater Adelaide Planning Region.

# 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.

**Murray Bridge** serves as the Regional City of the Murray Mallee Region and has been strategically identified as a satellite city in the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan. The city is central to the Plan's vision for sustainable growth, serving as a hub for housing, employment, and services across the region. Its role as a satellite city is crucial in easing pressure on metropolitan Adelaide by offering affordable housing, diverse job opportunities, and a high quality of life while maintaining its unique identity and heritage.

## 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.

**Barmera** is a Major Service Centre located within the Riverland area along the shores of Lake Bonney. Barmera has an important role in supporting surrounding agricultural communities, offering a range of essential services including healthcare, education, retail, and professional services, and is a hub for tourism due to its lakeside location and recreational amenities.

**Berri** is a Major Service Centre for the Berri Barmera Council area and serves as the administrative, commercial, and service hub of the Riverland. As a Major Service Centre, it is home to government services, health facilities, the regional office of several state government departments and services, and a range of retail outlets.

**Loxton** is a Major Service Centre strategically located along the River Murray within the Riverland area. It supports a diverse and thriving economy based on irrigated horticulture, dryland farming, and increasingly, tourism. The town plays a central role in servicing surrounding agricultural districts, particularly those producing citrus, wine grapes, almonds, and stone fruits. Loxton is also home to significant infrastructure including packing facilities, engineering works, and educational institutions, making it a key hub for both economic activity and community services.

**Mannum** is a Major Service Centre that provides a wide range of essential services and infrastructure to surrounding rural communities. It supports regional employment across sectors such as agriculture, tourism, health, education, and light manufacturing; and offers retail and public service facilities that cater to both residents and visitors, including critical healthcare through the Mannum District Hospital. Mannum is expected to play a significant role in accommodating future population growth and supporting regional development through improved infrastructure and community services.

**Renmark** is Australia's first irrigation settlement and serves as a Major Service Centre of the region. Strategically located on the banks of the River Murray and along the Sturt Highway, Renmark is a key hub for transport, agriculture, and tourism. As the heart of a rural horticultural district, the town supports a diverse economy, producing citrus and stone fruits, wine and table grapes, vegetables, wheat, timber, and dairy products.

**Tailem Bend** is a Major Service Centre located at the junction of the Dukes and Princes Highways, along the River Murray. Historically a key railway hub, the town has evolved into a vibrant regional centre supporting agriculture, tourism, and transport industries. It serves as the commercial heart of the surrounding Mallee area, offering a wide range of shops, services, and community facilities.

**Waikerie** is a Major Service Centre renowned for its irrigated horticulture, particularly citrus and stone fruits. Waikerie offers a range of services to meet the needs of the surrounding community including heath care, early childhood, primary and secondary education, retail and professional services.

## 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.

**Blanchetown** is a Supporting Service Centre that provides essential services to nearby rural communities. It provides access to government services, health and wellbeing support through outreach programs like iREACH Rural Health, and regional initiatives such as the Mid Murray Family Connections network, which offers a range of family wellbeing programs.

**Coonalpyn** functions as a Supporting Service Centre, offering essential health and community services to residents of the Coorong District and surrounding rural areas. Coonalpyn plays a vital role in maintaining regional health and wellbeing, complementing larger service centres in the Murray Mallee.

**Karoonda** is a Supporting Service Centre providing essential health, education, and community services to its rural population. The town is home to the Karoonda and District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital and offers a range of community services including a pharmacy, childcare centre, school community library, post office, and police station, all contributing to the wellbeing and safety of residents.

**Lameroo** is a Supporting Service Centre and farming hub located along the Mallee Highway. Lameroo provides access to essential health via the Lameroo District Health Service, and community and recreational services to its surrounding agricultural communities. Recreational amenities include a public swimming pool, golf course, caravan park, and picnic areas at Lake Roberts.

Source: Murray River Trails

**Meningie** is Supporting Service Centre for regional wellbeing, complementing larger centres while maintaining strong local accessibility. Meningie offers a comprehensive range of health and community services to the Coorong District and surrounding areas and is home to Meningie and Districts Memorial Hospital and Health Services and Meningie Community Health Centre.

**Morgan** is a vibrant Supporting Service Centre offering a range of health and community services to residents in the Mid Murray area. The town is serviced by Mid Murray Family Connections and the Murray Mallee Aged Care Group, which provide a range of outreach services to support families and ageing residents of the town. The town boasts numerous recreational amenities, including riverside parks, picnic areas and recreational vehicle parking, and offers a range of tourist accommodation options.

**Pinnaroo** is a Supporting Service Centre providing a range of essential services to its local and surrounding communities. Services and facilities include the Southern Mallee District Council office; a Services Australia access point which provides access to Centrelink and Medicare services; and the Mallee Community Health Service.

**Swan Reach** is a valuable support hub, offering a mix of health, community, and tourism-related services that contribute to regional wellbeing and connectivity. Transport services such as the Murray Mallee Bus Service offer reliable charter options for community groups and events, enhancing mobility within the region. Swan Reach also offers a range of hospitality and recreational amenities, including the Swan Reach Hotel, riverside camping areas, and access to the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve.

**Tintinara** is a Supporting Service Centre, offering essential health and community services to its rural population. The Country Health Connect Clinic in Tintinara provides a range of nursing services and home-based care. In addition to health services, Tintinara supports the local agricultural economy and offers recreational amenities like walking trails, a visitor information centre, and heritage displays that reflect its pastoral history.

## 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 Murray Mallee Region

**The Plan identifies several key priorities to guide sustainable growth and resilience across the region. These priorities reflect the region's unique strengths, challenges, and aspirations for the future.**

### Protecting agricultural land and supporting industry

Primary industry is the backbone of the region's economy and identity. Protecting agricultural land from incompatible uses is essential, while allowing flexibility for industries to adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions. Non-productive land also plays a vital role in supporting a diverse regional economy, including opportunities for renewable energy and nature-based tourism.

## Expanding housing choice

In response to the national housing crisis, it is critical to ensure the timely and adequate supply of land for a variety of housing options and tenures. This supports the evolving needs of communities, fosters economic growth, and helps attract and retain key workers across the region.

## Securing water access and enhancing river health

Equitable, secure, and sustainable access to water is vital for community wellbeing and economic stability. The River Murray is the region's primary water source, and its wetlands offer cultural, recreational, and tourism benefits that must be preserved for future generations. Tourism and recreation are key contributors to the local economy, supporting small and medium enterprises and creating employment opportunities.

## Strengthening environmental sustainability and biodiversity

Environmental sustainability remains a central concern, particularly in the context of climate change. The region's unique biodiversity underpins its environmental health, economic productivity, and quality of life. Protecting and enhancing these natural assets strengthens resilience, boosts productivity, and supports long-term sustainability.

## Building regional resilience

While primary production is a key strength, it also presents risks to long-term resilience. Climate change, economic pressures, and limited crop diversity make the region vulnerable to shifts in water security, market volatility, and global supply chains. The Plan acknowledges these vulnerabilities and sets a pathway for greater diversification, adaptation, and resilience.

## Planning for climate risk and net zero transition

Recent flooding events and rising climate risks highlight the need for proactive planning. Future growth areas have been identified within the context of a climate emergency and the government's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

## Coordinating infrastructure delivery

Integrated planning is essential to align land use with the services and infrastructure needed to support growth. While much of the region is appropriately zoned, infrastructure delivery has lagged. Prioritising infrastructure planning and investment at both state and local levels is critical to unlocking development potential.

## Addressing structural and financial challenges

Regional councils face unique structural and financial challenges compared to metropolitan areas. With a smaller ratepayer base and vast areas to service, councils must deliver infrastructure and services across dispersed communities with limited resources. Rising operational costs driven by consumer price index increases and climate events such as the 2022–23 River Murray flood further intensify these pressures. Growth is therefore a strategic imperative for financial sustainability. Expanding the supply of rateable land and attracting new residents and businesses helps councils spread the cost of service delivery and asset renewal more effectively.

## Improving regional connectivity

Ongoing improvements to the road network including the High Productivity Vehicle Network and other infrastructure are essential to enhance connectivity across the region. Better access to services and markets support both community wellbeing and business growth.

# A planning vision for Murray Mallee

**With a diverse, sustainable economy, the Murray and Mallee Region balances agricultural growth and innovation with environmental stewardship, supporting vibrant, resilient communities.**

**The Murray Mallee is home to more than 73,000 residents and welcomes over one million visitors annually, reflecting its vital role in South Australia's economy, identity, and lifestyle. The region's prosperity is driven by a diverse mix of industries including agriculture, food processing, health and aged care services, and a growing tourism sector which collectively contribute upwards of $4.8 billion to the state's economy.**

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of the region's economy and cultural identity. Key activities include horticulture, viticulture, and intensive livestock farming, with the Riverland recognised as Australia's largest winegrape-producing region. The area is also renowned for its almonds, citrus, stone fruits, onions, potatoes, and carrots, supported by ideal climate conditions and world-class producers.

The region fosters innovative, inclusive, and emerging economic opportunities across sectors such as AgTech, community services, the care economy, social enterprises, the circular economy, and creative industries. These sectors are helping to diversify the regional economy, build resilience, and create new pathways for employment and social impact.

Tourism continues to grow, supported by the region's proximity to the River Murray and the Coorong. Visitors are drawn to its natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities including houseboating, camping, fishing, and water sports. Signature attractions such as Monarto Safari Park, The Bend Motorsport Park, the River Murray, and the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve enhance the region's appeal, alongside a thriving winery and distillery scene.

The River Murray is a lifeline for the region, supplying drinking water, irrigating farmland, and supporting tourism and recreation. It also holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for Aboriginal communities and provides critical habitat for diverse plant and animal species, contributing to the region's biodiversity and climate resilience.

# Murray Mallee Regional Plan outcomes:

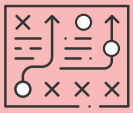
**The Plan aims to achieve the following outcomes:**

**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: John Montesi

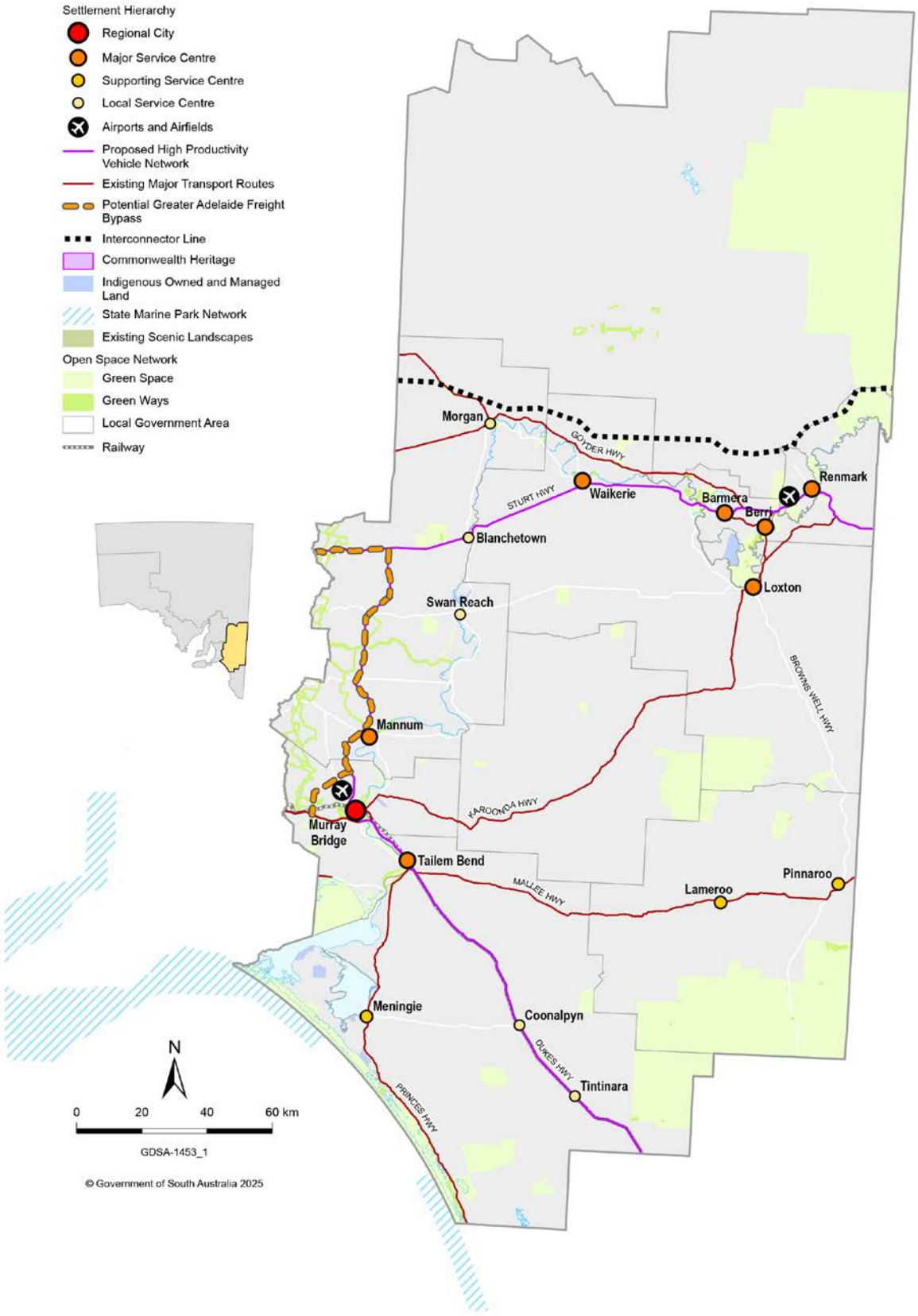
# Digital innovation

**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 spaces, jobs and the necessary supporting infrastructure.

The previous Murray Mallee 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 the ability to provide clear and consistent certainty on the overarching directions for the state or region. In addition, the digital regional plan can be more readily easily updated with current data and information. This provides 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.


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
Potential Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass
Interconnector Line
Commonwealth Heritage
Indigenous Owned and Managed Land
State Marine Park Network
Existing Scenic Landscapes
Open Space Network
Green Space
Green Ways
Local Government Area
Railway
Morgan
GOYDER HWY
Waikerie
STURT HWY
Barmera
Berri
Renmark
Blanchetown
Swan Reach
Loxton
BROWNS WELL HWY
Mannum
KAROONDA HWY
Murray Bridge
Tailem Bend
MALLEE HWY
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# Population

## Context

## Recent population change

**Murray Mallee is home to more than 73,000 people, which is about 4% of the state's population.**

- The region has seen its population increase by over 1500 people since 2016, an increase of 0.44% per year
- Around 25% of the population is located within the Rural City of Murray Bridge and the remainder spread across Major Service Centres such as Renmark, Loxton, Waikerie, Berri, Barmera, Mannum, and Tailem Bend.
- The region's population of 60 to 64 year olds sits at 7.5%, this is higher than the state average of 6.2%

Source: Cassandra Missen

# Learn more about projected population to 2051

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

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.

The region is expected to see an increase of 28,000 permanent residents (excluding seasonal workers and tourists) by 2051, translating to an average annual growth rate of 1.1%.

Growth will be directly tied to the performance of the region's economy, which is heavily reliant on the movement of freight. There are several projects currently underway being planned for that will provide employment opportunities, driving demand for housing for permanent residents and seasonal workers.

The most significant opportunity is the High Productivity Vehicle Network Project, which seeks to upgrade several key roads (including Sturt Highway, Dukes Highway and Princes Highway) to improve the road freight network. Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend may be attractive locations for new transport and logistics businesses to establish and take advantage of improved regional road access.

Tourism has traditionally provided an important source of revenue to the region. New tourism initiatives such as the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve and the Coorong Trail may increase demand for short stay accommodation in surrounding towns.

There are also several renewable energy and waste management projects in planning or feasibility stages. This includes the Mannum Solar Farm and battery energy storage systems facility (BESS), Summerfield BESS, Palmer Wind Farm and Greenhill Energy's proposed Riverbend Energy Hub at Tailem Bend projects that could significantly increase local demand for residential and employment land.

These opportunities need to also be considered in the context of key demographic challenges, including:

- An ageing population, with close to 50% of additional growth of people aged over 70.
- Decline in young adults (aged 15 to 29) for study and jobs outside the region.
- Notable increases in young families (seen by joint projected growth in the 0 to 14 and 35 to 44 cohorts.

These demographic trends are important to recognise as they have practical impacts on land use and infrastructure planning, particularly around the types of housing we should be planning for.

## Population summary

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 73,097 | 73,097 |
| 2051 | 93,013 | 101,270 |
| 2021-2051 **Total Change** | 19,916 | 28,173 |
| 2021-2051 **Average annual change** | 664 (0.8%) | 939 (1.09%) |

# 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 difficult to predict, than state or regional level. For this reason, a shorter time period has been used, from 2021 to 2041.

## Berri Barmera Council

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 10,735 | 10,735 |
| 2041 | 10,986 | 11,347 |
| 2021-2041 Total Change | 251 | 611 |
| 2021-2041 Average annual change | 13 (0.1%) | 31 (0.3%) |

## Coorong District Council

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 5,597 | 5,597 |
| 2041 | 5,873 | 6,066 |
| 2021-2041 Total Change | 276 | 469 |
| 2021-2041 Average annual change | 14 (0.2%) | 23 (0.4%) |

## District Council of Karoonda East Murray

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 1,026 | 1,026 |
| 2041 | 1,036 | 1,070 |
| 2021-2041 Total Change | 10 | 44 |
| 2021-2041 Average annual change | 1 (0.1%) | 2 (0.2%) |

## District Council of Loxton Waikerie

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 11,924 | 11,924 |
| 2041 | 13,177 | 13,640 |
| 2021-2041 Total Change | 1,254 | 1,716 |
| 2021-2041 Average annual change | 63 (0.5%) | 86 (0.7%) |

## Mid Murray Council

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 9,350 | 9,350 |
| 2041 | 10,613 | 10,988 |
| 2021-2041 Total Change | 1,264 | 1,639 |
| 2021-2041 Average annual change | 63 (0.6%) | 82 (0.8%) |

## Rural City of Murray Bridge*

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 22,339 | 22,339 |
| 2041 | 31,567 | 34,855 |
| 2021-2041 Total Change | 9,228 | 12,516 |
| 2021-2041 Average annual change | 461 (1.7%) | 626 (2.2%) |

## Renmark Paringa Council

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 10,007 | 10,007 |
| 2041 | 10,638 | 10,987 |
| 2021-2041 Total Change | 631 | 980 |
| 2021-2041 Average annual change | 32 (0.3%) | 49 (0.5%) |

## Southern Mallee District Council.

| Scenario | Med | High |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Population** | | |
| 2021 | 2,028 | 2,028 |
| 2041 | 2,050 | 2,117 |
| 2021-2041 **Total Change** | 22 | 89 |
| 2021-2041 **Average annual change** | 1 (0.1%) | 4 (0.2%) |

* Murray Bridge LGA population projection and annual growth rate has been calculated over 20 years to 2041 and is different to the 30-year population projection and annual growth rate reported for the Murray Bridge subregion in the *Greater Adelaide Regional Plan*.

# 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.**

Like much of South Australia, the Murray Mallee Region is experiencing the impacts of the national housing crisis. Rental vacancy rates are at historic lows, and alternative low-cost housing options – such as long-term caravan park sites and marina berths – are on the rise.

## Analysis of housing land supply

A review of land supply across the region indicates that more than 4,000 hectares of land is zoned or earmarked for future residential development. This can accommodate 30,000 dwellings and is enough to meet the high-series population projections to 2051 and beyond.

Strategic growth studies undertaken by regional councils show that most Regional Cities (such as Murray Bridge), Major Service Centres (including Renmark, Berri, Barmera, Waikerie, Loxton, Mannum, and Tailem Bend), and Supporting Service Centres (such as Lameroo, Pinnaroo, and Meningie) have adequate zoned or identified land for future growth. However, some local service centres and minor townships including Morgan, Cadell, and Mypolonga currently lack identified land supply.

Importantly, not all zoned land is 'development-ready'. In many cases, land may lack essential infrastructure, or landowners may not intend to develop. Addressing infrastructure gaps will require coordinated planning and investment from both state and local governments to bring land online and unlock development potential.

Community preferences also influence housing development. Demand for rural living allotments can create pressure to rezone land on the outskirts of towns. This highlights the need for a place-based approach that reflects local aspirations while protecting regional character.

A range of housing types is needed to meet the changing needs of communities. This is an important part of supporting liveable, inclusive, and resilient communities. Housing types may include crisis and transitional accommodation, housing for key workers such as healthcare professionals and emergency services personnel, options for young people to remain in the region, and housing suited to ageing in place.

## Housing snapshot

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Total dwellings** | **38,127** | |
| Occupied dwellings | 30,872 | 81% |
| Avg persons per occupied dwelling | 2.3 | |
| Average annual dwellings built (10 years to 2024) | 280 | |

## Region projected housing demand and land supply

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand and land supply** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 156 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2051 | 4,617 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 1,562 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 1,477 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 18,565 |
| Zoned total | 21,604 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 176 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 286 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 3,768 |
| Zoned total | 4,230 |
| **Future residential land supply – (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 32,800 |
| Rural living | 83 |

* Murray Bridge LGA *additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2051* are reported in the Murray Bridge subregion of the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan and therefore are not included in the Murray Mallee Region figure.

# Local government areas

## Berri Barmera Council

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 17 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041 | 330 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 54 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 44 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 995 |
| Zoned total | 1,093 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 6 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 117 |
| Zoned total | 123 |
| **Future residential land supply – (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 932 |
| Rural living | - |

## Coorong District Council

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 13 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041 | 253 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 410 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 98 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 1,562 |
| Zoned total | 2,070 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 26 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 91 |
| Zoned total | 117 |
| **Future residential land supply – (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 2,938 |
| Rural living | - |

## District Council of Karoonda East Murray

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 1 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041 | 25 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 87 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 524 |
| Zoned total | 611 |
| **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 | 174 |
| Rural living | - |

## District Council of Loxton Waikerie

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 48 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041 | 928 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 146 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 103 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 1,442 |
| Zoned total | 1,691 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 4 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 33 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 923 |
| Zoned total | 960 |
| **Future residential land supply – (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 796 |
| Rural living | 83 |

## Mid Murray Council

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 46 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041 | 886 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 376 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 59 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 6,782 |
| Zoned total | 7,217 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 94 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 10 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 769 |
| Zoned total | 873 |
| **Future residential land supply – (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 692 |
| Rural living | - |

## Renmark Paringa Council

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 28 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041 | 530 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 87 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 42 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 2,200 |
| Zoned total | 2,329 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 2 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | 120 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 1,667 |
| Zoned total | 1,789 |
| **Future residential land supply – (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 618 |
| Rural living | - |

## Southern Mallee District Council.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Projected housing demand** | |
| Additional dwellings required annually to meet population projection to 2031 | 3 |
| Additional dwellings required to meet population projection to 2041 | 48 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 75 |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 172 |
| Zoned total | 247 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 23 |
| Zoned total | 23 |
| **Future residential land supply – (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 143 |
| 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.**

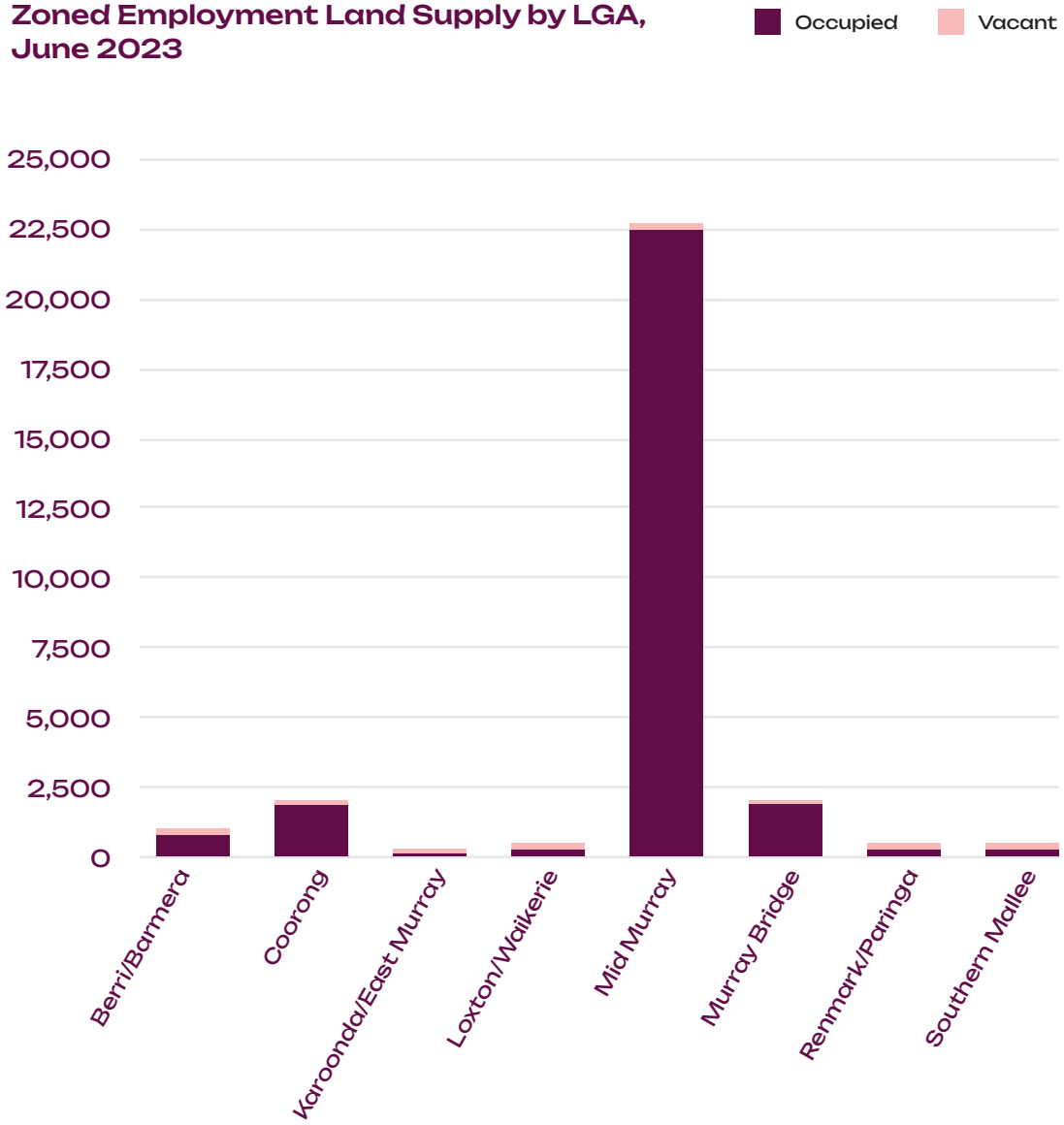
The planning system can support employment growth in the region by making sure there is enough land in the right places that is supported by the necessary infrastructure. It can also provide flexibility in zoning and policies to allow for diverse business models.

Unlike residential land, employment land demand is more difficult to forecast. A proactive strategy is to maintain a sufficient supply of zoned employment land in strategic locations to accommodate future growth. One of the most significant employment land opportunities is located at Pallamana, near the Thomas Foods International meat processing facility and Pallamana Aerodrome, within the Rural City of Murray Bridge.

## Analysis of employment land supply

The region comprises over 27,350 hectares of zoned employment land, with a large portion of Rural Intensive Enterprise Zone land located around Maude and Beatty within the Mid Murray Council.

### Zoned Employment Land Supply by LGA, June 2023




Of this zoned employment land, close to 400 hectares is vacant with just over 100 hectares in the Renmark Paringa Council area. A large portion of this is used for primary production, and therefore whilst it is currently assigned to an existing use, the land is typically void of significant site improvements.

# Learn more about employment sectors and land use mix

### Development trends

Between 2022 - 2023, a total of 21 hectares of vacant zoned employment land was developed in the region.

Should this trend continue, the region's current stock of zoned vacant employment land will be consumed within the next 30 years, noting that some employment land is not services or in a location that meets current needs. Therefore, additional employment land will be required to meet the needs of the region.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Vacant land consumption (annual)** | 21ha |

### Employment land use

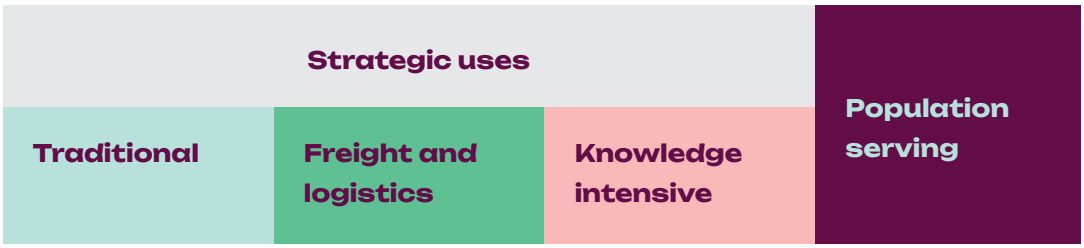
Zoned land within the region is predominantly used for traditional employment activities. This includes industry, mining, primary production and various forms of public utilities (i.e. electricity generation and wastewater treatment). These activities typically utilise large parcels of land compared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

### Emerging and innovative industries

The Murray Mallee Region is well-positioned to support emerging industries, particularly in renewable energy and circular economy initiatives. The completion of the EnergyConnect project in 2026 will link South Australia's energy market with New South Wales and Victoria, unlocking new opportunities for clean energy generation and innovation.

### Tourism and hospitality

Tourism remains a vital and growing sector, with opportunities to specialise in ecotourism, river-based experiences (boating, fishing, skiing), and the continued development of the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve. These attractions support small and medium enterprises, create jobs, and enhance the region's appeal to visitors and residents alike.

### Agriculture and value-adding

Growth in agriculture is expected to continue, particularly as global demand for meat protein rises. Innovation and value-adding in food production will be key to maintaining competitiveness. However, residential and employment growth, climate change, and structural shifts in the economy will require careful planning to protect productive land and support continued agricultural prosperity.

### Community services

The region's ageing population is expected to increase demand for professional services, particularly in aged care and related fields. This will drive growth in the healthcare and social services sector which is forecast to become a major regional employer. The community services sector encompassing aged care, disability support, early childhood education, and community development, will be a key contributor to the region's economy and social wellbeing.

Further insights are explored in the productive economy theme.

### Workforce needs

There is a real and pressing need to attract key workers such as doctors, nurses, teachers, and emergency service personnel to the region as well as keep young people in the region. Additionally, it is essential to provide suitable housing and social infrastructure including childcare, schools, and recreation facilities to attract and retain a workforce for the region.

Coordinated efforts will be needed to ensure that workforce development, accommodation, and service delivery keep pace with economic and population growth. Additionally, impacts from climate change, technological advancement, and structural shifts in the economy will require careful planning to sustain productivity and long-term resilience.

## Learn more about employment land supply

## Employment land supply - Region

| Employment land use mix | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 25,111 |
| Freight and logistics | 704 |
| Knowledge intensive | 505 |
| Population serving | 504 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 25,418 |
| Vacant | 356 |
| Future supply | 1,664 |

# Local government areas

## Berri Barmera Council

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 278 |
| Freight and logistics | 1 |
| Knowledge intensive | 18 |
| Population serving | 63 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 377 |
| Vacant | 73 |
| Future supply | 9 |

## Coorong District Council

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 1073 |
| Freight and logistics | 45 |
| Knowledge intensive | 174 |
| Population serving | 249 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 1,492 |
| Vacant | 62 |
| Future supply | 14 |

## District Council of Karoonda East Murray

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 13 |
| Freight and logistics | 0 |
| Knowledge intensive | 34 |
| Population serving | 36 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 50 |
| Vacant | 10 |
| Future supply | 0 |

## District Council of Loxton Waikerie

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 60 |
| Freight and logistics | 4 |
| Knowledge intensive | 16 |
| Population serving | 206 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 300 |
| Vacant | 26 |
| Future supply | 326 |

## Mid Murray Council

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 22,281 |
| Freight and logistics | 1 |
| Knowledge intensive | 26 |
| Population serving | 38 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 22,706 |
| Vacant | 52 |
| Future supply | 0 |

## Rural City of Murray Bridge

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 1,328 |
| Freight and logistics | 35 |
| Knowledge intensive | 74 |
| Population serving | 122 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 1,531 |
| Vacant | 50 |
| Future supply | 1,406 |

## Renmark Paringa Council

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 56 |
| Freight and logistics | 227 |
| Knowledge intensive | 10 |
| Population serving | 20 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 307 |
| Vacant | 119 |
| Future supply | 201 |

## Southern Mallee District Council

| Employment land use mix (BIC) | Hectares |
|---|---|
| Traditional | 21 |
| Freight and logistics | 0 |
| Knowledge intensive | 152 |
| Population serving | 158 |
| **Employment land supply** | **Hectares** |
| Occupied | 185 |
| Vacant | 15 |
| 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.[2]**

By 2051, the Murray Mallee Region is projected to accommodate an additional 28,000 permanent residents. Growth over this period will be concentrated within the Rural City of Murray Bridge and Major Service Centres such as Renmark, Loxton, Waikerie, Mannum, Tailem Bend, Berri and Barmera. Murray Bridge provides significant long-term growth opportunities, with existing capacity for an additional 8,000 houses, and new growth areas identified to support up to an additional 23,400 homes over the longer-term to further establish it as one of Greater Adelaide's major satellite cities.

Source: River Hamptons

Many local governments within the region have already undertaken detailed strategic planning work to identify opportunities to accommodate projected growth, and this work has formed the foundation for new land identified within the Plan.

The local population and economy are growing side by side, driven by tourism, freight related industry, primary production activities, and renewables.

### Future housing supply

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

Detached dwellings currently dominate the housing stock across the region, highlighting the need for more varied housing options in key townships and service centres.

There is increasing demand for smaller homes suited to single-person households, accessible units for older residents, and temporary accommodation for seasonal workers. Expanding housing diversity and tenure options will support ageing in place, clearing traditional housing stock and attracting new families and key workers to the region.

Unoccupied dwellings are notably high in parts of the Murray Mallee, particularly in areas with seasonal holiday rentals and private holiday homes. This helps boost housing availability during peak periods, but it also highlights the urgent need to create more permanent, affordable housing for residents and workers.

### Affordable and social housing

Access to safe, secure, and affordable housing both for long-term rental and home ownership, is critical to attracting and retaining essential workforce personnel including healthcare professionals, emergency service workers, educators, and aged care staff. Providing housing options that meet the needs of existing residents wishing to downsize can also help unlock traditional housing stock for new families and younger residents.

A place-based approach to housing supply is essential. This means planning for housing that meets the needs of communities, reflects local character and is connected to infrastructure and services.

### Key worker housing

The Office for Regional Housing through Renewal SA is also undertaking several projects to increase housing stock in the Murray Mallee Region. The Regional Key Worker Housing Scheme seeks to secure suitable housing in regional areas for essential government workers, such as police officers, teachers and medical professionals.[3]


Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development

## 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 Renmark and Loxton.**

The Office for Regional Housing will work with local governments, regional employers, the development industry and other peak bodies to provide affordable and key worker housing for police, teachers, and health professionals, helping to retain critical workers in regional communities.

Learn more about the Office for Regional Housing.

Councils and non-government organisations have called for a coordinated approach to deliver diverse housing options that meet current and future community needs. The Plan encourages all levels of government and community organisations to take action in delivering affordable and diverse housing across the region.

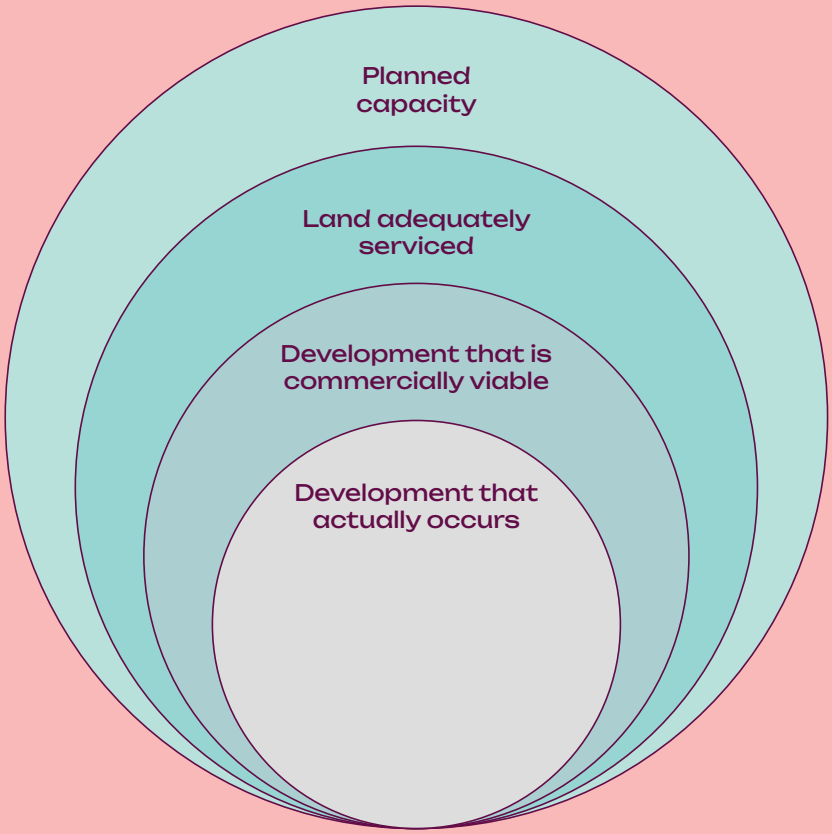
### Identifying enough land for the dwellings we need

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 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.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

While there is sufficient zoned land, or land earmarked for housing over the next 15 years, infrastructure is required to support the development of this land. This includes community wastewater management system (CWMS), water, roads, electricity and stormwater. Costs for infrastructure will not be able to be borne exclusively by councils or ratepayers. Other funding mechanisms are needed to deliver infrastructure so that zoned land can be brought online for development. Collaboration between state and local government and infrastructure providers will be critical.

High cost of construction in the region is also an obstacle. At present, land and construction costs are greater than market value, creating a considerable deterrent for developers and landowners. A shortage of skilled workers willing to work in the region is a key part of this cost.

## 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.

Attracting more construction workers, key workers, seasonal workers, and young families requires offering a wider range of housing types and tenures. This must be supported by essential social infrastructure such as healthcare, schools, community centres, and recreational facilities. Greater housing choice is critical to enabling those who currently live in the region to stay in the region, such as older people who can no longer work the land but would like to remain within their community. Currently, anecdotal evidence suggests that many people who move off the land leave the region due to a shortage of appropriate housing, whether in the form of smaller housing typologies, supported living or aged care.

## 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 Pla*n 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.

Growth planning should prioritise logical consolidation of existing townships over expansion, unless it can be demonstrated that there is an appropriate level of demand and land can be serviced with infrastructure. This will minimise encroachment on areas of rural, landscape or environmental significance which should be avoided other than in exceptional circumstances.

### Local infill investigation areas

Local infill investigation areas have been identified as opportunities for well-planned and well-located sources of new housing and smaller scale employment opportunities. These areas include opportunities within proximity to activity centres and transport infrastructure to encourage a strategic and targeted approach to increasing density in established built up areas.

More detailed planning work and infrastructure investigations will be required by local government and other stakeholders to unlock the potential of identified land. Council investigations are not limited to areas identified in the Plan and may identify other local areas suited for infill development.

The Department for Housing and Urban Development will support local government with the development of local housing area plans to assist with coordination and alignment.

### 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 settlement 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 townships 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.

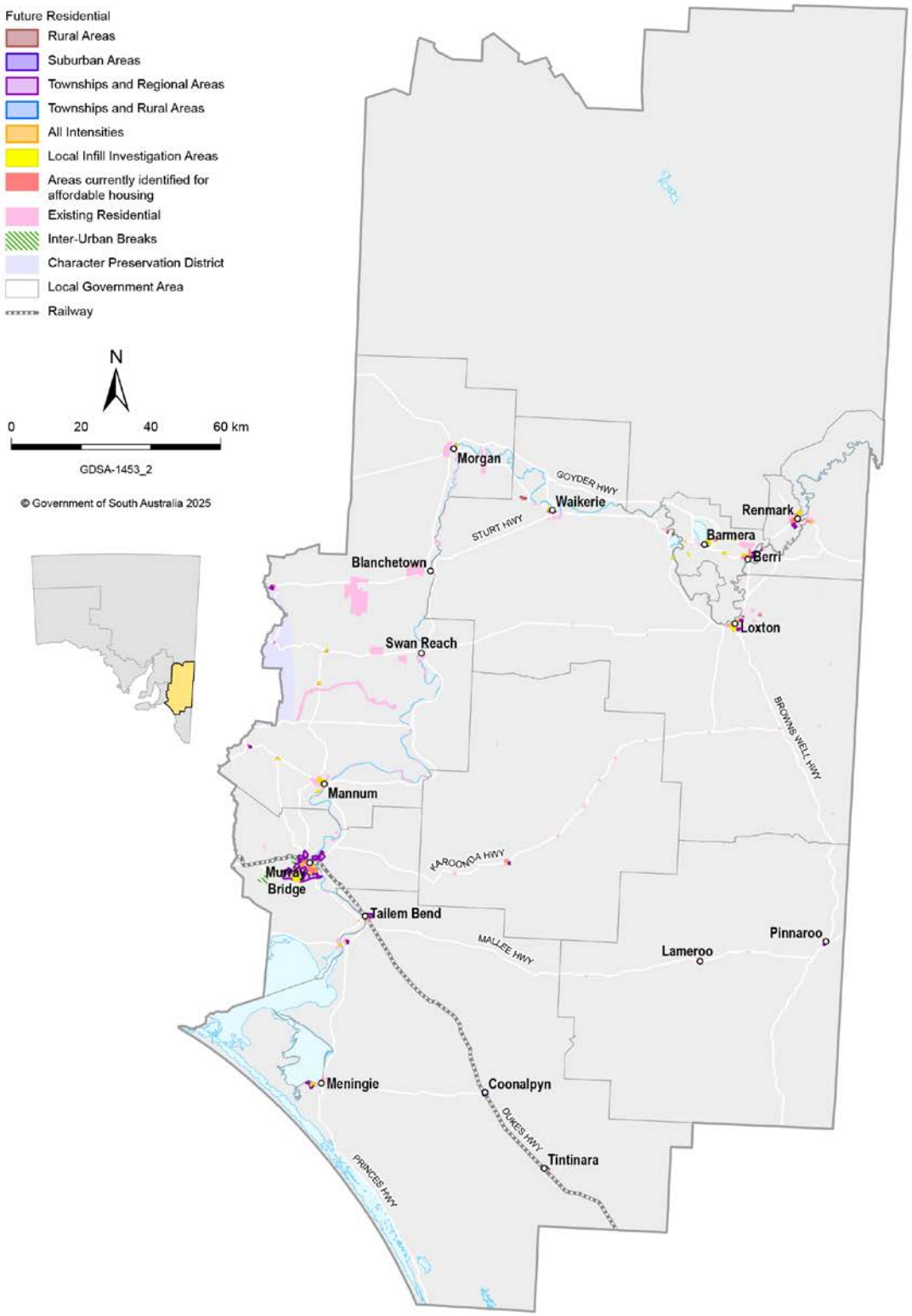
Typically, the local road network is either graded or spray sealed and only above-ground stormwater systems are provided. Solar and battery technologies mean that off-grid solutions may be viable, and on-site waste systems (including solutions that prevent wastewater entering surface or ground water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

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 townships 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.
- Avoid 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.
- The impact and demand on community infrastructure is evaluated such as the impact of locating new estates and settlements 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 is considered 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.

Source: Annie Beth




## Housing supply and diversity

# Township land supply

## Regional City

### Murray Bridge

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 87.4 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 305 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 1,124 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 4,136 |
| Zoned total | 5,565 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 58 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 89 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 162 |
| Zoned total | 309 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 26,507 |
| Rural living | - |

# Major Service Centres

## Barmera

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 6.3 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 13 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 87 |
| Zoned total | 100 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 2 |
| Zoned total | 2 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 45 |
| Rural living | - |

## Berri

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 11.6 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 36 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 44 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 764 |
| Zoned total | 844 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 6 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 68 |
| Zoned total | 74 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 887 |
| Rural living | - |

## Loxton

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 11.4 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 42 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 78 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 914 |
| Zoned total | 1,034 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 4 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 31 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 560 |
| Zoned total | 595 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 541 |
| Rural living | 6 |

| Mannum | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 23.8 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 163 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 52 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 1,086 |
| Zoned total | 1,301 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 62 |
| Zoned total | 62 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | - |
| Rural living | - |

## Renmark

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 23.3 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 68 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 42 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 1,089 |
| Zoned total | 1,199 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 46 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 803 |
| Zoned total | 849 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 582 |
| Rural living | - |

## Tailem Bend

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 3.4 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 42 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 84 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 39 |
| Zoned total | 165 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 7 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 42 |
| Zoned total | 49 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 1,057 |
| Rural living | - |

## Waikerie

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 2 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 19 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 12 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 246 |
| Zoned total | 277 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 2 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 90 |
| Zoned total | 92 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 255 |
| Rural living | - |

## Supporting Service Centres

### Coonalpyn

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 0.2 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 15 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 0 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 17 |
| Zoned total | 32 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 0 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 0 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 0 |
| Zoned total | 0 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 201 |
| Rural living | 0 |

## Karoonda

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 1.6 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 32 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) - | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 84 |
| Zoned total | 116 |
| **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 | 174 |
| Rural living | - |

## Lameroo

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 2.7 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 15 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) - | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 54 |
| Zoned total | 69 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) - | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 23 |
| Zoned total | 23 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | - |
| Rural living | - |

## Meningie

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 2.8 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 58 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 8 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 426 |
| Zoned total | 492 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 2 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 41 |
| Zoned total | 43 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 1,119 |
| Rural living | - |

## Morgan-Cadell

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 3.8 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 25 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 674 |
| Zoned total | 699 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 10 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 39 |
| Zoned total | 49 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | - |
| Rural living | - |

## Pinnaroo

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 1.8 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 43 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 56 |
| Zoned total | 99 |
| **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 | 143 |
| Rural living | - |

## Swan Reach

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 1.3 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 16 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 0 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 433 |
| Zoned total | 449 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 10 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 5 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 236 |
| Zoned total | 251 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 0 |
| Rural living | 0 |

## Tintinara

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recent housing activity** | |
| Average annual dwellings built 2015-24 | 0.1 |
| **Existing residential land supply – neighbourhood and township zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | 16 |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | - |
| Undeveloped zoned | 196 |
| Zoned total | 212 |
| **Existing residential land supply – rural living zoned (allotments)** | |
| Vacant | - |
| Proposed lots (lodged/approved land divisions) | 17 |
| Undeveloped zoned | 8 |
| Zoned total | 25 |
| **Future residential land supply (allotments)** | |
| Neighbourhood and township | 228 |
| Rural living | - |

## 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 | DHUD | State-wide |
| Code Amendment - Loxton - Residential | Undertake a Code amendment to rezone Rural Living land adjacent to Loxton High School to enable more residential development. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | The District Council of Loxton Waikerie | Loxton High School |
| Code Amendment - Renmark - Residential (Deferred Urban) | Undertake a Code amendment to rezone Deferred Urban Land in the township of Renmark in accordance with endorsed structure plan. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | Renmark Paringa Council | Renmark |
| Tailem Bend - Residential | Undertake a Code amendment to rezone land in Tailem Bend as identified in the Coorong Growth Strategy to Neighbourhood Zone. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | Coorong District Council | Tailem Bend |

## 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 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 and 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 an essential part of our cultural heritage.

The lands and waters of the River Murray, or Murrundi, are central to the culture and beliefs of Aboriginal people who have cared for these areas since creation.

The Ngarrindjeri are the Traditional Owners of the Lower Lakes, Murray Mouth, Coorong, and along the river to Mannum. The First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee Region are the Traditional Owners from the Victorian border to Morgan. They believe Murrundi is a living entity, with its freshwater flows being the lifeblood of their Nations.

This important connection to the River Murray over many thousands of years is reflected in the many culturally significant heritage sites throughout the region, including a number of national parks such as Coorong National Park, Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park and Murray River National Park, where rock art, middens and canoe trees have been found.

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.

Aboriginal peoples followed a complex system of land management and the reciprocal relationship between people and the land underpinned all aspects of life.

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. We can also look at ways to incorporate 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 provides 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 Aboriginal groups for the search area.

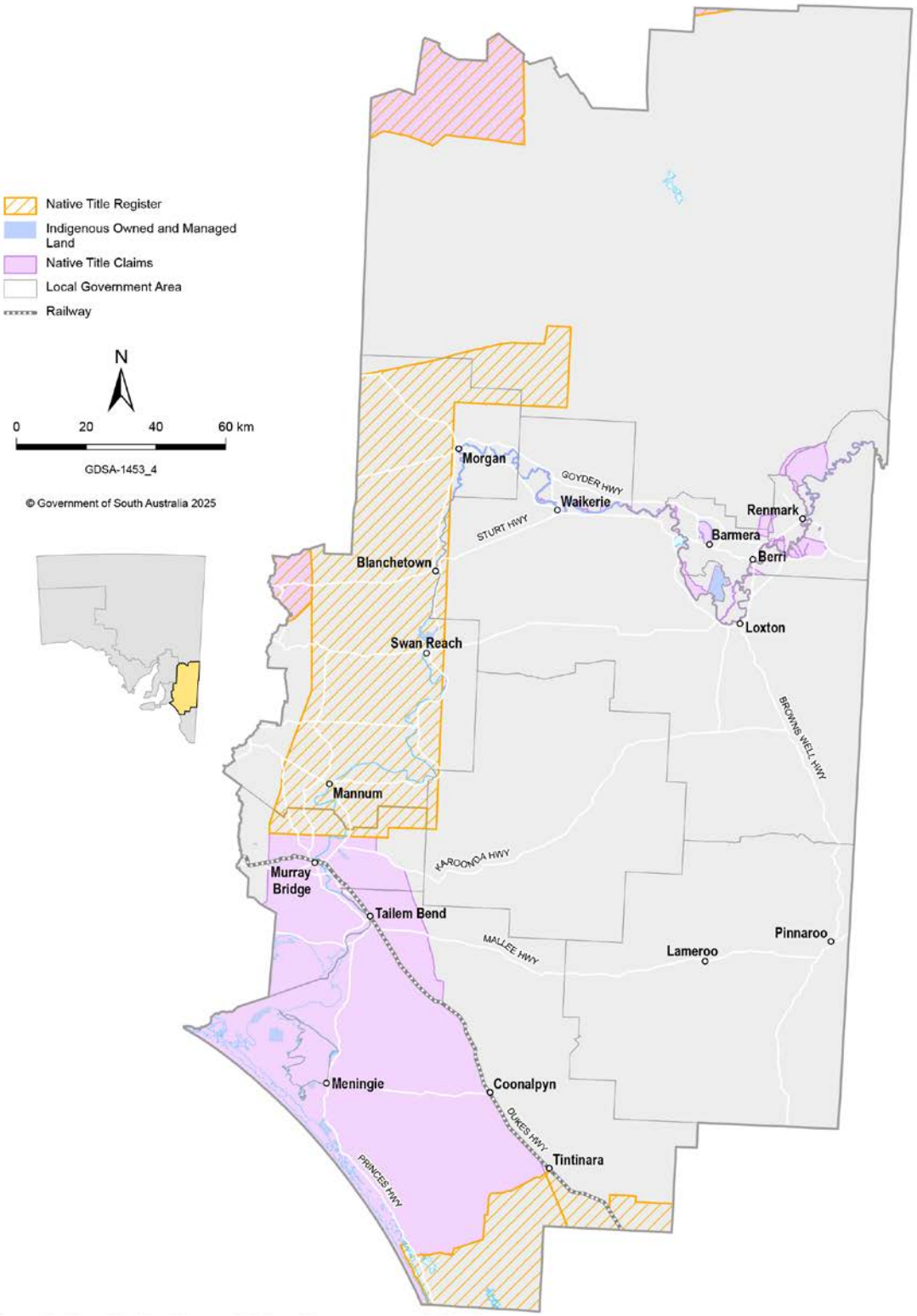
Request for searches can be made at taawika.sa.gov.au.

Partnering with Aboriginal communities and applying Planning with Country 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. Predictive cultural mapping to identify areas of higher risk will be investigated with Aboriginal people for incorporation into regional plans.

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 Regional 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: Annie Beth

State and Local Heritage Places reflect the region's unique and diverse history, fostering a strong sense of place and regional identity. Their conservation and protection should be central to planning policy.

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. 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.

The Murray Mallee Region currently has 112 State Heritage listed places spread across the region, and 153 Local Heritage Places within Mid Murray Council and Rural City of Murray Bridge areas only, indicating that heritage surveys have not yet been undertaken by the majority of the councils in the region.

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. Additionally, shipwrecks along the coastline of the Upper Spencer Gulf coastline are protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981* and covered by the Historic Shipwrecks Overlay in the Code.

Careful management of these sites brings history to life, fosters identity, and distinguishes the region within the national context.

### Adaptive re-use

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.

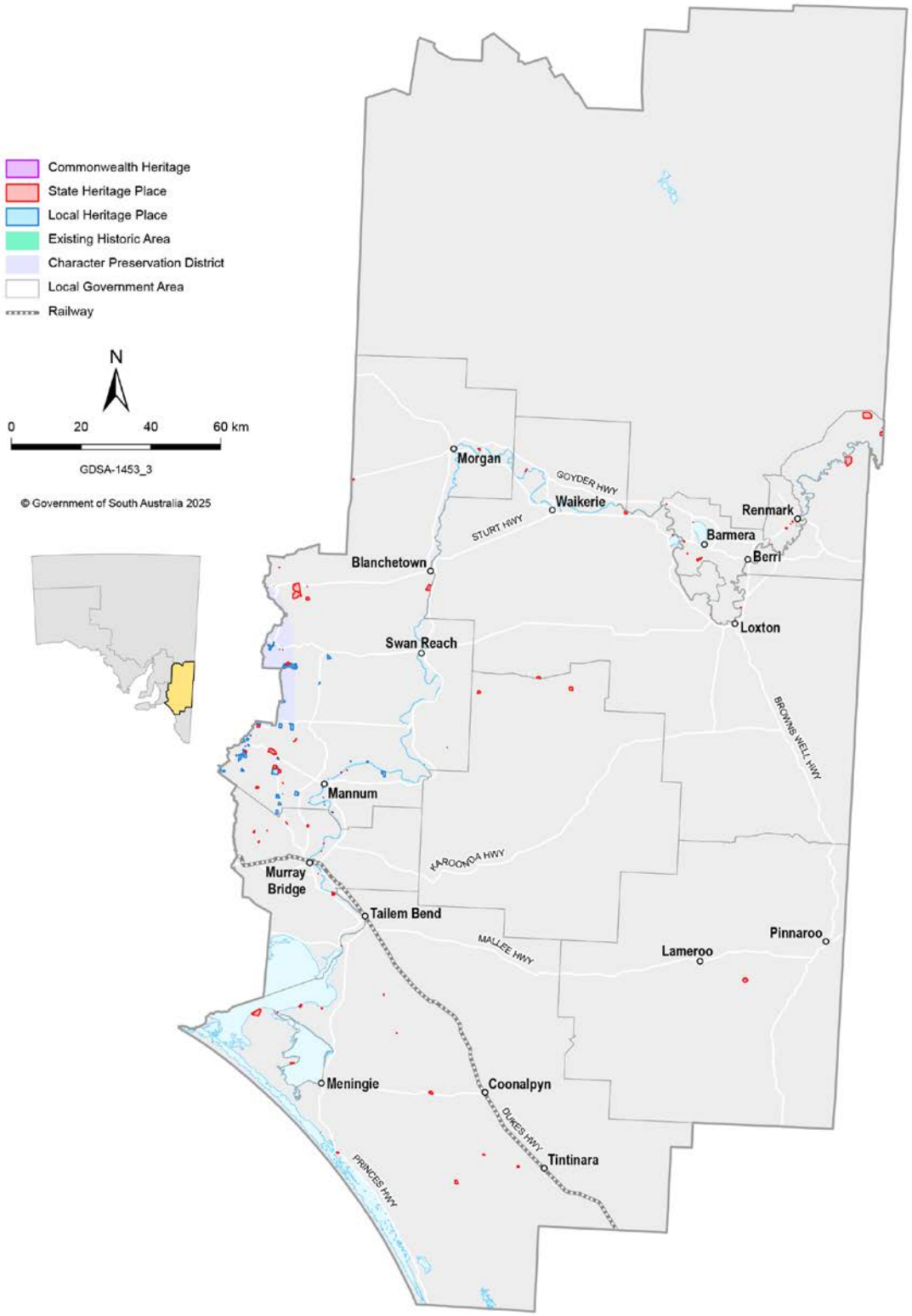
It is recognised that adaptive re-use of underutilised heritage buildings, or the restoration of streetscape facades, is an important part of retaining and maintaining heritage in South Australia. It can play a major role in revitalising key precincts that reflect our cultural values and reinforce a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

The historic townships of the Murray Mallee present opportunities for respectful adaptive re-use that celebrate heritage places through thoughtful activation.

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.

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.

As the region is rich in historic buildings and areas, a range of adaptive re-use and redevelopment opportunities exist, which can preserve and celebrate historic built form while enabling additional activities.




## 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 and natural values of important natural coastal, river and rural 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 settlements to safeguard rural character and maintain and strengthen unique township identity.

Source: Shutterstock

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

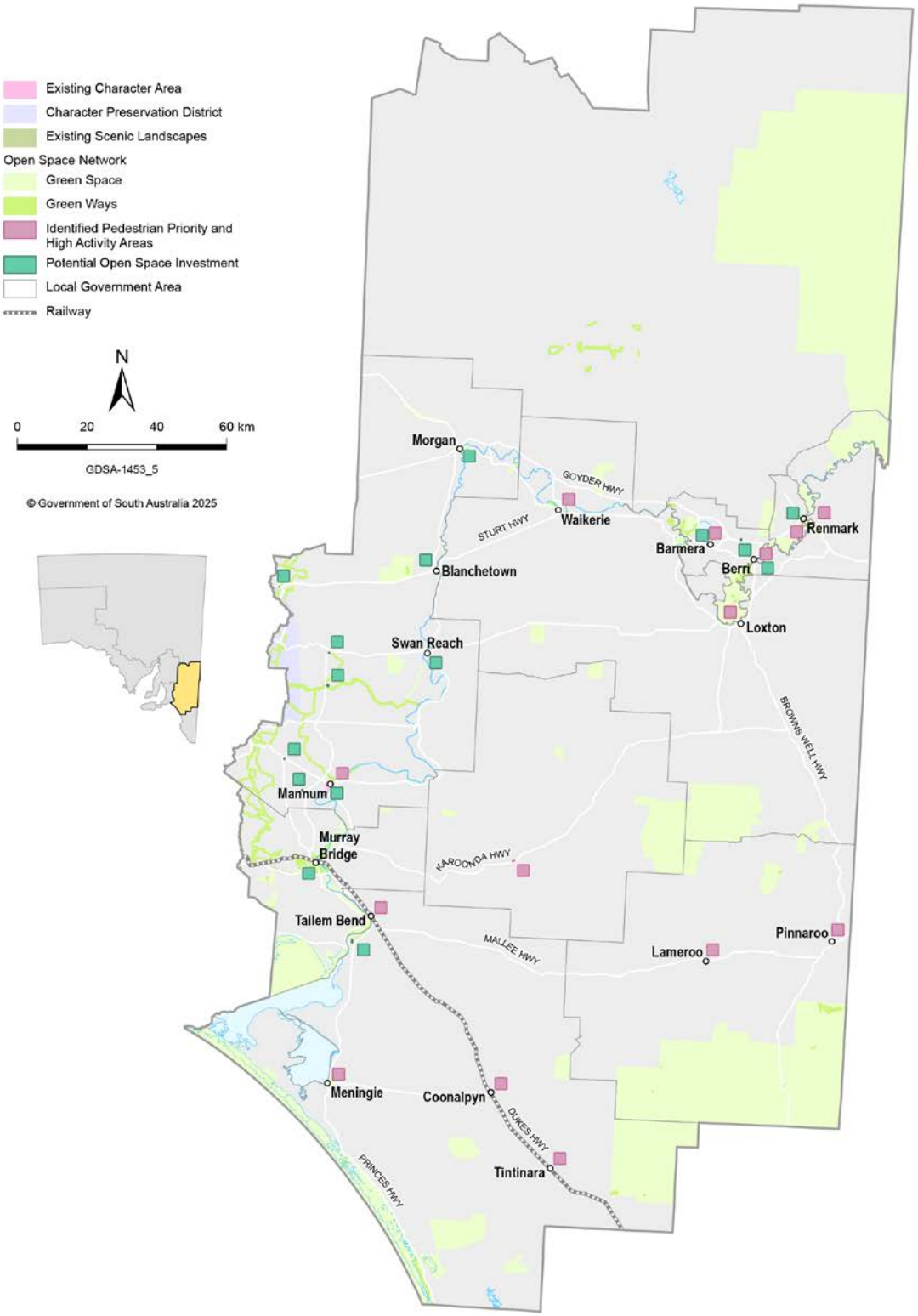
Several master plans have been developed across the Murray Mallee with several more proposed, such as for the township of Wellington East and Tailem Bend. Master plans are encouraged to guide where and how development should occur. They provide a clear vision, support investment certainty and enhance character and placemaking in key precincts such as town centres, foreshores or parklands.

Public realm initiatives will also be progressed in established towns such as Berri, Barmera, Waikerie, Wellington East, Mannum and Renmark. Pedestrian priority areas, where pedestrians are or should be prioritised over vehicle movement, will be concentrated in established towns and activity centres including Renmark, Berri, Barmera, Loxton and Waikerie.

An enhanced emphasis on tree planting and green infrastructure initiatives across the region, with a particular focus on native species selection, will 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 overall amenity and aesthetic appeal of these towns, fostering a greater sense of wellbeing and community pride. It can help to mitigate the impacts of climate change, supporting resilient and sustainable development. Ensuring building design and siting responds to the hotter, drier climatic conditions projected to occur in the region is a priority.

## Actions

| Title | Action Description | Timing | Lead | Spatial application |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reinforce Character Values | Support local government in pursuing improvements to Character Preservation District Overlay and to initiate a Code amendment to reinforce the character values in the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale Character Preservation Districts and whilst supporting primary industries. | 03/2025 - 03/2029 | Department for Housing and Urban Development | |


Existing Character Area
Character Preservation District
Existing Scenic Landscapes
Open Space Network
Green Space
Green Ways
Identified Pedestrian Priority and High Activity Areas
Potential Open Space Investment
Local Government Area
Railway
N
0 20 40 60 km
GDSA-1453_5
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Morgan
GOYDER HWY
Waikerie
STURT HWY
Blanchetown
Barmera
Renmark
Berri
Loxton
Swan Reach
BROWNS WELL HWY
Mannum
Murray Bridge
KAROONDA HWY
Tailem Bend
MALLEE HWY
Pinnaroo
Lameroo
Meningie
Coonalpyn
DUKES HWY
Tintinara
PRINCES HWY

# Productive economy

## Theme:

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

**The Murray Mallee Region contributes approximately $5.2 billion to South Australia's Gross State Product. Agriculture, viticulture, meat processing, healthcare and social assistance are the largest employment sectors.[4]**

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).[5]

Supportive planning policies, investment in infrastructure, expansion of local training opportunities and attraction of skilled labour will all be critical to realise the economic potential of the Murray Mallee Region.

### Current top 3 employing industries

1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing (21%)
2. Healthcare and social assistance (14%)
3. Retail trade (10%)

Source: ABS, 2021

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

## Economic drivers

The region benefits from established and export-oriented agriculture, viticulture and tourism.

The **agricultural industry** continues to dominate the region in both employment and export income, contributing over $2 billion worth of exports in the 2022-23 financial year. Cropping, sheep, cattle and hay are the main agricultural products of the region.

The region's diverse and scenic landscape shaped by the River Murray, the Coorong, conservation parks, and expansive farmland, is a key attraction for both South Australian, interstate and international visitors. This natural beauty plays a significant role in the state's **tourism economy**, supporting vital local employment opportunities. Emerging opportunities such as the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve is driving new tourism experiences, building upon other success stories such as the Monarto Safari Park and The Bend Motorsport Park.

The **renewable energy sector** is an emerging contributor to the region's economic profile which will only grow upon completion of the EnergyConnect project, opening opportunities to export energy into New South Wales and Victoria. The sector is well facilitated by an abundance of open space, sunshine and ambient wind levels across the region, however, it does in some instances utilise existing zoned employment land. Regional advances in clean energy generation technologies such as wind-solar hybrid networks are globally recognised.

Investment opportunities also lie in the areas of **innovation and technology**, particularly in agricultural production.

Continued growth is expected in the **healthcare and social services sectors**. An ageing population will require increased care from specialised health professionals. This growth is dependent on the region's ability to retain and attract the required healthcare workers and ensure equitable access to healthcare.

The availability of infrastructure (power, water, sewer, digital technology, reliable freight routes) is critical to support these economic development opportunities.

### Future workforce

For any sector to succeed, it needs a skilled, reliable, and supported workforce, along with good, affordable housing in reasonable proximity to employment. Furthermore, if the region is to attract and retain younger workers and families, access to quality schooling and childcare services is essential. To support this goal, collaborative efforts across government and industry will be directed toward identifying short-term actions that quantify childcare demand and enhance access for working families.

# 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 Economic Statement by ensuring enough serviced land is available to accommodate current and future industries, in the right location and serviced by infrastructure.

Attracting and retaining a strong, 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, serviced by appropriate infrastructure. This is critical for enabling local job opportunities and accommodating a growing population. 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.

Source: Shutterstock

### Employment land supply and demand

The major commercial and industrial centres of Murray Bridge, Renmark, Barmera, Loxton, Waikerie, Mannum and Tailem Bend will remain the primary employment, logistic and industrial precincts for the region. Continued support and investment in road and rail freight facilities and infrastructure will be integral to future proofing the Murray Mallee economy, supporting warehousing and distribution related activities tied to existing established primary production activities.

The region's continuing investment in recycling and reuse of materials, and its transition to a more circular economy, will require an appropriate supply of land for waste and resource recovery. Other waste management solutions that support local processing of materials will also be required where waste export restrictions are in place.

Land supply studies undertaken by several councils in the region indicate that while there is a significant amount of land available (zoned or earmarked for future rezoning) for employment land uses, much of the land is not considered to be 'development-ready' due to a lack of supporting infrastructure.

## Actions

| Title | Action Description | Timing | Lead | Spatial application |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Feasibility study - Berri Barmera | Investigate the opportunity for a transport/logistics hub as identified in the Berri Barmera Growth Strategy. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | The Berri Barmera Council | The Berri Barmera Council |
| Loxton - Strategic Employment | Undertake a Code amendment to rezone land in Loxton to Strategic Employment as identified in the Loxton Waikerie Growth Strategy. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | The District Council of Loxton Waikerie | Loxton |

# State innovation places

## Long-term strategic objectives

1. **Support the development of State Innovation Places and clustering of knowledge-intensive and creative industries, with flexible planning policies to enable adaptive land uses.**

2. **Align identified priority State Innovation Places through the South Australian Innovation Places Leadership Framework and apply appropriate planning policies to protect future viability and prevent land use conflict.**

3. **Encourage structure planning of emerging innovation districts to ensure they do not lose their economic and employment potential through incompatible development.**

4. **Encourage the development of integrated employment and residential mixed-use precincts where conflicts between uses can be managed.**

The Government of South Australian aims for increased investment in research and development, ensuring it drives innovation across all businesses and industries in the state.

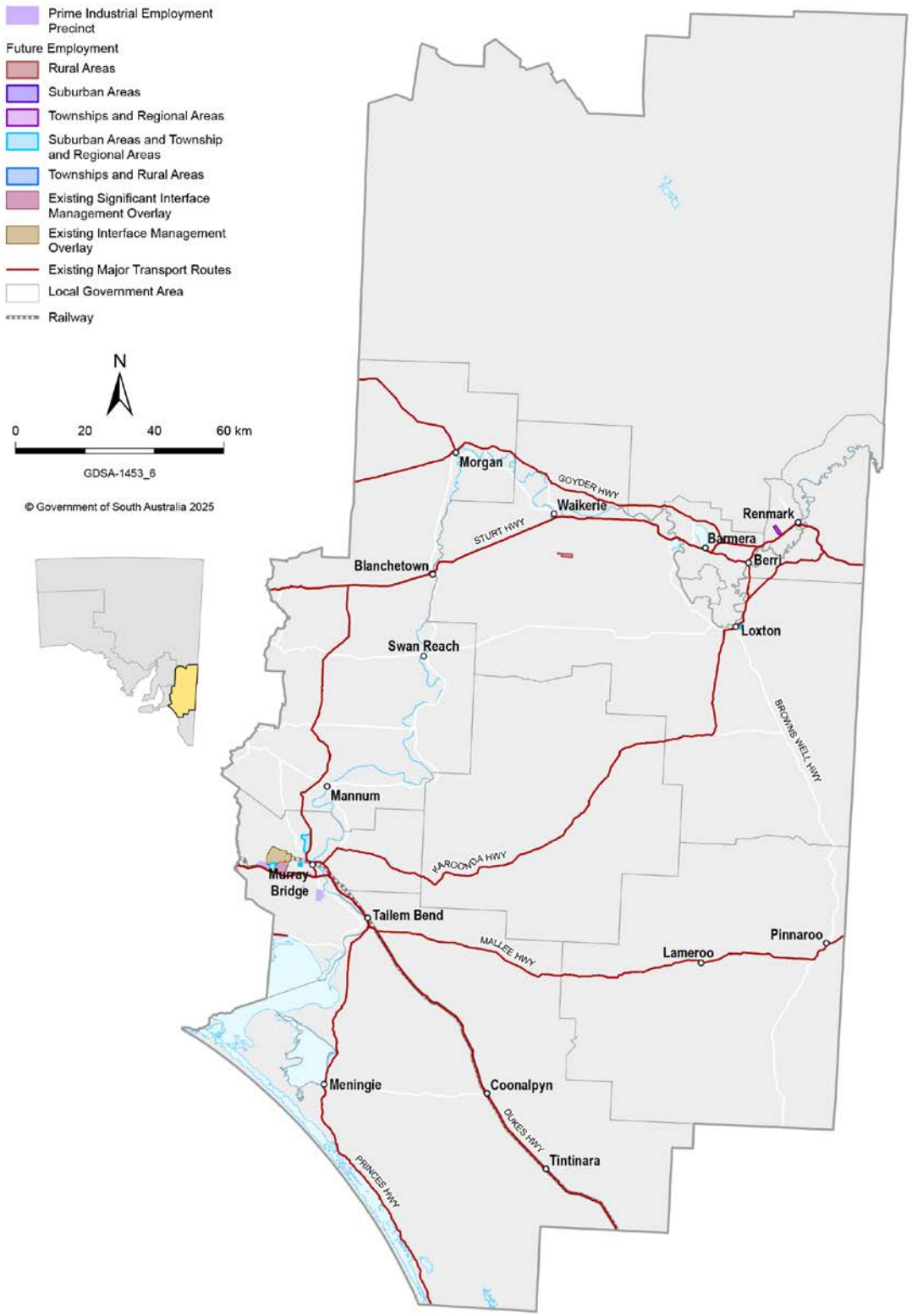
State Innovation Places (SIPs) are specialised employment clusters of knowledge-intensive activities and creative industries. SIPs are anchored by complementary academic institutions, research and development centres or entrepreneurial support organisations and integrated as residential mixed-use precincts that promote creativity and collaboration.

Conditions that drive successful SIPs include access to a highly skilled workforce, and a land use mix and quality of place derived from a high-quality public realm and access to other amenities, such as active transport networks and pedestrian focused areas.

The government plays an essential role as a catalyst in the development of innovation districts to provide confidence to the market. This includes leadership, zoning, essential infrastructure to ensuring ongoing competitiveness.

The South Australian Innovation Places Leadership Framework provides a 10-year roadmap for government, research, business and industry to harness the power of the state's connected and collaborative network of innovation places.

The Framework positions innovation places to support essential economic growth, investment attraction, job creation, boosting regional connectivity and linking state-wide education, skills and workforce programs.


Prime 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 Significant Interface Management Overlay
Existing Interface Management Overlay
Existing Major Transport Routes
Local Government Area
Railway
N
0
20
40
60 km
GDSA-1453_6
© Government of South Australia 2025
Morgan
GOYDER HWY
Waikerie
Renmark
STURT HWY
Barmera
Berri
Blanchetown
Loxton
Swan Reach
BROOKINS WELL HWY
Mannum
KAROONDA HWY
Murray Bridge
Tailem Bend
MALLEE HWY
Pinnaroo
Lameroo
Meningie
Coonalpyn
DUKES HWY
Tintinara
PRINCES HWY

## 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 opportunities 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 now committed to growing the state's visitor economy to $12.8 billion, with the creation of 16,000 new tourism jobs by 2030.[6]

*The South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030* [7] 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.


Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

The Murray Mallee Region has a significant tourism industry, underpinned by the draw of the water-based activities on the expansive River Murray from border to coast. The Riverland is known for its food and wine tourism, with award-winning cellar doors, local produce, and dining experiences.

In 2023, tourism in the region generated $373 million in visitor expenditure and directly employed 1,300 people. This strong figure was driven by 1.1 million day trips and 363,000 overnight visitors.

## Monarto Safari Park

Monarto Safari Park is an exceptional regional example of growing and diversifying an established tourism experience. Now the largest safari park outside of Africa, it has recently completed a major investment. Comprising new visitor and conference centre and glamping facilities, it is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the region.

The 2023 addendum to the *Monarto Safari Park Master Plan* identifies a raft of future upgrades over the next five years and beyond, including student accommodation further elevating its current offering.

Source: Zoos SA

The South Australian Tourism Commission's Value of Tourism snapshot indicates that tourism expenditure for the Murray River, Lower Lakes and Coorong regions has already exceeded its target of $196 million by 2025 and has also exceeded its target of $246 million by 2030. Ongoing investment in services, accommodation and other land uses to support this growing visitor demand is required. The focus will be on increasing overnight stays through enhanced regional and cross-regional collaboration around touring routes and events. Success will depend on developing new products, infrastructure, and building regional capabilities.[8]

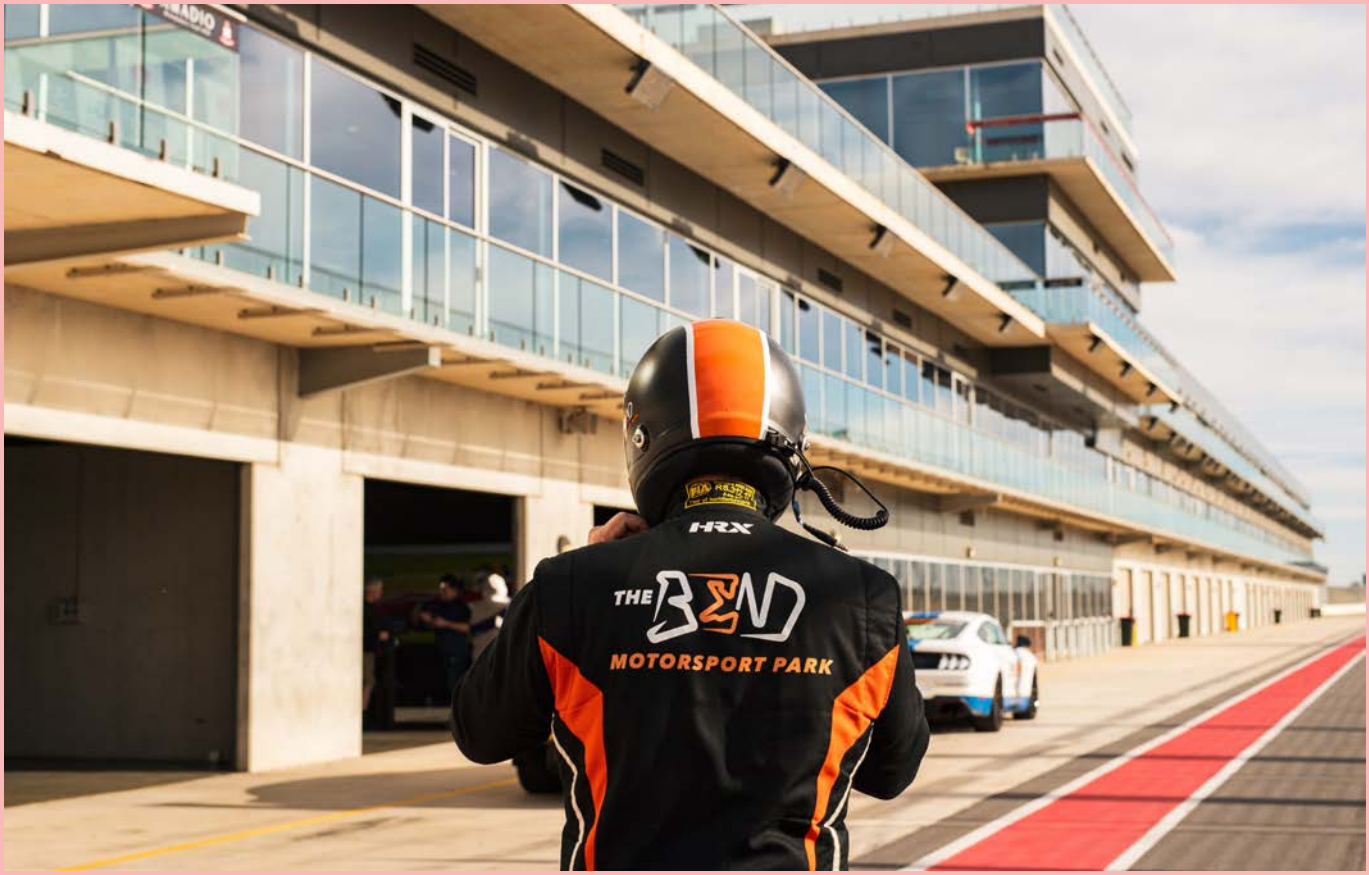
## River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

The River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve is Australia's only accredited International Dark Sky Reserve, one of just 21 such reserves globally, recognised by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) as having some of the darkest skies on the planet. Covering more than 3,200 square kilometres within the Mid Murray Council, including 80 kilometres of the River Murray, conservation parks and farmland, the reserve offers a range of nature-based activities and astro-tourism opportunities, with Council working closely with the IDA and state government to protect and enhance its status as a destination for dark sky tourism both nationally and internationally.

The Reserve presents exciting opportunities beyond tourism including scientific and astronomical research, educational and school-based programs, and commercial ventures aligned with Dark Sky practices. A future planetarium or observatory will support these aspirations.

To preserve the integrity of the Reserve's designation, it will be necessary to explore appropriate planning and regulatory controls to minimise light pollution caused by urban development and transport networks. This will ensure the long-term protection of the Reserve's exceptional night sky environment, maintaining its value for tourism, science, and education now and into the future, while also protecting local biodiversity by supporting the natural behaviours of nocturnal species and contributing to the overall health of the ecosystem.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission




Source: Tourism Australia

## The Bend Motorsport Park

A purpose-built motorsport park located on the outskirts of Tailem Bend opened on the former Mitsubishi test track in 2017. This facility has grown to accommodate a range of tracks which draw local and national motorsport events, including the V8s. Most recently, the Park opened a drag strip, which can accommodate over 20,000 spectators.

The Bend is important to South Australian and local tourism by drawing visitors for major events like the Supercars endurance race and attracting audiences with its world-class facilities. It also serves as a gateway to the region with site functioning as both a key stopover for travellers between Melbourne and Adelaide and a significant regional economic driver through its year-round activities and substantial investment.

### Cultural and heritage tourism

The region has immense cultural and heritage tourism including Aboriginal heritage sites like Ngaut Ngaut Aboriginal Site, cultural trails such as the Murray Bridge Water Discovery Trail, early European history like the Mallee Tourist & Heritage Centre and the Mypolonga Schoolhouse, and contemporary cultural experiences at the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery.

In addition, trail-based tourism is an important and growing segment. Key existing trails, such as the Murray Coorong Trail and the Lavender Federation Trail, provide valuable links between towns, natural attractions, and cultural sites, and present further opportunities for investment in signage, access infrastructure, and regional promotion.

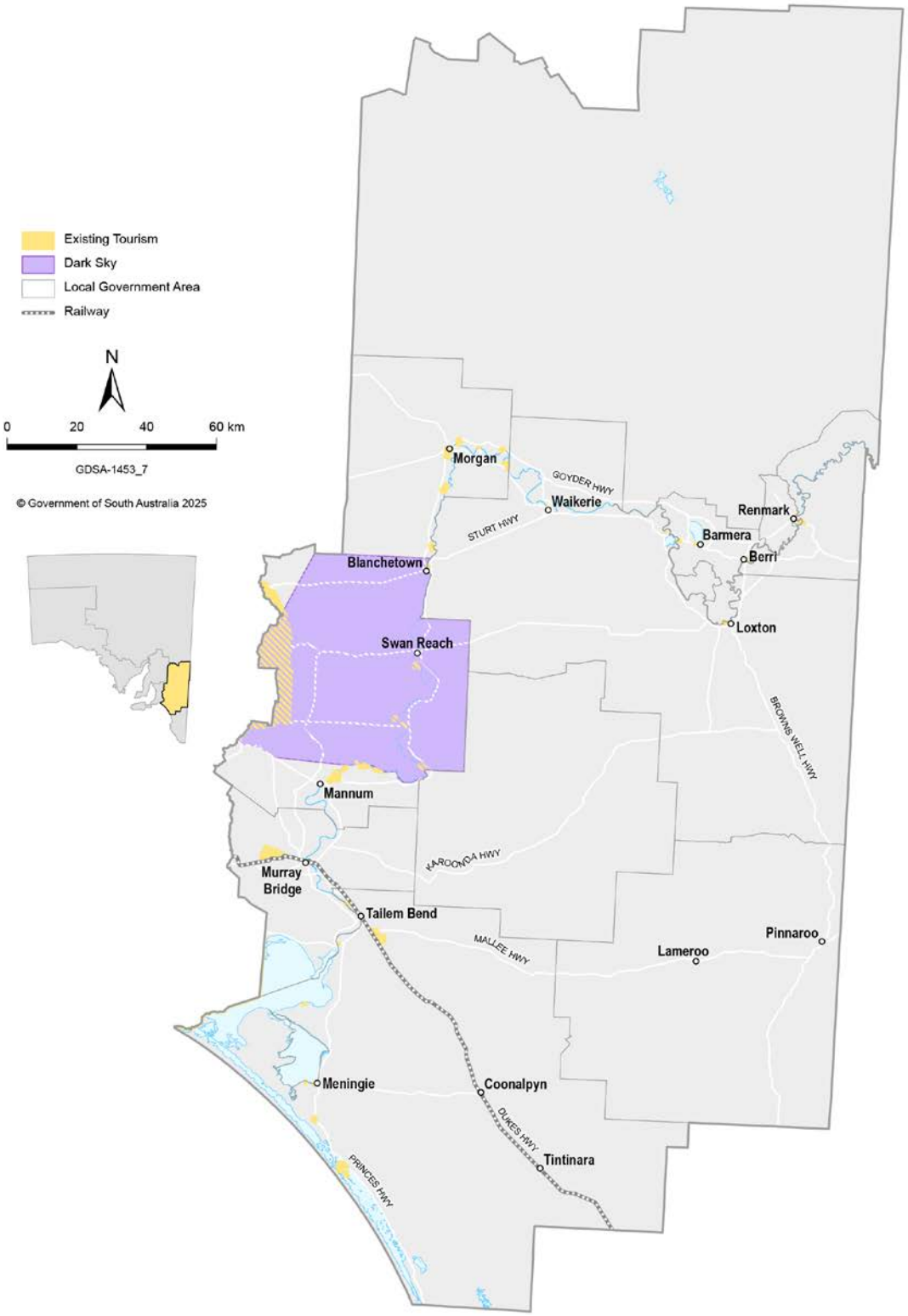
### Pathways for tourism development

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, marinas and golf course 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.

## Actions

| Title | Action Description | Timing | Lead | Spatial application |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Investigation - River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve | Investigate dark sky sensitive lighting policy, practices and development to support the potential of the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve, and to facilitate immersive tourism experiences that showcase the Dark Sky Reserve. | 03/2025 - 03/2027 | Mid-Murray Council | River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve |
| 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. Drive innovation, diversity, and dynamism in the region's primary industry sector by adopting new technologies, intensifying production systems, and recognising and protecting 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 appropriate value-adding and rural business diversification 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 productive primary production land across the region is a priority. The agricultural industry continues to dominate the region in both employment and export income, contributing over $2 billion worth of exports in the 2022-23 financial year. Cropping, sheep, cattle and hay production are key primary industries in the region.

Even well-established industries are changing, with the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board foreseeing that areas like Waikerie and the northern Mallee may shift toward large-scale corporate farming models. These operations typically employ fewer people and contribute less to local industry, potentially slowing regional economic growth. Facilitating rural value-adding opportunities such as visitor experiences, tourist accommodation, food and beverage production, farm stays, and other tourism ventures, will help support the region's thriving primary production sector.

The almond industry is a significant contributor, with the Riverland accounting for over 20% of almond plantations nationally. Value-add industries aligned to these key sectors are predominately located within the townships of Renmark and Loxton.

The wine industry, focused around the Riverland area of the region, is Australia's largest winegrape-region by tonnage due to its ideal climate, with vineyards covering over 22,000 hectares.[9] In recent years, grape prices have dropped significantly and profitability reduced due to a global oversupply of wine, to the point where grape growing is becoming increasingly unsustainable, resulting in vast areas of vines being replaced with other produce crops.

The recent wine grape crisis has highlighted the need to ensure that zoning of horticultural and agricultural land provides sufficient flexibility. This can allow primary producers to pivot in response to demand and supply and changing climate conditions. Any change of land use must be approached carefully, as the loss of farmland threatens both local character and infrastructure efficiency. In places like Renmark, this includes the viability of irrigation systems.

### Biosecurity

Strong biosecurity measures must be maintained as a crucial tool to protecting primary industry and natural resource management. 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, can support a regenerative approach to agriculture and land management. Recent investments in this area, backed by the state government's *Carbon Farming Roadmap for South Australia*, highlight the region's commitment to this sustainable practice.

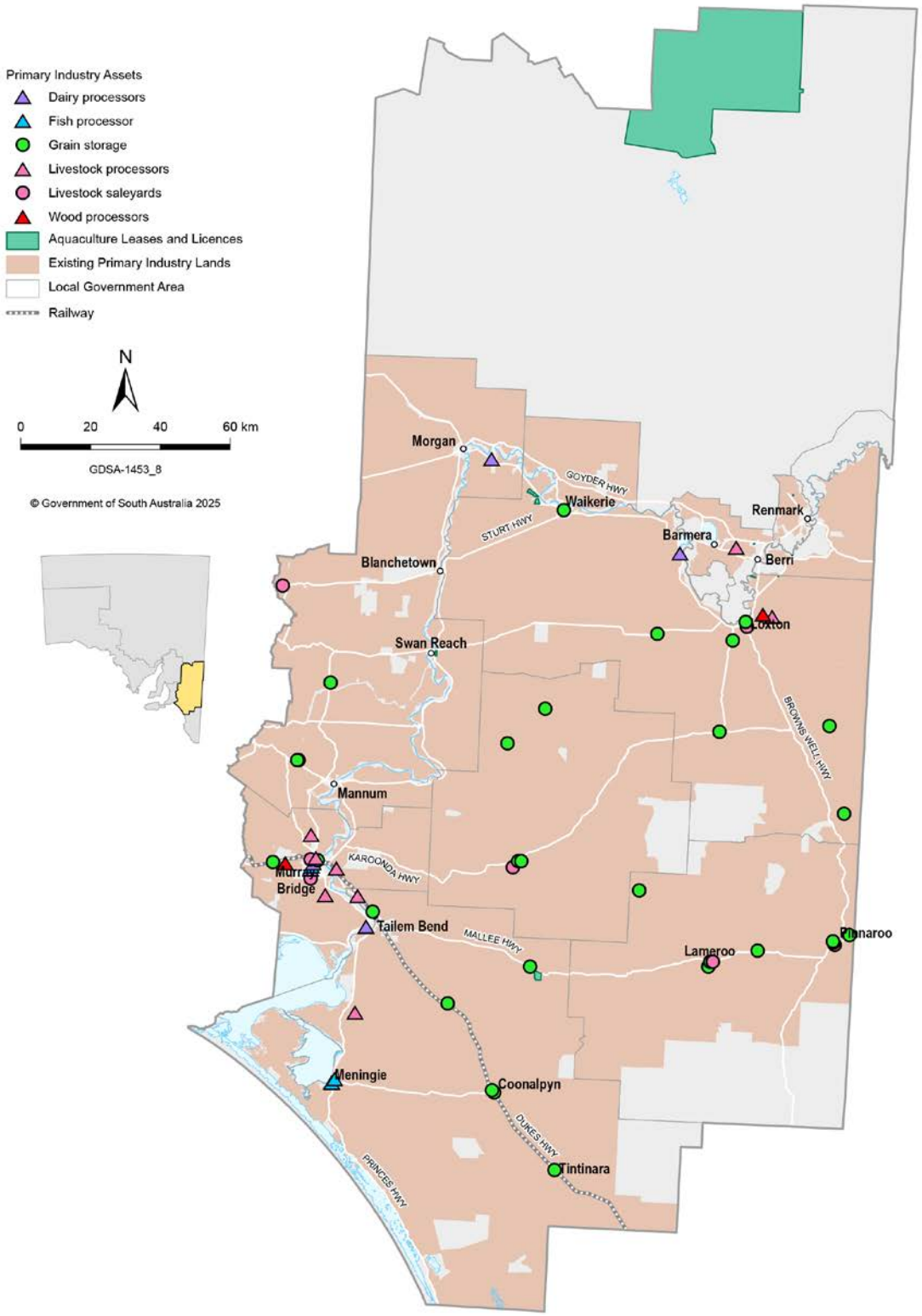
### Value-adding

Value-adding presents exciting opportunities for the agribusinesses sector.[10] Farm stays and eco-tourism, for example, can diversify and expand land-derived income, and support the region's primary producers.

Flexibility enables the expansion of the region's economic base and promotes its regional identity. A new Rural Intensive Enterprise Zone has been introduced into the Code. It envisages industry clusters of multi-purpose intensive agricultural production, processing facilities and supporting ancillary industries that are important economic and employment assets to the state. Opportunities to further apply the Rural Intensive Enterprise Zone to key rural industry sites and clusters will 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. | 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. | 2030 | Department for Housing and Urban Development | State-wide |


Primary Industry Assets
Dairy processors
Fish processor
Grain storage
Livestock processors
Livestock saleyards
Wood processors
Aquaculture Leases and Licences
Existing Primary Industry Lands
Local Government Area
Railway
N
0 20 40 60 km
GDSA-1453_8
© Government of South Australia 2025
Morgan
Waikerie
Renmark
Barmera
Berri
Blanchetown
Loxton
Swan Reach
Mannum
Murray Bridge
Tailem Bend
Lameroo
Pinnaroo
Meningie
Coonalpyn
Tintinara
GOYDER HWY
STURT HWY
BROOKS WELL HWY
KAROONDA HWY
MALLEE HWY
DUKES HWY
PRINCES HWY

# Waste and resource recovery

## Long-term strategic objectives

1. Provide an appropriate supply of land for waste, 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.

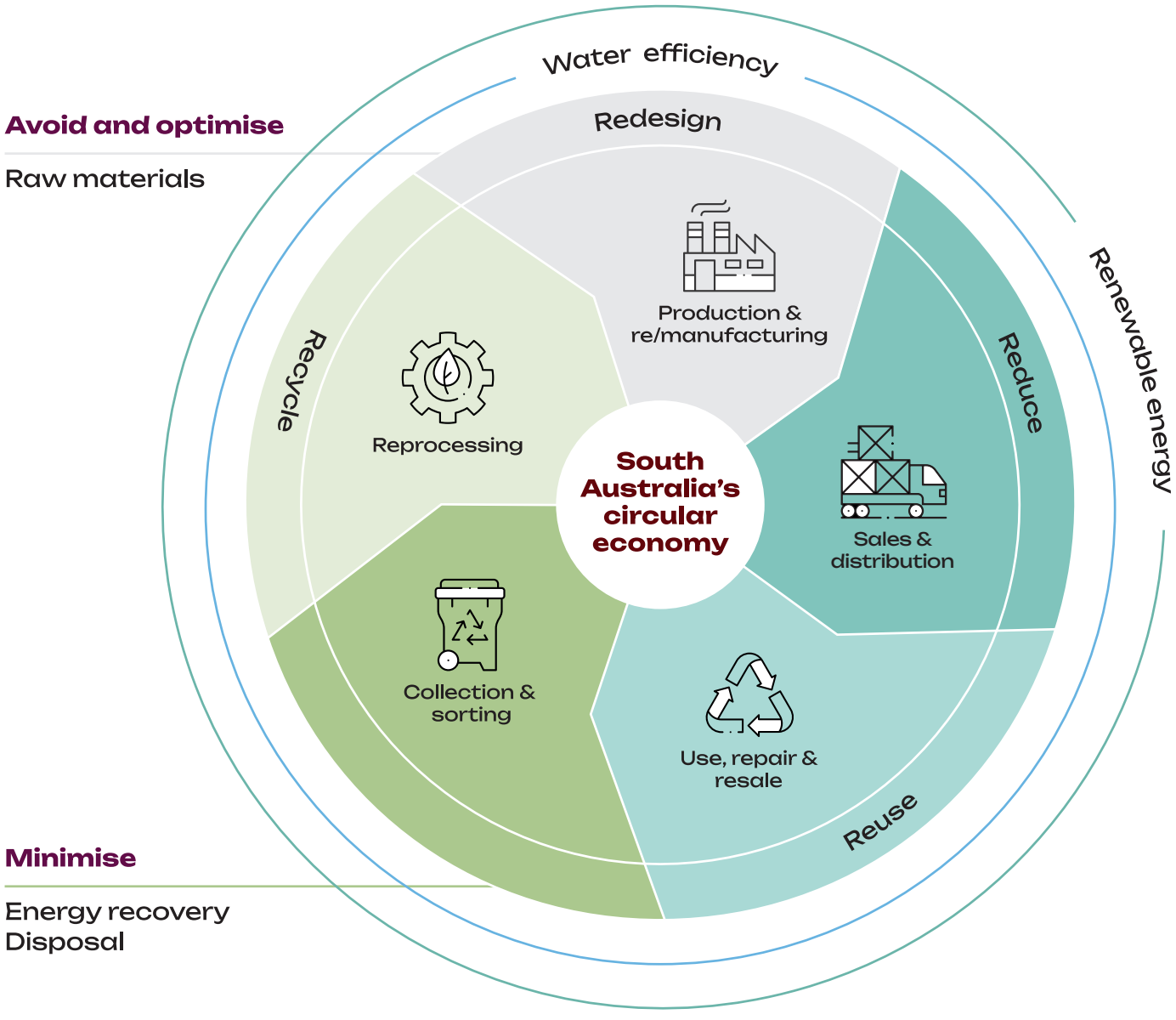
The regulation and management of waste and resource recovery is primarily the responsibility of the state government. The *Environment Protection Act 1993* (EP Act) establishes the primary legislative framework for this, while the *Green Industries SA Act 2004* requires Green Industries SA (GISA) to 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.



### 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. This will ensure we can 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. This also means that 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.

Continuing investment in recycling and reuse of materials is being driven by community, state and national objectives to transition to a more circular economy and deliver higher order waste management solutions. Building capability and capacity supports local processing of materials where waste export restrictions are in place. An appropriate supply of land for waste and resource recovery, should be identified. An established local circular economy can maximise resource use, support economic growth, and serve communities. This can include consideration of initial local processing of materials to increase transport efficiencies for secondary processing and markets in other locations. There is an opportunity for the development of localised regional waste management solutions and recycling facilities in Tailem Bend.

### 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, contributes to the state's commitment to reduce emissions, 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. Reusing spaces, assets and building materials also ensures that these resources are retained at the highest value.

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

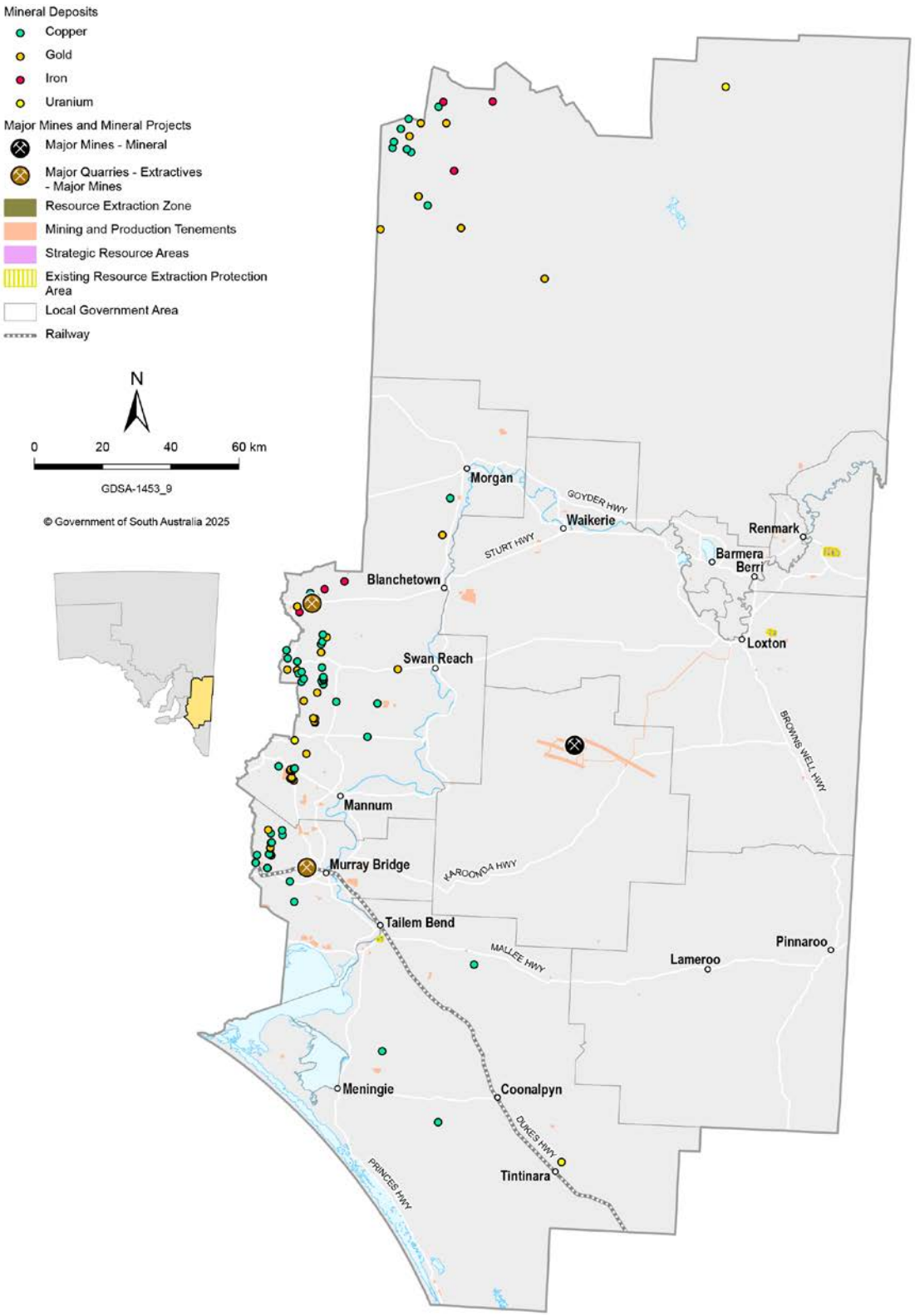
1. Protect key infrastructure, including associated strategic access routes, transport corridors and pipelines, that contribute to the region's economy.
2. Establish infrastructure corridors that support infrastructure such as transport, pipelines and energy infrastructure provision to key resource areas.
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.

South Australia has considerable in-demand commodities including critical minerals, which underpin the state's economy and export activities. The provides for a critical resource that will support the emerging space industry in the state.

Protecting these key resource areas and associated infrastructure, including connections via strategic access routes, transport corridors and pipelines from encroachment of incompatible development is critical. This will manage risk 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. The 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 can provide up-to-date regional data and strategies, allowing 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: Shutterstock

## Learn more about Outcome 3

The River Murray is the state's primary source of water and one of its greatest assets. Much of the primary industry within the region relies heavily on fair, equitable and sustainable access to the river for irrigation. Achieving sustainable levels of demand for water is essential, particularly considering the effects of climate change and the importance of protecting the biodiversity of the river and the region. The long-term productivity and biodiversity of the region needs to be managed by mitigating threats posed by erosion, land degradation, climate change and invasive species.

By 2030, the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape region is projected to have the greatest decline in annual rainfall (6.8%), from the baseline period of 1986–2005. This is forecast to increase to 15% by 2050[11]. This change in the rainfall-runoff relationship means that for any long-term reduction in rainfall, there is an exponentially larger reduction in water availability from native sources like the River Murray.

The River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve is an important asset that includes 80 kilometres of the River Murray, conservation parks, farmland and some of the darkest skies on the planet. To maintain its international accreditation and protect the unique nocturnal species that call it home, the reserve needs to be protected from urban encroachment and associated light pollution.

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. Heatwaves, bushfires, coastal erosion and flooding place people's health, livelihoods, and property at risk. New development will need to be carefully planned and located away from areas of high risk. Protecting communities and the environment from exposure to industrial emissions and hazards is also fundamental to maintaining a healthy region.

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

Source: Shutterstock

The Murray Mallee Region is home to a diverse range of ecosystems and ecological communities that exist in inland, coastal, estuarine, and marine environments. The Murraylands and Riverland is a unique region and is home to a diverse range of native species, with over 2,000 plants and more than 450 animals.[12] The region includes critically important habitats such as the River Murray, Ramsar listed Chowilla Floodplain, the Coorong and Lower Lakes. Projects in these areas to re-establish the Mallee Birds, Murray crayfish[13] and southern bell frog[14] in the Lower Lakes are being undertaken, which will only further improve the region's scenic qualities.

The region is also home to the unique native iron grass *(Lomandra effusa* and *Lomandra multiflora ssp dura)* which thrives in the transition zones between higher rainfall forests and woodlands and the drier Mallee areas.[15] The Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grassland of South Australia is listed as a critically endangered ecological community by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.*

Native vegetation and biodiversity should be protected and where impacts cannot be avoided, they will be minimised or offset by reintroducing habitat into landscapes that have been previously modified through urban development or primary production. This is supported through programs such as the Growing Regional Urban Biodiversity, which seeks to increase the number of native trees and plant species in public spaces to improve biodiversity and increase climate resilience.[16]

Soil protection and regenerative practices are important considerations for the region. Soil health underpins agricultural sustainability, food security and biodiversity outcomes. Regenerative agriculture practices such as cover cropping, reduced tillage and increasing areas of rehabilitated and replanted native vegetation should be encouraged and landowners should be educated in and incentivised to adopt such practices.

In addition, shelter belts, erosion and dryland salinity control, and the use of wetlands for stormwater control and quality, can maximise production and improve biodiversity outcomes.

Dryland agriculture will need to become more flexible and resilient as less rain and drier conditions increase in the northern areas of 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, which highlights where our areas of remnant native vegetation are located, identifies threatened ecological communities of national environmental significance and vegetation land cover.

## 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 NV 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 NV 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.

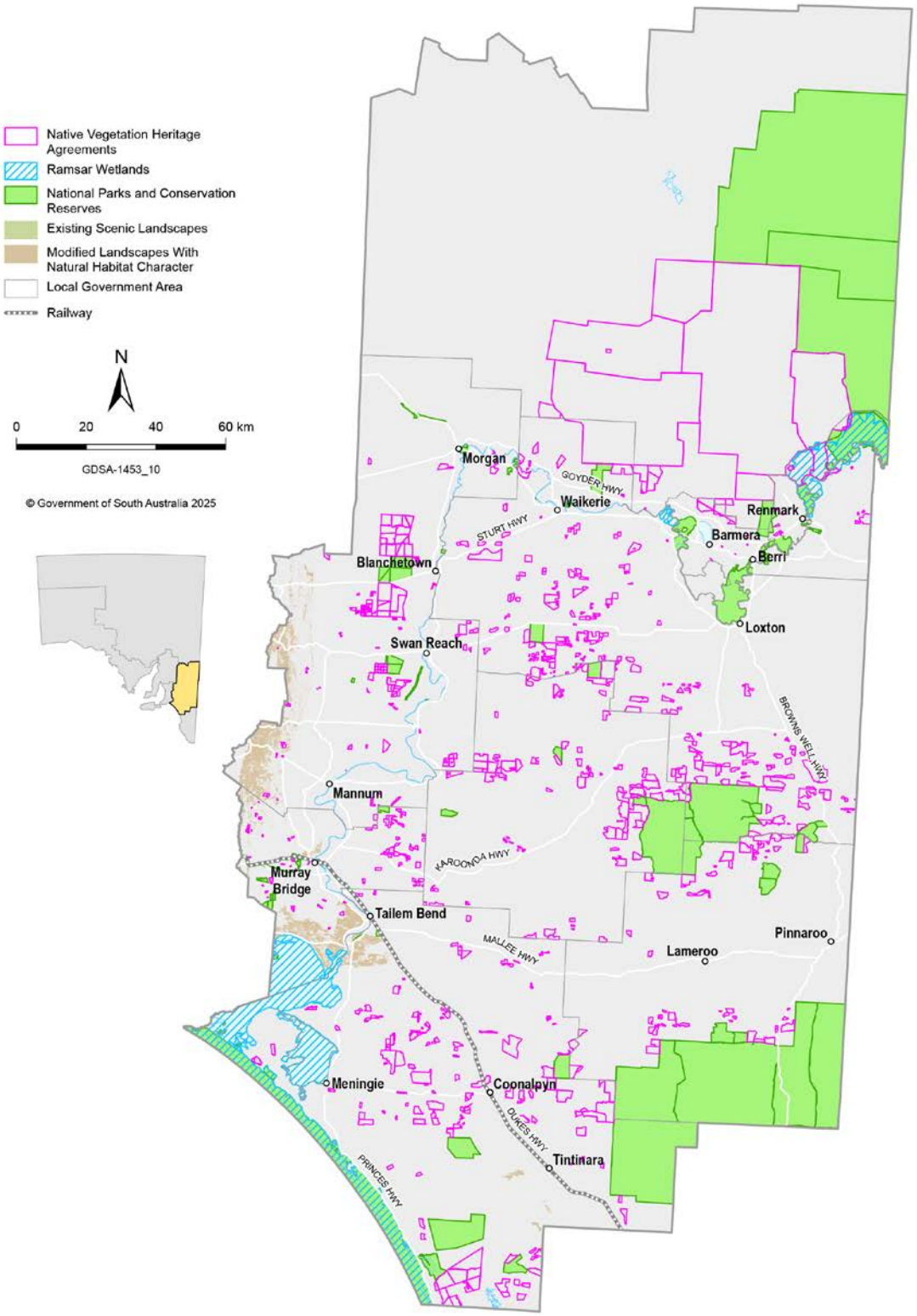
As part of a more holistic review to streamline current legislation and enhance biodiversity protection, the government has passed its first ever Biodiversity Act. The *Biodiversity Act 2025* once in operation will absorb the entirety of the existing NV Act and wildlife provisions of the *National Parks 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.

## Actions

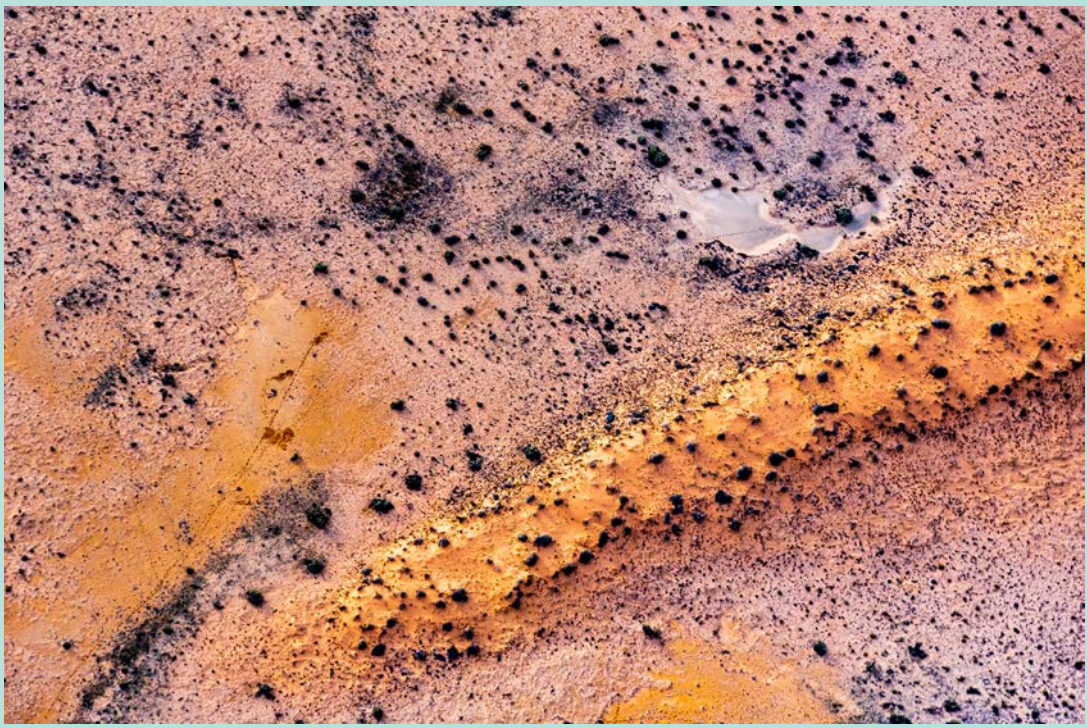
| Title | Action Description | Timing | Lead | Spatial application |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Biodiversity Mapping | Incorporate new biodiversity and habitat mapping that provides clear guidance on which areas need protection, which areas may be appropriate for development, and which areas need caution to provide greater certainty about regional biodiversity priorities. | 2028 | Department for Environment and Water | State-wide |
| Strategic Plan - Pangarinda Reserve - Open Space | Develop vision and strategic plan for Pangarinda Botanic Garden, Wellington East in consultation with Crown Lands. | 03/2025 - 03/2029 | Coorong District Council | Pangarinda Reserve, Wellington East |


Native Vegetation Heritage Agreements
Ramsar Wetlands
National Parks and Conservation Reserves
Existing Scenic Landscapes
Modified Landscapes With Natural Habitat Character
Local Government Area
Railway
N
0 20 40 60 km
GDSA-1453_10
© Government of South Australia 2025
Morgan
Waikerie
Renmark
Barmera
Berri
Blanchetown
Loxton
Swan Reach
Mannum
Murray Bridge
Tailem Bend
Pinnaroo
Lameroo
Meningie
Coonalpyn
Tintinara
GOYDER HWY
STURT HWY
BROOKS WELL HWY
KAROONDA HWY
MALLEE HWY
DUKES HWY
PRINCES HWY

## 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 emissions development and living environments 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 and climate change adaptation strategies in the early planning of master planned township neighbourhoods and new investment in 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 promote low or zero net emissions and climate resilient buildings and support market transition.
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 South Australia's climate targets.



Source: Shutterstock

The Murray Mallee faces challenges from climate change including more frequent and severe heatwaves, reduced average rainfall, droughts, bushfires and floods. In 2050, the Murray Mallee Region is projected to experience an increase in daily maximum temperatures of 1.7 degrees Celsius and 10.2% less annual rainfall.[17] These are likely to impact on agricultural production, public health, community wellbeing, natural landscapes and wildlife habitats, and public and private infrastructure.

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

| | Projected Change | Associated Risks |
|---|---|---|
|  **Higher Temperatures** | • Higher average daily maximum temperatures<br>• Longer, hotter and more frequent heatwaves. | • Reduced agricultural productivity<br>• Changes in distribution and abundance of pest plants and animals<br>• Increased risks of heat related illness and death. |
|  **Drier with more time in drought** | • Reduced average annual rainfall<br>• Reduced spring rainfall<br>• More time spent in drought. | • Increased stress on water resources<br>• Reduced condition of water dependent ecosystem<br>• Reduced agricultural productivity. |
|  **More dangerous fire weather** | • More days of dangerous fire weather<br>• Longer fire seasons. | • Increased risks to public health and safety<br>• Increased damage or destruction of assets, infrastructure and the natural environment. |
|  **More intense heavy rainfall events** | • More rain falling in extreme rainfall events<br>• More frequent extreme rainfall events. | • Increased flood risk<br>• Increased damage to assets, particularly roads and bridges<br>• Increased damage to food crops. |
|  **Rising sea levels** | • Increasing average sea levels<br>• Increased height of extreme sea level events. | • Increased coastal flooding<br>• 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 more than 60% by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and to achieve 100% net renewable electricity generation by 2027.

With the 55% decrease from 2004-05 levels recorded in 2022-23, at least a further 5% net emissions reduction would be 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 and is responsible for 39% of all emissions.[18]

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 many 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 and align with the *South Australia's Net Zero Strategy 2024-2030, South Australian Government Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Actions* and the *Climate Ready Government Initiative.* This includes considering increased intensity and frequency 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 the changing climate including the climate being hotter and drier with more extreme weather events, with 'climate ready' development and housing that minimises emissions, is energy efficient and adapted to the changing climate. Cost-effective innovative infrastructure solutions (e.g. renewable energy, independent water systems, communications) are encouraged.

Industries and technologies that reduce reliance on carbon-based energy supplies and directly or indirectly reduce emissions should be supported. The region presents an opportunity to recover waste from primary production to generate energy from biomass.

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. It also recognises the important role that 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 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. | 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. | 2030 | Department for Housing and Urban Development | State-wide |

# Coastal and riverine environment

## Long-term strategic objectives

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

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

3. Protect the high blue and teal carbon storage values of areas such as salt marshes and freshwater wetlands.

4. Recognise and continue to protect and enhance the environmentally important features of natural coastal and riverine environments including estuaries, marine-protected areas, sand dunes and wetlands.

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

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

## 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*
- *River Murray Act 2003*.

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.

The coastline and the river 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.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

### Coastal development

Most of the region's coastal and riverine areas are protected by the Conservation Zone. For coastal areas the Coastal Areas Overlay applies, while multiple overlays apply to the River Murray, including the River Murray Flood Plain Protection Area Overlay which seeks to protect the riverine environment. The Ramsar Wetlands Overlay applies in this region to recognise the ecologically significant of the Riverland, Banrock Station and Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert wetlands. This zoning preserves the open nature of the coast riverine areas, promoting public access and limiting the impact and development of structures. A large portion of the region's coastline is adjacent to the Encounter and Upper South East Marine Parks, as identified in the *Special Legislative Scheme – Marine Parks Act 2007,* underpinning the unique and sensitive natural marine environments of South Australia's southeastern coastline.

Future development should preserve and enhance the natural coastal and riverine environments and wetlands, and avoid impacts on natural coastal processes including sea level rise, flooding, erosion, and sand dune drift to avoid the need for public expenditure on protection of the environment and development. Nature-based solutions to coastal protection, such as living shorelines should be considered. These "soft" solutions help reduce erosion of dune environments. These solutions can be used in place of or in combination with traditional "hard" or "grey" engineering solutions such as seawalls.

Development adjacent the coast should not rely on coastal open space to off-set shortfalls in the provision of open space for development, noting that open space provision can buffer landward development from coastal hazards; provide opportunities for on-site stormwater retention measures that will reduce run-off to the coast; and coastal open space may reduce over time due to coastal processes and sea-level rise.

### Blue carbon

Blue carbon is the carbon captured and stored in coastal ecosystems including seagrass meadows, saltmarshes and mangroves. Teal carbon is the carbon captured and stored in freshwater ecosystems such as wetlands, lake and rivers. These ecosystems are carbon sinks, accumulating and retaining carbon in the plants themselves and in the soils below as well as enhancing the biological and ecosystem services which these areas provide.

The CLLMM (Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth) Research Centre[19] is conducting research into the benefits of blue and teal carbon on tidal reconnection, coastal wetland restoration, and seagrass rehabilitation as possible nature-based solutions to climate change.

### 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 an increased frequency and depth of flooding in coastal areas. It is important to identify areas that are likely to be affected by storm events to determine the most appropriate management strategies. Sea level rise, coastal flooding and erosion are risks for 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, as 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: Shutterstock

South Australia's climate and geography place our people and property in the path of natural hazard events. In response, our land use planning system needs to be dynamic. It must continue to evolve to safeguard our communities, infrastructure and environments as the frequency and intensity of natural disaster events increases due to climate change. Consideration of natural disasters as a priority in land use strategies and planning will protect the region's affordability, create more resilient communities and reduce recovery timeframes.[20]

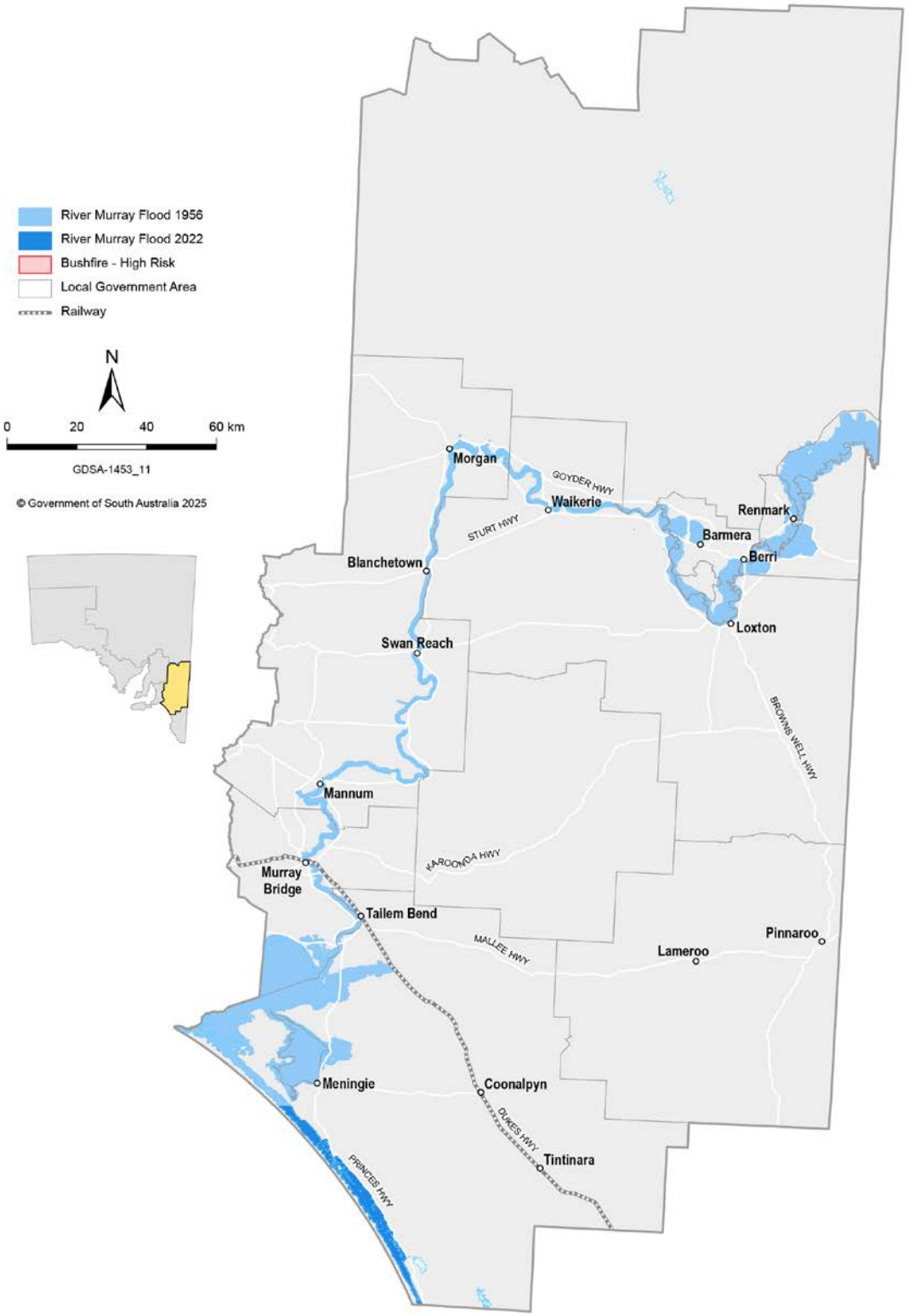
The Murray Mallee Region frequently experiences drought and intense storms. Shack settlements and townships in proximity to the River Murray are particularly vulnerable to flooding events.

Improving the resilience of infrastructure, such as roads and rail, in areas of greatest flood risk is a priority. Flooding of roads and rail most at risk will form part of work to be undertaken by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to ensure the transport network of the region is more resilient to future events.

By identifying, modelling and spatially representing natural hazards, particularly flood and bushfire, it can provide direction on suitable locations for essential infrastructure. It can inform key land use policy decisions around suitable growth areas. This work is happening now and 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.

## 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 |




## Natural hazards

# 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, marine and riverine environments from encroachment and impact by significant developments.
3. Support state significant operations and industries and protect them from encroachment by incompatible land uses and/or sensitive receivers.
4. Assess and manage risks posed by known or potential site contamination to enable the safe development and use of land.

Legally operating industries that contribute to the economy can still produce emissions and engage in hazardous activities, such as air and noise pollution or site contamination. The Murray Mallee Region has several Environment Protection Authority (EPA) licenced activities in operation which primarily relate to the food production and processing, 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.

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. 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 strengthen planning policies for the management of interfaces between sensitive land uses and existing industrial and employment 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 of land. 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.

Scientific understanding and technologies to assess and remediate site contamination are 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.**

# Learn more about Outcome 4

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.

Effective infrastructure planning and delivery has a range of benefits. It can reduce commercial barriers by increasing market access and boosting 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 safe and reliable access to goods, services, employment, education, and social opportunities.

With its strategic geography connecting other states and territories, the Murray Mallee Region is a national freight hub. The region has major rail and road freight transportation networks that provide access to key markets in Adelaide and the eastern states.

Proximity to major freight transport networks and freight storage facilities are strengths of the Murray Mallee Region. Strategic infrastructure such as roads, rail and high-pressure gas pipelines are crucial elements in the value chain, providing comparative advantage to local agricultural, mining, and manufacturing industries.

The region's transport networks enable it to build on the opportunities presented by proximity to the growing industrial areas of northern metropolitan Adelaide (for example, Edinburgh Parks), the Barossa Valley wine region, and agricultural activities in the Mid North and Fleurieu Peninsula. They also link the region to export facilities and interstate markets.

Protecting key infrastructure assets and supporting the growth of export-related and value-added industries near transport hubs is essential. This approach enables full capitalisation on existing investments and encourages new industries to establish themselves in the region. It also provides greater certainty and support for current industries, helping to strengthen long-term economic resilience.

Several initiatives are being explored to expand road and rail freight networks across the region. These projects aim to connect industrial and commercial areas with interstate markets and export facilities more efficiently. Transport disadvantage remains a major barrier to workplace participation for many in the region, preventing young people from accessing training programs and apprenticeships, older people from remaining in (or rejoining) the workforce, and people living with disabilities from participating in economic activities.

Finding opportunities to connect communities and provide access to services and employment opportunities through means other than private vehicles is critical. Solutions such as public transport, community bus services and active transport means, should be championed at state and local government level.

### Telecommunications and digital infrastructure

Reliable telecommunications and digital connectivity are critical for industry development. They play a role in unlocking innovation, improving access to services, jobs and opportunities, and breaking down physical and social barriers that can lead to isolation and decreased quality of life. The switch off of Telstra's 3G network in October 2024 has significantly reduced phone and internet reliability across the region, with Grain Producers SA advising that 48% of grain producers have been negatively impacted. This highlights the importance of a reliable internet network to support modern farming practices.

Advancing telecommunications connectivity and access is a key priority for the region. Given the remoteness of some communities in the Murray Mallee, digital connectivity is important for ensuring access to services necessary to daily life. However, access to quality telecommunications 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 a growing tourism industry, enhancing broadband and mobile connectivity will provide a significant opportunity for economic growth in the region.

### Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure is comprised of the facilities, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities. They support communities to be happy, healthy and safe. The provision of social infrastructure is delivered by federal, 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 Murray Mallee Region, social infrastructure in the form of schools, recreation facilities and open space; and increased and more accessible healthcare services (both traditional medicine and allied health) is needed to support existing communities and the future growth of the region. A severe shortage of general practitioners and mental health services already reported across the region. A lack of childcare services significantly impacts the ability for parents to engage in the workforce and remain in the region.

### Essential services

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

# 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.

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, strategic freight routes, alongside key transport facilities including airstrips, seaports and intermodal and bulk handling facilities. Murray Bridge is at the crossroads for both rail and road linkages from Victoria to Adelaide. These transport systems are of strategic significance and are therefore planned, delivered and protected differently to the local transport networks.

### 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 for by the Australian and state governments and are crucial to linking people with the places they live, work, visit and recreate within.

## South Australia's Transport Strategy

*South Australia's Transport Strategy* prepared by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, 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.

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 focus on the movement of people or as destinations. From a planning perspective, movement and place often compete. Movement corridors are fast, efficient and minimise travel time, whereas great Places encourage us to linger, stay and extend our time in the area. Establishing the right balance between the two is vital.

Understanding the envisaged functions of transport networks is essential as it assists in adopting the right type of infrastructure investment and urban design approaches that support local movement.

### Freight and supply chain networks

Freight and supply chain networks in the Murray Mallee Region play a vital role in supporting the area's agricultural, horticultural, and manufacturing sectors. The region is serviced by major transport corridors including the South Eastern Freeway, Sturt, Dukes, Princes, and Mallee Highways, with Karoonda Road acting as a central diagonal link.

These routes facilitate the movement of high-value commodities like meat, grapes, and other agricultural products, contributing between $1.5 billion and $1.65 billion annually to the regional economy.[21]

However, freight movement is challenged by infrastructure limitations, particularly at River Murray crossings and ageing road networks. Strategic planning by Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland and local councils has identified the need for upgrades to key freight routes, improved inter-regional connectivity, and better alignment of road ownership and funding responsibilities.[22]

South Australia's broader *Freight and Supply Chain Strategy* also emphasises resilience, sustainability, and technology integration to future-proof the network and support regional competitiveness.[23]

The most significant opportunity is the High Productivity Vehicle Network (HPVN), which received $525 million in the 2025-2026 Federal Budget. The HPVN will deliver upgrades for a Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass from Monarto on the South Eastern Freeway and east of Truro on the Sturt Highway. A business case has been prepared, which seeks to upgrade key roads (including Sturt Highway, Dukes Highway and Princes Highway) to improve the road freight network and enable higher productivity vehicles to bypass the trip up and down the South Eastern Freeway.[24] This is particularly important given Murray Bridge, Tailem Bend and Monarto South provide a key intersection for road and rail from Victoria. These are attractive locations for new transport and logistics businesses to establish and take advantage of improved regional road access.

## 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


In identifying locations for strategic freight routes, it will be important to consider opportunities to minimise heavy vehicle traffic through local towns to improve safety and liveability for local communities; and ensure future planning balances regional productivity with public safety outcomes.

### Air transport

The Royal Flying Doctors Service and other service providers rely on maintained and accessible airstrips for coverage to respond to emergencies and provide goods and services to townships and settlements. 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 that provide for both private and emergency access. Developing a hierarchy of airstrips and sealed emergency airstrips is a priority.

### Public transport

The use of public transport in the Murray Mallee Region is low, and services are currently limited. Buses are the only form of public transport available, with long distance connections provided through to Renmark, Loxton, Meningie and Coonalpyn from Adelaide. The East Riverland public transport service also provides a four-weekday morning route between Loxton-Berri-Renmark, and a one day a week service to Loxton-Moorook-Barmera-Berri.[25]

The Murray Mallee Community Passenger Network operated by the Tailem Bend Community Centre, provides a volunteer-run paid service that offers community transport via private vehicle in the council areas of Coorong, Karoonda East Murray, Southern Mallee and Murray Bridge, and a Medical Bus Service between Keith and Adelaide that services the council areas of Coorong, Karoonda East Murray, Mid Murray, Murray Bridge, Southern Mallee and Tatiara. This transport network provides a critical service to transport disadvantaged people within the region.

## 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

Future transport planning will investigate connectivity and the infrastructure required to adequately service the region. Relevant findings from these studies will be incorporated into future updates to the Plan to ensure continued alignment. A review of the *Passenger Transport Act 1994* will identify removing barriers for service delivery in regional South Australia. Areas of the region that fringe the Greater Adelaide may be appropriate places for the expansion of metropolitan taxis, chauffeur and rideshare services.

### 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.

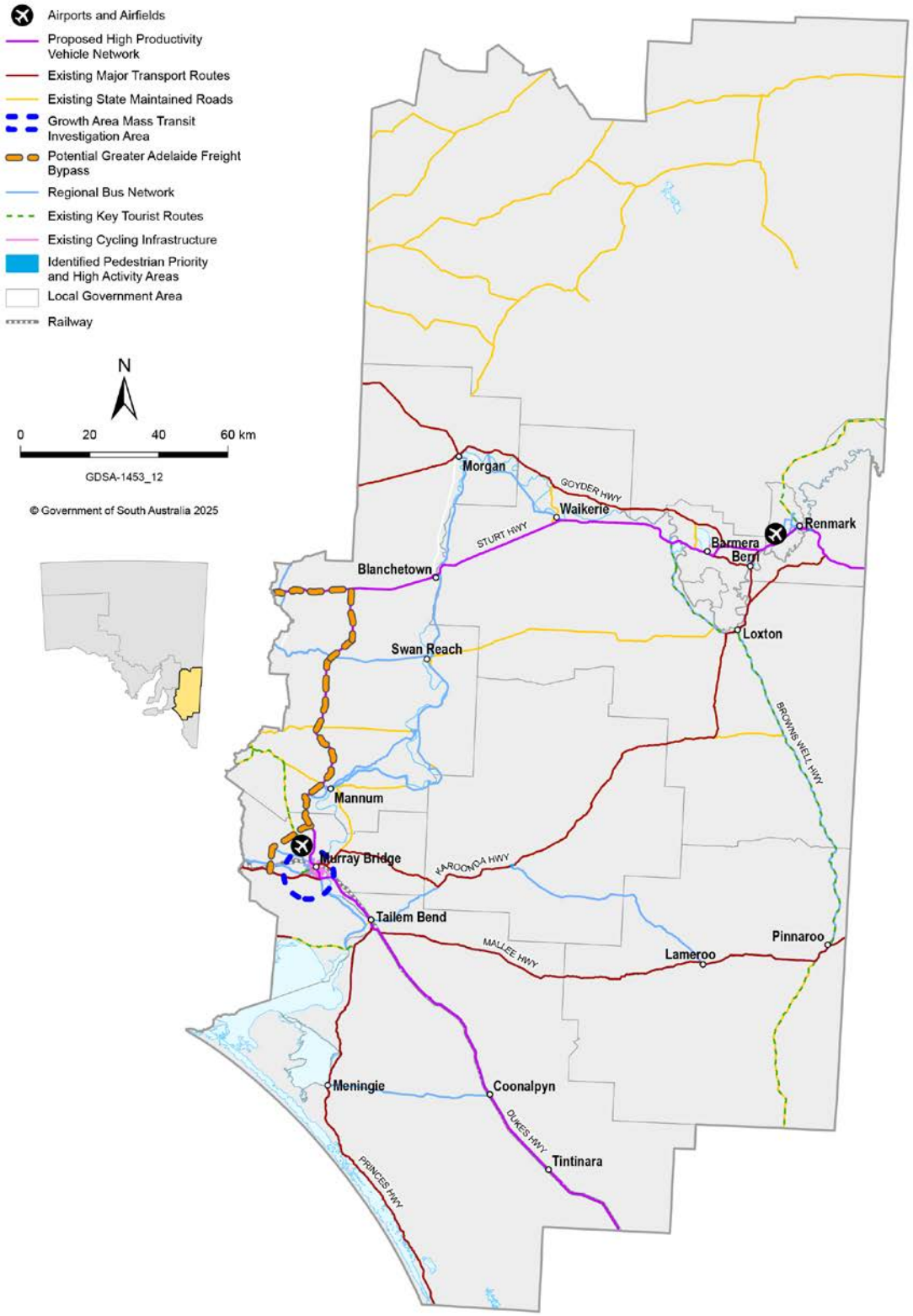
2. **Planned infrastructure** is land reserved through identification in the Plan and the Code.

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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Murray Mallee transport network resilience strategy and framework | Undertake the development of a River Murray Flood Resilience Plan to understand the impact of flood events associated with the River Murray, and outline future options for infrastructure resilience and betterment across road, rail, and marine infrastructure that will address flood vulnerability. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | Department for Infrastructure and Transport | Region-wide |
| Murray Mallee Transport Study | Undertake a transport study for the Murray Mallee to inform area network planning and investment in the region. The study will consider key issues and opportunities to improve all forms of transport across the region, including freight movements, road safety and efficiency, and its ability to support liveability, and population and economic growth in the Murray Mallee. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | Department for Infrastructure and Transport | Region-wide |
| 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. | 11/2025 - 01/2028 | Department for Infrastructure and Transport | State-wide |




## Strategic transport networks

## Integrated water management, security and quality

### Long-term strategic objectives

1. Murray Mallee's water supply catchments are protected and support a healthy environment, vibrant communities and a strong economy.

2. The Murray–Darling Basin's water resources are managed to be resilient and maintain essential function through the extremes of our changing climate, ensuring ongoing water security for communities within Greater Adelaide and across the Murray Mallee and connected regional South Australia.

3. The region's water sources and supporting infrastructure are resilient and meet the needs of the population and economy while balancing affordability. An adaptive planning approach supports clearly defined benchmarks for investment in water and wastewater system options. Water and wastewater systems use integrated and innovative solutions to support housing and employment growth.

4. 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.

## Regional context

In terms of South Australia's water security, there is no region in the state more critical than the Murray Mallee. The River Murray flows into the state and out to sea through this region, and in so doing, underpins the water security needed to support much of the state's economic development. Along the way, South Australia's section of the River Murray supports critical ecosystems and cultural values of multiple First Nations people. This is the region where SA Water operates the River Murray locks, weirs and pump stations that underpin the water security of Greater Adelaide and vast swathes of regional South Australia beyond the Murray Mallee Region.

The Murray Mallee Region's drinking water systems rely on both surface water (from the River Murray) and groundwater resources. Townships in the region that are reliant on groundwater include Pinnaroo, Lameroo, Geranium and Parilla, where SA Water provides town water supply services. All other towns rely on water direct from the River Murray. Non-drinking water is also sourced from local stormwater catchments and recycled wastewater.

The River Murray is part of the Murray-Darling Basin, which is Australia's largest and most complex river system stretching from Queensland to South Australia. In 2012, the Australian Government developed the *Murray-Darling Basin Plan* (the Basin Plan 2012) to share available water resources between the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia - protecting the Basin for future generations. The South Australian share of the water resource is further managed by the *Water Allocation Plan* for the *River Murray Prescribed Watercourse*. This plan sustainably shares the available water between the environment and other water users under all flow conditions.

The groundwater systems of the Murray Mallee are recharged locally and in Victoria. As such, the state government and the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board, when allocating groundwater resources in accordance with the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019,* consider cross-border groundwater management issues in accordance with the *Border Groundwater Agreement (Groundwater (Border Agreement) Act 1985).* The sharing of groundwater in the South Australian Murray Mallee occurs via the *Mallee Prescribed Wells Area Water Allocation Plan* [26].

# Murray-Darling Basin Plan review

The *Murray-Darling Basin Plan* sets limits on the amount of water that can be extracted from the Basin each year for consumption and seeks to ensure water is available to support the environment. The 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation considered the performance of the Basin Plan against its objectives and expected outcomes, with the evaluation indicating that there is evidence of improvement in environmental outcomes in many areas across the Basin. Insights from the evaluation will inform the 2026 Basin Plan Review and help shape future reform. More information on the Basin Plan can be found here: The Basin | Murray–Darling Basin Authority

The outcomes of this review and other state and Australian Government policies impacting the Murray-Darling Basin, such as a review of the *South Australian River Murray Water Resource Plan* (DEW, 2019), will have a significant impact on the future economic growth prospects of all South Australian regions that are supplied by the River Murray, including the Murray Mallee Region.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

As we look to the future, there is a critical need to ensure that growth is balanced with strong environmental objectives. Protecting the health of water-dependent ecosystems must remain a priority to support the region's long-term resilience and liveability.

A resilient and sustainable water future must balance affordability with the maintenance of ongoing water supply and ensure liveability in the face of climate change impacts and a growing population.

### Planning for future water

Planning for future water 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 drivers at all scales. In addition, during peak tourism periods, demand for water surges.

Modelling these can indicate the volume of water required to meet 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 urban 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.

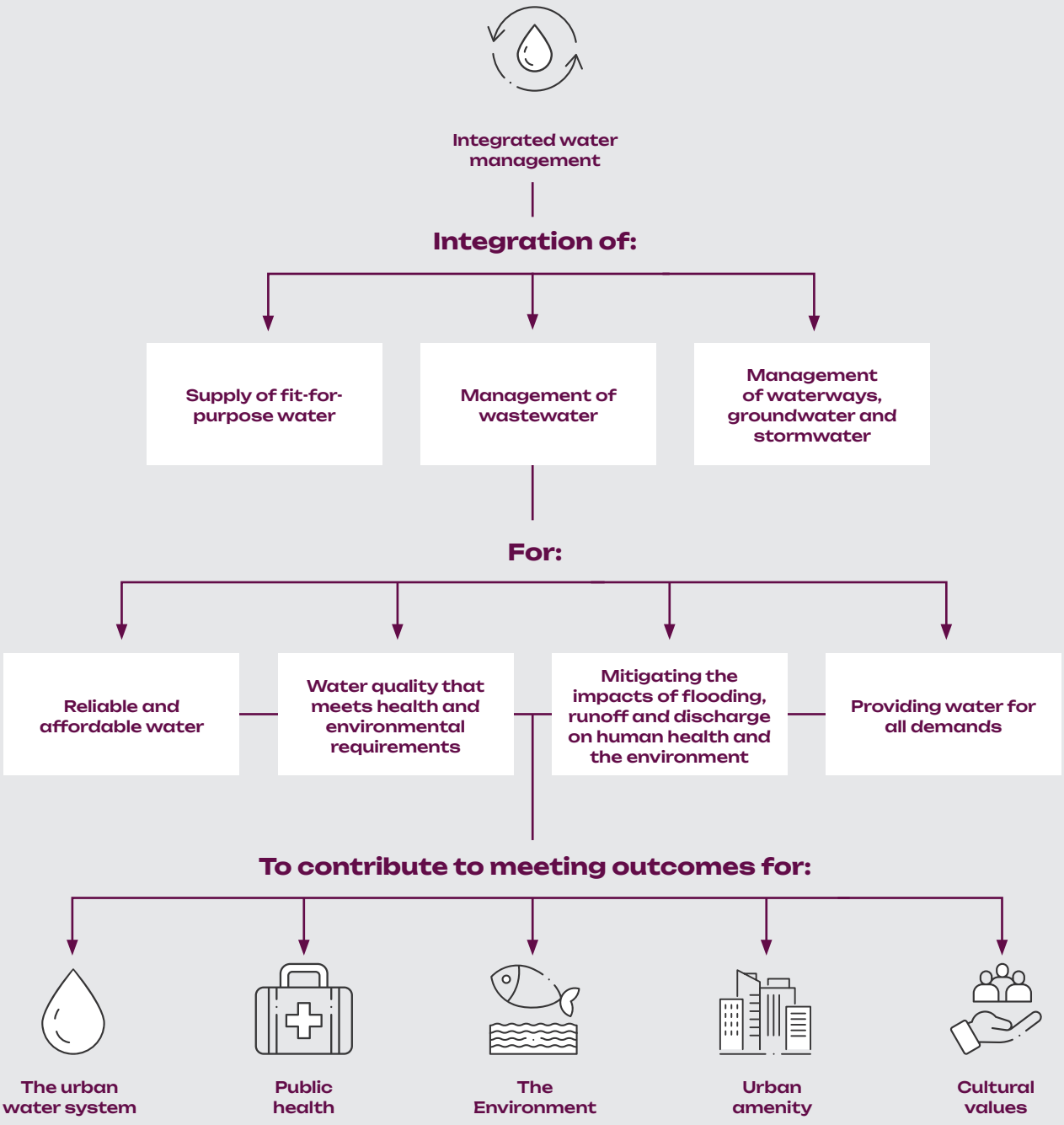
### Integrated water management

For cities and townships, 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. rivers, creeks, 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[27]




Source: https://www.sawater.com.au/water-and-the-environment/south-australias-water-sources/water-for-future-generations

In terms of wastewater management, a reticulated urban sewerage system provides better environmental and public health outcomes (compared with on-site disposal), while also enabling a scale of water recycling that provides the best chance of making such a scheme economically viable.[28] 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 (e.g. beyond cities and towns).

The combined supply of wastewater from SA Water treatment plants and local government Community Wastewater Management Schemes (CWMS), together with stormwater capture and reuse, are becoming increasingly important to meet water demand and reduce environmental impact, both in larger metropolitan areas and small towns.

Urban stormwater management at all scales and phases of urban development (including land use planning and development decisions, capture and reuse scheme implementation, street-scale water quality improvement, asset maintenance, etc.) play a critical role in managing the quantity and quality of runoff from urban areas (also see WSUD, below). Through the development and implementation of stormwater management plans, council asset management plans, and appropriate planning responses to address stormwater and flood management risks, the opportunities/risks arising from urban stormwater can be best managed/realised.

### Water sensitive urban design

The region's varied rainfall and increase in frequency of long, hot, dry summers mean that 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 landscapes also often disrupt the natural connections between water and plants. Conventional roads, roofs and other hard surfaces prevent rainwater soaking into the soil. Typical stormwater systems drain water directly into natural water bodies, creating challenges to these receiving waters in terms of pollutants and modified flow regimes.

It is important to reduce impermeable surfaces where possible, to help improve stormwater management, retain healthy soils, reduce the urban heat island effect, and increase the available space for planting trees and other greenery.

The planning system plays a key role in facilitating good design outcomes. This includes protecting groundwater catchment areas, existing valuable trees, increasing site permeability and enhancing diversity of plantings. Providing sufficient space for new urban greening, supported by adequate soil and water infrastructure will also assist with urban greening outcomes.

Integrating water sensitive urban design through residential and commercial developments, including in carparks, is an effective way to manage stormwater, improve water quality, and maximise the growth of trees and other vegetation.

Policy improvements, education, advisory material, incentives and new practices supported by strong evidence and data are all needed to strengthen the response to urban greening and cooling.

## Actions

| Title | Action Description | Timing | Lead | Spatial application |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Water Infrastructure Strategy | Development of a water strategy for the Murray Mallee 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. | 2029 | SA Water | State-wide |

# 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 over the next 15- to 30-years, 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.[29] 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 has the lead responsibility for planning, regulating, funding and operating the state's largest social infrastructure assets, including social housing, education and health services, major entertainment facilities, justice and emergency services facilities and cemeteries. Private and not-for-profit providers also play an important role in service delivery.

Accessibility and quality can vary for different types of social infrastructure. This often impacts the region's most vulnerable and remote groups. Furthermore, the planning and delivery of social infrastructure can fall behind responses to housing demand.

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.

## Responsibilities for social infrastructure provision

**State government budget impact**

costs borne by all South Australians

- Education services
- Health services
- Major sport, recreation, arts and culture venues
- Emergency Management
- Justice facilities
- Cemeteries

**Local community infrastructure**

costs to local ratepayers

- Libraries and civic buildings
- Community centres
- Local sport and recreation facilities
- Local arts and culture
- Aged care services
- Cemeteries

### 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 in South Australia will increase by over 18,000 over the next 20 years, placing increased demands on existing education facilities.

The average building age across public schools, pre-schools and childcare 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.

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.

Education goes beyond qualifications – it's about empowering local communities through innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership. The region is experiencing both immediate and long-term shortages in key sectors such as aged care, disability support, health and allied health services, early childhood education, teaching, transport, logistics, mental health, social work, and community services. Without a strategic approach to attracting and retaining skilled professionals, the region risks further population decline and reduced access to essential services.

To address this, investment is needed in grassroots leadership and innovation initiatives, backed by schools, local governments, and local community hubs, community enterprise incubators, and youth leadership development programs.

### 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.

The growing and ageing population places increased pressures on health systems, whilst health infrastructure faces challenges due to its scale, age, complexity and fragmented nature.

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, while recognising that some health services require a critical population mass to operate efficiently.

### 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.

Emergency services play a key role in planning for and managing risks from natural hazards within the region. Planning for future capacity for emergency services, such as the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service, the South Australian Country Fire Service, and South Australian State Emergency Service is critical.

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission ensures that volunteers and employees across the fire and emergency services sector are provided with the resources and support they need to conduct vital emergency services work.

### 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
- Improving the use of places and spaces for active living.

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.

The South Australian Housing Trust 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, which is 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.

## 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)

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission 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.

### 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, monitoring and agreed infrastructure thresholds will be critical for alignment of land use planning and infrastructure delivery.

### 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 Murray Mallee 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 Murray Mallee 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 Ettrick, Marama, Mount Mary, Murtho, Mypolonga, Nildottie, and Wunkar; and Round 5 adding Peebinga 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.

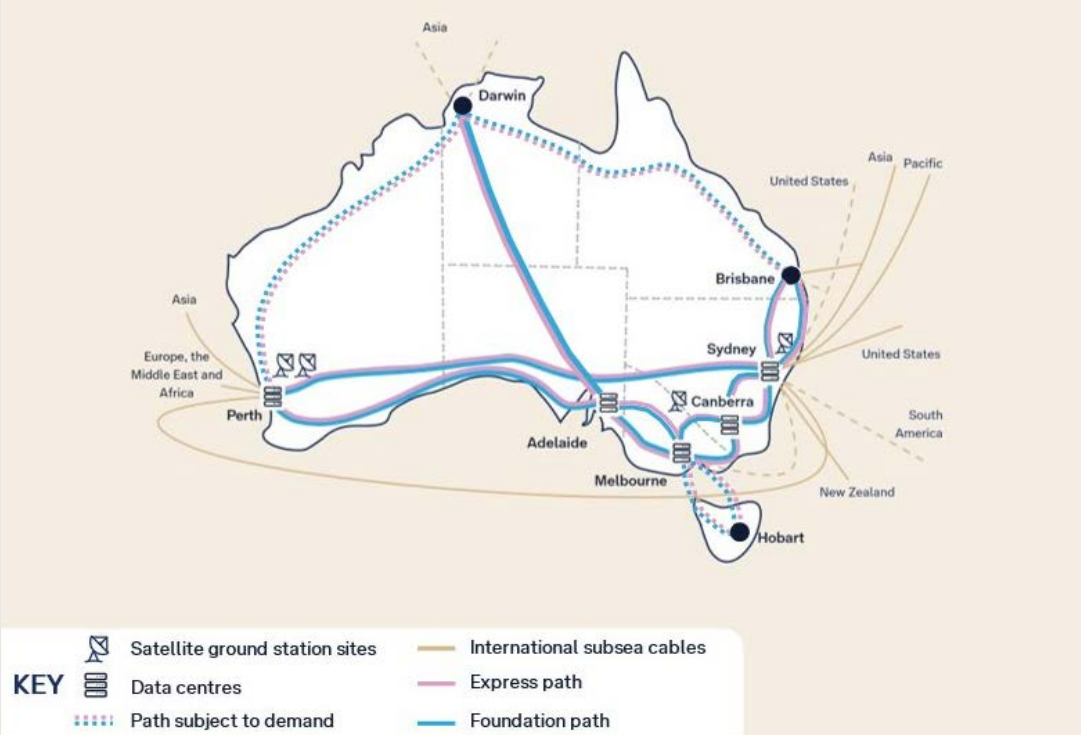
Link: https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-program

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.



## 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 and 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: Shutterstock

The provision of sustainable, reliable and affordable energy is essential in meeting the basic needs of communities. It underpins housing supply, businesses, services, economies and future enterprises. Moreover, renewable and sustainable energy supply is 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)

### Renewable energy

Decentralised renewable energy generation will 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. The siting of any new large-scale renewable energy facility should avoid scenic landscapes, land with high environmental and food production value, and culturally significant areas in recognition of the important role these areas play in supporting the region's economy.

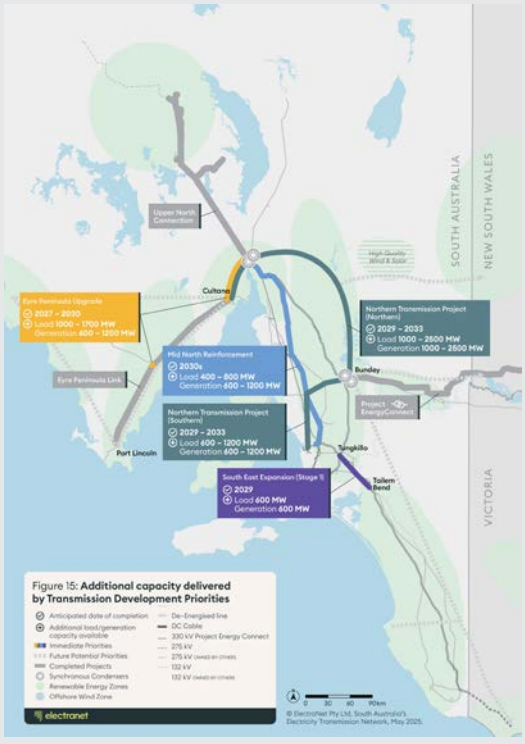
As of June 2025, six large-scale solar projects in the Murray Mallee have received development approval, one of which is under construction (Solar River Project Stage 1).

In addition, four battery energy storage projects have received development approval, one of which is under construction (Summerfield BESS), and one 288 MW wind farm project has received development approval.

### Electricity infrastructure

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

The development of major transmission assets typically requires five to seven years from initial planning to delivery. Failure to adequately plan for transmission assets can potentially delay development and lead to increased costs. Construction of the South Australian component of Project EnergyConnect (a new high-voltage interconnector between South Australia and New South Wales) improves the security and resilience of the state's power system, enables more renewable energy development exports, and will accelerate investment in renewable energy projects close to Bundey.[30]




## Transmission development priorities

Source: Transmission Development Priorities – ElectraNet Network Transition Strategy, March 2024, page 23

### Emerging energy technologies

Supporting the development of efficient, smart electric buildings that can optimise energy use and participate in demand-side flexibility programs will also be vital to enable energy use to be shifted to times when electricity is plentiful and cheaper, thereby benefiting consumers, the distribution network and the broader market. 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 will need to be sufficiently responsive and adaptable to emerging green energy technologies, battery storage (including community batteries), and supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles and future innovations that may emerge as part of planned urban growth.

# Infrastructure corridors and reserves

## 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 is critical to plan infrastructure requirements to enable efficient roll out during, or in advance of, land development. Reserving land ahead of demand provides greater certainty for establishing future infrastructure that is of key importance to a planning region or the state, including infrastructure such as:

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

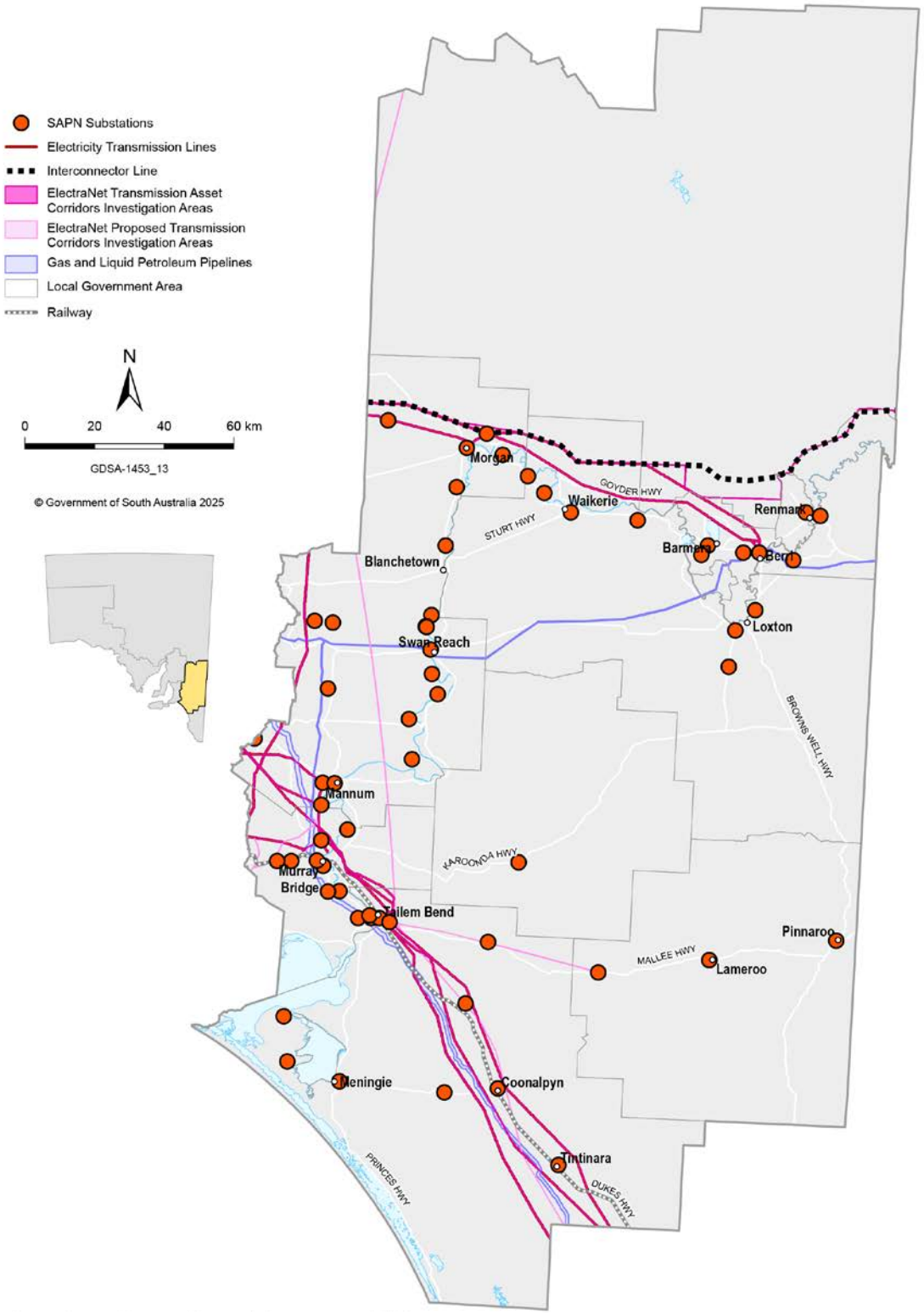
- reserve corridors or sites for future infrastructure.
- plan for the replacement or upgrade of ageing assets.
- align long-term infrastructure planning with projected growth.

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.

## 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). | 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 a vital link between 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.

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.

Source: South Australian Tourism Commission

Effective delivery of the Plan will benefit from the suite of new digital tools in the Code. It will keep government, industry and councils up-to-date with trends in land supply and demand for housing and employment land use and enable faster responses to changes.

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 is to be maintained to guide delivery of the Plan's priorities. This plan will include rolling five-year actions and regular dynamic reporting to track the progress by theme, location and the 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. Develop and maintain infrastructure capacity analysis and planning 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 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.

## 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 new growth areas. |
| **Local area planning** | Councils are responsible for planning how their area can meet 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).

### 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.

## Loxton Waikerie Growth Strategy

Completed in 2024, the *Loxton Waikerie Growth Strategy* (Strategy) provides a clear plan for how the region should grow to become more liveable, competitive and sustainable over the next 30 years. The Strategy specifically informs future rezoning proposals, infrastructure investment decisions, District Council of Loxton Waikerie's advocacy role in growth management issues and decisions around the use of community land and assets.

A vision, objectives, and actions were established for the region and the townships of Loxton, Loxton North, Waikerie, Kingston on Murray, Moorook, and Ramco (Sunlands) to support a medium-growth scenario.

The Strategy can be found here.

## Coorong Growth Strategy

Developed in 2022, the *Coorong Growth Strategy* (Strategy) was reviewed and updated in December 2024 to reflect changes in regional development projections.

The Strategy identifies different growth scenarios for the towns of Tailem Bend, Coonalpyn, Tintinara, Meningie and Wellington East and the anticipated residential land required to achieve the envisaged growth.

The Strategy can be found here.

## Mid Murray Growth Management and Housing Strategy

Completed in 2025, *Mid Murray Growth Management and Housing Strategy* (Strategy) provides a framework for land use planning, infrastructure investment, and service provision within the Mid Murray Council area. It supports council, state government, businesses, and the community in achieving sustainable growth by leveraging the region's strengths and available infrastructure.

By taking a targeted, strategic approach, the Strategy seeks to ensure growth aligns with local identity and regional opportunities. Strengthening connections to nearby growth centres, while preserving Mid Murray's unique appeal, will be critical for navigating this period of transition.

The Strategy can be found here.

## Berri Barmera Growth Strategy

Completed in 2021, the *Berri Barmera Growth Strategy* (Strategy) focuses on sustainable development by addressing an ageing population, economic diversification away from wine volatility, and strategic land use planning. Locations investigated include Berri, Barmera, Glossop, Monash, Cobdogla, Loveday, Winkie and Overland Corner.

The Strategy can be found here.

## Actions

| Title | Action Description | Timing | Lead | Spatial application |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Infrastructure investigations | Investigate delivery of residential allotments on land along Monash Road, Barmera with focus on infrastructure capacity and delivery. | 03/2025 - 03/2027 | Berri Barmera Council | Monash Road, Barmera |
| Infrastructure investigations and Code Amendment - Tintinara - Residential | Investigate council infrastructure provision to support growth area development (subject to owner/ developer support). Undertake a Code amendment of growth areas in line with the Coorong Growth Strategy. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | Coorong District Council | Tintinara |
| Infrastructure Planning | Prepare an infrastructure strategy to underpin growth areas identified in the Berri Barmera Growth Strategy. | 03/2025 - 03/2027 | Berri Barmera Council | Berri Barmera Council |
| Mid-Murray Growth Management and Housing Strategy | Incorporate the findings of the Mid-Murray Growth Management and Housing Strategy into the Plan by identifying priority actions and Code amendments. | 03/2025 - 03/2027 | Mid-Murray Council | Mid Murray Council |
| Structure Plan - Wellington East | Undertake a structure plan for Wellington East that includes consideration of water supply and connection to the township of Wellington which is located within the Rural City of Murray Bridge council area. | 03/2025 - 03/2030 | Coorong District Council | Wellington East |

# Infrastructure charging

## Long-term strategic objectives

1. **Support 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 the selection of appropriate infrastructure funding and delivery mechanisms.**

3. **Align infrastructure investment with strategic growth objectives to unlock regional development potential.**

4. **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.**

5. **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.[31]

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 Murray Mallee Region.

### Strengthen infrastructure mechanisms for regional growth

Mechanisms such as infrastructure deeds, 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, if 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 settlements, 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 SA | State-wide |

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