

RALLY **FOR** **RIVERLAND**

ADVOCACY GUIDE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2021–2026



ABOUT RALLY FOR RIVERLAND

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

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.

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 Rally for Riverland Advocacy Guide and Exec Summary are designed to be the blueprint for big picture and lasting change for the benefit of the whole 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

OPTIMISING COLLABORATION



What we are advocating for:

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

Background:

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.

Issue:

Improving community wellbeing and opportunity is multi-dimensional and multi-jurisdictional.

When the Riverland's three Councils advocate separately, we often achieve results that benefit individual sections of the community, but not the broad Riverland community as a whole.

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.

WATER AND THE RIVER



What we are advocating for:

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

Background:

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

The Murray–Darling Basin Agreement sets out how water is to be shared between New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Under the Agreement, South Australia has an annual total entitlement of 1,850 gigalitres 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.

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.

Issue:

The Riverland relies on permanent plantings in terms of the irrigated horticulture sector, which therefore requires a consistent supply of water.

Climatic variability affects the volumes of water available for allocation, which is compounded by the ability for water to be traded out of the region and speculative trading on the water market.

These forces have a negative effect on the competitiveness of the Riverland and the quality of environmental assets.

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE REGION

What we are advocating for:

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

Background:

The Riverland is situated on the Sturt Highway, which is the primary transport route connecting the south/central and western parts of Australia with the East coast. The Sturt highway enables access both to and through the Riverland. It forms a vital economic link for access to markets for agricultural products and tourism, as well as providing an essential health and education connection for the Riverland.

Issue:

Significant improvements are required to enable safer and more efficient travel to the West (Adelaide) and the East (Mildura and beyond).

Specific issues include:

- The width and quality of the carriageway,
- Minimal overtaking lanes (none between the Riverland & Mildura),
- Conflict with local road/intersections,
- The need for a bypass at Truro, and
- Road access to commercial airports.

The \$87.5 million Federal/State Roads of Strategic Importance investment is welcomed, but more is required to enable the upgrades that are needed.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE



What we are advocating for:

- 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.

Background:

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.

Issue:

Tourism Infrastructure: From 2013 to 2019, the value of tourism has grown by 29%. To support the sector, there is an identified need to increase the availability of higher quality accommodation and the availability of tourism product.

Digital Inclusion: While network coverage has improved in recent years, it is still unreliable and patchy in some parts of the Riverland, particularly when accessing data (using 4G or 5G).

WORKING POPULATION



What we are advocating for:

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

Background:

There has been a clear decline in the relative size of the Riverland's working age population. This has been in part driven by the brain drain of the Riverland's young people to metropolitan centres in search of education, employment or lifestyle opportunities.

Issue:

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.

However, industries in the Riverland still require a working age population with relevant skills.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICES & SUPPORT

What we are advocating for:

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

Background:

The Riverland community has challenges in relation to health outcomes being marginally poorer in the region than in the metropolitan area, the provision of health services and accessibility of those 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.



HOUSING

What we are advocating for:

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

Background:

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.

Issue:

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 image features a graphic design with three main color blocks: a large teal block on the left, a dark blue block in the top right, and a yellow block in the bottom right. The text 'RALLY FOR RIVERLAND' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The word 'RALLY' is on the first line, 'FOR' is on the second line, and 'RIVERLAND' is on the third line. A thin white horizontal line is positioned above the 'R' in 'FOR', and a thin white vertical line is positioned to the right of the 'Y' in 'RALLY' and the 'D' in 'RIVERLAND', creating a rectangular frame around the word 'FOR'.

**RALLY
FOR
RIVERLAND**