



BRM
Advisory

Renmark Paringa

Community Plan Review Report

September 2024

Version 1.2



BUSINESS • RESOURCE • MANAGEMENT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
1. BACKGROUND	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Purpose of the Review	3
1.3 Approach to the Review	3
2. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY	4
2.1 Strategic Framework	4
2.2 Achievements	5
2.3 Opportunities to Improve the Framework & Reporting.....	6
3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	7
4. REVIEW OF REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS	9
4.1 Regional Plans	9
4.2 State Plans	10
4.3 National Plans.....	11
5. LONG TERM STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS REPORT (2020)	12
6. SOCIAL TRENDS	13
6.1 Population & Demographic Profile	13
6.2 Health	14
6.3 Community Safety.....	15
6.4 Culture	16
6.5 Community Plan Comparison	17
7. ECONOMIC.....	18
7.1 Economic Growth.....	18
7.2 Employment	19
7.3 Education	21
7.4 Tourism.....	21
7.5 Transport	22
7.6 Technology.....	23
7.7 Community Plan Comparison	24
8. ENVIRONMENTAL	25
8.1 Climate Variability & Water Availability	25
8.2 Waste	25
8.3 Environmental Flows	26
8.4 Pest Plants and Animals	26
8.5 Community Plan Comparison	27
9. GOVERNANCE	27
9.1 River Murray Flood (2022).....	28
9.2 Local Government Reform	28
9.3 Elections	28
9.4 Project Delivery Impacts.....	28
9.5 Long Term Financial Pressures.....	28
9.6 Community Plan Comparison	29
10. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	30
10.1 Communications Plan	30
10.2 First Phase Community Engagement	30
10.3 Second Phase Community Engagement.....	35
11. PRELIMINARY DIRECTIONS.....	35
11.1 Stakeholder Insights	35
11.2 Strategic Framework, Structure Delivery.....	35
11.3 Community Plan Preliminary Directions.....	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Renmark Paringa Council (RPC) is undertaking a review of its Community Plan 2021-2030 (the Community Plan) to fulfil its statutory obligations and to ensure that it continues to reflect the desired future for the coming six years (and beyond).

The existing Community Plan sets a long-term community vision supported by strategic outcomes, which in tandem seek to deliver a **liveable, prosperous** and **sustainable** community, underpinned by **effective governance**.

This Community Plan Review Report (the Report) provides the foundation for the review, ensuring that the Council has considered relevant factors as legislated in Section 122 of the *Local Government Act 1999* ('the Act').

In addition to considering the Council's existing strategic framework, structure and delivery of its current plans and actions, the Report also considers the various roles and responsibilities of the various tiers of government and regional, state and national plans, before turning its attention to the relevant social, economic and environmental trends relevant to RPC.

Trend data is considered against the key findings, challenges and opportunities as identified through the last comprehensive review of the Community Plan and as published in the Council's Long Term Strategic Directions report (2020).

Many of the key challenges identified through the last review remain relevant for RPC today, including:

- an ageing population and loss of working families
- moderate population and economic growth
- high levels of unfavourable health outcomes
- high reliance on climate-dependant industries (like agriculture)
- less higher-skilled jobs in the local economy
- a hotter and drier climate, with impacts to water availability and quality.

However, the opportunities differ, in reflection of Council's significant investments in infrastructure over the past few years, its demonstrated high community satisfaction levels and trust (particularly, in response to the handling of the recent flooding events) and success in attracting improved tertiary education to the region (bolstered by enhanced digital connectivity), among other achievements.

Through its review, Council has engaged with its community to confirm areas for desired focus and to reshape its Community Plan and supporting Strategic Framework to improve clarity and support better monitoring and reporting.

This Report has informed the development of the revised Community Plan. It demonstrates RPC's commitment to a robust review process, legislative compliance and meaningful engagement with its community to shape the future of Renmark Paringa.



1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

As per section 122 of the Act, a Council must develop and adopt plans for the management of its area, to be called collectively the strategic management plans.

A comprehensive review of strategic management plans (SMPs) must be undertaken within two years of the general election of the council (i.e. by November 2024).

RPC is undertaking a review of its Community Plan 2021-2030 (the Community Plan) to fulfil its statutory obligations and to ensure that it continues to effectively set the desired future for the coming six years and beyond.

The Community Plan sets a community vision supported by strategic outcomes, which in tandem seek to deliver a liveable, prosperous and sustainable community, underpinned by effective governance.

Supporting the delivery of the current Community Plan is a Corporate Plan 2021-24, asset management plans, long term financial plan and annual business plan and budget.

Collectively, these strategic management plans guide the activities, focus and allocation of resources for the RPC.

Figure One: RPC Community Plan 2021-30 Strategic Outcomes





1.2 Purpose of the Review

The review will be conducted by Council to both fulfil its statutory obligations but primarily capitalise on the opportunity to ensure the Community Plan continues to effectively reflect the shared vision for the RPC community.

The review also provides an opportunity for the RPC to:

- Reflect on its achievements
- Engage with its community
- Strengthen or alter its directions
- Adjust practices and refine approach.

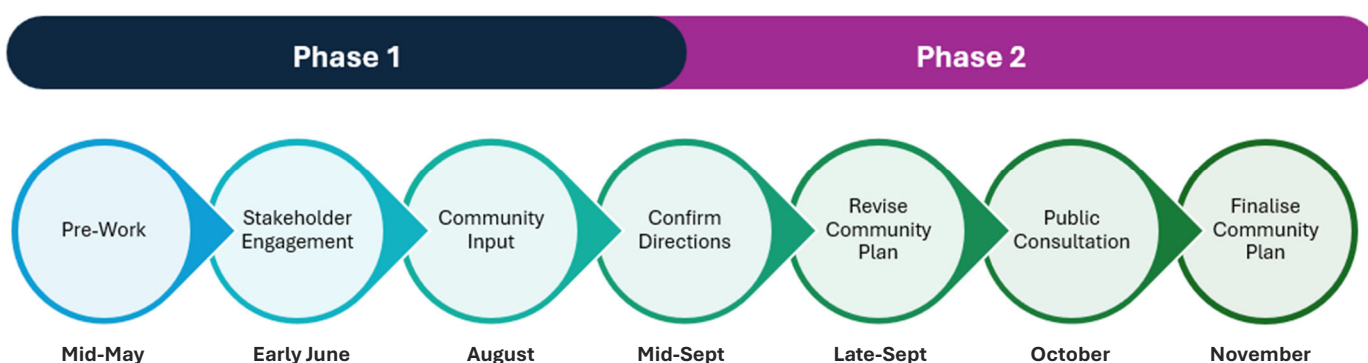
1.3 Approach to the Review

To fulfil its statutory obligations, the review will include the following:

- Clarify how the Council works with other tiers of government and delivers on their directions.
- Address the strategic planning issues within the area of the Council, consistent with any relevant state planning policy or regional plan under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.
- Consider its roles and responsibilities under this or any other Act.
- Adopt a process or processes to ensure that members of the public are given a reasonable opportunity to be involved in the development and review of its strategic management.

The review will be completed in two phases and informed by preliminary community engagement and public consultation.

Figure Two: Approach to the Review (Two Phase Outline)





2. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

2.1 Strategic Framework

As outlined in the existing Community Plan, the RPC took a different approach to its previous review and development of its Community Plan to enable it to set a longer-term vision.

With a ten-year time horizon, the Community Plan was pitched at a high level and established a vision, strategic outcomes and goals.

The Community Plan was supported by the 'Long Term Strategic Directions' document, that provides the evidence-base to inform directions.

The Council's priorities were then established in a three-year Corporate Plan, which informed the Annual Business Plan and Budget cycle, with delivery monitored by an annual Corporate Scorecard, Annual Report, and staff performance plans.

The relationship between these documents is illustrated in the Council's Strategic Framework diagram.

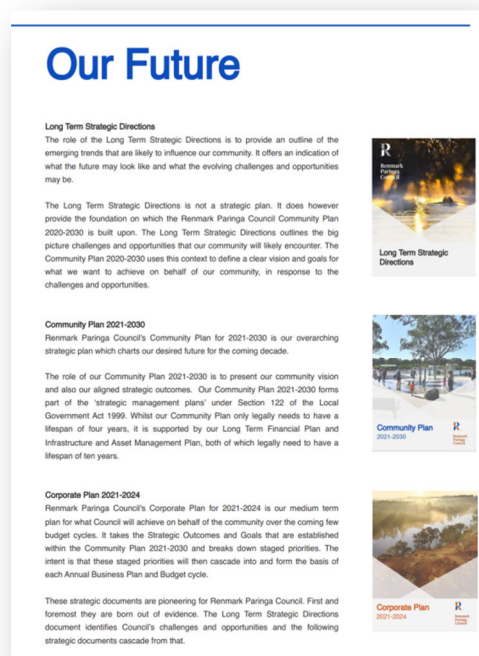


Figure Three: RPC's Strategic Framework (as included in the Community Plan)





The Council's *Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan 2023 – 2033* further adds to the Council's Strategic Framework by aligning itself with the Long Term Financial Plan between the Corporate Plan and the Annual Business Plan and Budget.

The representation of these important strategic management plans between the 'aspiration' of the Community Plan and Corporate Plan, and the 'constraints' of the Council's financial position and renewal requirements is important as it ensures that there is a connection between the two. The diagram also introduces the Council's 'Corporate Scorecard' mechanism for monitoring success and assigning responsibility.

Figure Four: Strategic Framework Diagram (as included in Council's Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan 2023 – 2033)



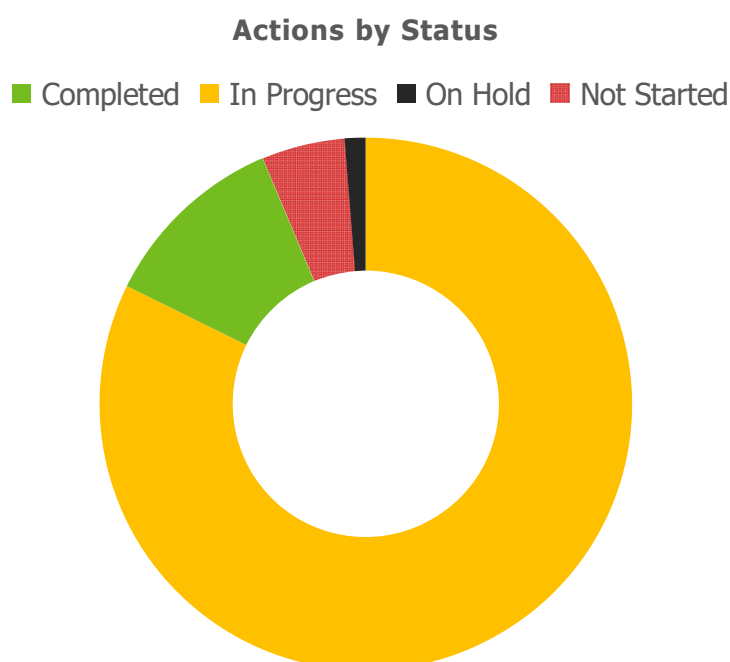
2.2 Achievements

In terms of delivery, Council has tracked progress in its Corporate Scorecard, with the last update prepared in February 2024.

Per the scorecard, Council has committed to approximately 79 action items through its Corporate Plan, with progress against these actions summarised in Figure Five.



Figure Five: Progress Against Corporate Plan



As shown in Figure Five, most Corporate Plan actions remain in progress, with nine reported as completed (11.4%), 65 in progress or commenced (82.3%), one in progress but on hold (1.3%), and four yet to commence (5%).

For the actions in progress, 14 are reported as 'behind schedule' (18%), with limited resources and the impact of the flood recovery appearing as a common contributing factor.

Key Projects of interest include progressing the Urban Design Framework Projects (including wharf redevelopment), commencing a new Growth Strategy for Renmark Paringa, changeover of streetlights to energy efficient "LEDs" and upgrades to Government Road to improve freight movement.

2.3 Opportunities to Improve the Framework & Reporting

Based on a preliminary review of the strategic framework and achievements as reported, there is an opportunity for Council to consider updating its framework to provide more useful guidance for delivery.

Ideally, the framework should explain the role and relationship between supporting plans, with the diagram to include reference to Council's Annual Report (as a statutory requirement and useful mechanism for monitoring delivery).

Improved monitoring and reporting on progress of achievements against the Community Plan will assist Council more effectively promote achievements and demonstrate value back to the community.



3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A good Community Plan should reflect the collective aspirations of the community and provide a clear pathway to addressing the issues and opportunities that are most important. It is also important that the Community Plan is set in the context of local government's role and the outcomes that are within Council's scope of control or influence.

For example, local government is often looked to by the community to play a bigger role in meeting local needs in areas such as health, housing, public transport, and social services. Others look to local government to implement policies and rules that are beyond the parameters set in State legislation or statutory instruments such as tree protection, dwelling densities or building heights.

Preparing a Community Plan provides the opportunity for councils to clarify their roles and determine how they will prioritise the allocation of resources, with an emphasis on the municipal services, activities and programs that local government is responsible for.

The roles and responsibilities of Australia's three tiers of government are outlined in Table One to provide context to inform RPC's Review of its Community Plan.

Table One: Summary of government roles and responsibilities

Federal Government Collects approximately 80% of Australia's taxes	
• Defence • Foreign Affairs • Immigration • Trade and commerce • Social security • Financial Assistance Grants • Commonwealth Legislation	• Telecommunications • Air travel • National highways • Postal service • Currency • Industrial relations • Special Purpose Grants
State and Territory Governments Collects approximately 16% of Australia's taxes	
• Health services • Education and skills • Police and justice • Emergency Services • Environmental protection • Major events • Planning policy • State legislation	• Public transport • Major roads and railways • Major public works and utilities • National parks • Public and social housing • Social services • Tourism and trade
Local Government Collects approximately 4% of Australia's taxes	
• Local roads and footpaths • Waste services • Parks, gardens and recreation reserves • Ovals and sports fields	• Animal management • Litter and Nuisance • Environmental health • Libraries



- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths and trails • Playgrounds and swimming pools • Local by-laws and permits • Planning and building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking control • Public lighting • Festivals and events • Community services • Public art • Local economic development |
|--|--|

Where local government does not have a direct service delivery or facilitation role, councils can influence outcomes for the community in other ways, such as partnering or advocating. A summary of the different roles Councils can play in serving their community is provided in Table Two.

Table Two: Summary of local government roles

Council's Roles	Definition and Examples
Service Provider	Direct provision of services to the community • <i>Waste collection</i> • <i>Libraries</i>
Policy Maker	Creating and implementing plans, ideas and solutions on local issues • <i>Climate Change Policy</i> • <i>Public Health Planning</i>
Administrator	Managing Council's financial and legal affairs • <i>Risk management</i> • <i>Council and Committee meetings</i>
Owner / Custodian	Managing community land and assets entrusted to Council • <i>Community centres</i> • <i>Parks, gardens and reserves</i>
Partner	Working with the community and others to deliver projects, programs and outcomes • <i>Community grants and sponsorships</i>
Agent	Providing services on behalf of a third party under agreement • <i>Commonwealth Home Support Program</i> • <i>Immunisations</i>
Advocate	Speaking on behalf of the community to achieve influence • <i>Making submissions to State Government / Parliament</i> • <i>Event and investment attraction</i>
Regulator	Operating under legislation to keep the Council area safe, clean and orderly • <i>Animal management</i> • <i>Planning and building assessment</i>

It is important that Council is cognisant of the various roles that it plays and the scope of its influence when setting its strategic directions through its Community Plan. If Council does this well, it can increase its impact as it serves its community without unnecessary distraction or diffused effort across areas where it can't make a significant difference.



4. REVIEW OF REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS

Section 122 of the Act requires councils, as part of their review of their strategic management plans, to consider relevant regional, state and national plans.

4.1 Regional Plans

A selection of plans prepared by relevant bodies has been reviewed to gain an understanding of the economic, environmental and social objectives being pursued at a regional level.

Regional Plans Reviewed	Summary of Regional Objectives
<i>Infrastructure Australia</i> Regional Strengths and Infrastructure Gaps / Regional Analysis: SA 2022 <i>Landscape SA Murraylands & Riverland</i> Murraylands and Riverland 2021-2026 Regional Landscape Plan <i>Murraylands & Riverland RDA</i> Strategic Direction 2023+ Circular Economy Opportunities 2022 <i>Murraylands & Riverland LGA</i> Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022–26 <i>Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program</i> The Murraylands and Riverland Plan <i>Renmark Paringa Council</i> Emergency Management Plan Economic Development Strategy <i>Tourism SA</i> South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy 2025 – Murray River, Lakes & Coorong	Economic - Managing responsible population growth through orderly planning and enhanced infrastructure - Growing the population of working age people to support the long-term labour force - Economic diversification - Enhancing the visitor experience and building the tourism brand - Growing key economies including tourism, circular economy, primary production - Enhancing digital inclusion and access to technology - Improving freight infrastructure and other enablers to facilitate industrial growth - Providing targeted skills and training programs within the region Environmental - Promoting sustainable land management practices - Biodiversity, native vegetation and restoring habitats - Protecting coastal and marine environments - Preserving the region's natural resources and cultural heritage - Adaptation to withstand the impacts of drought and facilitating access to drought-related information and support services - Management of climate-related risks and hazards - Enhanced water security and water resources management - Developing regional resource recovery infrastructure to support the diversion of waste from landfill Social - Supporting community health and wellbeing through inclusion and social connection - Enhancing community engagement and participation in civic life - Protecting and enhancing the liveability and amenity of the region's communities - Enhancing the availability of services for the region's communities - Improving clinical health services with an emphasis on aged care, rehabilitation, midwifery and mental health



4.2 State Plans

A selection of plans prepared by relevant South Australian bodies has been reviewed to gain an understanding of the economic, environmental and social objectives being pursued at a state level.

State Plans Reviewed	Summary of State Objectives
Arts and Culture Plan 2019 – 2024 Blue Carbon Strategy 2020 – 2025 DPC Strategic Directions 2023 - 2025 Hydrogen Jobs Plan Preventative Health SA Wellbeing Index 2022 Regional Visitor Strategy 2025 South Australia Climate Change Action Plan 2021 - 2025 South Australian Economic Statement 2023 South Australia's Small Business Strategy 2023 South Australian Public Health Plan 2019 – 2024 Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Plan 2019 State Budget 2024 -2025 State Infrastructure Strategy 2020 State Waste Strategy 2020-2025 Volunteering Strategy for South Australia Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2018	Economic • Leveraging opportunities from the transition to a low carbon economy through technology and innovation and the green industrialisation of our economy • Investing in infrastructure to enhance the State's productivity and economic competitiveness • Attracting and retaining new industries and a skilled workforce and building the skills and talent of the local workforce • Growing the regional visitor economy and partnering with the private sector to develop unique tourism products and experiences • Taking urgent action to address regional housing shortages • Enhancing cyber security Environmental • Accelerating work towards achieving net-zero commitments • Managing climate risks and integrating climate risk governance in planning and decision making across government • Supporting the circular economy, diverting waste from landfill and reducing plastics and packaging • Supporting the expansion of carbon farming and blue carbon • Ensuring secure, climate resilient regional water supplies • Protecting communities from environmental and public health risks Social • Relieving cost of living pressures • Building stronger communities and environments that promote good health and wellbeing • Combatting loneliness and social isolation • Improving community safety • Growing the volunteering participation rate of South Australia • State-based implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart – SA First Nations Voice



4.3 National Plans

A selection of plans prepared by relevant bodies has been reviewed to gain an understanding of the economic, environmental and social objectives being pursued at a national level.

State Plans Reviewed	Summary of State Objectives
Australian Infrastructure Plan 2021 Federal Budget 2024/25 Future Made in Australia plan National Agreement on Closing the Gap National Cabinet Priorities National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021 -2025 National Climate Risk Assessment National Housing Accord National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Powering Australia and National Energy Performance Strategy Revive: Australia's Cultural Policy 2023	Economic • Enhancing Australia's productivity • Implementing the National Housing Accord to tackle the national housing crisis • Making Australia a renewable energy superpower • Accelerating delivery of nationally significant projects • Ensuring the resilience and security of Australia's infrastructure systems and networks • Partnering with local government to invest in community building infrastructure and enhanced place-based economic and social outcomes • Enhancing national security and cyber security Environmental • Managing climate risks to mitigate impacts on Australia's essential infrastructure and services • Introducing new regulatory and reporting mechanisms to support Australia's net-zero targets under the Paris Agreement • Developing a national standard for considering disaster and climate risk in land use planning • Promoting product stewardship, extended producer responsibility and developing circular supply chains Social • Easing cost of living pressures • National health system reform • Supporting the delivery of social and affordable housing • Developing an NDIS Financial Sustainability Framework • Enhancing early learning and childhood development • Partnering with state and local governments to develop cultural infrastructure • Implementing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap



5. **LONG TERM STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS REPORT (2020)**

RPC developed a Long Term Strategic Directions report to inform its Community Plan.

The document outlines the challenges and opportunities RPC expected to encounter when setting its strategic objectives.

The document is divided into three themes: social trends, economic trends and environmental trends.

Trends were highlighted with the intent to provide a holistic view of the community's future drivers.

Key findings were provided, supported by nominated 'Community Challenges & Opportunities' and an overall 'SWOT' Analysis at the conclusion of the report.

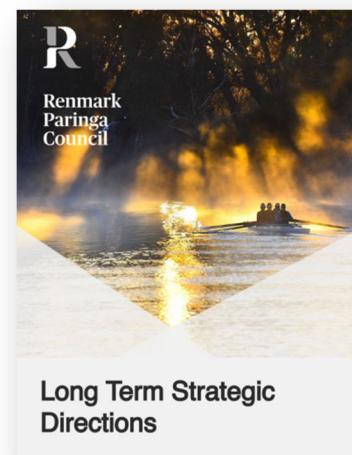
In particular, the report highlights:

- The Council's strong respect from the community to lead and govern effectively.
- Opportunities for the Council to partner to deliver greater regional outcomes, leveraging its enviable lifestyle to attract and retain population and grow the economy.
- The constrained financial environment faced by the Council, with forecasted operating deficits to 2029.
- The challenges of an ageing population, poor health outcomes, a dominant agricultural sector with limited diversity of industry, and loss of young people.

Key Findings from the Long Term Strategic Directions document have been reviewed against updated Census (2021) and other relevant data to ascertain whether the 'State of Renmark Paringa' has changed.

These are grouped against the themes of social trends, economic trends, environmental trends (and governance) to reflect and compare with the 2020 Long Term Strategic Directions document.

The existing Community Plan strategic outcomes and supporting goals are also listed for context.





6. SOCIAL TRENDS

The following social trends influence the Council's directions under its 'Liveable' strategic outcome in the Community Plan. A full list of the current strategic outcomes and goals, and a summary comparison of these trends against the Long Term Strategic Directions report is provided at the end of this section.

6.1 Population & Demographic Profile

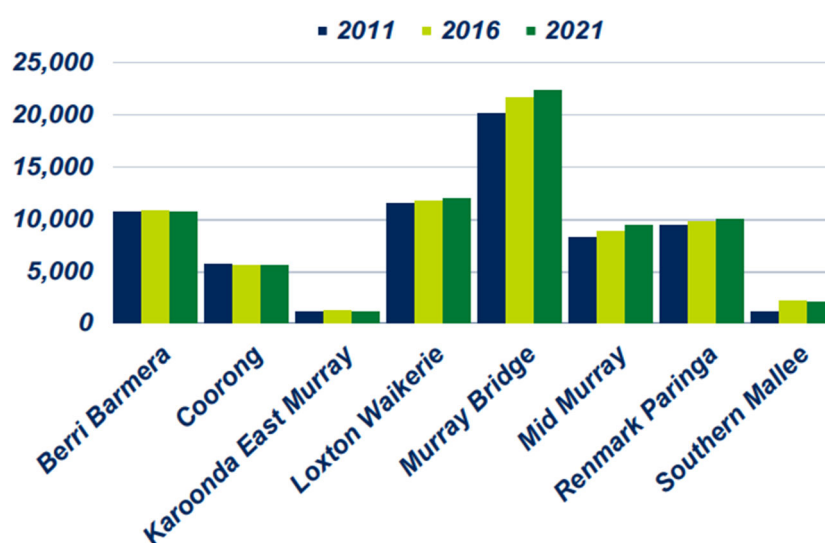
In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC noted relatively static population levels from the Census in 2016 (9,475) and a rising media age (from 39 to 44). The report also notes lowering fertility rates (reduced from 2.32 to 1.72 average children per female) and steady household income growth aligned with inflation.

Population trends have remained steady, as shown in Census data from 2016 to 2021, with RPC area's population increasing by 308 people (3.2%), representing an average annual population change of 0.64% per year, over the Census period.

The estimated resident population in 2023 is 10,107.

Population growth is steady across the region, with the highest levels of growth experienced in Murray Bridge, as illustrated in Figure Six.

Figure Six: Population Over Time Across the Region¹



The largest changes in the age structure in RPC between 2016 and 2021 were in the following age groups:

- Seniors (70 to 84) (+230 people)
- Young workforce (25 to 34) (+133 people)

¹ Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murraylands and Riverland Regional Profile 2023



- Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69) (+73 people)
- Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49) (-69 people)

Interestingly, when compared with the region, RPC has slightly higher levels of young workers (25 to 34). The median age has remained steady at 44.

Household size has remained steady at an average of 2.3 people per household, while average household income has increased steadily over the past 10 years (at approximately 1.3% per annum)².

The average birth rate has been reported by Preventative Health SA³ at 1.9 in 2022, which is higher than the reported birth rate in the Long Term Strategic Directions Report.

6.2 Health

In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported that it was well serviced by health services. Residents requiring assistance with core activities remained steady, but resident health outcomes were considered predominantly less favourable than in Greater Adelaide.

In 2021, 690 people (or 7.1% of the population) in RPC reported needing assistance in their day-to-day lives due to a disability, with increases reported across most age groups, but the highest proportion in those aged between 75 and 84.

Preventive Health SA recently completed a 'population health profile' for RPC that analysed a range of health metrics from residents of the council area and compared this with regional and state-based health data.

The report highlights that RPC records lower 'good or better health' and 'good wellbeing' perceptions than its comparisons, per Figure Seven.

Figure Seven: Health and Wellbeing Perceptions

Health and Wellbeing

	Renmark Paringa	Country SA	SA Overall
Good or better health	62.3%	*73.5%	*75.9%
Good wellbeing	32.4%	*41.7%	37.6%
Meeting sleep guidelines	54.9%	60.4%	61.1%

The most common long-term health condition reported was arthritis, while asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) were also reported at higher levels in RPC than

² ABS Census Data 2021

³ Renmark Paringa Council: A population health profile prepared by Preventive Health SA 2024



comparison areas. This was reflected in reported daily smoking levels, which were the equivalent of 1 in 5 residents reporting daily smoking.

Psychological distress (1 in 4) and suicidal ideation (1 in 6) was also more pronounced from RPC participants than the comparison, and nearly half of the 200 participants were considered obese and a further quarter overweight, despite engaging in more daily moderate activity than those in the comparison areas.

6.3 Community Safety

In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported that the community's perception of safety regressed despite no unfavourable shifts in crime experienced by residents and reductions in offences reported. Anecdotal perceptions of higher levels of illicit drug use were canvassed in the report, but no evidence or corroboration by local police found that this was unique to RPC.

In the Council's 2023 Community Satisfaction Survey, nearly three-quarters of respondents were satisfied with the Council's provision of public safety and amenity services (at 71%) and only 9% dissatisfied.

Since 2019, crime within the township of Renmark appears to be trending up as reported by Red Suburbs (informed by publicly available crime data)⁴ and as shown in Figure Eight.

Figure Eight: Crime Trends – Township of Renmark (Red Suburbs, May 2024)



While crime within Renmark is slightly higher than SA averages, the Red Suburbs 'Crime Rank' for RPC has been assessed as 25/100, which is similar to other regional SA local government areas.

A 2021 Adelaide University study⁵ reports that national wastewater data demonstrates methamphetamine use is higher in the regions than metropolitan areas. The stimulant is only used by a small proportion of South Australians regularly (approximately 1%), but SA has one

⁴ <https://www.redsuburbs.com.au/suburbs/renmark/>

⁵ <https://health.adelaide.edu.au/ua/media/2374/drug-and-alcohol-use-in-sa.pdf>



of the highest rates of consumption nationally. It is the second highest drug of concern due to its harm to the individual and the community.

Similarly to the challenges of the Long Term Strategic Directions report, no new data has been able to be sourced that would demonstrate a higher use of illicit drugs within the RPC area when compared to the region or SA.

6.4 Culture

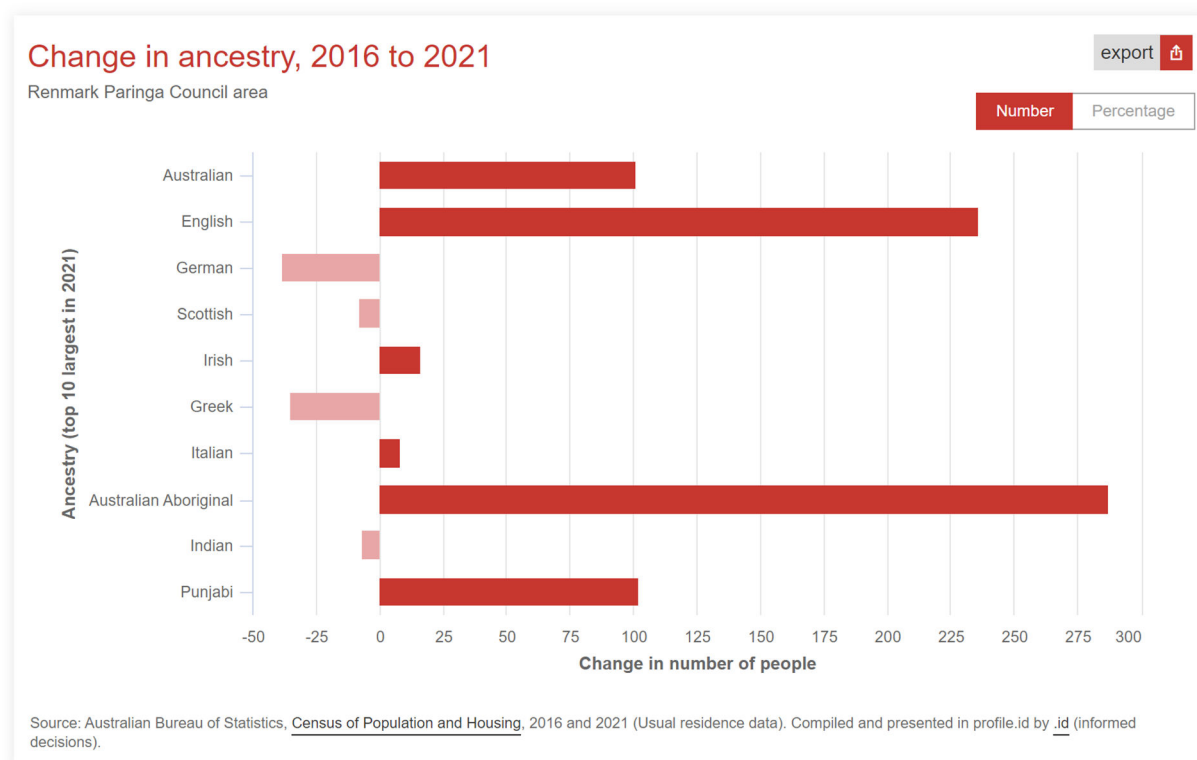
In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported a culturally diverse population for a regional location. Retention of cultural identity has been important for first and subsequent generations who have migrated and settled in the RPC area.

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of households with children increased by 77 households (or 6.0%) across RPC, which is not considered to be a major difference or change in trend.

There was, however, a significant increase in the number of RPC residents who identified as Australian Aboriginal, increasing from 0.2% of the population to 3.1% (or +287 persons).

English (+236 persons), Punjabi (+102 persons) and Australian (+101 persons) were the next largest group of new residents that now call RPC home (refer Figure Nine).

Figure Nine: Change in Ancestry, 2016-2021 (ABS)





6.5 Community Plan Comparison

The canvassed social trends influence the Council's directions under its 'Liveable' strategic outcome in the Community Plan. This strategic outcome is currently supported by four outcomes and eight goals, as listed below.

Outcome 1.1	We are socially inclusive and enable excellent community connections
Goals	To have community resilience enhanced through social inclusion and connectivity.
	To have a sound appreciation for local heritage and culture.
Outcome 1.2	We are healthy, active and stimulated
	To have health and social services that are delivered through programs and advocacy and matched to the emerging demographics.
	To have greater levels of participation in sport and recreational activities.
	To have public services that are stimulating and exciting.
Outcome 1.3	We are proud of and actively use our public spaces
	To have public spaces that are well utilised and invoke a sense of community pride.
Outcome 1.4	We are safe and feel secure
	To have a community that feels secure.
	To have regulatory services that underpin community safety.

These outcomes respond to the following challenges and opportunities as listed in the Community Plan and informed by the Long Term Strategic Directions review, which (as shown) differ slightly, but remain relevant.

Key Challenges & Opportunities (2020)	Review Findings
Our population is aging at a rapid rate.	Median age remained stable at 44.
Most health outcomes are less favourable than in metropolitan Adelaide.	Trend has continued.
Our lifestyle and quality open space is attractive for net positive immigration.	Trend has continued.
Criminal offences have slightly reduced but perception of safety has declined.	Perception has improved but criminal offences appear to have increased.



7. ECONOMIC

The following economic trends influence the Council's directions under its 'Prosperous' strategic outcome in the Community Plan. A full list of the current strategic outcomes and goals, and a summary comparison of these trends against the Long Term Strategic Directions report is provided at the end of this section.

7.1 Economic Growth

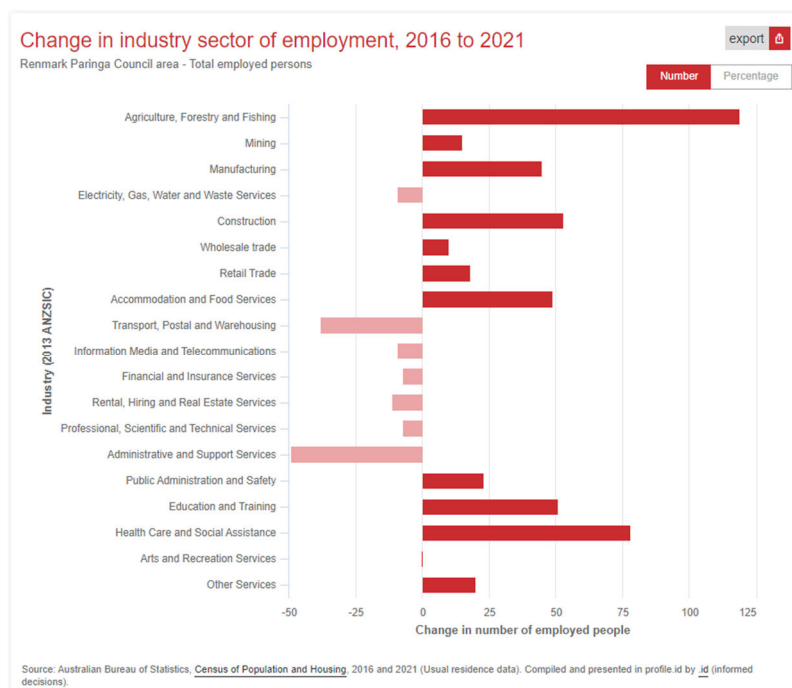
In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported economic growth occurring at a faster rate than the state or national averages. RPC is highly reliant on the agriculture sector, which is the most productive sector and the sector with the greatest exports. The local reliance on agriculture supports two of the largest South Australian exports: wine and fruit/vegetables.

RPC's reliance on agriculture continues, with the 2021 Census reporting the largest changes in the jobs held by the resident population between 2016 and 2021 were for those employed in:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (+119 persons)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (+78 persons)
- Construction (+53 persons)
- Education and Training (+51 persons)

Interestingly, as shown in Figure Ten, there were also reported reductions in industries that have typically experienced growth in other regions (e.g. logistics and administration).

Figure Ten: Change in Industry Sector Employment, 2016-2021 (ABS)





While the 2021 Census data shows promising trends that indicate a strong agricultural sector, it is understood that this data may not reflect the reality of 2024, with broader macro trends such as a reduction in wine exports making business difficult in the region.

Despite these challenges, the agricultural sector showed growth through to the 2022/23 financial year, as illustrated by economy.id data in Figure Eleven, demonstrating growth in employment, value, exports and worker productivity (but reductions in domestic imports/value).

Figure Eleven: Industry Sector Analysis - Agriculture (economy.id)

Industry sector analysis export							
Renmark Paringa Council area - Agriculture - Constant prices	2022/23			2021/22			Change
Economic measure	Renmark Paringa Council area	South Australia	Renmark Paringa Council area as a % of South Australia	Renmark Paringa Council area	South Australia	Renmark Paringa Council area as a % of South Australia	change
Employment (total)	912	29,393	3.1%	879	28,537	3.1%	+33
Employment (FTE)	851	29,121	2.9%	820	28,001	2.9%	+30
FTE to total employment ratio	0.93	0.99	0%	0.93	0.98	0%	0
Output/Total Sales (\$m)	326.57	12,013.37	2.7%	294.71	11,156.89	2.6%	+31.86
Value add (\$m)	181.04	6,659.88	2.7%	163.30	6,182.08	2.6%	+17.74
Exports (\$m)	265.32	9,428.41	2.8%	229.20	8,447.46	2.7%	+36.12
Exports (domestic) (\$m)	163.26	5,306.01	3.1%	158.68	5,234.96	3.0%	+4.57
Exports (international) (\$m)	102.06	4,122.40	2.5%	70.52	3,212.50	2.2%	+31.54
Imports(\$m)	7.25	2,762.69	0.3%	7.71	2,873.55	0.3%	-0.45
Imports (domestic) (\$m)	6.87	2,753.18	0.2%	7.35	2,866.57	0.3%	-0.48
Imports (international) (\$m)	0.38	9.51	4.0%	0.36	6.98	5.2%	+0.02
Local Sales (\$m)	61.25	2,584.95	2.4%	65.51	2,709.43	2.4%	-4.26
Worker productivity (\$ per worker)	198,553	226,580	0%	185,739	216,637	0%	+12,814

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions). Data are based on a 2020/21 price base for all years. NIEIR-ID data are inflation adjusted each year to allow direct comparison, and annual data releases adjust previous years' figures to a new base year. Learn more
Please refer to specific data notes for more information

7.2 Employment

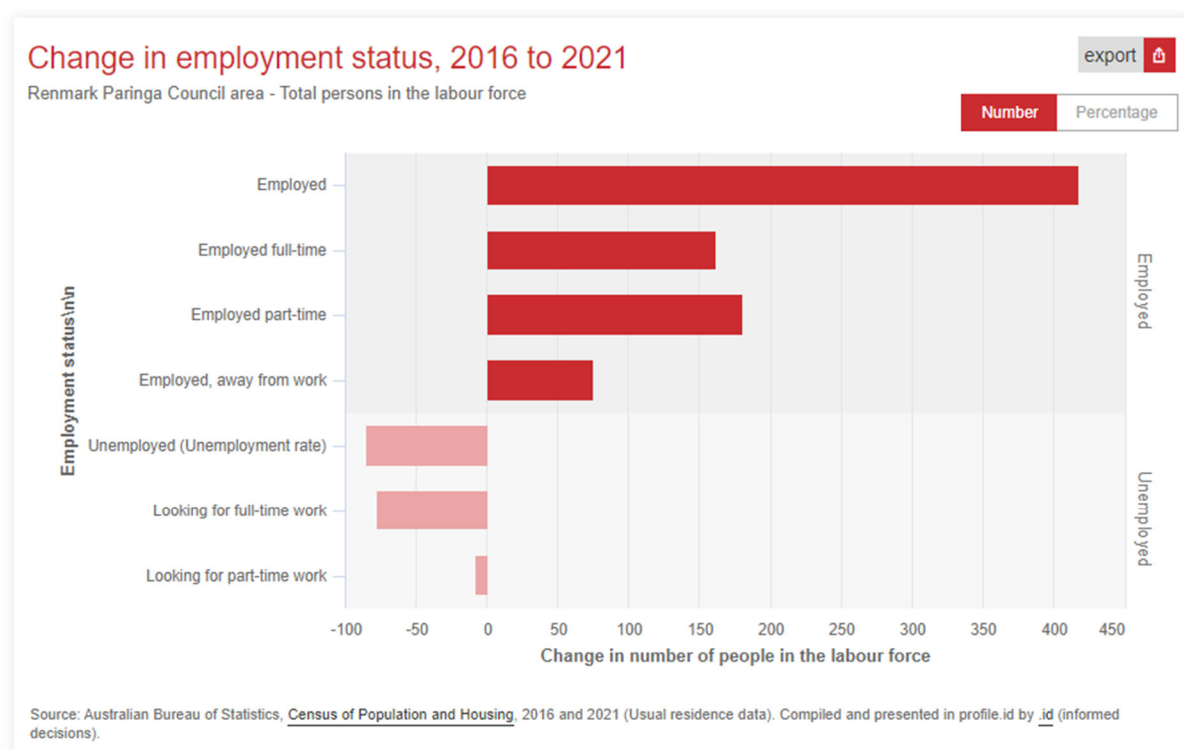
In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported unemployment at a moderate level and is marginally higher than state / national averages. Agriculture was the largest employer, but both the number and percentage of jobs within agriculture had decreased. A large proportion of current occupations require unskilled or comparatively low skilled labour. Health care / social assistance and accommodation / food services are industries that have experienced employment growth.

As shown in



Figure Twelve, the five years between 2016 and 2021 saw significant increases in the number of residents employed, with reductions to those unemployed and those looking for work (both part time and full time).

Figure Twelve: Change in Employment Status, 2016-2021 (ABS)



Unfortunately, there was also a significant reduction in formal volunteering across the region, a pattern reflected across the nation. It is possible that this data does not reflect a sustained trend, but rather an anomaly resulting from the timing of the Census collection, and that volunteering post COVID-19 has subsequently improved⁶.

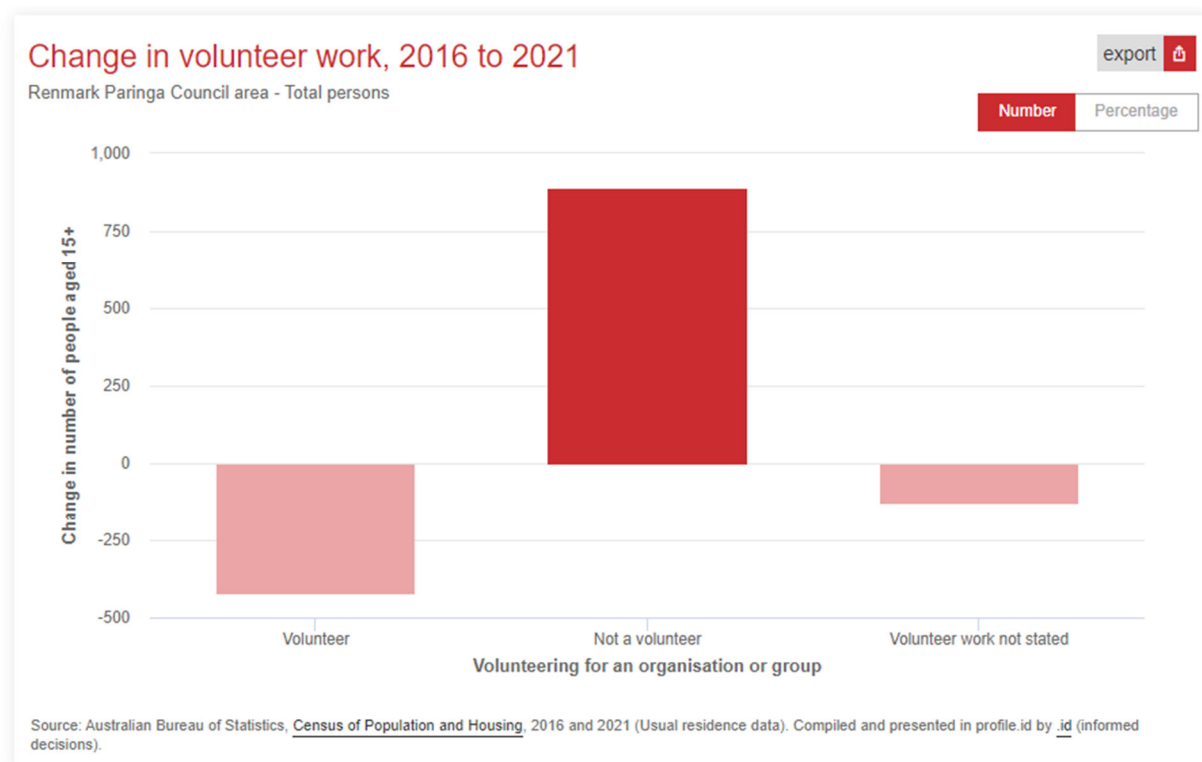
Based on ABS Census data, the proportion of residents aged over 15 volunteering in RPC was 15.5% in 2021 compared with a rate of 21.3% in 2016 (with the latter less than, but more reflective of, the current SA average volunteering rate⁷), as shown in Figure Thirteen.

⁶<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VA-Volunteering-and-the-Ongoing-Impact-of-COVID19-14-May-2021.pdf>

⁷<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteering-Australia-Key-Volunteering-Statistics-2024-Update.pdf>



Figure Thirteen: Change in Volunteer Work, 2016-2021 (ABS)



7.3 Education

In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported a relatively small proportion of the population is degree qualified. A relatively small proportion of school leavers are remaining in the region and undertaking higher education.

There were positive changes with respect to education, with the largest changes in the qualifications of the population related to vocational qualifications (+237 persons), Bachelor or Higher degrees (+169 persons) and no qualifications (+84 persons).

Regional access to university was improved with the creation of the Flinders University campus at Renmark and Paringa Hospital, with teaching facilities including a library, extended hours access computer laboratory, classrooms, clinical simulation facilities and student common rooms. Expanded access to online learning is also expected to have had a positive affect on vocational qualifications and degrees.

7.4 Tourism

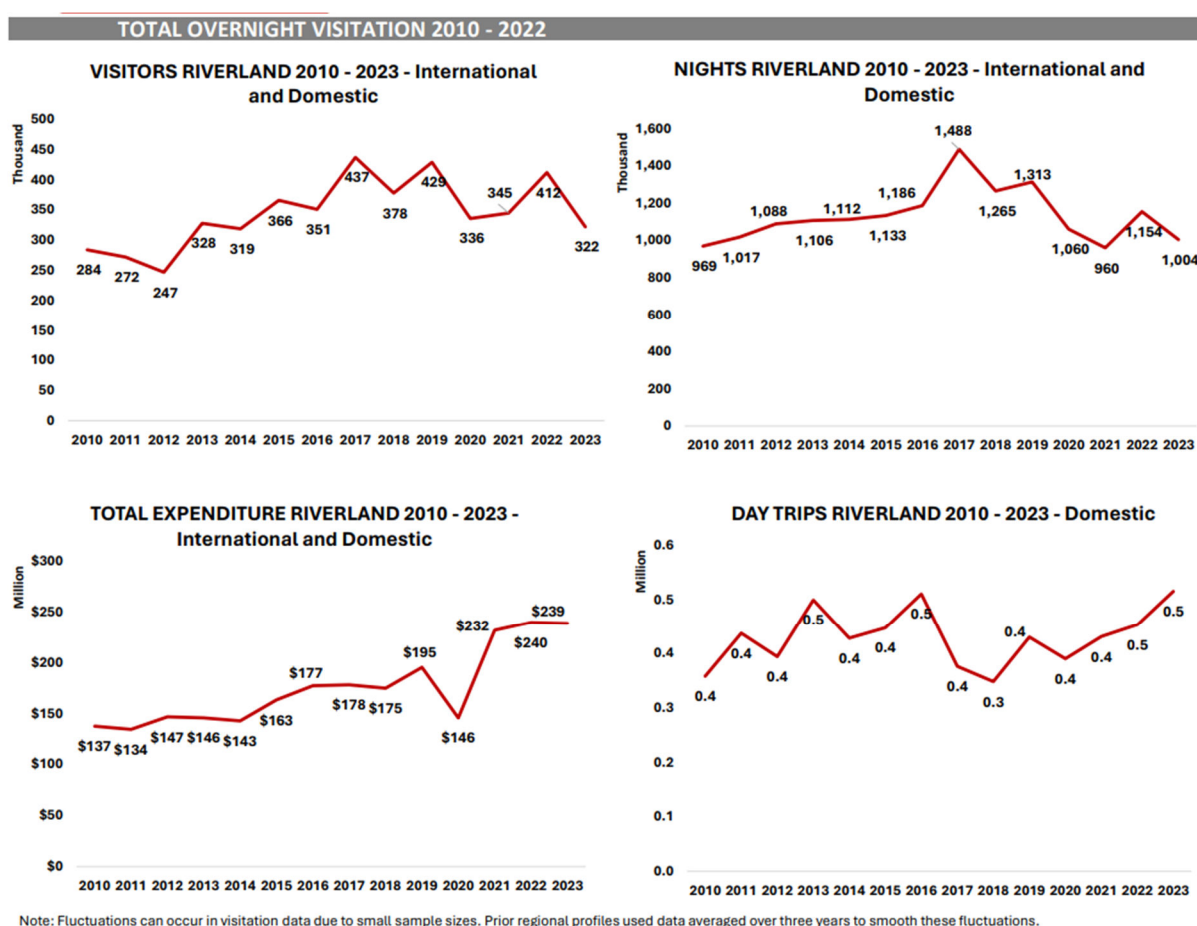
In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported challenges quantifying the economic effect of tourism. Tourism was a modest driver of the local economy. The Riverland was attracting less than 2 percent of South Australia's international visitors, 3 percent of interstate visitors, 6 percent of intrastate visitors and 2 percent of domestic day trips.



As a proportion of the South Australia's tourism market, the Riverland is one of many regions that has declined in visits since 2019, with only Adelaide, Barossa and Clare Valley achieving growth in visits during the last four years (3%, 8% and 11% respectively)⁸.

As shown in Figure Fourteen, international, and domestic visits to the Riverland are trending downward since 2016/17. However, expenditure has trended up since 2014 (excluding 2020) and domestic day trips have (on annual averages) trended at approximately 450,000 day trips, per annum.

Figure Fourteen: Overnight Visitation, Expenditure and Day Trips, 2010-2022 (Tourism SA)



Overall, the Riverland has experienced a decline in visits since December 2019 of 25% but an increase in expenditure of 22%, as recorded in December 2023 at \$239,000,000.

7.5 Transport

In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported most of RPC's largest industries rely on the Sturt Highway to get products to and from the marketplace. The major road transport route between Adelaide and the east coast traversing RPC is a significant

⁸ <https://tourism.sa.gov.au/media/t22jtq3u/riverland-december-2023.pdf>



geographical and economic advantage. Quality passenger linkages to major service centres are vital.

In December 2023, Regional Development Australia SA produced an Infrastructure Prioritisation report, which highlights the importance of the Truro Bypass to freight movement along the Sturt Highway as part of the Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass project.

These works are promoted as *'critical to enable South Australia to maintain and grow regional... to transport agricultural products and to reduce freight traffic on local roads'*⁹.

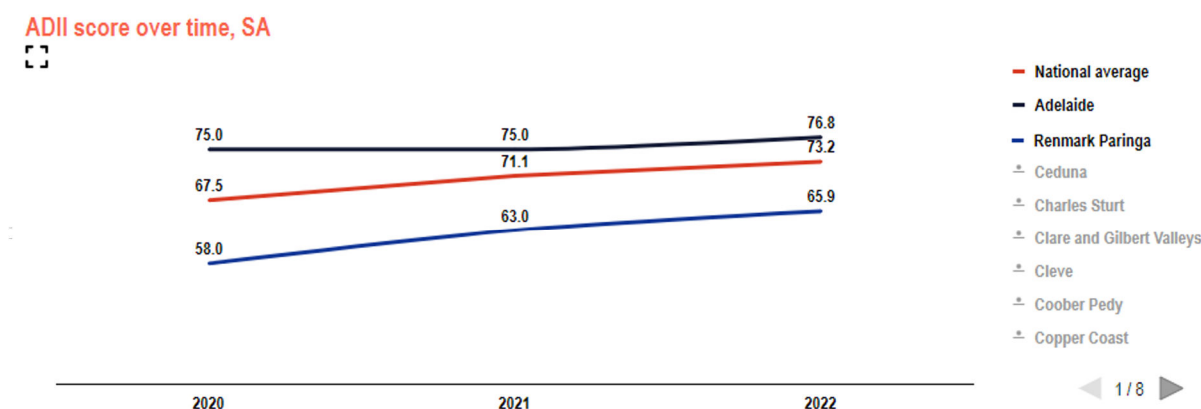
Quality passenger linkages to major service centres do not appear to have been improved in the period since 2020.

7.6 Technology

In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported digital inclusion is comparatively low in the region but is critical for education, industry and community wellbeing. South Australia's digital inclusion is the second lowest of the States, at 60.2, Adelaide is 61.7 and the whole of Australia is 61.9

In 2022, RPC area was assessed with a 65.9 Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) Score¹⁰, which is a 12% improvement from its 2020 assessment. Ratings for Australia and Greater Adelaide also increased over this period (refer Figure Fifteen) but the gap between all three ratings is closing.

Figure Fifteen: ADII Score Over Time (2020-2022)



The ADII uses data from the Australian Internet Usage Survey to measure digital inclusion across three dimensions of Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. The Index measures these three dimensions because research shows they are the key requirements of digital inclusion.

⁹https://regionaldevelopmentsa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/RDSA-2023-Infrastructure-Prioritisation-Report_Final_Compressed.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/dashboard/National.aspx>



Despite improvements shown, telecommunication infrastructure remains a high priority for the Murraylands & Riverland RDA, particularly to resolve 'mobile black spots' as areas of limited mobile phone coverage. Under the Commonwealth's *Mobile Black Spot Program*, multiple new areas have received mobile network coverage. Round 7 was announced in December 2023, in combination with a Regional Connectivity Program¹¹.

7.7 Community Plan Comparison

These economic trends influence the Council's directions under its 'Prosperous' strategic outcome in the Community Plan.

This strategic outcome is currently supported by four outcomes and six goals, as listed below.

Outcome 2.1	We are encouraging of investment into local industries
Goals	To have agility and resilience in our traditional industries.
	To have growth and diversification in industries that are future-focused and attract skilled people.
	To have valuable development opportunities that are guided by proactive land use planning.
Outcome 2.2	We are advocating for improved education opportunities
	To have education opportunities which attract and retain people within our region.
Outcome 2.3	We are supporting the development of the tourism sector
	To have development and greater economic value generated from tourism.
Outcome 2.4	We are embracing technology and supporting digital inclusion
	To have regional access to technology that assists in improving industry competitiveness.

These outcomes respond to the following challenges and opportunities as listed in the Community Plan and informed by the Long Term Strategic Directions review, which (as shown) differ slightly but remain relevant.

Key Challenges & Opportunities (2020)	Review Findings
Tourism has the potential to further grow and economically contribute.	Remains relevant
This is a geographically central location with ease of accessibility to Southern and Eastern Australian markets.	Remains relevant
The local economy is growing faster than State/National averages	Growth aligned to SA Averages

¹¹<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-program>



There is a high reliance on climate-dependant industries like agriculture.	Remains relevant
There is a comparatively small number of higher skill jobs in the local economy.	Remains relevant
There is a loss of school leavers for higher education opportunities.	35–49-year-olds represents highest loss (refer previous section)

8. ENVIRONMENTAL

The following environmental trends influence the Council's directions under its 'Sustainable' strategic outcome in the Community Plan. A full list of the current strategic outcomes and goals, and a summary comparison of these trends against the Long Term Strategic Directions report is provided at the end of this section.

8.1 Climate Variability & Water Availability

In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported that the Murray Darling Basin will be facing a hotter and drier future. Water availability and quality will be negatively affected, which will have a detrimental effect on irrigated agriculture. Climate change adaptation, as opposed to mitigation, will be essential.

These expected trends continue, with declines in winter rainfall, increased variability (longer droughts, more intense wet periods, other extreme events) and challenge to water users and ecosystems to sustain themselves at low levels of water¹².

The region has had to adapt to the impacts of more extreme weather events, particularly the flooding of the River Murray.

High evapotranspiration rates mean that there will be less water in the landscape with more water being required to irrigate crops effectively.

Water quality issues, particularly salinity and black water events, are expected to be more prevalent, reducing the fit for purpose nature of water supplies, and impacting communities, industry and the environment.

8.2 Waste

In the Long Term Strategic Directions report, RPC reported that waste management will continue to become a more significant and more expensive problem, particularly as the international market for recycling becomes smaller.

Waste management has experienced a greater shift towards 'circular economy' practices, supported by localised markets and improved infrastructure capacity. A target of zero avoidable waste to landfill by 2030 guides action during and beyond the lifespan of South Australia's Waste Strategy 2020-2025¹³.

¹² Murray Darling Basin Authority Climate Vulnerabilities (2020) [weblink](#)

¹³ Green Industries SA, SA Waste Strategy (2020-2025) [weblink](#)



Murraylands & Riverland RDA continues to advocate for Circular Economy Precincts, both at Waikerie (for residential and industrial development) and for soft plastics 'upcycling'.

In recent years, the SA Government has implemented a range of efforts to reduce landfill, including introducing laws to reduce single use plastics and packaging. The Council has invested efforts in avoiding waste, improving resource recovery and increasing its use of recycled materials.

8.3 Environmental Flows

The flood of the River Murray is expected to significantly improve the health of the river and may present opportunities to leverage the enhanced condition.

The health of the River Murray is regularly under threat from a range of factors including water quality, pest plants and animals, loss of habitat (e.g. woody debris) and barriers to fish passage.

Flow regime is widely regarded as the key driver of river health and has changed in many ways as a result of river regulation. Future efforts to retain gains achieved by the flood are important, such as varying water levels in the Lock 5 and 6 weir pools.

Wetland management is another important tool to support river health such as through rehabilitation projects that install regulators to help natural wetting and drying cycles¹⁴.

8.4 Pest Plants and Animals

Pest plants and animals have a major impact on the natural and agricultural environment in the region. They compete with native plants and animals for food and breeding resources and predate on native flora and fauna to the extent that some species are facing extinction.

Their control also poses a large cost to agriculture each year. In the river, European Carp are a well-known pest causing damage to native aquatic plants, disturbing soft sediments in wetlands and competing with native fish. On the land, rabbits are a perennial problem along with goats and pigs which damage the soil and destroy native vegetation. Foxes and cats prey on small mammals, reptiles and birds and their eggs, particularly ground-dwelling species.

Weeds such as Bridal Creeper, Boneseed, Golden Dodder and Weeping Willow all have a significant impact on their environment and present their own difficulties to control.

Local action such as education, early spotting and projects to implement control measures will assist in reducing the problem and can work within the framework of regional pest plant and animal management such as that conducted by the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board.

¹⁴Remark Paringa Landcare Draft Plan (2017) [web link](#)



8.5 Community Plan Comparison

The following environmental trends influence the Council's directions under its 'Sustainable' strategic outcome in the Community Plan.

This strategic outcome is currently supported by five outcomes and eight goals, as listed below.

Outcome 3.1	We are planning for and adapting to a changing climate
Goals	To have assets and operations that are designed to account for less rainfall, higher temperatures and extreme weather variation.
	To have investigated and implemented further renewable and energy efficiency opportunities.
Outcome 1.2	We are leveraging our reputation to advocate for improved water security and quality outcomes
	To have recognition for our stewardship of water resources.
	To advocate for better water quality and security.
Outcome 1.3	We are responsible custodians of community infrastructure
	To have community infrastructure and assets that are well maintained, actively utilised and fit for purpose.
Outcome 1.4	We are advocating for and delivering positive environmental outcomes
	To have a clean, healthy and thriving natural environment.
Outcome 1.5	We are pursuing innovative waste solutions
	To have waste volumes to landfill reduced.
	To have circular economy opportunities investigated

These outcomes respond to the following challenges and opportunities as listed in the Community Plan and informed by the Long Term Strategic Directions review, which (as shown) differ slightly but remain relevant.

Key Challenges & Opportunities (2020)	Review Findings
The region will experience a hotter and drier climate.	Remains relevant
Water availability and quality will likely be negatively affected.	Remains relevant
Waste management has the potential to provide economic opportunities.	Remains relevant

9. GOVERNANCE

In its 2023/24 Annual Business Plan, the Council lists the following 'significant influences' affecting the operations of the Council. A full list of the current strategic outcomes and goals, and a summary comparison of these trends against the Long Term Strategic Directions report is provided at the end of this section.



9.1 River Murray Flood (2022)

The 2022 flood was the second largest River Murray flood in 152 years. The flood preparation and subsequent recovery required the near full attention of RPC's staff and contractors for many months. Council, with the assistance of a team of contractors, was successful in remediating 38 kilometres of levee banks, locking/pumping 30 stormwater drains and proactively engaging with our local community.

The Council reports no levee bank breaches, no property damage within the levee banks and no loss of life. However, the result is that many scheduled capital and operating works needed to be postponed. Further, while government support will cover many of the costs that Council accumulated during the flood, there will be assets that will require ratepayer funding to repair.

9.2 Local Government Reform

The *Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill* was passed by the State Government in June 2021. Implementation of the revised legislation has commenced and is occurring through a series of tranches, continuing to this day. The revised legislation has benefits in terms of public transparency and accountability, but it does also add financial costs to Councils.

Key changes include new leadership responsibilities for the Mayor, training obligations for Elected Members, changes to Audit & Risk Committee composition, new community engagement charter and obligations (pending), changes to internal audit and new responsibilities for ESCOSA to review and advise on Council financial management and performance (among other changes).

9.3 Elections

Since adoption of the Community Plan, South Australian local government elections occurred (November 2022), resulting in a new Council composition with a four year term. The RPC experienced a 44% change-over, welcoming four new Elected Members and the return of Mayor Hunter and five Elected Members. With a new elected body, it is reasonable to expect changes in expectations and strategic focus.

9.4 Project Delivery Impacts

The report also lists the challenges faced in the construction industry, as the Australian economy rebounds in 'the wake of Covid-19', resulting in significant demand in the construction sector, trade shortages, increased pricing, shortages of materials and delayed time frames. This has impacted Council's ability to deliver on time and on budget.

Similarly, the recent flooding diverted significant effort and focus for the Council as it prepared and responded.

9.5 Long Term Financial Pressures

High inflation has also placed pressure on Council's Long Term Financial Plan, which was set with an assumed Consumer Price Index (CPI) of an average of 2.5% per annum. With inflation reaching 7.9% (Adelaide All Groups - year ending March 2023) and maintain levels above 4%,



the short to service debt is significantly higher and Council has had to consider high rate rises to maintain pace with the cost of doing business.

9.6 Community Plan Comparison

These factors influence the Council's directions under its 'Effective Governance' strategic outcome in the Community Plan.

This strategic outcome is currently supported by four outcomes and seven goals, as listed below.

Outcome 4.1	We are the trusted partner of choice
Goals	To have public and private sector opportunities regularly presented, based on our reputation for delivering quality outcomes.
Outcome 4.2	We are accountable and reliable
	To have fit for purpose systems in place to ensure the highest levels of accountability.
	To have exceptional communication channels that enable fact-based community discussions.
Outcome 4.3	We are efficient and effective
	To have the right technology systems that enable efficient and effective delivery.
	To have an approach that prioritises financial sustainability and efficiency.
Outcome 4.4	We are delivering results with a healthy, skilled and empowered organisation
	To have a safe, healthy and empowered organisation.
	To have an agile and skilled organisation.

Key Challenges & Opportunities (2020)	Review Findings
Council has a good reputation for delivery with funding partners.	Remains relevant
Council is well respected in the community, with 82% of Community Survey respondents rating Council favourably	Remains relevant (strong survey results achieved in 2024)
Council is financially constrained with operating deficits forecast but has minimal debt and a sound borrowing capacity.	Remains relevant
Council has the opportunity to more closely collaborate with other Councils to achieve regional benefits.	Remains relevant



10. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

10.1 Communications Plan

Staff prepared a comprehensive Communications Plan to guide the design and implementation of community engagement activities, ensuring that the community was afforded opportunities to influence the shape of the review and the focus of new the Community Plan (and fulfilling statutory obligations).

Methods of communication comprised the following internal and externally focussed mediums:

- CEO 'Weekly Wrap'
- e-Newsletter or direct mail (MailChimp)
- Social Media Channels
- Media (print and radio)
- Website and Engage RPC website
- Staff equipped with the right information to directly communicate with the public
- Elected Members equipping with the right information to directly communicate with the public.



10.2 First Phase Community Engagement

A 'first phase' of community engagement was designed to promote the project and provide preliminary insights to guide the focus for RPC's review, to be supported by a more formal opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Community Plan in September.

The first phase comprised an online survey that was marketed as a 'Love where you live, make it even better' campaign. The intention was to draw interest and make the engagement inviting and appealing for the community to get involved (i.e. rather than asking for their say on a 'plan').

Promotions utilised photos, graphics, social media platforms to showcase what the Community Plan is and to make it easy and accessible for people to get involved. A small prize of a local produce gift basket was also provided as an extra incentive for interested community members to fill out the survey (particularly with acknowledgement to community members who may have already recently contributed to the Community Satisfaction Survey and Growth Strategy survey).



As shown in the timeline, the first phase of community engagement was first advertised on 14 August and closed 4 September.

The survey received 88 responses reflecting an engaged community.

Across the responses to questions, the majority were positive, a small minority was mixed and remainder neutral.

Key theme against the questions asked are provided below based on a qualitative text analysis.

These findings were presented to senior staff and Elected Members to help draw attention to key opportunities for strategic focus (i.e. as one of the key inputs informing the review of the Community Plan).



Survey Question 1: What do you love about living in or visiting the Renmark Paringa area?

Respondents highlighted the following key themes that reflect what the community loves about living in the Council area:

Murray River Riverfront

- Many respondents love the scenic riverfront, parks, and gardens, highlighting the beauty of the Murray River and the well-maintained public spaces.
- The river is a desirable focal point for leisure, with activities like walking, picnics, and water sports being popular.
- There was recognition of ongoing improvements by RPC to enhancing the riverfront and public spaces, which contributes to the town's appeal.

Riverland Lifestyle

- Similarly, the area is valued for its strong community spirit, family-friendly environment, and relaxed, laid-back lifestyle.
- Respondents appreciate the sense of security and the welcoming atmosphere of the town.



Amenities and Services

- Access to essential services, such as shops, pharmacies, and recreational facilities, is appreciated.
- The town's cleanliness, safety, and the availability of various amenities like walking trails, playgrounds, and community events were frequently mentioned.

Survey Question 2: In 10 years' time you hope Renmark Paringa will be...

Responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting a strong sense of community pride and hope for future development. The key themes emerging from the data include:

Family-Friendly

- Many respondents emphasised the need for the area to become even more family-friendly, with calls for improved playgrounds, better swimming facilities (including indoor pools), and more activities for children and youth to keep them engaged and active.

Active With Convenient Access to Services

- There is a desire amongst those that participated for economic growth, including more shops, restaurants, cafes, and local businesses, particularly in the town centre.
- Some respondents also expressed hope for increased access to government services, better healthcare, and more educational opportunities.

Vibrant with Tourism

- Many envision Renmark Paringa as a top tourist destination, with a thriving food, wine, and retail scene.
- Respondents were supportive of attracting more visitors with events, vibrant markets, and more dining and shopping options, while also preserving the natural beauty and charm of the area.

Sustainable

- A recurring theme was the desire to maintain and enhance the area's natural environment, including the health of the river, surrounding native vegetation, and more green spaces.
- Some respondents also highlighted the importance of incorporating First Nations knowledge and culture into the area's future.



A Charming Township

- Despite the calls for growth, there was also strong sentiment to maintain the 'small-town feel', ensuring that any development across RPC is balanced with preserving the charm of the region, still safe and peaceful.

Socially and Culturally Inclusive

- Respondents hoped for a community that is socially equitable, culturally rich, and inclusive, with more opportunities for social connections through sports, arts, and various interest groups.

Survey Question 3: What is the most important thing for Renmark Paringa Council to do now to plan for 2034?

The sentiment expressed in the responses was generally constructive, with a mix of optimism and concern for the future of RPC. Key themes include:

Investment in Infrastructure

- Respondents were keen to see a strong focus on improving and maintaining infrastructure, such as footpaths, roads, and public spaces.
- Respondents emphasised the need for better pedestrian and wheelchair access, continued enhancement of public spaces, and walking trails.
- The upgrade to key sporting facilities (specifically, the AFL/Netball facility in Renmark) and playgrounds (including provision of a regional level playspace) were also seen by respondents as an area of priority.

Invest in Economic Development

- Respondents showed an interest in attracting new businesses, filling 'empty shops', and supporting local industries to stimulate economic growth.
- Tourism and commercial opportunities were seen as vital for the region's future.
- More community events and markets to foster social connections and economic vibrancy.

Retain young people

- Ensuring that young people and families have access to services, recreational facilities, and educational opportunities was a common priority area amongst respondents.
- The community wants to create a family-friendly environment that supports the social and educational development of children and young people.



Advocate for Health and Aged Care Services

- Similarly, access to health care and aged care are key concerns, with many respondents calling for improved medical services and support for the aging population.

Support Development of Affordable Housing

- Respondents also emphasised the need for more affordable housing, with calls for increasing the housing supply and ensuring diverse, accessible options for all residents, (including seniors and lower-income families).

Look after the Environment

- Respondents expressed a desired for focus on sustainable practices, such as planting native trees, preserving natural habitats, and planning for future growth in a way that respects the environment.

Recognise the Cultural History of the Region

- There was a call for greater recognition and engagement with First Nation communities, including creating 'culturally safe spaces' and preserving Aboriginal history.

Engage the Community

- Many responses highlighted the importance of engaging with the community through consultation and feedback.
- Residents want to be involved in planning and decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard and needs are met.

Survey Question 4: Anything else you want to add?

Respondents were given a final opportunity to provide other ideas, capturing the following future-focussed comments:

- Improving pedestrian and vehicle interactions (specifically 21st Street bridge).
- Adding and upgrading playgrounds, particularly in under-served areas.
- Enhancing public spaces with additional amenities such as exercise equipment, water slides, and adventure parks.
- Simplifying the development process for landowners and supporting local business growth.
- Developing tourism through improved accommodation, conference centres and unique attractions.



- Promoting the region more effectively, including rebranding the wine region and supporting local businesses.
- Expanding and diversifying community events to cater to different demographics and interests.
- Enhancing access to healthy activities, including bike tracks and an indoor pool for year-round use.

Respondents also provided feedback specifically to RPC regarding how it conducts its business, encouraging the Council to maintain transparency and efficiency in council operations, to keep applying for government funding and to support community-driven initiatives.

10.3 **Second Phase Community Engagement**

Council will undertake further community engagement/public consultation on the draft Community Plan over 21 days (commencing in October) to gather feedback in response to its draft strategic directions.

Further detail about the approach to community engagement for this second phase will be provided via separate Council report.

11. **PRELIMINARY DIRECTIONS**

Preliminary directions were provided to support stakeholder engagement and reflect the early stakeholder insights.

Many of these preliminary directions are also reflected in the draft Community Plan (as marked).

11.1 **Stakeholder Insights**

Preliminary stakeholder insights were captured through engagement with senior staff and Elected Members in June 2024.

Following the first phase of community engagement and demographic review (i.e. this report), further insights were captured through stakeholder engagement with senior staff and Elected Members in September to inform the preparation of the draft Community Plan.

11.2 **Strategic Framework, Structure Delivery**

Based on input received, the Council is clear that the review should include changes to the Strategic Framework to reframe the Long Term Strategic Directions as a *supporting* and not a driving strategic document.



There is also a desire to amalgamate the Community Plan and Corporate Plan to create a consolidated, 'delivery focussed' Community Plan. This will improve reporting and make it easier to promote to the Council what activities are being undertaken in support of strategic outcomes.

These changes are reflected in the draft Community Plan.

Likewise, the Council intends to review its suite of supporting plans to identify areas for focus and investment. It will also consider effective reporting mechanisms and measures.

The revised Strategic Framework is shown in Figure Sixteen.

Figure Sixteen: Reframed Strategic Framework Diagram





11.3 Community Plan Preliminary Directions

Structure

- Distribute Goal Areas evenly across Strategic Outcomes (if there is only one supportive goal area, then it doesn't warrant a Strategic Outcome)
- Combined with Corporate Plan
- Include Key Initiatives

These changes are reflected in the draft Community Plan.

Content

- Maintain four Strategic Outcomes
- Clarify the tag words (ideally, these are just shortforms for the Strategic Outcome)
- Fill Goal Area gaps and consolidate goal areas where necessary.
- Identify prospective key initiatives for inclusion.
- Add supporting measures (if practicable)

These changes are reflected in the draft Community Plan.

Appearance and Tone

- Provide a positive, future focussed design.
- Leverage the Community Plan as a 'prospectus' for investment in the region.
- The plan should reflect the pride that the community has in its region.

These changes are reflected in the draft Community Plan.