MURRAY MALLEE REGIONAL PLAN

Draft
March 2025

STATE PLANNING COMMISSION

Contents

Vision

Acknowledgement of Country

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

Introduction

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

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

The River Murray serves as a vital ecosystem and a recreational hub, attracting hundreds of thousands of tourists each year, which in turn fuels the local economy and supports a variety of industries. Its picturesque landscapes and rich biodiversity not only enhance the region's appeal but also create opportunities for sustainable growth and development.

The region also stands out for its significant agricultural contributions, accounting for 25% of the state's dairy and pig production, a quarter of the nation's crushed wine grapes, and over half of its horticultural crops. This economic diversity is complemented by a robust processing and manufacturing sector, which enhances the value of primary industries and showcases the region's ecological richness and versatility.

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

Learn more about the Murray Mallee region

The Murray Mallee region, with a population exceeding 73,000 (2021 ABS data), 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 regional city of Murray Bridge, which is home to about 25% of the region's total population.

The following local councils operate with the Murray Mallee region:

- Berri Barmera Council
- Coorong District Council
- District Council of Karoonda East Murray

- District Council of Loxton Waikerie
- Mid Murray Council
- Renmark Paringa Council
- Rural City of Murray Bridge
- Southern Mallee District Council.

For the purpose of this Plan, it is important to recognise that the regional city of Murray Bridge is also located within the Greater Adelaide planning region.

Our biggest priorities

Learn more about the biggest priorities facing the Murray Mallee region

The key priorities for the Murray Mallee region relate to the retention and protection of primary agricultural land, increased housing choice to meet the changing needs of communities, the protection and enhancement of the River Murray as a valuable resource and asset, and the coordinated delivery of infrastructure to support strategic residential and employment growth.

Primary industry is the backbone of the region's prosperity and identity. It is vital to protect primary production land from encroachment by incompatible uses, while also allowing flexibility for industries to adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions.

In light of the ongoing housing crisis, it is more important than ever to ensure the timely and adequate supply of land for a variety of housing options and tenures to meet the evolving needs of communities, foster economic growth, and attract and retain key workers in the region.

Equitable, secure and sustainable access to water is critical for the well-being of communities and the diverse economy in the Murray Mallee region. The River Murray and its wetlands provide invaluable cultural, recreational, and tourism benefits that must be preserved for future generations.

The unique biodiversity of the Murray Mallee region is essential to the quality of life, economic stability, and environmental health of its communities. Protecting and enhancing this biodiversity strengthens resilience to climate change, boosts productivity, and supports the overall well-being of the region.

Integrated planning aligns land use with the necessary services and infrastructure to support growth in suitable areas. While large sections of land across the region are appropriately zoned, the infrastructure needed to facilitate development has not yet been implemented. It is therefore critical that the planning and delivery of infrastructure is prioritised at the state and local government levels.

A planning vision for Murray Mallee

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

The Murray Mallee region is home to over 73,000 permanent residents and is visited by over 1 million people per year, highlighting the significant contribution the region makes to the state's economy. This is driven by various sectors including agriculture, processing industries, health and aged care services, and tourism, which contributes upwards of $4.8 billion towards the state's economy.

Key agricultural activities include horticulture, viticulture and intensive livestock farming. The area is well-known for its beef, cattle, sheep and grain farming, as well as the production of a variety of fruits and vegetables, particularly wine grapes, almonds, citrus, stone fruits, onions, potatoes and carrots. Additionally, the Riverland is the largest winegrape producing region in Australia. Its climate conditions are ideal for almond growing, with two of Australia's largest almond producers located there.

The region's proximity to the River Murray and the Coorong makes it a popular tourist destination, offering a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities such as houseboating, camping, fishing and water sports. Notable attractions include Monarto Safari Park, the Motorsport Park at the Bend, the River Murray and the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve. A growing winery and distillery sector further enhances the region's appeal.

The River Murray is an important resource, supplying drinking water to local towns and settlements (and indeed much of South Australia), irrigating agricultural land, and supporting tourism and recreation. It also holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for the Aboriginal peoples of the area. Additionally, the river and its surrounding lakes and wetlands provide essential habitats for a diverse range of plant and animal species, contributing to the region's biodiversity and climate resilience.

The Murray Mallee Regional Plan (the Plan) outlines the long-term planning vision for the region to 2051 and beyond, guiding:

- where houses and employment land will go
- how housing and population will be serviced
- what infrastructure is needed and how it will be provided.

It provides governments, businesses, industry and not-for-profit organisations with the data and direction to plan for and respond to growth and change in our communities and towns, while achieving our conservation goals.

Murray Mallee Regional Plan outcomes:

Aligning with the vision, the Plan has been prepared 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 environment
- Outcome 4: An integrated and connected region
- Outcome 5: Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning.

Digital innovation

South Australia is the first state to have a fully digitised planning system, which is widely acknowledged as the best in the country. This innovation has now been extended to include 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 and plays a critical role in identifying appropriate land for future housing, employment, open spaces, jobs and the necessary supporting infrastructure.

While 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 SPPs, 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, while the digital regional plan provides a dynamic platform that can be more readily updated with current data and information. This provides an adaptable approach as to how those overarching directions are applied at the regional, sub-regional 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.

Context

Population

Recent population change

Since 2016, the Murray Mallee region has seen its population increase by over 1,500 people, growing at an approximate rate of 0.44% per annum, to now exceed 73,000 residents. This equates to about 4% of South Australia's total population; with 25% of 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.

In 2021, over 7.5% of the population was aged between 60-64, representing a higher proportion of persons coming into retirement age. This percentage is significantly higher than the state average of 6.2% and therefore presents both challenges and opportunities for the region.

From a land use and infrastructure perspective this means ensuring communities have adequate access to healthcare services, and that townships are supporting more diverse housing and accommodation options. This will help retain people in the region, which will only benefit the local economy and community through being able to pull on their valuable experience and knowledge.

Projected population to 2051

Population projections provide a picture of the population as it may develop in the future.

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

The population projections used for the Plan reflect the state's adopted high-growth projections derived from the 2021 Census.[1] The high-growth scenario is used by state and local government when evaluating residential and employment supply. Actual population growth is tracked by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on a regular basis.

Planning for the high series projection is important to ensure that land supply can respond if demand exceeds expectations. This might occur if a significant employer is introduced in one or more township and/or the 'tree change' trend takes a greater effect.

Under a high growth scenario, 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 1.28%. This equates to a demand for approximately 13,900 additional dwellings.[2]

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 or in planning and feasibility stages that will provide significant employment opportunities and in turn, drive demand for housing, not just for permanent residents but for seasonal workers too.

[1] Census of Population and Housing published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).
[2] An occupancy rate of 2.3 persons per dwelling is based on the current average across the region as reported in the 2021 Census.

The most significant opportunity is the High Productivity Vehicle Network Business Case, which seeks to upgrade a number of 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 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 Greenhill Energy's proposed Riverbend Energy Hub at Tailem Bend and the Waikerie Park Circular Green Economy Proposal. Projects that come to fruition 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:

- Close to 50% of additional growth is associated with persons aged 70+.
- Outside of Murray Bridge there is projected decline in the number of persons between 15 and 29 who are likely to leave to undertake further studies or employment opportunities.
- Notable increases in total persons in the 0-14 and 35-44 (working age) cohorts directly correlate with one another (i.e. young families).

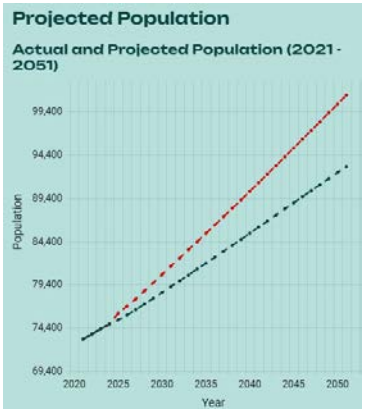
These demographic trends are important to recognise as they have practical impacts on land use and infrastructure planning, and particularly around the types of housing we should be planning for.

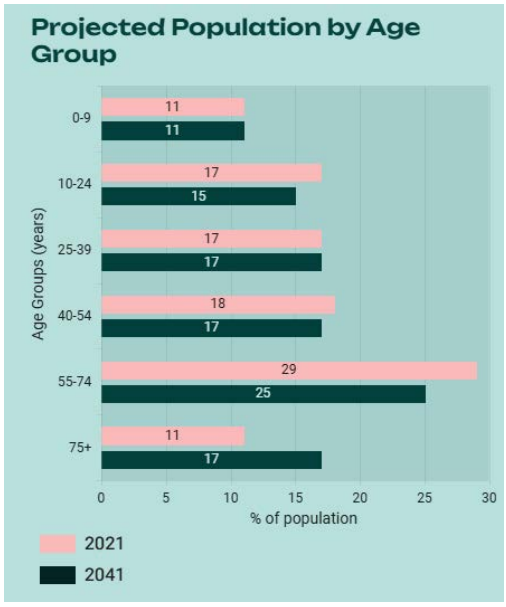
**NEED UPDATED GRAPHICS

Population Summary

Population Growth Scenario (2021 - 2051)

Scenario	Medium	High
Total Population		
2021	73,097	73,097
2051	93,014	101,269
2021 - 2051 (Total Change)	19,917	28,172
2021 - 2051 (Ave annual change)	664 (0.91%)	940 (1.28%)





Housing trends and land supply

The planning system can help meet future demand by ensuring there is sufficient land for new houses and that is serviced by the necessary infrastructure, and by providing flexibility in zoning and policies to allow for housing diversity to meet the changing needs of communities.

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

A review of land supply across the region indicates there is over 4,000 hectares of land that is either zoned or earmarked for future residential development, which could theoretically accommodate upwards of 30,000 dwellings. On this basis, there is sufficient land to accommodate the high series population projection and beyond, subject to infrastructure capacity and adequate allocation of land within individual townships.

A review of the strategic growth studies undertaken by councils within the region indicates that there is generally sufficient zoned land, or land identified for future growth, throughout the regional city (Murray Bridge), the major service centres (Renmark, Berri, Barmera, Waikerie, Loxton, Mannum, Tailem Bend) and the supporting service centres (Lameroo Pinnaroo, and Meningie). However, there are some local service centres and minor townships, including Morgan, Cadell and Mypolonga where no land supply has been identified.

Critically, whilst the regional cities, major service centres and supporting service centres are generally considered to have a sufficient supply of zoned residential land to accommodate projected growth over the next 0-15 years, not all supply is 'development ready', meaning it may not be serviced by infrastructure, or the landowner/s may not have intent to develop their land.

Planning for and funding service infrastructure will be a challenge that councils and the state government will need to address in order to bring zoned land online for development.

In addition to the lack of infrastructure, community perceptions and lifestyle preferences should not be underestimated as a key influence on the development of land. For example, while there may be land zoned for residential development within township boundaries, demand for rural living allotments may lead to pressure to rezone land on the outskirts of townships to accommodate this trend. Therefore, while there is a hypothetical 15+ year supply of land for housing, not all of this land can or will be developed.

Housing Snapshot

	Murray Mallee (excl. Murray Bridge)	**Murray Bridge (excl. Murray Mallee)**
Total dwellings	27,705	10,422
Occupied dwellings	21,781 (79%)	5,827 (56%)
avg persons per occupied dwelling	2.2	2.3
Average annual dwellings built (2014 to 2023)	194	135

Region Projected Housing Demand and Land Supply

	Murray Mallee (excl. Murray Bridge)	Murray Bridge
Projected housing demand 2021-51	13,900	
Average annual dwellings built (2014-23)	188	102
Land supply		
Proposed lots	346	628
Undeveloped zoned	14,111	6,435
Zoned total	14,457	7,063
Future growth	6,504	25,055

Dwelling types

Detached	33,527	89%
Attached	0	0%
Medium	4,231	11%

Renmark

Projected housing demand	
Average annual dwellings per year (2014-2023)	30
Land supply	
Proposed lots	42
Undeveloped zoned	1,099
Zoned total	1,209
Future growth	580

Berri

Projected housing demand	
High growth dwellings per year (2014-2023)	12
Land supply	
Proposed lots	44
Undeveloped zoned	773
Zoned total	817
Future growth	346

Barmera

Projected housing demand	
High growth dwellings per year (2014-2023)	6
Land supply	
Proposed lots	0
Undeveloped zoned	434
Zoned total	437
Future growth	45

Loxton

Projected housing demand	
High growth dwellings per year (2014-2023)	12
Land supply	
Proposed lots	78
Undeveloped zoned	918
Zoned total	996
Future growth	296

Waikerie

Projected housing demand	
High growth dwellings per year (2014-2023)	3
Land supply	
Proposed lots	12
Undeveloped zoned	345
Zoned total	357
Future growth	1,442

Tailem Bend

Projected housing demand	
High growth dwellings per year (2014-2023)	5
Land supply	
Proposed lots	84
Undeveloped zoned	40
Zoned total	124
Future growth	785

Mannum

Projected housing demand	
High growth dwellings per year (2014-2023)	24
Land supply	
Proposed lots	52
Undeveloped zoned	1,125
Zoned total	1,177
Future growth	0

Employment trends and land supply

A prosperous economy requires us to have employment land that will accommodate our current and future industries, is appropriately serviced and connected to infrastructure 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 supported by the necessary infrastructure, and through flexibility in zoning and policies to allow for diverse business models.

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

The most significant future employment land supply has been identified at Pallamana around the Thomas Foods International (TFI) meat processing facility and Pallamana Airport, within the regional city of Murray Bridge.

The ageing population is forecast to increase the demand for professional services, particularly in the areas of aged care and related professions. This will increase the proportion of the region's workforce employed in the health care and social services sector. It will be important to ensure suitable accommodation is provided to support this critical workforce. Further, in order to attract and **retain** this workforce, other employment opportunities and appropriate social infrastructure will need to be in place to support key worker families, such as childcare, schools and recreation facilities.

Renewable energy developments are expected to drive growth in the region, particularly with the completion of the NSW EnergyConnector project in mid-2026, which will connect South Australia's energy market to New South Wales and Victoria. For example, Greenhill Energy's proposed Riverbend Energy Hub that is proposing to convert landfill waste and sustainable biomass into high value products such as fertilisers and synthetic fuels, and into low-cost clean hydrogen for use in emission free power and transport, is expected to result in an increase in jobs and subsequent demand for housing in parts of the region.

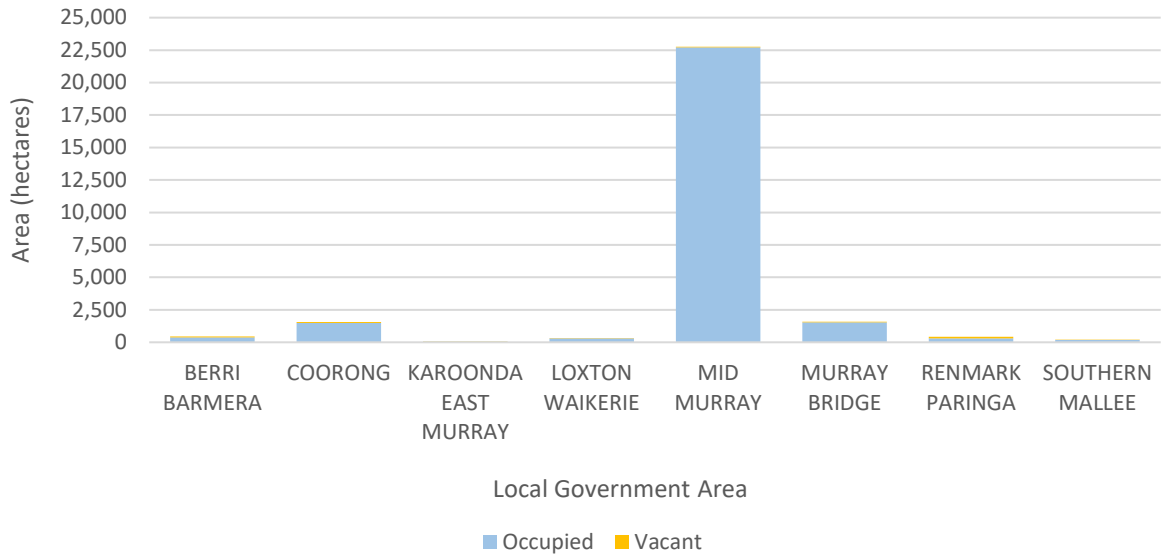
The tourism and hospitality sector is also an important component of the region's economy, with the industry expected to continue to grow and specialise in key areas, such as ecotourism, river experiences and the continued push to elevate the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve.

Growth in the agriculture sector is also expected to continue particularly as international demand for meat protein increases, supported by opportunities for innovation and value-adding. Further insights are explored in the Productive Economy theme. Impacts on primary production from residential and employment growth, climate change, technology and innovation and structural changes in the economy will require careful planning to support continued productivity growth.

Employment land supply

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

The region contains approximately 405 hectares of zoned vacant employment land, with close to 30% located within the Renmark Paringa council area. It should also be acknowledged that a significant portion of zoned employment land is used for primary production purposes, and therefore whilst it is currently assigned to an existing use, the land is typically void of significant site improvements.



Current Top 3 Employing Industries

1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing = 20.8%
2. Health care and social assistance = 14%
3. Retail trade = 10%

Learn more about employment sectors and land use mix

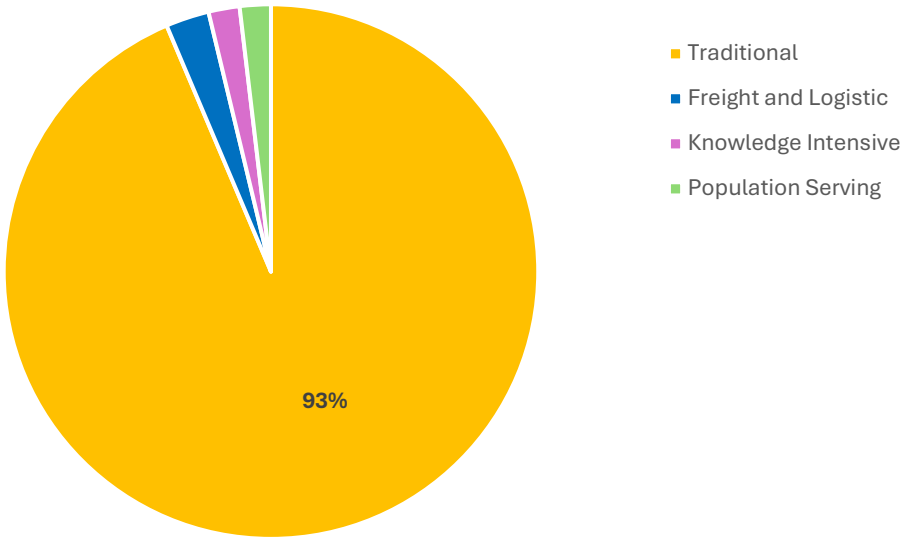
Development Trends

In the 12 months leading up to 2023, a total of 21 hectares of vacant zoned employment land was developed within the region. Should this trend continue it is likely the current stock of zoned vacant employment land will be consumed within the next 30 years. It is crucial to recognise that not all of this land is considered 'development ready' or situated in suitable locations (noting that 30% of the vacant land is located in Renmark) to meet the requirements of both industry and the community. Therefore, other land supply options are required to service their specific requirements.

Development Trends	
Vacant land consumption (annual)	21ha
15 Year Trend Demand (estimated)	315ha

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 and Population Serving.



**Data from land use codes (valuergeneral.sa.gov.au)*
***Public utilities refers to land used for the provision of electricity, water, transport and telecommunications etc.*

The tables below detail the current consumption rates and capacity of zoned employment land, as well as proposed longer term employment land for the region.

Current Top 3 Employing Industries

20.8%

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

14%

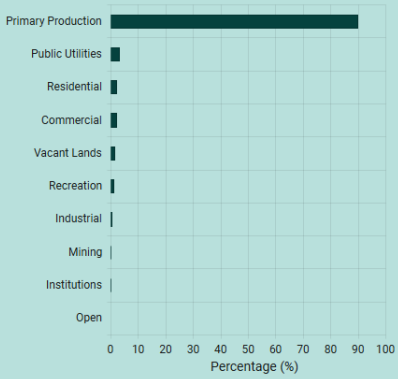
Health Care and Social Assistance

10%

Retail Trade

*Census 2021 data

Employment Land Use Mix



*Data from land use codes (valuergeneral.sa.gov.au)
**Public utilities refers to land used for the provision of electricity, water, transport and telecommunications etc.

Employment Sectors and Land Use

Development Trends

Vacant Land Consumption (annual)	20.96 ha
15 Year Demand (estimated)	314.45 ha

Theme:

People, Housing and Liveability

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.[3]

Learn more about Outcome 1

By 2051 the Murray Mallee is projected to accommodate an additional 28,000 permanent residents. Growth over this period will be concentrated within the regional city of Murray Bridge and major service centres such as Renmark, Loxton, Waikerie, Mannum, Tailem Bend, Berri and Barmera.

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 this Plan.

Population growth in the regions is primarily driven by economic growth, which is expected to be driven by tourism, freight related industry, primary production activities and renewables.

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. The program will deliver up to 30 new regional homes by 2025, including within Renmark, helping to address the critical need for purpose-built government workers' accommodation.[4]

The Plan addresses the region's anticipated housing needs over the next 15-30 years by ensuring adequate land supply and managing the growth of towns. This is guided by the region's projected steady population growth. Strategic land-use planning can ensure a diversity of housing options

[3] What does 'Housing as a human right' mean in Australia? | AHURI
[4] Construction Begins on Regional Housing | Premier of South Australia

are offered near health and community services. Managing fringe-growth and consolidating populations within existing township boundaries where possible is important. This will enhance the viability of services and facilities and reduce the risks of natural hazards like bushfires and flooding. The Plan also aims to prevent the encroachment of development onto environmentally sensitive areas or high value agricultural land.

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. **Coordinate housing growth with infrastructure by concentrating development within the existing footprint of identified townships and settlements unless it can be demonstrated there is appropriate demand, and land can be serviced with infrastructure.**
3. **Increase opportunities for well-located and well-designed housing to support the needs of a diverse range of people.**
4. **Monitor land supply and demographic trends to ensure sufficient land is available to support a growing population.**
5. **Existing buildings are adaptively re-used for new housing, including commercial, industrial and heritage places.**
6. **Support the provision of worker's accommodation for temporary and seasonal workers, as well as permanent workers, in locations close to employment.**

While it has been identified that there is sufficient zoned land, or land earmarked for housing over the next 15 years, infrastructure (CWMS, water, roads, electricity and stormwater) is required to support the development of this land. This poses a considerable challenge to councils within the region given the costs involved in delivering new or augmented services, as not all of these costs can reasonably be passed on to ratepayers. Therefore, there needs to be other funding avenues and mechanisms available to assist with bringing zoned land online for development. State and local government and infrastructure providers will need to work collaboratively to address this ongoing concern and prioritise funding accordingly.

Another obstacle to development is the high cost of construction in the region. At present, land and construction costs surpass market value, creating a considerable deterrent for developers and landowners. The high cost of construction is due in part to the shortage of skilled workers willing to work in the region.

One way to attract more construction workers (and indeed key workers, seasonal workers and young families) to the region is to provide greater housing choice, both typology and tenure, that is supported by social infrastructure such as healthcare, schools, and recreation activities.

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.

In alignment with the state government's Housing Roadmap, the Plan therefore 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.

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.

Aboriginal cultural heritage and values

Long-term strategic objectives
1. **Aboriginal cultural heritage and areas of significance are protected for the benefit of current and future generations.**
2. **The Traditional Owners of the land should be engaged 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.**

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 its Traditional Owners, 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.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* protects Aboriginal heritage (including Aboriginal ancestral remains, sites and objects) from the impacts of excavation, damage, disturbance, or interference. Land use proponents are strongly encouraged to first talk about their plans directly with Traditional Owners, via Recognised Aboriginal Representative Bodies (RARB's) or, where

there is no RARB, through relevant native title bodies and/or any relevant Aboriginal organisation or Traditional Owners of the area.

This should be done early to consider if impacts to Aboriginal heritage can be avoided, and before applying to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to obtain permission to impact heritage. Information about known Aboriginal heritage within an area and Aboriginal heritage groups who should be consulted can be obtained through undertaking a search of the central archives. This will provide an indicative location of known Aboriginal heritage and contact details for Traditional Owner groups for the search area.

The planning system offers the opportunity to require the consideration of cultural heritage values of a site early in the development pipeline rather than after a Code amendment or development approval under the PDI Act.

When Traditional Owners are engaged early in the planning process, any adverse impact can potentially be avoided or better managed, which creates more certainty for all involved. This also provides an opportunity to build capacity and pathways for knowledge sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

The Community Engagement Charter (Charter) guides public participation in the preparation of planning policies strategies and schemes, including any proposals to rezone land. The Commission recently updated the Charter with the aim to ensuring engagement is inclusive and respectful and highlights the need to consider appropriate opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in planning decisions that affect them. Future guidance is required to ensure that all entities proposing changes to planning instruments including state agencies, private proponents and local government undertaken sensitive and respectful Aboriginal engagement about land use planning matters.

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

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 Traditional Custodians 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. An integrated connecting with Country network is important in the early stages will also help to avoid areas of cultural sensitivity and help to streamline cultural heritage processes in the proceeding stages.

It will also be important to continue to work with First Nations representatives to consider how cultural information and interests could be incorporated into planning processes, including working with representatives on cultural mapping.

State and local heritage

Long-term strategic objectives

1. **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 State 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 reuse of buildings that enhance areas of cultural or heritage value, capitalise on existing investment and/or contribute to vibrant and liveable places.**
5. **Provide flexible planning policies that unlock creative design solutions, and land use outcomes that enable the adaptive reuse of heritage places.**
6. **Promote the heritage values of National, State and Local Heritage listed places.**
7. **Council leads the identification and listing of local heritage places to protect the local historical and attributes and themes that are important to local communities.**

The identification of a building or structure as a local heritage place requires a heritage study to be undertaken by the relevant local council, and a subsequent Code amendment to consolidate the list of proposed local heritage places into the Code.

For a state heritage listing, anyone can nominate a place, area or object to be considered for listing by the South Australian Heritage Council, or a broader heritage study can be commissioned by the Heritage Council.

The Murray Mallee region currently has 112 state heritage listed places spread across the region, and 153 local heritage places within Mid Murray and Murray Bridge council areas only, indicating that heritage surveys have not yet been undertaken by the majority of the councils in the region.

Heritage places reflect the region's unique and diverse history, promoting a strong sense of place and regional identity. The conservation and protection of heritage places should be fundamental

considerations of planning policy, and councils in the region are encouraged to undertake heritage studies within their local government areas to identify places that warrant that protection.

Local heritage is protected through the PDI Act, with places listed in the Code. This legislative framework is the basis for the ongoing management of State Heritage Places and Local Heritage Places. The transition of local heritage to the *Heritage Places Act 1993* is being considered by the state government, to bring all heritage protections under one legislative umbrella. This is a substantial piece of work that requires legislative and policy reform.

In addition, there are a number of shipwrecks along the coastline of the Coorong, which are protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981*.

Landscape and township character

Long-term strategic objectives
1. Recognise the unique character of areas by identifying their valued physical attributes in consultation with communities.
2. Maintain or enhance the scenic amenity of important natural coastal landscapes, views and vistas.
3. Investigate sensitive design approaches to infill in established townships, focused on retrofitting original housing, retaining and enhancing streetscape amenity and tree canopy cover.
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.

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

It is important to understand the differences between character and heritage. Heritage is embodied in the story and setting 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.

Scenic rural landscapes frame many townships, contributing to an attractive sense of place for communities and visitors to the region. Landscapes of high scenic quality are safeguarded through a range of legislation and planning policies.

An enhanced emphasis on tree planting and green infrastructure initiatives across the region 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 amenity and aesthetic appeal of towns, fostering a greater sense of well-being and community pride. It can 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.

Master plans are strongly encouraged as they can provide a strong vision for where and how development is to occur. They can support certainty for future investment and enhance character and placemaking within a town centre or specific precinct, such as a foreshore or parkland. 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.

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.

Local infill investigation areas

Long-term strategic objectives
1. Local area planning identifies and plans for additional housing opportunities to support a diverse range of housing to meet the evolving needs of local communities and local housing supply targets.

2. **Local infill areas located to create walkable and connected neighbourhoods that reduce the need for car journeys.**
3. **Investigations are undertaken to address infrastructure capacity and identify planning, coordination and funding mechanisms to improve the sustainable delivery of local housing within established townships.**

Local government plays a vital role in the planning for housing. Decisions made at the local level have a direct impact on the quantity, quality, and affordability of housing supply.

Key local government functions, such as initiating land rezoning, assessing development applications and delivering local infrastructure, impact housing location, density and cost, as does determining how surplus local government land should be used. Local government is best positioned to identify the place-based planning response to the Plan's directions.[5]

Local infill investigation areas have been identified as opportunities for well-planned and well-located sources of medium density or new Missing Middle housing, and smaller scale employment opportunities. These areas include opportunities within proximity to activity centres and major transport infrastructure, to encourage a strategic and targeted approach to increasing density.

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 should be guided by, not limited to areas identified in the Plan and may identify other local areas suited for infill development.

Local coordination and delivery

Delivering new housing outcomes in a way that will meet community expectations requires analysis of local infrastructure and open space capacity, improved design, landscaping and tree planting. Careful planning is required to manage small-scale infill with greater care to address community concerns about poor design, tree canopy loss, street parking loss and the detrimental effects on heritage areas and character.

Local area planning harnesses local knowledge, insights and expertise of councils to identify housing needs and issues facing their communities to drive the development of local place-based solutions.

Local area planning will need to consider:

- The evolution of future housing needs to reflect local demographic changes and diversity of housing choices local communities now seek.
- Engagement with landowners of large vacant parcels to identify and address potential blockers of development, such as zoning restrictions, environmental concerns, financing challenges, or community opposition.

[5] Local Affordable Housing Plan Toolkit

- Locations within townships that would benefit from regeneration, and the housing types and densities that could integrate sensitively with local neighbourhoods.
- The capacity of local road networks, walking and cycling networks, stormwater infrastructure, sport and recreation facilities and other social infrastructure.
- Potential improvements to the amenity of neighbourhoods to benefit current and future communities.
- The future investment required and use of local infrastructure charging mechanisms, such as the establishment of infrastructure schemes to fund improvements.
- Quality of open space and opportunities for investment, including the partnership opportunities through the Planning and Development Fund to support the provision of open space linked to housing growth.

The role of governments in planning for and coordinating local infill investigation areas is further discussed in the Implementation and Delivery section.

Councils' role in planning for their local communities

Councils plan and shape how our neighbourhoods grow, bringing them to life.

As the closest level of government to communities, local planning is essential as each community is different.

There are a range of services that councils are required to provide by legislation, including planning at the local level for the development and future needs of their area. This includes providing for the welfare, wellbeing and interests of their community and managing, developing and conserving the environment.

Councils also manage and maintain the extensive network of local infrastructure that is essential for creating liveable and sustainable communities including local roads, stormwater systems, footpaths and bike paths, open space and playgrounds and the management of parking.

A local understanding of these issues and alignment between local housing needs, planning and infrastructure coordination is essential for providing the right mix of housing in the right places to support the needs of individual communities across the Murray Mallee.

Theme:

Productive Economy

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

The Murraylands and Riverland region contributes approximately $4.818 billion to South Australia's Gross State Product (GSP). Agriculture, viticulture, meat processing, health, aged care and social assistance being the largest employment sectors.[6]

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.[7] 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 region. The region is highly export oriented and benefits from established agriculture, viticulture and tourism.

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. The provision of local and affordable housing for workers and residents will be critical for the establishment and ongoing operation of new and existing industries.

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 demonstrate the region's ability to identify and

[6] 2021 Census https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area
[7] South Australian Economic Statement, 2023, Department of the Premier and Cabinet

drive new tourism experiences, building upon other success stories such as the Monarto Safari Park and the Bend Motorsport Park.

Investment opportunities also lie in the areas of innovation and technology, particularly in agricultural production. This is supported by the Loxton ThincLab, which is a regionally focussed 'business incubator' specialising in agtech, food innovation and regional businesses.[8] This facility is recognised within *South Australia's Innovation Places Leadership Framework,* which was published in late 2024.[9]

Continued growth is expected in the health care and social services sectors. In particular, 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 health care workers.

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

[8] https://www.adelaide.edu.au/thinclab/locations/loxton
[9] https://www.innovationplaces.sa.gov.au/assets/documents/Innovation-Places-SA-Framework_FA.pdf

Employment lands

Long-term strategic objectives
1. **Protect and expand well serviced employment land that is strategically located to support economic growth and productivity.**
2. **Strategically plan for waste management infrastructure and services that reduce waste to landfill and support opportunities to promote a circular economy.**
3. **Promote new, latent and alternative employment types and attract new business investment by enabling a diverse range of flexible land use opportunities.**

Attracting and retaining a strong, educated workforce will support economic growth in the region. A readily available supply of employment land, serviced by appropriate infrastructure, and separated from sensitive land uses such as residential development is crucial to facilitating local employment opportunities that can support an increased population.

Employment lands require access to markets through priority freight corridors, telecommunications, and other infrastructure. They must be well connected to local industries to enable the exchange of goods and services. Employment lands should be expanded and protected where they are well connected to these networks, and where they are not constrained by abutting land uses.

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.

Waste export restrictions are driving investment in waste reuse solutions. An appropriate supply of land for waste and resource recovery, as well as other related green industries, should be identified to maximise resource use, support economic growth, and serve communities.

Land supply studies undertaken by a number of 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.

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 South Australian Government 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 focussed areas.

Government plays a catalytic and essential role in facilitating the development of innovation districts, from providing leadership and confidence to the market, to designating appropriate land use zoning and providing essential infrastructure and ensuring the ongoing competitiveness of the jurisdiction.

The SA Innovation Places Leadership Framework (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.

This 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.

The dynamic and connected network of thriving innovation places will accelerate innovation to deliver increased economic complexity, jobs and prosperity for the state. These innovation places include the Loxton ThincLab, along with manufacturing precincts, business parks, universities / higher education and emerging areas of economic and industry clusters mostly located within Greater Adelaide. They create a network of dedicated spaces with physical, digital and social infrastructure required to accelerate new ideas into widespread economic outcomes.

Given their importance as key drivers of economic development in South Australia, this network of innovation places are protected as SIPs within the Plan.

Tourism and events

Long-term strategic objectives
1. Identify key land uses which can be complemented by tourism opportunities 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.** **3. Facilitate tourism opportunities by enhancing enabling infrastructure and services such as airport, maritime infrastructure, major roads and digital technology.**

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.[10]

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

The Murray Mallee region has a significant tourism industry, underpinned by the draw of the River Murray from border to coast, especially during the summer months for houseboat and water-based activities. Full of cultural significance and sightseeing opportunities, tourism generated

[10] DSD SA Tourism investment 010724.pdf

$373 million in visitor expenditure in the year ending 2023 for the region. This strong figure was driven by 1.1 million day trips and 363,000 overnight visitors.

The South Australian Tourism Commission's Value of Tourism snapshot indicated that tourism expenditure for the Murray River, Lakes and Coorong region has already exceeded its target of $196 million by 2025 and has also exceeded its target of $246 million by 2030, highlighting the need to continue providing an appropriate level of services, accommodation and other land uses to support this growing visitor demand. The tourism sector provides 1,300 direct jobs. 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.[11]

Monarto Safari Park

An example of this is the Monarto Safari Park, which is now the largest safari park outside of Africa. It has recently completed a new visitor and conference centre along with glamping facilities, making it one of the most popular tourist attractions in the region. The Monarto Safari Park Master Plan Addendum 2023 also identifies a raft of future upgrades over the next 5 years and beyond, including student accommodation, that will only elevate its current status.

The River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

The River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve is also an emerging new nature-based tourism product for the region. This reserve was granted accreditation from the Internation Dark-Sky Association (IDA) in 2019 and covers more than 3,200 square kilometres within the Mid Murray Council. The reserve offers a range of nature-based activities including accommodation, with the Council working closely with the IDA and state government to not only protect but enhance its status as a destination for dark sky tourism both nationally and internationally.

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 has opened a drag strip, which can accommodate over 20,000 spectators.

The planning system provides the impact assessed pathway for large-scale tourism enterprises, if considered to be of economic, social or environmental importance to South Australia. Impact assessed development is the highest level of development assessment and is reserved for those projects which cannot be properly considered under existing pathways (such as an assessment under the Code), 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.

[11] Flinders Ranges and Outback – RVS Progress Snapshot

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

The Commission is undertaking a review of policies within the Code that relate to tourism development. The purpose of the review will be to ensure that the policies of the Code are contemporary and meet current market demands for high quality tourist accommodation and tourism development (of all sides) such as agri-based tourism, that value-adds to locally produced products (i.e. cellar door, farm gate sales). These activities should be considered where impacts on agricultural productivity, the environment and scenic amenity can be successfully managed.

Primary industry

Long-term strategic objectives
1. **Support the region's primary industry sector as dynamic, innovative and diverse through technology adoption, intensification of production systems and recognition and protection of its unique advantages.**
2. **Facilitate appropriate value-adding and rural business diversification and associated ancillary land uses such as storage, warehousing and logistics.**
3. **Minimise the loss or fragmentation of valuable primary production land.**
4. **Protect key assets underpinning the region's current and potential future primary industry development.**
5. **Equitably manage the interface between primary production and other land use types.**

Retaining productive primary production land across the region is a priority, with the agricultural industry continuing to dominate the region in both employment and export income, contributing over $2 billion worth of exports in the 2022-23 financial year. Facilitating rural value-adding opportunities such as visitor experiences, tourist accommodation, food and beverage production, farm stays, and other tourism ventures—along with providing additional workers' accommodation in suitable areas—will help support the region's thriving primary production sector.

The wine industry, which is 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.[12] In recent years, grape prices have dropped significantly to the point where grape growing is becoming increasingly unsustainable, resulting in vast areas of vines being replaced with other produce crops.

[12] https://www.wineaustralia.com/getmedia/d6861ad2-f9c3-4547-8d28-39fdf8fc2341/MI_Riverland-Region-Snapshot-2023-24.pdf

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

The recent wine grape crisis has highlighted the need to ensure that zoning of horticultural and agricultural land provides sufficient flexibility, to allow primary producers to 'pivot' in response to demand and supply and changing climate conditions.

Value-adding and diversification through new business models will also provide greater prosperity for the region's agribusiness sector and increase Gross State Product.[13] This is supported by business incubators such as the Loxton ThincLab, which is a collaboration between the University of Adelaide and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA). This seeks to provide local entrepreneurs, companies and agribusiness a space to develop innovations and business models aimed at enhancing South Australia's agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability.[14]

This in turn supports and drives the removal of barriers to innovation, new investment, and the diversification of land uses.

Strong biosecurity measures are crucial to primary production and natural resource management. The South Australian Biosecurity Policy 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—focused on increasing carbon sequestration or reducing emissions—can play a pivotal role in an integrated regenerative approach to agriculture and land management. By incorporating carbon farming into agricultural enterprises, land regeneration is supported, delivering multiple direct benefits and ultimately strengthening the resilience of the enterprise. Recent investments in this area, backed by the state government's Carbon Farming Roadmap, highlight the region's commitment to this sustainable practice.

In concert, sustainable agricultural practices, value-add industries, improved technology, and land management practices will support a growing and more diverse regional economy.

[13] Department of Primary Industries and Regions Strategic Plan 2021-2025 (pir.sa.gov.au)
[14] https://www.adelaide.edu.au/thinclab/locations/loxton

Mineral and energy resources

Long-term strategic objectives
1. **Protect key resources, including associated strategic access routes, transport corridors and pipelines, that contribute to the Murray Mallee'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. **Adequate separation distances between mining activities, housing and other incompatible development are maintained.** 5. **Facilitate appropriate post-mining land uses.**

South Australia has considerable in-demand commodities, including critical minerals which underpin the state's economy and export activities. Whilst the region has a strong primary production and renewable energy focus, mines such as the Mindarie Mineral Sands project provide access to a critical resource that will support the emerging space industry in the state.

Mindarie Mineral Sands Project

After closing in 2015, the Mindarie Mineral Sands Mine is set to reopen with new deposits found. This will lead to investment in new processing and mining facilities and almost doubling the mining camp given the closest service centre is the township of Karoonda located approximately 40 kilometres to the south.

These key resource areas and associated infrastructure, including connections via strategic access routes, transport corridors and pipelines should be protected from encroachment of incompatible development to 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. This overlay aims to maintain the long-term availability and productive capacity of extractive resource lands. The opportunity exists to investigate and consider the application of these policy frameworks to licenced activities across the region.

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

Theme:

Natural Resources, Environment and Landscapes

Outcome 3: A more climate-resilient and sustainable environment

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.

Future liveability and wellbeing are dependent on how well the region adapts to and mitigates the impacts of climate change. South Australia is projected to experience increased average temperatures, reduced average rainfall and rises in sea level. This is coupled with an increased frequency and intensity of extreme natural events such as heatwaves, bushfires, and flooding, all of which place people's health, livelihoods, and property at risk.

Decision-making should be informed by the best available climate science to minimise the need for future adaptive responses.

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

The threat of natural hazards including coastal flooding, erosion and bushfires is expected to increase. New development will need to be carefully planned to locate it away from areas of high risk, with more vulnerable and sensitive uses to be located outside potentially hazardous areas.

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.[15] In order 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.

[15] https://www.rivermurraydarkskyreserve.org/aboutus.php

Biodiversity

Long-term strategic objectives
1. **Identify areas of high biodiversity value and determine what types of sensitive development, if any, they could accommodate.** 2. **Minimise impacts of development on areas with recognised biodiversity value, such as native vegetation and habitat so that critical life-supporting functions can be maintained.** 3. **Retain native vegetation and areas of high biodiversity value wherever possible and enable the investigation of pathways that would provide for minimising and offsetting unavoidable impacts.** 4. **Identify and protect modified landscapes that have significant environmental value and can co-exist with other land uses such as primary production and tourism.**

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.[16] 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[17] and Southern Bell Frog[18] 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.[19] 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*.

[16] https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/native-plants-animals/managing-biodiversity
[17] https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/projects/wetlands-and-floodplains-projects/re-establishing-murray-crayfish-in-south-australia
[18] https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/projects/wetlands-and-floodplains-projects/southern-bell-frog-monitoring
[19] https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/projects/native-species-projects/all-projects-map-iron-grass-native-grassland-project

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 (GRUB)*, which 'seeks to increase the number of native trees and plant species in public spaces as a way to improve biodiversity and increase climate resilience.[20]

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.

Climate change

Long-term strategic objectives
1. Evaluate the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities and identify potential risk mitigation measures when planning for future grow
2. Encourage carbon-efficient living environments 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 township expansions and new investment in established townships.
5. Promote opportunities for green technologies and industries that reduce reliance on carbon-based energy supplies.
6. Monitor and review the impact of climate change on hazard risk and update hazard overlays within the Code to manage these risks.
7. Create polices, schemes, education and incentives to promote climate resilient buildings and support market transition.
8. Protect and enhance areas that provide biodiversity and ecological services and maximise opportunities for carbon storage.

The Murray Mallee faces challenges from climate change, including more frequent and severe heatwaves, reduced average rainfall, droughts, bushfires and floods. These are likely to impact on agricultural production, public health, community wellbeing, natural landscapes and wildlife habitats, and public and private infrastructure.

[20] https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/projects/native-species-projects/growing-regional-urban-biodiversity-grub

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 50% by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and to achieve 100% renewable energy generation by 2027.

With the 42% decrease from 2004–05 levels recorded in 2020–21, at least a further 8% net emissions reduction would be needed to meet the interim 2030 target. While emissions from the energy generation sector are reducing, more effort will be needed to address other major sources of emissions. For example, transport is the largest contributor to emissions in the state and is responsible for 29% of all emissions.[21]

Consistent with the government's approach, the South Australian planning system aims to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation. By undertaking both mitigation and adaptation solutions, 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 risks including the increased intensity of natural disasters, reduced rainfall, increased temperatures and sea level rise, in line with the South Australian Government Climate Change Action Plan.

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

In 2050, the Murraylands & Riverland region is projected to experience an increase in daily maximum temperatures of 1.7 degrees Celsius and 10.2% less annual rainfall.[22] This has the potential to impact the region's environment, economic base and its primary producers. New technology and value-added opportunities will be critical to support the region's economy and to maximise productivity.

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 recycle 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.

[21] https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-emissions
[22] Guide to climate projections for risk assessment and planning in South Australia 2022.pdf (environment.sa.gov.au)

The Code contains several hazard overlays which include policies to recognise sea level rise, bushfire (development siting, asset protection) and flood hazard. Recent work to update these overlays and other policies in the Code for flood and bushfire hazard will contribute to our climate change resilience.

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

Coastal environment

Long-term strategic objectives
1. Maintain and enhance public access to open space along the coastline.
2. Protect and enhance coastal and marine environments for their contributions to biodiversity, open space, economic productivity, and hazard risk mitigation.
3. Protect the high blue carbon storage values of areas such as salt marshes.
4. Recognise and continue to protect and enhance the natural coastal environment including environmentally important features, such as estuaries, marine-protected areas, and sand dunes.
5. Protect key coastal areas where critical infrastructure is at risk from sea level rise, coastal erosion and storm surges, and ensure new coastal development incorporates appropriate adaptation measures.
6. Maintain or enhance the scenic amenity of important natural coastal landscapes, views and vistas.

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

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

Most of the region's coastal areas are protected by Conservation Zoning within the Coastal Areas Overlay. This zoning preserves the open nature of the coast, promoting public access and limiting the 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 environment and avoid impacts on natural coastal processes including sea level rise, flooding, erosion, and dune drift to avoid the need for public expenditure on protection of the environment and development.

Blue carbon is the carbon captured and stored in coastal ecosystems including seagrass meadows, saltmarshes and mangroves. These ecosystems are carbon sinks, accumulating and

retaining carbon in the plants themselves and in the soils below. Much work has been done to investigate blue carbon potential across South Australia. This work has identified the benefits of tidal reconnection and coastal wetland and seagrass restoration. The protection and realisation of the values of blue carbon will also involve enhancing the biological and ecosystem services which these areas provide.

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

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.

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

Natural disasters can have significant financial and social impacts on individuals, communities and businesses. The economic, social and environmental cost of disasters can be reduced by prioritising consideration of the impact of natural disasters in land use strategies and planning for them appropriately. This will safeguard affordability, create more resilient communities and reduce recovery timeframes.[23]

The Murray Mallee region frequently experiences drought, intense storms and is particularly vulnerable to flooding events given the location of key townships and shack settlements along the River Murray.

[23] Addressing Resilience in Land Use Planning – summary for policy makers, IAG, October 2023

Resilience improvements for 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.

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

Emissions and hazardous activities

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

Emissions and hazardous activities, including air and noise pollution and site contamination, may result from lawfully operating industries and operations that make significant contributions to our economy. 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 that may give rise to adverse noise and air quality impacts. The identification of growth areas will be guided by best practice policy and updated mapping with respect to established and designated industrial areas which may cause emissions or involve hazardous activities.

The Code provides means by which relevant authorities can assess and manage risks posed by known or potential site contamination to enable the safe development and use of land. The Interface Management Code Amendment will further strengthen planning policies in relation to the management of interfaces between sensitive land uses and existing industrial and employment activities.

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

Theme:

Transport and Infrastructure

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 co-ordinated growth, supporting economic productivity.

Effective infrastructure planning and delivery has a range of benefits and can reduce commercial barriers, increase market access, and boost supply chain productivity. It promotes social inclusion through improved connectivity and accessibility, fosters employment, enhances placemaking and amenities, and increases community resilience.

The region's transport networks are essential for moving resources and freight, while also providing access to goods, services, employment, education, and social opportunities. With its strategic geography, connecting 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. They enable the region to build on the opportunities presented by close proximity to the growing industrial areas of northern metropolitan Adelaide (for example, Edinburgh Parks), the Barossa wine region, and agricultural activities in the Mid North and Fleurieu Peninsula. They also link the region to export facilities and interstate markets.

Protecting these infrastructure assets and providing for the expansion of export-related and value-added industry near these transport and storage hubs will enable capitalisation on investment in these assets, provide opportunities for more industry to move into the region, and give support and certainty to existing industries. A number of initiatives aimed at expanding road and rail freight networks across the region and linking these to growing industrial/commercial areas, interstate markets and export facilities are currently being investigated.

The most significant opportunity is the High Productivity Vehicle Network Business Case, which seeks to upgrade a number of key roads (including Sturt Highway, Dukes Highway and Princes Highway) to improve the road freight network. This is particularly important given Murray Bridge, Tailem Bend and Monarto South provide a key intersection for road and rail from Victoria. 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.

Reliable telecommunications and digital connectivity are critical for industry development and 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.

Social infrastructure is comprised of the facilities, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities. It helps us 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 health care services (both traditional medicine and allied health) is needed to support existing communities and the future growth of the region.

‘Childcare deserts’ are commonplace within the region, which significantly impacts the ability for parents to engage in the workforce.

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

Strategic transport networks

Long-term strategic objectives
1. **Facilitate an efficient, reliable and safe transport network that connects business to markets and people to places (including where they live, work, visit and recreate).** 2. **Identify and protect the operations of key strategic transport passenger and freight infrastructure.** 3. **Allow for the future expansion and intensification of strategic transport infrastructure for passenger and freight movements.** 4. **Support an efficient transport system that contributes to reducing emissions.**

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, seaport, 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.

Enhancing electric vehicle charging infrastructure and investigating potential battery swap networks for freight vehicles along key freight routes will encourage the transition of freight and passenger vehicles to zero emission technologies.

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.

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 in their own right. From a planning perspective, movement and place often compete; great movement corridors are fast, efficient and minimise travel time, whereas great Places encourage

us to linger, stay and extend our time in the area. Establishing the right balance between the two is vital.

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

Given the sparse nature of the Murray Mallee, the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) and other service providers rely on maintained and accessible airstrips for coverage to respond to emergencies and provide goods and services to townships and 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.

The use of public transport in the Murray Mallee region is low. 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[24].

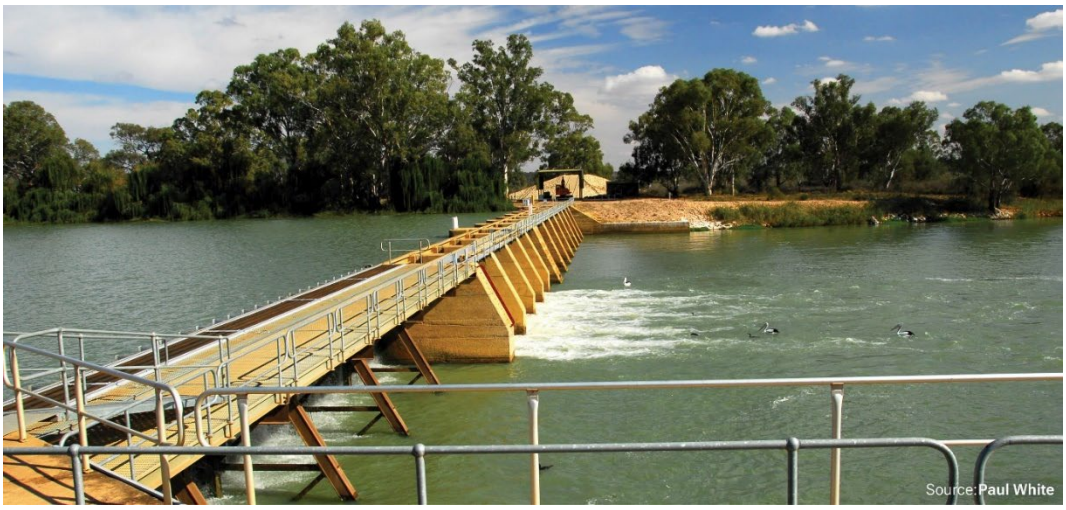
Future transport planning will explore connectivity and transport infrastructure requirements to adequately service the region. Relevant findings from these studies will be incorporated into future updates to Murray Mallee Regional Plan to ensure continued alignment. A review of the *Passenger Transport Act 1994*, which identifies removing barriers for service delivery in regional South Australia and fringe areas of Greater Adelaide will consider the future role of metropolitan taxis, chauffeur and rideshare vehicles to operate statewide.

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. A climate resilient water supply and supporting infrastructure meets the needs of a growing population and economy while balancing affordability.
3. An adaptive planning approach supports clearly defined benchmarks for investment decisions to develop new large-scale supply and wastewater system options, as well as investment in more localised small-scale solutions.
4. Fit for purpose integrated water and wastewater management systems and innovative infrastructure solutions facilitate the timely delivery of infrastructure to support housing and employment growth.
5. Water sensitive urban design principles are incorporated in all development to manage risks to water quality.

[24] https://www.berribarmera.sa.gov.au/our-community/community-transport

As water scarcity becomes more pronounced due to increasing housing, agricultural and industrial demands and climate change, innovative solutions to meet the growing needs of urban populations, while maintaining and enhancing our water-dependent ecosystems are needed.



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 needs requires projections of both supply and demand as they change over time. Both are influenced by variables such as climate change, population growth, demographics and economic conditions. Modelling this can indicate the volume of water required to meet the projected needs under different plausible scenarios. It is also important to ensure that water supply can be maintained during extreme events such as drought, bushfire, or flood events and can maintain the health of our natural environments. Projections of future water demand also inform the design of water treatment and distribution infrastructure.

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 timely and cost-effective manner – surface water (rivers and streams), groundwater, desalinated seawater, stormwater harvesting, recycled water and purified recycled water.

The Murray Mallee region is of course heavily reliant on the River Murray, the lifeblood of the region, not only in supporting population growth but economic growth. Currently the Murray-Darling Basin Authority is undertaking a *2026 Basin Plan Review*, with an 'Early Insights Paper' published in mid-2024.[25] This paper and the broader review, seek to reflect on the performance of the plan to date and what might need to be changed in response to emerging trends around climate change.

[25] https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/early-insights-paper-publication-basin-plan-review

The outcomes of this review and other state and federal government policies impacting the Murray-Darling Basin, such as the South Australian River Murray water resource plan, will have a significant impact on the future economic growth prospects of the Murray Mallee region.

This reinforces the need to enhance co-operation in the delivery of water, wastewater, recycled water and stormwater services as it is required to support water security, public health, environmental, urban amenity and cultural outcomes that South Australians value and expect.

Some parts of the drinking water system have a lower resilience due to their location and the way in which they are connected to the water supply network. This may be due to a network constraint that limits the ability to get water to an area or where a part of the network relies on a single source.

A reticulated sewerage system provides better environmental and public health outcomes (compared with on-site disposal) and provides a coordinated collection system for easier water recycling.[26]

The combined supply of wastewater from SA Water wastewater treatment plants and local government Community Wastewater Management Schemes, together with stormwater capture and reuse, are all becoming increasingly important to meet water demand and reduce environmental impact.

Stormwater management, from large scale capture and reuse schemes (Managed Aquifer Recharge) through to decentralised street scale infrastructure, plays an increasingly important role in managing the quantity and quality of urban runoff. Through the implementation of Stormwater Management Plans, and appropriate planning responses to address stormwater and flood management risks, the opportunities for realising the benefits of stormwater capture and reuse can be maximised.

Water-sensitive urban design can contribute to a reduction in flooding, water quality improvement and support urban greening and cooling. Water sensitive urban design should be supported through the Code and other relevant policies for both infill and greenfield developments.

The Plan provides new growth assumptions that will be used to inform investment decisions and priorities for water and wastewater 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.

To meet the critical need for water infrastructure, new fixed charges have been introduced.

The government will consider whether legislative change is required regarding the regulatory arrangements around water pricing, including reviewing the role of the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA).

[26] 853934-DEW-Urban-Water-Directions-Statement-FIN3.pdf (environment.sa.gov.au)

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. **Continue to provide opportunities for compatible non-residential uses such as education, health, recreational and community services near where people live.**
3. **Provide easy access to social infrastructure benchmarks to enable the consideration of priority areas for additional social infrastructure capacity.**

Our growing and ageing population, increasing migration and advancements in technology will increase demand and change the expectations that people have for the variety, quality and accessibility of social infrastructure services and assets.[27]

Ease of access to and quality of social infrastructure varies for different types of social infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable groups. The planning and delivery of social infrastructure often lags behind the increased demand for housing.

The need for better integration and alignment with growth area planning is recognised. At the macro scale, the Plan sets the strategic direction and land use intent to inform social infrastructure planning and support growth, noting that the planning and management of social infrastructure is complex.

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

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.

Strategic planning can reduce barriers to market access, improve social inclusion, support employment, and enhance resilience. Notable projects include upgrades to several regional hospitals, major upgrades to several schools including the Meningie Area school.

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.

[27] Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019 - 6. Social Infrastructure.pdf (infrastructureaustralia.gov.au)

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

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 (GICU) to ensure transparent infrastructure planning benchmarks inform state, local and private planning processes.

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

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. Provide electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure that is readily available and accessible to users.
5. Facilitate renewable energy generation and storage including small scale decentralised energy supplies to support agriculture, industry and communities in isolated locations.

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

South Australia is at the forefront of change, with the highest per-capita percentage of rooftop solar photovoltaic installations in Australia and the second largest wind-to-load ratio in the world (2024).

While these emerging technologies and economic factors are contributing to a reduction in the energy consumed from the grid, the transmission and distribution network will continue to play a vital role into the future.

Existing strategic electricity substations, transmission and distribution lines will require ongoing protection from incompatible land uses or activities. Further investigations in collaboration with key electricity infrastructure providers are required to identify future strategic corridors to ensure the region's long-term electricity needs can be met, which will form the basis of a future amendment to the Plan.

Project EnergyConnect

ElectraNet and Transgrid are partnering to deliver a new energy interconnector between South Australia and New South Wales, with an added connection through to Victoria.[28] This project is currently under construction with more than 200km of the South Australian component already complete. This project presents a significant opportunity for renewable energy projects in the region as they will be able to directly connect to the grid.

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.

[28] https://www.projectenergyconnect.com.au/

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. **Infrastructure reserves are planned and coordinated to service multiple uses including opportunities for regional open space and recreation opportunities.**

To support growing communities, it is critical to pre-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:

- The generation, distribution, or transmission of electricity or other forms of energy.
- Gas transmission pipelines.
- Water infrastructure or sewerage infrastructure.
- Transport networks or facilities (including roads, ports, wharfs, jetties, airports, and freight-handling facilities).
- Health, education, community, police, justice, or emergency services facilities.

Section 129 of the PDI Act outlines a streamlined approval process for essential infrastructure proposed within an 'infrastructure reserve.' Including infrastructure services in the Code, supported by standard infrastructure designs, could significantly streamline assessment processes.

Infrastructure agencies and service providers may consider using this mechanism under the PDI Act to strategically reserve corridors or sites for future assets or rebuilding of aged assets to assist with long-term infrastructure planning to accommodate future 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), potential desalination plant upgrades to provide water security.

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

Theme:

Delivery and Implementation

Outcome 5: Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning

Regional planning is an essential step in the line of sight between the State Planning Policies, regional demonstration of this and locally contextualised planning strategies.

Effective alignment of land use and infrastructure planning will allow for a more integrated and accurate view of the infrastructure required to deliver better outcomes for growing communities.

Bringing the Plan to life over the next 30 years will require ongoing collaboration and coordination across government, councils, industry and the community.

The PDI Act gives us the tools to implement some changes quickly, while other initiatives will need, investigation and investment. Effective delivery of the Plan will benefit from the suite of new digital tools in the state's new planning system. 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 tools and governance arrangements, within the Department for Housing and Urban Development (DHUD), including Growth and Coordination Unit (GICU) and the Infrastructure Coordination Group will coordinate infrastructure investment and facilitate well-serviced developments.

Aligning the 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy (Infrastructure SA) and the Transport Strategy (DIT) with the Plan allows for coordinated infrastructure planning, providing greater alignment, clarity and confidence. Other agencies and infrastructure providers plans will also consider the long-term growth assumptions identified to ensure integrated planning outcomes.

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 will:

- Support targets and actions for land use, transport infrastructure and the public realm through interactive maps, dynamic data and spatial plans.
- Increase the availability, accuracy and relevance of data to inform integrated land use and infrastructure decisions, including current and forward projections, statistical data and analysis.
- Allow faster implementation of planning strategies to respond quickly to housing demand or employment growth by streamlining zoning changes.
- Incorporate whole-of-government strategies and mapping data so that they can be integrated into the relevant regional plan and updated as required. This ensures mapping data and policies remain consistent, relevant and aligned. Amendments to planning instruments including regional plans can be driven by a range of government agencies and infrastructure providers enabling them to update information in the Plan to align with their long-term strategies.
- Require the state to maintain a 15-year rolling supply of zoned land across greenfield and infill areas. A further target requires the state to maintain 5 years of development ready supply (i.e. land that is serviced and can be built on now).
- Track housing supply every quarter to ensure we do not fall short of these targets. DHUD will actively monitor this to ensure we are building enough homes, and actively responding to any blockages.
- Require councils to undertake the necessary planning to ensure sufficient land is zoned to accommodate these targets over 10-year periods (across 30 years).

Short-term actions

An up-to-date implementation plan is to be maintained, with five-year rolling actions. This includes dynamic reporting to track the implementation by theme, location and the entity responsible.

These actions include recommendations about the amendment or establishment of other planning instruments available through the PDI Act such as a Code amendment, but also include further investigations to inform future updates to the Plan.

All the targets and actions, including their implementation status can be viewed in the dashboard.

Actions and complying Code amendments

Regional plans can include mechanisms to fast-track appropriate Code amendments at the Minister for Planning's discretion. These are referred to as section 75 Complying Changes. Section 75 of the PDI Act enables the minister to agree to change the Code via a streamlined process for implementing a recommendation from a regional plan. This could relate to amending

zoning or overlays in the Code to implement new growth areas or other spatial changes identified in the regional plans. Recommendations seeking code amendments in the Plan in accordance with section 75(1)(b) of the PDI Act, need to be reflected in maps or spatial information and supported by specific information about the changes that are being proposed. These can only be initiated or agreed to by the Minister for Planning, after seeking the advice of the Commission and are the subject of consultation under the Charter.

Future iterations have the potential to include complying changes to allow streamlined processes to amend the Code. Any amendment to the Plan to identify complying changes requires an amendment under section 73 of the PDI Act, and will include engagement with landowners, council and community under the Charter.

Coordination and delivery

Long-term strategic objectives
1. **Infrastructure capacity analysis and planning is developed and maintained in collaboration with state agencies, local government and utility providers to refine and prioritise growth areas.** 2. **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.** 3. **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.** 4. **Develop and implement structure plans for key settlements that integrate long term land use planning and infrastructure planning and delivery.** 5. **Increase the capacity of essential infrastructure such as community wastewater management systems (CWMS) and potable water to support population and tourist growth and industry expansion.** 6. **Consider the seasonal population fluctuations and tourism for services and infrastructure provision are considered when planning and funding infrastructure.**

Every person, no matter where they live, should have fair access to transport, employment opportunities, healthcare, shops and services. Access to quality services and infrastructure is intrinsically linked to community wellbeing and it can also reduce living costs and support greener, safer, healthier, more prosperous communities.

Land should be rezoned based on the timely and coordinated delivery of new or upgraded infrastructure alongside additional housing supply or prioritising the delivery of housing development in areas with additional infrastructure capacity.

When done effectively, this reduces the total cost to community and ensures people have access to necessary facilities and services, including utilities such as water and power and social services such as health and education or a reliable local bus network.

Importantly, the orderly expansion of infrastructure to support growth is not about providing all future infrastructure needs upfront as this is not practical or affordable for governments and taxpayers.

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 need to be provided up-front, 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. The Social Infrastructure Benchmarking and Population Projections will be formally recognised and linked to the Plan under section 71(b) of the PDI Act and the adopted planning assumptions to consider when undertaking long term planning for land use and infrastructure in the Plan.

Thresholds for new social infrastructure will be maintained for state level social infrastructure to ensure transparent infrastructure planning benchmarks are provided to inform state, local and private planning processes.

Adaptive planning approaches that use agreed growth projections, monitoring and infrastructure thresholds will be critical for alignment of land use planning and infrastructure delivery.

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 agreements 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.
- 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).

To develop successful strategies, local government must be empowered to collaborate in this process. Part of the core business of councils is to undertake strategic planning for their local area. Strategic planning at a local level should implement the growth targets and identify requirements and timing for local infrastructure and services.

Importantly, the role of councils has been elevated under the PDI Act as a Designated Entity who can undertake amendments to regional plans. This highlights the desire for councils to be actively refining in improving the Plan.

Alignment between revised population, housing and employment projections and council Strategic Management Plans required under the *Local Government Act 1999* such as strategic asset management and long-term financial plans will establish greater whole of government coordination.

Infrastructure charging

Long-term strategic objectives
1. Evaluate the most effective and fit-for-purpose infrastructure funding mechanism for projects such as deeds, infrastructure schemes and fixed charges.
2. Provide transparency of infrastructure costs associated with various housing options and critically analyse the cost benefits prior to land release or rezoning.
3. Develop models where infrastructure and services can be delivered by third parties to expedite projects, while maintaining appropriate quality control, engineering and other standards for construction and maintenance.
4. Structure planning of future growth areas is used to identify infrastructure costs and inform infrastructure charges, including the initiation of infrastructure schemes.

We need to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth and is funded fairly.

The delivery of infrastructure has been a planning challenge for many years. Funding models have been the subject of scrutiny by a range of interested parties, often with polarising views on how infrastructure should be funded. Infrastructure funding and delivery needs to ensure that there is a fair and proportional sharing of cost among users and wider beneficiaries of infrastructure. Traditionally, the delivery of essential infrastructure in greenfield developments is paid for through the development process. Cost-reflective pricing would have a significant impact on the ability to deliver houses.

New homes need new or augmented infrastructure and services regardless of their location, type or density. The work of Infrastructure SA and other infrastructure agencies around Australia shows land development costs in urban and township extension areas can be significantly higher than land development costs in established residential areas, but only where capacity remains in existing networks.

While small scale infill development has been benefiting from this capacity, in many cases it hasn't had to contribute. Equitable funding arrangements are required so that costs will be shared between the government and community (via taxes and user charges), alongside the developer and homebuyers.

Different infrastructure tools and models are suited to different circumstances and may depend on the nature of infrastructure required, the known level of detail available, who the beneficiary of the infrastructure will be and the timeframe for delivery.

Charging mechanisms should be:

- Fit for purpose.

- Proportionate in terms of administrative burden.
- Equitable with contributions based on beneficiaries.
- Evidence-based with accurate costing.
- Transparent with clear governance and accountability for the collected funds and how they are spent.

The PDI Act establishes general and basic infrastructure schemes. Basic infrastructure schemes apply to designated growth areas and provide the mechanism to ensure the delivery of essential infrastructure that is initially required to make a neighbourhood liveable, such as water, sewerage and electricity. They operate as a charge on the land when development takes place.

General infrastructure schemes are broader and envisaged to deliver a wider range of infrastructure including health, education, community facilities, public transport, police, justice and emergency services. These schemes are not yet operational.

The use of infrastructure schemes will ensure that all infrastructure required to build new communities will be planned and coordinated with direct accountability to the Minister for Housing and Urban Development. GICU will oversee the delivery of infrastructure schemes, regularly monitoring infrastructure costs and the delivery of growth areas across the state.

Infrastructure deeds will remain a useful tool in specific circumstances where the use of a scheme is not fit-for-purpose or warranted due to the scale of the project or small number of individual landowners.

Up until recently, those who benefit from new water, sewer or power infrastructure pay for it through augmentation charges. The settings for water are consistent with the National Water Initiative 2004 (NWI) in which cost-reflective pricing for the delivery of infrastructure is a central tenant.

In South Australia, those who have built in greenfield growth areas have paid for a range of infrastructure, while the vast majority of those who place pressure on existing infrastructure when they build houses in existing suburbs and towns have not.

To meet critical future housing needs for the state, maintaining the existing method of augmentation charging is unsustainable. It sometimes requires individual developments to fully fund augmentation works that are required (particularly in greenfield situations), which may have benefits outside the immediate development area.

Fixed infrastructure charges can play an important role in ensuring critical infrastructure can be provided fairly across urban and regional areas. These charges are supported by public sector investment through the ordinary budgetary process promoting shared investment.

State Actions Murray Mallee

No.	Outcome	Theme	Sub-theme	Title	Action Description	Timing	Responsibility	Region	SPP
1	An integrated and connected region	Transport and Infrastructure	Infrastructure corridors and reserves	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), to be placed on early commencement and completed in 2025.	0-2 years	DHUD-PLUS	Region-wide	SPP 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure
2	A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future.	Productive Economy	Primary Industry	Productive Land Value Mapping	Maintain contemporary productive land value mapping and identify key primary production assets that should be protected.	0-2 years	PIRSA	Region-wide	SPP 8: Primary Industry
3	A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future.	Productive Economy	Mineral and Energy Resources	Key Resource Areas Code Amendment	Identify and protect key resource sites across the State including investigating the application of the Resource Extraction Zone and Resource Extraction Protection Overlay and new policy that addresses urban interface issues.	0-2 years	DEM	Region-wide	SPP 10: Mineral and Energy Resources
4	A Greener, Wilder and More Climate-Resilient Environment	Environment, Natural Resources and Landscapes	Biodiversity	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.	0-5 years	DEW	Region-wide	SPP 4: Biodiversity
5	A Greener, Wilder and More Climate-Resilient Environment	Environment, Natural Resources and Landscapes	Coastal Environment	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, to incorporate additional Flooding Site and Floor Levels Technical and Numeric Variations.	0-5 years	DEW	Region-wide	SPP 13: Coastal Environment
6	A Greener, Wilder and More Climate-Resilient Environment	Environment, Natural Resources and Landscapes	Emissions and Hazardous Activities	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.	0-5 years	EPA	Region-wide	SPP 16: Emissions and Hazardous Activities
7	An integrated and connected region	Transport and Infrastructure	Strategic Transport Infrastructure	State Transport Strategy	To implement actions and strategic transport outcomes from South Australia's Transport Strategy to guide future transport investment and services across the Murray Mallee region, with assistance from the Department of Infrastructure and Transport.	0-2 years	DIT	Region-wide	SPP 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure
8	More housing in the right places	People, Housing and Liveability	Housing Supply and Diversity	Affordable Housing Overlay	Apply the Affordable Housing Overlay to all zones that envisage residential development, including neighbourhood, township, settlement, and activity centre type zones	0-2 years	DHUD-PLUS	Region-wide	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
9	More housing in the right places	People, Housing and Liveability	Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Values	Inclusion of Cultural Mapping into Regional Plans	Amend the Regional Plan to incorporate cultural mapping to identify potential significant landscapes and other culturally significant areas in conjunction with First Nations representatives.	0-5 years	DHUD-PLUS	Region-wide	SPP 7: Cultural Heritage

No.	Outcome	Theme	Sub-theme	Title	Action Description	Timing	Responsibility	Region	SPP
10	An integrated and connected region	Transport and Infrastructure	Strategic Transport Infrastructure	Murray Mallee transport network resilience strategy and framework.	Develop a resilience strategy and framework, that guides projects and initiatives to deliver a resilient transport system that contributes to long-term sustainability and bolsters the Regions overall preparedness for future challenges. This resilience planning will target the Riverland and Murraylands sub-regions.	0-5 Years	DIT	Murray Mallee	SPP 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure
11	An integrated and connected region	Transport and Infrastructure	Strategic Transport Infrastructure	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.	0-5 years	DIT	Murray Mallee	SPP 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure
12	More housing in the right places	People, Housing and Liveability	Housing Supply and Diversity	Workers Accommodation Overlay	Investigate amendments to the Planning and Design Code to facilitate worker's accommodation in regional areas that meet the housing needs of short term and permanent long distance commuter workers associated with key local industries.	0-5 years	PLUS	Region-wide	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
13	An integrated and connected region	Transport and Infrastructure	Social Infrastructure	Social Infrastructure Benchmarks	Establish and maintain social infrastructure benchmarks for new growth areas and regions.	1 Year	DHUD-GICU	Region-wide	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
14	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Implementation and Delivery	Coordination and Delivery		Partner with ISA and to develop regional infrastructure plans and regional scale Infrastructure Schemes to ensure catalytic infrastructure has an agreed delivery timeframe and funding arrangements from all relevant infrastructure providers.	1-4 years	DHUD-GICU	Region-wide	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity SPP 9: Employment Lands
15	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Implementation and Delivery	Coordination and Delivery	Integrated Structure Plans and Infrastructure Schemes	Partner with local governments, utility providers and private sector to develop Infrastructure Schemes and associated Integrated Structure Plans to deliver new growth areas and facilitate regional and local scale infrastructure planning.	1-4 years	DHUD-GICU	Region-wide	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
16	A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future	Productive Economy	Primary Industry	Investigate policy options for greater protection of environment and food production areas	Identify areas throughout the Murray Mallee that are high value food producing agricultural areas, including key natural landscapes, and tourism and environmental resources. Explore policy options to provide greater protection to these areas through the planning system.	3-4 years	DHUD-PLUS, PIRSA	Limestone Coast	SPP 8: Primary Industry

Local Actions Murray Mallee

No.	Outcome	Theme	Sub-theme	Title	Action Description	Timing	Responsibility	Region	SPP
1	A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future.	Productive Economy	Tourism and events	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.	0-2 years	Mid-Murray Council	Murray Mallee	SPP2: Design Quality
2	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	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 Murray Bridge Council area.	0-5 years	Coorong District Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
3	More housing in the right places	People, Housing and Liveability	Landscape and Township Character	Reinforce character values	Areas of high landscape value to be identified and incorporated into the Murray Mallee Regional Plan. To inform future Code Amendments, seeking to strengthen policy addressing scenic quality.	0-5 years	All Councils	Murray Mallee	SPP2: Design Quality
4	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	Infrastructure investigations and Code Amendment - Tintinara - Residential	Investigate Council infrastructure provision to support growth area development (subject to owner/developer support). Undertake Code Amendment of Growth Areas in line with the Coorong Growth Strategy.	0-5 years	Coorong District Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity SPP 9: Employment Lands
5	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	Infrastructure planning	Prepare an infrastructure strategy to underpin growth areas identified in the Berri Barmera Growth Strategy.	0-2 years	The Berri Barmera Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity SPP 9: Employment Lands
6	A strong economy built on a smarter, cleaner future.	Productive economy	Employment land	Feasibility study	Investigate the opportunity for a transport/logistics hub as identified in the Berri Barmera Growth Strategy	0-5 years	The Berri Barmera Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 9: Employment Lands SPP 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure
7	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	Infrastructure investigations	Investigate delivery of residential allotments on land along Monash Road, with focus on infrastructure capacity and delivery.	0-2 years	The Berri Barmera Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
8	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	Initial site investigation for future development opportunity.	Undertake feasibility into the Riverview Drive Waterway Residential Project in Berri - including detailed infrastructure investigations.	0-5 years	The Berri Barmera Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
9	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	Code Amendment - Loxton - Residential	Undertake a Code Amendment to rezone Rural Living land adjacent to the High School to enable more residential development.	0-5 years	The District Council of Loxton Waikerie	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity
10	More housing in the right places	People, Housing and Liveability	Landscape and Township Character	Strategic Plan - Pangarinda Reserve - Open Space	Develop vision and strategic plan for Pangarinda Botanic Garden in consultation with Crown.	0-5 years	Coorong District Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 2: Biodiversity
11	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	Code Amendment - Renmark - Residential (Deferred Urban)	Undertake Code Amendment to rezone Deferred Urban Land in the township of Renmark in accordance with endorsed Structure Plan.	0-5 years	Renmark Paringa Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity

12	Coordinated delivery of land use and infrastructure planning	Delivery and implementation	Coordination and Delivery	Mid-Murray Growth Management and Housing Strategy	Develop of a growth strategy to guide growth in Mid-Murray Council into the future. This strategy will identify growth areas, investigate employment and residential land supply and demand, analyse infrastructure needs to inform updates to the Regional Plan.	0-2 years	Mid-Murray Council	Murray Mallee	SPP 6: Housing Supply and Diversity SPP 9: Employment Lands