



Submission to the 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy

August 2019

Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island (RDA AHFKI) play an active and key role on behalf of all three levels of government in the development of its region. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the discussion paper and help shape the state's 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy.

The Region

Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island is a very diverse region encompassing peri-urban districts surrounding the eastern and southern edges of metropolitan Adelaide, to remote districts separated from Adelaide by sea. The regions economic makeup is as diverse although some industries are of common importance including primary industry, health and social care, construction, education and tourism.

The identification of growth areas in the 30-Year Plan for Adelaide recognises the attractive lifestyle on offer in the region whether for tree or sea-changers. Those growth areas include Mount Barker, Strathalbyn and the Fleurieu peninsula's coastal townships (Goolwa to Victor Harbor, and Yankalilla). Aside from the growth pain experienced in towns like Mount Barker, there are also demographic trends causing pains for some towns. Strathalbyn is evolving into a commuter township, particularly as retail spend shifts to nearby Mount Barker. The coastal townships of the Fleurieu Peninsula are attractive to retirees and their local economy is impacted by an increasingly aged population.

The attractiveness of the region is reflected in the regions average annual population growth from 2009 to 2018 (1.3%pa) which has been closer to that of the country (1.6%pa) than that of South Australia (0.9%pa). Similarly, the regions GRP has continually grown at a stronger rate than the state since at least the year 2000.

A New Focus

In the realm of funding constraints, focus needs to be applied to determine where best to invest. RDA AHFKI suggest identification of growth centres and prioritised resourcing rather than a broad-brush approach to the state. In our region the identification of growth centres in the 30-Year Plan for Adelaide completed the identification piece but did not provide the supporting resources to plan and build enabling infrastructure such as new and better roads, expanded schools, improved public transport and additional sporting facilities just to name a few.

At a regional level the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula have distinct competitive advantages for growth, as demonstrated above regarding GRP and population growth. Winners need to be backed and these regions could be identified for infrastructure investment to further leverage their competitive advantages with a high level of certainty around success.

Such an approach will also enable better master planning that can encompass all the facets of successful growth, many of which are discussed below.

Unlocking Economic Growth

There are many examples of opportunities to unlock economic growth in the region. The areas of focus that will unlock economic growth for RDA AHFKI include:

- Congestion

The rapid population growth in Mount Barker has created congestion which is reducing liveability. A solution for a whole-of-project approach to construction of the Heysen Boulevard ring-road through the extensive development on the southern side of Mount Barker is needed to relieve congestion on existing roads, reduce rat-running through back-streets, and enable planning and delivery of new public transport services.

- Transport productivity

Productivity gains can be realised region-wide for freight transport however specific opportunities include investment in a Hahndorf heavy freight bypass, the Middleton bypass as part of the proposed Southern Freight Route, finalisations of the merits of the Globelink project to divert heavy freight around the Adelaide Hills, and safety upgrades including additional overtaking lanes and shoulder sealing on roads such as the Long Valley Road between Mount Barker and Strathalbyn.

- Public transport

A recent public transport study of the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula highlighted the dire need for improved public transport in the region. Recommendations included among others a new service between Goolwa and Victor Harbor and new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services between Adelaide and the Adelaide Hills. New infrastructure will facilitate implementation including new and or expanded Park and Rides, and major interchanges.

- Access

Significant economic opportunity for the region cannot be realised without improved access that will improve liveability and growth of industry and tourism. For the region the key investment requirements include duplication of Victor Harbor Road, upgrades of ports at Cape Jervis and Penneshaw, improved traffic flow on Glen Osmond Road, and development of marina and cruise ship infrastructure at Victor Harbor. In the longer term, future proofing the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Murraylands can be achieved with long-term planning for a fast train service that will unlock significant growth in those regions by reducing barriers for commuters and tourism access.

- Decentralisation

The liveability of the region offers immediate, attractive opportunity for decentralisation of government administration and services. Benefits will be possible for Adelaide residents and commuters (reduced congestion), DPTI (extended road life), the environment (less carbon emissions) and the regional economy (greater local employment and economic activity).

- Study-hub

Retention of young people isn't a problem limited to Adelaide, the regions also suffer the same issue. One solution proven interstate is the development of regional study hubs which allow young people to

remain in their communities while they study and also allow delivery of skilled graduates in demand by local industries. A study hub is proposed for Victor Harbor.

- Utilities

The lack of utility services can be a significant barrier to growth. The high cost of bringing services to a project site are difficult to digest for project proponents or may even render the opportunity uneconomic. A government program to support developments through delivery of utilities would unlock significant regional investment in our regions industries including in tourism.

- Liveability

Maintenance of liveability will be critical to ongoing growth. Aside from factors around access, congestion and the like already mentioned, there is a need for better planning and investment in recreation infrastructure including in regional trails, sporting facilities (particularly at Mount Barker and Victor Harbor), regional education facilities and resources, cultural infrastructure and infrastructure such as parking and traffic management to enable better access to newly opened reservoirs including Myponga.

Connecting

RDA AHFKI maintain a database of its regional infrastructure needs and priorities through collaborations with all levels of government, industry, developers, project proponents and community groups. In particular, we are pro-active with our councils and operate an Economic Development Network (EDN) comprising economic development officers from all seven councils in the region. The primary focus of the network is to maintain a database of infrastructure priorities for the region. These guide the RDA AHFKI ongoing work priorities. RDA AHFKI look forward to engaging with Infrastructure SA to share those priorities for our region.
