

RALLY FOR RIVERLAND

ADVOCACY GUIDE
2021–2026

CONTENTS

About Rally for Riverland **03**

Optimising Collaboration **04**

Water and the River **06**

Accessibility of the Region **09**

Regional Infrastructure **12**

Working Age Population **16**

Equitable Access to Services & Support **19**

Housing **23**

Further information **27**



ABOUT RALLY FOR RIVERLAND

The vision of the Rally for Riverland project is to build a meaningful data set over time and to use this information to create a better future for the Riverland community.

The data sets that form the basis of the Rally for Riverland project were collected in 2020. As a result, the data was analysed and potential advocacy pathways were considered. This Rally for Riverland Advocacy Guide is designed to consolidate the data, findings and potential advocacy pathways into a simple and high-level snapshot with a clear call to action that all Riverland Councils, regional bodies, industry groups, businesses and individuals can use.

This Rally for Riverland Advocacy Guide is designed to be the blueprint for big picture and lasting change for the benefit of the whole Riverland community for 2021 - 2026.

OPTIMISING COLLABORATION

Desired Outcome for the Riverland

- For the Riverland to collaborate and advocate as a single, united region.

Issue

The Riverland is well loved by its community and has many strengths. There are however a number of challenges and issues that Councils do not have the resources or remit to solve. Many of these challenges and issues rely on State and Federal Governments providing solutions through infrastructure, programs and services.

One of the most important functions we can perform as local Councils is to advocate for the infrastructure, services and changes to regulations required for our communities to thrive.

Council led advocacy is the direct action, relationship building, and collaboration activities undertaken on behalf of the community to access and secure funding and to bring about changes to policy and regulations.

Improving community wellbeing and opportunity is multi-dimensional and multi-jurisdictional. The Riverland's communities are deeply interconnected, with many of the challenges identified spanning multiple local government areas. For the Riverland's regional advocacy efforts to be successful, a collaborative and coordinated approach to addressing major issues will be required; one that leverages an expanded network of stakeholders to effect change. Strategic collaboration enables participating councils to achieve common goals in innovative and cost effective ways. Collaboration can help to reduce duplication, deliver cost savings, access innovation and enhance skills development. It also provides a mechanism for local communities to share ideas and connect with others.



Strategic Alignment:

- **Community-level strategy alignment**
 - **Berri Barmera Council Strategic Community Plan 2020–2025:**
 - L5 – Provide opportunities for the community to participate in local civic issues and decision-making.
 - L13 – Work with the Federal and State Government to create a sense of welcome and provision of essential services across our community.
 - B4 – Enhance resource sharing and regional opportunities with other councils
 - **LW Future 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan:**
 - 4.4.3 – Continue working alongside and supporting Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland (RDA), Local Government Association (LGA), Murray Mallee LGA (MMLGA), Destination Riverland (DR), the Primary Producers Business Centre and other relevant peak organisations.
 - **Renmark Paringa Council Corporate Plan 2021–2024:**
 - 4.1.1 – To have public and private sector opportunities regularly presented, based on our reputation for delivering quality outcomes
 - Work continuously and proactively with external funding bodies in relation to potential opportunities that fit with our Outcomes and Goals.
 - 4.3.2 – To have an approach that prioritises financial sustainability and efficiency
 - Continue to strengthen bonds with the G3 Councils in order to drive efficiencies for the benefit of the broader regional community.

Relevant Decision Makers and influences:

- Renmark Paringa Council
- District Council of Loxton Waikerie
- Berri Barmera Council

How should advocacy occur?:

- Councils to continue working together to strive for results in the remaining six pillars as listed in this document.
- Meet with relevant decision makers and influencers in order to present the agreed positions.
- Develop a media campaign to disseminate the benefits of the agreed positions to a broader audience.

Key Messages:

- The Riverland is stronger when it is united.

Progress to Date:

- Delivery of the Rally for Riverland Advocacy Guide.

WATER AND THE RIVER

Desired Outcome for the Riverland

- That the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is delivered in full and on time.

Issue

The economy, culture and environment of the Riverland is highly reliant on the quality and quantity of water available in the River Murray.

The Riverland's main industry, Agriculture, Fishing & Forestry – which represents 42% of businesses in the region, contributes \$829.6 million to Gross Regional Product (20.9%) and employs 20.9% of the workforce – is heavily reliant on water (a key cost of production); as are other key sectors such as tourism and recreation. As a result, the Riverland is very vulnerable to changes in the availability, quality and affordability of water.

The Murray-Darling Basin Agreement (part of the Water Act 2007) sets out how water is to be shared between New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Before any water is allocated, the South Australian Government keeps water in reserve for critical human needs such as drinking, food preparation and hygiene – this is known as Critical Human Water Needs Water (CHWN). Consideration is also made to ensure there is enough water available to improve or maintain river health (environmental watering).

Thereafter, water is allocated to entitlement holders (in response to factors such as rainfall and storage levels); who can then use the water as needed or trade it on 'water markets'. Under the Agreement, South Australia has an annual total entitlement of 1,850 GL; and while in most years the full entitlement is made available, in dry years South Australia's entitlement may be reduced to a 'share' of available water resources.

This, combined with low rainfall in the catchment area, and an increase in the amount of water reserved for the environmental recovery of the river, had the effect of increasing uncertainty around water allocation (particularly for permanent plantings).

Exacerbating the situation is the way that water markets operate – which allows water to be traded out of region or across State lines to the highest bidder. This has resulted in 'churn' style purchases (i.e. to hold water and then re-sell for profit), off market deals and other speculative trading; which in turn has pushed water prices up.



Strategic Alignment:

- **Community-level strategy alignment**

- **Berri Barmera Council Strategic Community Plan 2020–2025:**

- NE6 – Expand / secure local water supply capacity to support economic development across the region.
- NE7 – Employ education and policy development to support water savings throughout the community.

- **LW Future 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan:**

- 3.4.1 – Advocate for adequate water flows in the River Murray for our irrigators as well as the environment.
- 3.4.2 – Implement initiatives to reduce energy use and improve water conservation.

- **Renmark Paringa Council Corporate Plan 2021–2024:**

- 3.2.2 – To advocate for better water quality and security.
- Work proactively with the State Government, Federal Government and industry groups to advocate for improved water security, literacy and quality for the benefit of industry, the natural environment and the community.

- **Regional-level strategy alignment:**

- **Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association 2020–25 Strategic Plan:**

- 3.1 – Plan for changing water security and stewardship.

- **Riverland Tourism Plan 2030:**

- 1.1 – Develop a destination brand strategy that shares the uniqueness of the Riverland Region as a year-round holiday destination and reflects the sentiment from visitors and the Riverland communities.
- Develop accurate, consistent and compelling key messaging around the Riverland's unique Murray River Story, the Health of the Murray River and First nations Stories in conjunction with key stakeholders.

- **State-level strategy alignment:**

- **Murray-Darling Basin Plan: South Australian Implementation Strategy 2013–2019:**

- Outcome 1: Return of a volume of water that is sufficient, based on best available science, to meet key environmental outcomes in South Australia.
- Outcome 2: Environmental flows delivered to help protect and restore River Murray wetlands and floodplains, including the Chowilla Floodplain and the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth.
- Outcome 3: Secure, reliable and good quality water supplies that support healthy and productive industries, communities and ecosystems.
- Outcome 4: Regional communities strengthened through investment that helps drive value-adding and diversification opportunities.
- Outcome 5: Effective implementation of the Basin Plan and associated reforms to achieve beneficial outcomes for the River and its communities.

- **Federal-level strategy alignment:**

- **Murray-Darling Basin Plan:**

- The aim of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is “to bring the Basin back to a healthier and sustainable level, while continuing to support farming and other industries for the benefit of the Australian community”.
- The Plan has a range of objectives in relation to: Water limits for consumption, Water for the environment, Infrastructure development, operation and maintenance, Managing groundwater, Maintaining water quality, Water markets and trade, Monitoring and enforcing compliance.

- **International-level strategy alignment:**

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Target 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.
 - Target 6.5: By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

Relevant Decision Makers and influences:

- Member for Chaffey
- Member for Barker
- Chief Executive, Murray Darling Basin Authority
- South Australian Minister for Environment and Water
- Federal Minister for Resources and Water
- Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder

How should advocacy occur?:

- Councils collaborate with industry groups (including Murraylands Riverland Local Government Association, irrigation trusts and horticultural peak bodies) and form agreed positions in regard to the implementation of the Basin Plan and water trading within the scope of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.
- Meet with relevant decision makers and influencers in order to present the agreed positions.
- Develop a media campaign to disseminate the benefits of the agreed positions to a broader audience.

Key Messages:

- Lasting legal and regulatory change that priorities the value of the Riverland’s regional economy, environment and cultural fabric.
- A desire to reduce the damaging influence of water market speculation and manipulation.
- A desire for a reduction in the complexity and red tape associated with the laws, processes and systems of the Murray Darling Basin water allocation.

Progress to Date:

- The Murray–Darling Basin Agreement continues to be implemented, with varying levels of commitment from the partner jurisdictions.

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE REGION

Desired Outcome for the Riverland

- Full duplication of the Sturt Highway, allowing for dual lane access from Gawler, to the Riverland and on to Mildura.

Issue

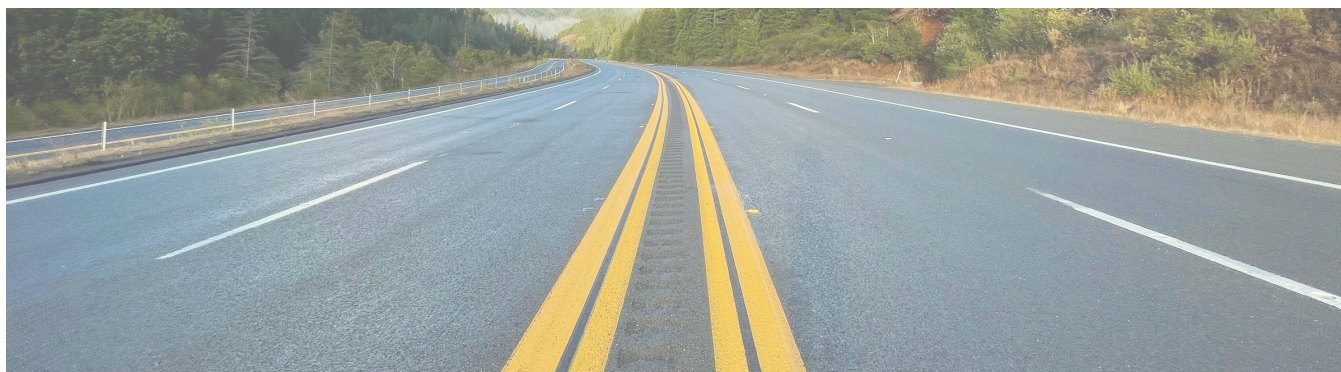
A safe and efficient transport network to the East (Riverland – Mildura) and West (Riverland – Adelaide) has been identified as a significant issue regarding the accessibility of the region, with the following issues/opportunities identified:

- The need for wider, higher quality roads suitable for heavy transport
- Conflict points between arterial roads and local roads
- Quality of the carriageway and no overtaking lanes between the Riverland and Mildura
- The need for a bypass at Truro
- A regional airport providing air transport to major centres
- Ongoing federal/state funding certainty
- Accessibility of the region is an issue that impacts the Riverland in the following ways:
 - Safety (real and perceived)
 - Access to health services
 - Access to economic markets and trade
 - Tourism
 - Freight
 - Social connectivity
 - The ability to connect to air travel via Mildura or Adelaide

The importance of safe and efficient transport infrastructure in the region and the burden of road development and maintenance for local governments is well documented.

In the 2019/20 Federal Budget the Government committed \$4.5 billion for the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative, including an additional \$1.0 billion in the 2019–20 Budget. The Renmark to Gawler corridor was identified as a key corridor and allocated \$70.0 million. With additional funding from the State government, a total of \$87.5 million is budgeted to upgrade the road from Renmark to Gawler with construction expected to commence in late 2020 and completed by early 2023.

The recent State and Federal funding of upgrades to elements of the Gawler to Renmark sections of the Sturt Highway is promising, but more investment is needed to allow the full economic and social unlocking of the main transport route between central and eastern Australia.



Strategic Alignment:

- **Community-level strategy alignment**

- **Berri Barmera Council Strategic Community Plan 2020–2025:**

- L12 – Advocate for increase to community transport and access to services and facilities both within and across townships.

- **LW Future 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan:**

- 1.2.6 – Advocate for improved access to community transport services across the district.
- 2.1.3 – Assist our local industries and businesses to take advantage of domestic and international markets.

- **Renmark Paringa Council Corporate Plan 2021–2024:**

- 2.1.1 – To have agility and resilience in our traditional industries.
- Advocate for improved and safer transport routes to Adelaide and eastern state markets.
- 2.1.2 – To have growth and diversification in industries that are future-focused and attract skilled people.
- Proactively promote the region to industries that require centralised access to southern and eastern markets.

- **Regional-level strategy alignment:**

- **Regional Development Australia Murraylands & Riverland 2020–2023 Strategic Plan:**

- Identify and develop proposals with partners for priority regional infrastructure (built, natural and knowledge).

- **Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association 2020–25 Strategic Plan:**

- 1.1 – Improve transport movement, efficiency and safety.
- 1.2 – Attract funding for ‘fit for purpose’ transport infrastructure.

- **Riverland Tourism Plan 2030:**

- 2.7 – Advocate for the investment in the region’s road network to support the touring market and visitation to and around the Region.
- 2.9 – Advocate for enhanced public transport links that support the visitor to get to, and move around the Region.

- **State-level strategy alignment:**

- **Infrastructure SA – 20– Year State Infrastructure Strategy:**

- Priority 26: Identify key economic corridors through Adelaide and the regions and plan interventions to create more efficient supply chains.

- **Roads of Strategic Importance – Sturt Highway (Renmark to Gawler):**

- The Australian and South Australian Government’s have committed \$87.5 million to upgrade the Sturt Highway between Renmark and Gawler.
- Extending approximately 210km, this section of Sturt Highway passes through the townships of Nuriootpa, Truro, Blanchetown, Waikerie, Loxton, Barmera, Berri and Renmark.
- Upgrades along this section of Sturt Highway will include:
 - junction improvements
 - new overtaking lanes and overtaking lane extensions
 - pavement resealing and rehabilitation
 - safety barrier upgrades
 - new and upgraded rest areas for improved fatigue management.

- **Federal-level strategy alignment:**

- **Roads of Strategic Importance**

- The Australian Government is investing \$4.9 billion in the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative to help connect regional businesses to local and international markets, and better connect regional communities.

- **International-level strategy alignment:**

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
 - Target 9.1: Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

Relevant Decision Makers and influences:

- Member for Chaffey
- Member for Barker
- South Australian Minister for Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
- Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development

How should advocacy occur?:

- Councils collaborate with industry groups (including the RDA, MRLGA, DR and transport / horticultural peak bodies) to develop an agreed approach for liaising with relevant decision makers and influencers.
- Meet with relevant decision makes and influencers in order to present the desired outcome.
- Develop a media campaign to disseminate the benefits of the desired outcome to a broader audience.

Key Messages:

- Full duplication of the Sturt Highway is required, allowing for dual lane access from Gawler, to the Riverland and on to Mildura.
- Duplication is needed to allow the full economic and social unlocking of the main transport route between central and eastern Australia.

Progress to Date:

- The Australian and South Australian Government's have committed \$87.5 million to upgrade the Sturt Highway between Renmark and Gawler. These upgrades will include: junction improvements, new overtaking lanes, pavement resealing, safety barrier upgrades and new/upgraded rest areas.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Desired Outcomes for the Riverland

- State, Federal and private investment into the development and improvement of tourism product and accommodation.
- The Federal Mobile Black Spot Program is continued and that all Mobile Black Spots in the Riverland are eliminated.

Issue

There are certain categories of regional infrastructure that while present in the Riverland, are under-represented in terms of quality and/or quantity. These categories include: tourism infrastructure and telecommunications technology.

Tourism Infrastructure:

Tourism is a growth industry for the Riverland. Since 2013, the annual value of tourism (measured in visitor expenditure) has grown by 29%, from \$140 million to \$181 million (as of June 2019). In order to support the growth of the sector, there is an identified need to increase the availability of higher quality accommodation and the availability of tourism experiences/product.

Digital Inclusion:

Access to telecommunicationstechnology has become a modern necessity for people to connect, work, access education and participate in the Australian economy. While the Riverland has made progress in terms of its telecommunications network, issues exist in relation to the capability to access/use technology and network coverage/reliability.

In relation to the capability to access/use technology, 23.4 percent of Riverland households do not have access to the internet (compared to 14.1 percent Australia-wide). The effect of this is digital exclusion is compounded by the Riverland's ageing population and comparatively high levels of disability.

While network coverage/reliability has improved in recent years (particularly due to the Mobile Black Spot Program), it is still unreliable and patchy in some parts of the Riverland, particularly when accessing data (using 4G or 5G).



Strategic Alignment:

- **Community-level strategy alignment**

- **Berri Barmera Council Strategic Community Plan 2020–2025:**

- B9 – Initiate improvements to infrastructure within townships to enhance amenity for residents and visitors education and training programs that respond to workforce gaps and innovation.

- **LW Future 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan:**

- 2.3.4 – Advocate for, and provide, high quality infrastructure to support our local tourism industry.

- **Renmark Paringa Council Corporate Plan 2021–2024:**

- 2.3.1 – To have development and greater economic value generated from tourism
 - Collaborate with State agencies, other local governments and Crown Land licensees in relation to potential tourism opportunities.
- 2.4.1 – To have regional access to technology that assists in improving industry competitiveness
 - Promote the fibre to the premises roll out of the NBN through Renmark and advocate for other digital economy opportunities.
 - Provide programs that assist in upskilling in regard to digital literacy, in partnership with external funding partners.
- 3.3.1 – To have community infrastructure and assets that are well maintained, actively utilised and fit-for-purpose
 - Consider and plan for the development of new infrastructure and assets where required to meet a community need that existing infrastructure and assets do not meet.

- **Regional-level strategy alignment:**

- **Regional Development Australia Murraylands & Riverland 2020–2023 Strategic Plan:**

- Identify and develop proposals with partners for priority regional infrastructure (built, natural and knowledge).

- **Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association 2020–25 Strategic Plan:**

- 1.4 – Improve internet, mobile coverage
- 4.2 – Attract investment for enabling infrastructure

- **Riverland Tourism Plan 2030:**

- 2.1 – Progress key visitor experience projects for the Region already under way (funding/grant applications)
- 2.2 – Advocate and support the development of existing/new Nature Based and Outdoor Adventure experiences
- 2.3 – Advocate and support the expansion of existing/development of new Food, Beverage and Produce experiences
- 2.4 – Advocate and support the investment of existing/development of accommodation that delivers on the Region's strengths and attraction of high yield visitor personas and niche markets
- 2.5 – Advocate and support the development existing/development of new History, Heritage, Arts and Cultural experiences
- 2.10 – Advocate for improved digital connectivity

Strategic Alignment:

- **State-level strategy alignment:**
 - **South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030**
 - Support the development of unique and appealing experiences that are focused on South Australia's strengths.
 - Upgrade and refresh quality of accommodation across South Australia to match consumer expectations and create immersive experiential accommodation options.
 - **South Australian Digital Inclusion Strategy**
 - Under development
- **Federal-level strategy alignment:**
 - **Tourism Australia Corporate Plan 2021/22 – 2024/25**
 - Use market and consumer insights to identify special interest experiences that have high potential to drive travel to Australia. Work with these sectors through the Signature Experiences of Australia program to bundle and promote these experiences.
 - **Reimagining the Visitor Economy Strategy**
 - Under development.
 - **Mobile Black Spot Program**
- **International-level strategy alignment**
 - **United National Sustainable Development Goals**
 - Target 9.1: Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

Relevant Decision Makers and influences:

- South Australian Member for Chaffey
- Federal member for Barker
- South Australian Minister for Tourism
- South Australian Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
- South Australian Minister for Regional Development
- Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment
- Federal Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

How should advocacy occur?:

- Councils collaborate with industry groups (including Destination Riverland) and form agreed positions regarding tourism infrastructure in the region to South Australian Tourism Commission.
- Councils to continue to advocate to the Federal Government to increase nbn roll out and to resolve black spot coverage issues in the region.
- Meet with relevant decision makes and influencers in order to present the agreed positions.
- Develop a media campaign to disseminate the benefits of the agreed positions to a broader audience.

Key Messages:

- That the Riverland is supported to grow and diversify in its offerings
- That the Riverland is seen as a desirable region for interstate and intrastate tourism
- To attract and retain professionals to the region who are seeking to work remotely
- To grow the tourism sector in the Riverland by creating new and exciting infrastructure which mirror consumer desires and wants

Progress to Date:

- State Government feasibility study on Riverland Wine Centre
- Funding provided to the Berri, Loxton and Renmark Community Hotels for renovations

WORKING POPULATION

Desired Outcomes for the Riverland

- Access to a greater range of in-region tertiary and vocational study options that are linked to industry needs and regional career pathways.

Issue

Over the past few Census periods, there has been a clear decline in the relative size of the Riverland's working age population and an increase in the median age.

The issue has been in part driven by the loss of Riverland's young people to metropolitan centres in search of education, employment or lifestyle opportunities. Research indicates that, on average, more young people have moved out of the Riverland than have migrated in over the past 15 years.

A range of social and economic indicators provide some insight around the potential impact of limited opportunities available to youth and young adults. For example, youths aged 15 to 24 represent the cohort with the highest level of unemployment (7.1%) in the region. They are unlikely to be enrolled in University (3.6%) or TAFE (5.6%), and – with only 82.1% involved in school, work or further education or training – are considered relatively disengaged overall.

A declining working population can hinder economic growth through labour shortages and reduced productivity; with potentially detrimental consequences for housing markets, local government finances and consumer spending. It can also put pressure on the healthcare system due to changing health profiles, increased demand for health services and rising health costs.

This is not a new or unique issue for regional areas. Research on rural youth frequently cites outmigration – sometimes referred to as 'brain drain' – as a significant issue facing rural communities. A key factor contributing to the region's declining working age population is a lack of opportunity for youth, young adults and families, leading to an outward migration of these groups.

While the quality and affordability of education within the region is generally considered to be good, there is limited 'in region' access to university education; coupled with limited curriculum choice (health is the only university pathway offered in region). Related to this is the recent downsizing of the TAFE at Berri, which has found it difficult to attract and sustain the minimum number of enrolments required to run certain subjects. This has resulted in the tendency for young people to move out of region, to complete their tertiary and vocational study. Industries in the Riverland require a working age population with relevant skills, however there is an ongoing need to attempt to import these skills in due to the inability to develop and retain these skills in region.



Strategic Alignment:

- **Community-level strategy alignment**

- **Berri Barmera Council Strategic Community Plan 2020–2025:**

- L3 – Engage with, and support, young people to actively participate in the community and contribute actively to their futures.
- B3 – Support education and training programs that respond to workforce gaps and innovation.

- **LW Future 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan:**

- 2.2.1 – Raise the profile of our district and promote it as a great place to live and work.
- 2.2.2 – Advocate on behalf of the community to seek new employment opportunities and jobs growth across the district.

- **Renmark Paringa Council Corporate Plan 2021–2024:**

- 2.1.2 – To have growth and diversification in industries that are future-focused and attract skilled people.
- To have growth and diversification in industries that are future-focused and attract skilled people.
- 2.2.1 – To have education opportunities which attract and retain people within our region
- Collaborate with education providers and industry (including agriculture) to seek to attract and develop higher education opportunities associated with required skills across the region.

- **Regional-level strategy alignment:**

- **Regional Development Australia Murraylands & Riverland 2020–2023 Strategic Plan:**

- Develop or procure a platform that matches priority regional skills demand with supply.
- Provide pathways for the development of high-priority regional skills.

- **Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association 2020–25 Strategic Plan:**

- 2.5 – Improve access to skills development programs.
- 4.4 – Attract and develop skills to grow the region.

- **Riverland Tourism Plan 2030:**

- 4.2 – Develop and/or identify systems to connect businesses to potential employees
- 4.3 – Advocate for the growth of the tourism industry workforce

- **State-level strategy alignment:**

- **SA Regional Development Strategy**

- Regional Leadership and Skills – Engage and give regional leaders access to development opportunities, and have strategies in place to support worker shortages.
- Regional Services – Identify regional service gaps and put in place services for community safety, well being and liveability.

- **Food, Wine and Agribusiness Plan for Growth**

- Growing business capacity and expanding the skilled workforce.

- **Skilling South Australia Initiative:**

- Unlocking more opportunities for students and career seekers to access training and build skilled careers.

- **SA Youth Action Plan**

- Young South Australians have the necessary life skills and supports to complete school and transition confidently to further education and training or to meaningful employment. They can successfully build vocational pathways that reflect the changing world of work. They are financially resilient and confident in their future.

- **Federal-level strategy alignment**

- **Planning for Australia's Future Population**

- Delivering the skills needed in regions: We need migration that contributes to regional communities, meets local skill shortages and invests in local economies and communities.
- Investing in regional Australia: Government support to regional Australia focuses on supporting regional communities to realise their potential.

- **International-level strategy alignment:**

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
- Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Target 8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

Relevant Decision Makers and influences:

- South Australian Member for Chaffey
- Federal member for Barker
- South Australian Minister for Human Services
- South Australian Minister for Education
- South Australian Minister for Innovation and skills
- Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
- Federal Minister for Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education
- Federal Minister for Minister for Education and Youth
- Federal Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs

How should advocacy occur?:

- Councils collaborate with industry groups (including the RDA and MRLGA) to develop agreed specific priorities for education and vocational training required within region.
- Meet with relevant decision makes and influencers in order to present the desired outcome.
- Develop a media campaign to disseminate the benefits of the agreed positions to a broader audience.

Key Messages:

- To prevent brain drain and to enable industry access to required skills, a greater range of in-region tertiary and vocational study options.

Progress to Date:

- Renmark Paringa Council has established a memorandum of understanding with Flinders University to support their efforts to establish allied health courses in-region (commencing 2023) for the benefit of tertiary students, allied health employers and the broader Riverland community.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICES & SUPPORT

Desired Outcomes for the Riverland

- An expansion of the mental health, allied health, aged and disability services provided at the Riverland General Hospital (Berri).
- State government support on an expansion of the bus network and frequency, with a hub and spoke focus on the Riverland General Hospital (Berri).

Issue

Transport disadvantage can be defined as the difficulty accessing transport (public and private) and/or difficulties associated with maintaining private transport as a result of cost, availability of services or poor physical accessibility. Overall, the age-standardised rate (per 100) of individuals that have difficulty accessing transport in each of the three local government areas varies from 2.8 to 3.5. The impact of transport disadvantage is further complicated by factors such as households not having access to a motor vehicle (5.3%) and the large distances residents are required to travel to places of work (ranging from a median of 5.1 to 8.8 km across each of the three local government areas).

A recent report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare stated that “On average, Australians living in rural and remote areas have shorter lives, higher levels of disease and injury and poorer access to and use of health services, compared with people living in metropolitan areas. Poorer health outcomes in rural and remote areas may be due to multiple factors including lifestyle differences and a level of disadvantage related to education and employment opportunities, as well as access to health services”.



Issue

Key issues related to health services include:

- Limited range of specialists in region and a long wait-time for visiting specialists
- The need to travel to Adelaide for specialist consultations and treatment
- Challenges in attracting and retaining health professionals
- Limited access to allied health and hospital 'add-ons'
- Large distances between services
- Long GP wait times/limited access to GPs/lack of service continuity
- Only basic mental services
- Insufficient drug and alcohol support services (no in-region detox facility)
- Limitations to the quality, variety, volume of aged care and NDIS services
- Communication between health service providers.

A snapshot of the health challenges faced by people in the Riverland includes:

- The age-standardized rate (per 100) of residents that consume alcohol at levels considered to be a high risk to their health over their lifetime (i.e. more than 2 standard drinks per day, on average) ranges from 14.3 to 16.7 across the three local government areas.
- An estimated 21.6% of the population in the South East, South Australia region (the closest Statistical Area Level 4 to the Riverland) have used an illicit drug in the past year.
- The age-standardised rate (per 100) of residents that are obese ranges from 35.0 to 39.1 across the three local government areas.
- The age-standardised rate (per 100) of residents that have mental health or behavioural problems ranges from 16.9 to 18.4 across the three local government areas. The number of residents that receive treatment for their mental health conditions in local Emergency Departments has increased by 28.5% from 2014 to 2018.
- The average annual age-standardised rate (per 100,000) of deaths by suicide and self-inflicted injuries ranges from 11.7 to 12.9 across the three local government areas.
- The proportion of children in their first year of full-time school whose physical health and wellbeing is considered developmentally at risk or vulnerable is 26.8%.
- The proportion of residents that identify as needing assistance with core activities (including selfcare, mobility and communication) because of a health condition, disability, or old age is 7.1%.



Strategic Alignment:

- **Community-level strategy alignment**

- **Berri Barmera Council Strategic Community Plan 2020–2025:**

- L10 – Partner with others to foster continuous local improvement in health service provision, facilities and infrastructure.
- L12 – Advocate for increase to community transport and access to services and facilities both within and across townships.

- **LW Future 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan:**

- 1.2.2 – Advocate for the continuation and improvement of health services delivered throughout our district.
- 1.2.4 – Respond to the challenges of an ageing population.
- 1.2.6 – Advocate for improved access to community transport services across the district.

- **Renmark Paringa Council Corporate Plan 2021–2024:**

- 1.2.1 – To have health and social services that are delivered through programs and advocacy and matched to the emerging demographics.
 - Advocate for improved regional health services with State and Federal agencies.
 - Promote services for older community members, people with disabilities and carers.

- **Regional-level strategy alignment:**

- **Regional Development Australia Murraylands & Riverland 2020–2023 Strategic Plan:**

- Provide Identify and map connections between regional community groups and organisations that support ongoing improvements in community resilience.

- **Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association 2020–25 Strategic Plan:**

- 1.1 – Improve transport movement, efficiency and safety
- 2.2 – Further improve service delivery
- 2.3 – Support ‘Ageing well’ practices/planning

- **State-level strategy alignment:**

- **South Australian Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2025**

- We will develop services to meet the diverse needs of expanding populations in both metropolitan and country areas.
- We will complete the realignment of services between regions to achieve agreed self-sufficiency levels.
- We will develop strategies to improve access to country hospitals and services including improving capability through innovative use of workforce and technology, improving patient-flow between metropolitan and country facilities, and expanding cancer services.

- **Federal-level strategy alignment:**

- **Australia’s Long Term National Health Plan**

- Pillar One: Guaranteeing Medicare, stronger primary care, and improving access to medicines through the PBS.
 - Deliver 3,000 new doctors and 3,000 new nurses to rural and regional areas.

- **International-level strategy alignment**

- **United National Sustainable Development Goals**

- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Target 3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.
- Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

Relevant Decision Makers and influences:

- South Australian Member for Chaffey
- Federal member for Barker
- South Australian Minister for Human Services
- South Australian Minister for Health
- South Australian Minister for Innovation and skills
- Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care
- Federal Minister for Families and Social Services
- Federal Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme

How should advocacy occur?:

- Councils collaborate with the Riverland, Mallee, Coorong Local Network and positions in regard to specific local health priorities.
- Meet with relevant decision makes and influencers in order to present the agreed positions.
- Develop a media campaign to disseminate the benefits of the agreed positions to a broader audience.

Key Messages:

- Local health services for local communities.
- Health services that are accessible and tailored to our demographic needs.

Progress to Date:

- Renmark Paringa Council has established a memorandum of understanding with Flinders University to support their efforts to establish allied health courses in-region (commencing 2023) for the benefit of tertiary students, allied health employers and the broader Riverland community.

HOUSING

Desired Outcome for the Riverland

- That a Riverland Regional Plan is developed, which considers a broad range of development opportunities, including the full breadth of housing supply requirements.

Issue

There are two issues that have been identified in regard to housing in the region, which are intrinsically linked to each other. The first is the affordability of housing and the second is the lack of available housing. Data indicates that while the overall rate of home ownership in the Riverland is similar to other regions, outright ownership is actually more common (37.3%, compared to 32.7% in South Australia) and ownership via a mortgage less so (30.8%, compared to 35.4% in South Australia). This may be explained, in part, by the large proportion of residents in the region that have reached retirement age or older, who are more likely to have completed the process of repaying their homes. The issue is therefore not in relation to financial or mortgage stress for those that are already purchasing a home, however it is more in relation to the affordability and availability of housing for those that are wishing to purchase or rent.

In relation to the affordability of housing, the following points are relevant:

- Undersupply of quality affordable housing;
- Lack of options for older people downsizing;
- Emergency and transitional accommodation often at capacity;
- Lack of transport hampering access to services; and
- Long wait times for public housing

Pressure areas in the Riverland include public housing, privately owned rentals, 'fit for purpose' housing for those with disabilities, family homes to purchase in the \$250,000 to \$600,000 range, single dwelling homes and homes within reasonable transport distances to services. The most affected demographics are those receiving welfare/pensions, single adults and young people.

It is essential for a region to have an adequate supply of housing to suit all market and demographic requirements, as this ensures that there are sufficient individuals to fulfill all required employment roles within the community.



Strategic Alignment:

- **Community-level strategy alignment**

- **Berri Barmera Council Strategic Community Plan 2020–2025:**

- L6 – Ensure Council infrastructure supports accessibility for families, the ageing population and people with disabilities through Council's planning and design principles.
- L11 – We will support and encourage diverse housing and land to meet demand, support the community and encourage development, recognising the need for affordability.
- B7 – Facilitate development through appropriate zoning and amend where required.

- **LW Future 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan:**

- 3.2.1 – Continually review and update the Development Plan.

- **Renmark Paringa Council Corporate Plan 2021–2024:**

- 2.1.3 – To have valuable development opportunities that are guided by proactive land use planning.-
 - Finalise the Jane Eliza Development Strategy.
 - Pursue the establishment of a Joint Planning Board and development of a Regional Plan.
 - Work with the State Government to undertake Code Amendments from the Regional Plan.
 - Advocate for the protection of critical mass of irrigated horticultural land.

- **Regional-level strategy alignment:**

- **Regional Development Australia Murraylands & Riverland 2020–2023 Strategic Plan:**

- Identify and develop proposals with partners for priority regional infrastructure (built, natural and knowledge).

- **Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association 2020–25 Strategic Plan:**

- 2.4 – Apply evidence-based research to improve housing option.

- **State-level strategy alignment:**

- **Our Housing Future 2020–2030**

- Strategy 1: Create conditions for a well-functioning housing market that meets the housing needs of all South Australians
 - 1.2 – Creating an appropriate land supply pipeline and diversity of housing supply through a responsive planning and zoning system commencing with the introduction of the Planning and Design Code
 - 1.4 – Developing local/regional housing plans to respond to specific conditions and local demand.
- Strategy 2: Reduce housing stress through 20,000 affordable housing solutions
 - 2.1 – Delivering 1000 new affordable houses by 2025 for low and moderate-income households through a \$398.7 million Affordable Housing Initiative.
 - 2.5 – Delivering 5000 Affordable Housing outcomes through inclusionary, design and incentive provisions in the planning system, including the 15% Affordable Housing Policy.

- **Federal level strategy alignment**

- N/A

- **International-level strategy alignment:**

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing

Relevant Decision Makers and influences:

- South Australian Member for Chaffey
- Federal member for Barker
- South Australian Minister for Human Services
- Federal Minister for Minister for Housing

How should advocacy occur?:

- Councils collaborate with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and Murraylands Riverland Local Government Association in relation to the development of a Riverland Regional Plan.
- Meet with relevant decision makes and influencers in order to present the agreed positions.
- Develop a media campaign to disseminate the benefits of the agreed positions to a broader audience.

Key Messages:

- The Riverland is livable for everyone, with the right housing mix.

Progress to Date:

- Collaboration between Councils and the Murraylands Riverland Local Government Association has commenced in regard to the development of a Riverland Regional Plan.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Rally for Riverland is an initiative by Renmark Paringa Council, Berri Barmera Council and the District Council of Loxton Waikerie.

Rally for Riverland has enabled the development of a meaningful, evidence-based document which celebrates the Riverland's successes and determines the issues in the region which act as barriers to prosperity and growth. The project creates a shared platform which is to be used to advocate collectively for a better future for the Riverland community.

For further information please contact:

Renmark Paringa Council

Phone: (08) 8580 3000

Email: council@renmarkparinga.sa.gov.au

web: renmarkparinga.sa.gov.au

#RallyForRiverland



**Renmark Paringa
Council**



Building a Better Community



**District Council of
Loxton Waikerie**

**RALLY
FOR
RIVERLAND**