



City of
Mount Gambier



Partnership Priorities and Advocacy 2024 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

The City of Mount Gambier aims to continue strengthening its partnerships with local, state and federal governments and stakeholders to advocate for community opportunities and challenges and work together to provide improved services for the city and the Limestone Coast region. This is the second Partnership Priorities and Advocacy document for Council. The first edition, from November/December 2021, guided many conversations and promoted issues of importance with all of our partners. This second edition outlines what has been achieved and updates the critical issues.

The initiatives identified within this document will help to facilitate the growth and prosperity of the local community, the region and South Australia. The advocacy and partnership opportunities are categorised under the four elements of the City of Mount Gambier Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 and include:

- Local transport,
- Housing,
- Education,
- Health services and emergency support,
- Internet connectivity,
- Road, rail and freight infrastructure,
- Forestry and water,
- Sustainability, environment, waste and the circular economy,
- Tourism and major events,
- Workforce attraction and retention,
- Arts and creative industry, and
- Regional collaboration.

These areas form the basis for the current and future work of Council, with objectives to maximise funding and advocacy opportunities as they arise to deliver sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits for the community.

Mount Gambier has a strong history of implementing innovative major projects that continue to set standards for regional South Australia. From the award winning Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre, the nationally recognised Mount Gambier Library, to the construction of Council's largest ever infrastructure project, Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre, these projects demonstrate Mount Gambier's dedication to successful outcomes for both its community and for regional South Australia.

We look forward to working in partnership with all levels of government and other partners to deliver these important shared outcomes for the benefit of our community and South Australia as a whole.

The City of Mount Gambier acknowledges the Boandik Peoples as the traditional custodians of the land Mount Gambier sits upon today.

We respect their spiritual relationship with the land and recognise the deep feelings of attachment our First Nations peoples have with the land.

The City of Mount Gambier is committed to working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the process of reconciliation.

OUR COMMITMENT AND VISION

Mount Gambier (population: 27,771 (profile id, 2022)) is the economic hub for the Limestone Coast region with annual economy of \$6.8billion (RAI [In]Sight), more than twice that of Whyalla (population: 21,894 (profile id, 2022)) and 25 per cent higher than Warrnambool, Victoria (population: 35,406 (ABS ERP, 2021)). Mount Gambier has more than 2,105 businesses with 12,345 residents employed in 2021. Mount Gambier is the regional centre of South East South Australia and Western Victoria with a role, function and responsibility for driving the development agenda in this corner of Australia.

Mount Gambier is built on the strength of its people, a clean natural environment and the diversity of its industries. Council strives to create vibrancy, promote our identity and build on our reputation as a place to live, work, visit and invest. To provide a future for our people, we require additional economic growth, employment, and recreational and educational opportunities.

The richness and diversity of:

- Our People
- Our Location
- Our Economy; and
- Our Climate, Natural Resources, Art, Culture and Heritage

make Mount Gambier the thriving, successful place that people are proud to call home.

These elements will contribute towards the future growth and development of the city and form the goals of the Council's Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024. These areas provide the strategic base from which Council's priorities are built and provide opportunities outlined in this Partnership Priorities and Advocacy document to partner with all levels of government.

These goals bring together four key themes that affect our people – whether they live, work, study or visit the city of Mount Gambier. We seek to grow our city and the communities of which it is comprised, and the capabilities of our people and their connection to each other and to the city are key.

Council is embarking on our community vision for 2035. This advocacy document will continue to respond to any new priorities for our community that arise from this process.



PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVEMENT

The City of Mount Gambier Partnership Priorities and Advocacy 2021 - 2022 document was a valuable resource used to guide many conversations and highlight issues of importance with all of our partners. This second edition builds on what has been achieved for our community because of partnership and investment by all levels of government, including:

- ✓ Appointment of South Australia's first Cross Border Commissioner.
- ✓ Increased State Government investment into public housing over the next four years.
- ✓ Adoption of City of Mount Gambier's Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy.
- ✓ Announcement of upgrades to Mount Gambier and Districts Health Service, including Mental Health Unit and Emergency Department.
- ✓ Opening of a Medicare Urgent Care Clinic in Mount Gambier.
- ✓ Announcement of Mount Gambier education and training precinct development that will include UniSA, TAFE, Forestry Centre of Excellence, Mount Gambier Technical College and Flinders University Regional Allied Health Program.
- ✓ Adoption of the City of Mount Gambier Blue Lake Sports Park Masterplan.
- ✓ Secured funding for Head to Health facility in Mount Gambier.
- ✓ Commencement of road infrastructure upgrades on Jubilee Highway by Department of Infrastructure and Transport.

OUR PEOPLE

Local Transport

Mount Gambier has maintained a fixed route public bus transport system for more than 60 years, with the current service in place for 30 years. It has been largely unaltered during this time.

The current public bus service is funded by the State Government and is provided by a third party. The service has recently been tendered and a new provider has been selected. However, the service level remains the same without route changes.

The service currently doesn't allow people to access employment and/or education facilities given its restricted hours of operation and does not adequately service facilities such as the Mount Gambier Hospital, Foodbank, the newly developed Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre and senior lifestyle villages of Woodlands and Hallmont. It also has lengthy wait times for servicing stops along each route and lacks service to residential growth areas.

When compared with other similar sized regional communities in Australia, Mount Gambier's current public transport service is sub-standard. The comparative expenditure allocated to the local service is more appropriate for a community of around 3000 to 6000 people rather than a regional capital of around 28,000.

According to Bus SA's 2018 Election Platform, *Moving People 2025*, regional spend per capita was approximately \$200 per head in Victoria/New South Wales, \$120 per head in Western Australia, and under \$20 per head in South Australia.

Partnering with the City of Mount Gambier to upgrade the provision of transport services is an important lever to activate Mount Gambier's natural and built assets and link its health, recreation, and community services. It will be a key economic driver for the future of a modern and connected city.

The State Government will be undertaking a Regional Transport Review in 2024 and Council will make a submission to advocate for significant improvements to service delivery.

Advocacy

Equity of spending on bus services and implementation of new routes.



Housing

Economic growth is increasingly compromised by access to housing. In the context of an expanding property market and regionalisation, Council is exploring implementation models with the private and non-government sectors to facilitate access to housing for incoming residents to work and invest in the community.

A key step is upgrading the existing housing stock to increase the supply of affordable housing provided and determining the viability of including affordable homes as a requirement of new housing estates and developments. This would help ensure people on low incomes are not priced out of the market or put at risk and would facilitate workforce planning with an adequate housing supply.

The State Government has committed an additional \$55.2 million over the next four years to additional public housing on top of the \$177.5 million election commitment to deliver 400 new public homes, upgrade 350 others and extra maintenance for a further 3000 properties.

In addition, tens of millions of dollars is being invested to upgrade 350 vacant properties to be homes again for those throughout the state who need them.

The Federal Government's \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund is designed to create a secure, ongoing funding pipeline for social and affordable rental housing.

The Office for Regional Housing is also expected to deliver approximately 30 new homes for police, teachers and healthcare workers in Mount Gambier and other regional locations in South Australia as part of a pilot program.

Partnership priority

Work in partnership to address housing accessibility in Mount Gambier.

Establish regional targets for housing in South Australia from the Federal Housing Australia Future Fund.



Library

State Government Funding Agreement

Following the expiration of a ten year State Government funding agreement, a new agreement has been negotiated until 2026. The new agreement secured funding for public libraries through a material grant and an operational grant each year. However, this agreement does not include indexation and results in a decrease in funding.

The City of Mount Gambier supports the Local Government Association (LGA) in its current campaign to reintroduce indexation of the funding to ensure support for the purchase of library resources and the delivery of programs, events and other library services for our community.

Digital Literacy

The ability to access the online world and navigate that world has never been more important. Government and private services continue to move online and digital skills are essential for employment and education opportunities and for social inclusion.

The reduction in face-to-face services, including bank branches, telco shopfronts and state and federal government departments, has increased the frustration and stress for community members who don't have the access they need to go online, which has put extra pressure on libraries who are playing a broad and growing digital support role without the additional resourcing and staffing to match.

Funding support

Funding commitment as agreed to be indexed to CPI for the next five years.

Funding commitment to support libraries' role in upskilling our community to increase digital literacy.



Health

Primary Health Care and Preventative Health Services

Mount Gambier is the major service centre for the Limestone Coast and services an area of almost 75,000 people across the South East of South Australia and Western Victoria. The Limestone Coast has a variety of health services and options available and the local health network plays a critical role in ensuring affordable access to associated specialist services and allied health. Following considerable advocacy from Council, an Urgent Care Clinic has been introduced in Mount Gambier.

Council is committed to the wellbeing of the community and acknowledges that quality health care is an essential service for this to be realised. To fulfil Council's vision to be 'an inclusive city where people lead fulfilling lives' health services must meet individual needs, irrespective of location.

Council is committed to partnering with health services to advocate for appropriate care in our region.

There are currently gaps in health services in the region, including but not limited to - private hospital provision, day surgery options, palliative care, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, mental health support and radiation treatment.

The outcomes of the Aged Care Royal Commission are creating further pressure on our aged care sector with significant gaps in access to qualified and skilled staff.

Council continue to advocate to state and national bodies for increased disability and inclusion support in the Limestone Coast.

Currently, Mount Gambier residents requiring radiotherapy must travel to Adelaide or Warrnambool to receive radiation treatment.

Ongoing facilitation and advocacy for the development of health services in Mount Gambier is important to meet community needs but is also a pillar to drive the economy into the future.

Flight schedules and their reliability are a challenge for patients travelling for treatment and are a significant barrier to attracting medical specialists to Mount Gambier. When flights are unreliable, it disrupts appointments and can deter medical professionals from considering positions in regional areas altogether.

The challenges associated with practising medicine in regional cities, such as distance from specialised resources and equipment and limited access to professional development and career prospects, can lead to higher turnover rates of healthcare professionals.

Multi government collaboration will begin to resolve health worker shortages and ensure regional communities get better access to health professionals and care.

Advocacy

Radiation treatment delivered in the Limestone Coast.



Suicide Prevention and Aftercare Options

Research indicates that suicide remains a high risk to any person who has attempted suicide at least three months after the attempt (Life In Mind, 2021). When people present at an Emergency Department after an attempt they are often checked over, discharged and perhaps given a referral for counselling. Waiting lists for counselling, if the person can afford the gap fees, are often up to three months and beyond leaving them in a high-risk status.

In Adelaide there are two services, *The Way Back* – a Beyond Blue program and the Suicide Prevention Support Service, both delivered through Anglicare SA. The Suicide Prevention Support Service is limited to the Fleurieu Peninsula and the Adelaide Hills.

South Australia lost 226 lives to suicide in 2021. According to Lifeline Australia an estimated 65,000 people attempt to take their life each year. People in rural populations are two times more likely to take their life by suicide (AIHW, 2022). This is strong evidence of why an after-attempt support service must be available to every South Australian.

The City of Mount Gambier advocates strongly for services that address both prevention and care of its community in times of need.

Advocacy

Expansion of regional services that address both suicide prevention and aftercare for the community.

Palliative Care Services

Over the past four years, palliative care in Australian hospitals has increased by 28%. As more people age and live alone, the demand for health services continues to rise.

In the Limestone Coast a committed team of specialist palliative care nurses covers a large area from Mount Gambier to Bordertown. Our local hospital has one dedicated, but not exclusive, palliative care room. There is no resident palliative care specialist.

To address this gap, a dedicated volunteer group has introduced the Mount Gambier In Home Hospice Care service. This unique service, the first of its kind in South Australia, offers crucial non medical support to ease the burden on caregivers and families. It allows patients to stay home longer, avoiding unnecessary hospital visits. The service was made possible by a \$150,000 grant from the South Australian Government's Health and Wellbeing Palliative Care 2020 Grants program.

Despite the introduction of the Mount Gambier In Home Hospice Care service, there is still a need for a purpose-built palliative care facility in Mount Gambier. The South Australian Government is currently conducting a feasibility study and business case to explore the possibility of establishing a dedicated palliative care facility in the City of Mount Gambier, serving the broader Limestone Coast region.

Funding support

Funding commitment for a dedicated palliative care facility based in the city of Mount Gambier and servicing the wider Limestone Coast region.



Migrant Settlement Services

There is a steady flow of refugees and new migrants to Mount Gambier and the broader Limestone Coast region. Our local Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) provides support for migrant settlement, community capacity building and development for new migrants, empowering them through training and employment initiatives.

By assisting in building community, the MRC supports new arrivals and their new and establishing groups and communities to engage with and contribute effectively to Mount Gambier's society, culture, economy and environment.

Further support is required to enhance cultural awareness and advocacy within the community. Additional support would enable training for businesses on common issues faced by refugees during settlement to boost efforts in employment support, training, and apprenticeships. Fostering inclusive participation in events and activities empowers new arrivals to actively contribute to the community's cultural, economic and social fabric. Additional resources in these areas are important for the continued successful integration of migrants in Mount Gambier.

Advocacy

Expansion of regional services provided for the settlement of new migrants to the city of Mount Gambier and broader region.

Emergency Support

As one of the busiest Metropolitan Fire Service stations in South Australia, Mount Gambier pursues an adapted solution to ensure the community's safety through the provision of appropriate response vehicles. The 2021/2022 Metropolitan Fire Service performance report shows the Mount Gambier station attended 454 incidents, responding to 271 more incidents than Mount Barker and 172 more than Seaford.

The State Government announced eight new heavy urban pump rescue appliances for South Australia with a reduced plan for Mount Gambier of a second hand vehicle despite trucks used by local crews being 20 years old – five years beyond the ideal age limit.

Mount Gambier received a second hand appliance as its first response unit and the pump went soon after the station received it. This also happened with another temporary replacement unit which failed and was then written off.

Council has resolved to advocate for improved equipment, facilities and extended services for the MFS.

Council continues to advocate for stronger community resilience actions to support communities in preparing for, responding to, enduring and recovering from adverse situations in alignment with the Australian Local Government Association's Strategic Plan. This includes funding to develop an emergency management plan and funding for council supported community relief and recovery centres.

Additional support from CFS to work with councils can help identify high risk assets and preventative strategies, such as participating in controlled burns on agreed council controlled assets.

Funding support

Ensure sustainable capital funding for appropriate asset maintenance and replacement regime for emergency management.



Education

Tertiary and Vocational Education

Support for the presence of tertiary education providers is important to the economic growth of Mount Gambier which experiences lower levels of school and post-school attainment compared with South Australia as a whole. In terms of post-secondary attainment, the region has a significantly lower proportion of the adult population with Bachelor degrees or higher (11.8 per cent, compared with 22.7 per cent for South Australia as a whole (ABS, 2021)).

Based on the 2021 Census, 37.7 per cent of the population aged over 15 years in the Limestone Coast had attained Year 12, compared to 52.6 per cent for South Australia. The city also rates poorly in terms of innovation and start-up businesses, with a lower level of business start-ups than many other regional cities.

The Mount Gambier and District Tertiary Health Education Grants have supported residents from Mount Gambier and the surrounding district who need to leave the region to undertake university studies in health skill areas required within our community.

Each year, a limited number of grants are offered, building our regional capacity to generate an increased presence of skilled and trained health professionals.

The grants deliver a unique community-led response to local essential skill shortages within the health sector but the widening of support for tertiary and vocational education funding for the region is essential to continue building the economy through innovation and skills.

The City of Mount Gambier supports programs and the tertiary education sector that connect with local industry and actively seeks to partner with government to obtain funding initiatives to facilitate the sustainability of the regional workforce.

The Government of South Australia's commitment to developing a Mount Gambier education and training precinct at the existing UniSA and TAFE provides an opportunity for industry engagement with the broader region to ensure the training matches local skills needs and students can access local employment opportunities. City of Mount Gambier continues to advocate for the community with representation on the steering committee for this development.

The merger of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia will create one of the largest tertiary education providers in the country. It has the potential to strengthen the local delivery of tertiary education programs, further advancing Mount Gambier as a "university city".

Advocacy

Ongoing commitment to existing tertiary offering and increased support for tertiary and vocational education funding for the region.

Primary and Secondary Education

As Mount Gambier's population continues to grow, it is crucial to proactively monitor the demand for primary and secondary education. This ongoing assessment in Mount Gambier ensures that educational resources align with the increasing population, facilitating effective planning and resource allocation. This approach to the evolving needs of the community means educational stakeholders can address challenges in a proactive manner, maintaining a responsive and thriving education system.

Child Care Services

Child care centres throughout Australia are struggling with such severe workforce shortages, leading to the cap of enrolments. Jobs and Skills Australia data shows the number of estimated vacancies for childcare workers has roughly doubled since before the pandemic, creating challenges to deliver essential services.

OUR LOCATION

Crater Lakes Activation

The Crater Lakes is an integral part of Mount Gambier, not only significantly contributing to the liveability of our city but also as an important connection to culture and the natural environment.

In 2021 Council and SA Water finalised co-dedication of the Blue Lake/Warwar and are working collaboratively to ensure the provision of water supply and services and to develop the potential to maximise one of South Australia's iconic natural assets.

Council is developing a Crater Lakes Activation Plan to work with the community to explore options and deliver actions to capitalise on the Crater Lakes precinct.

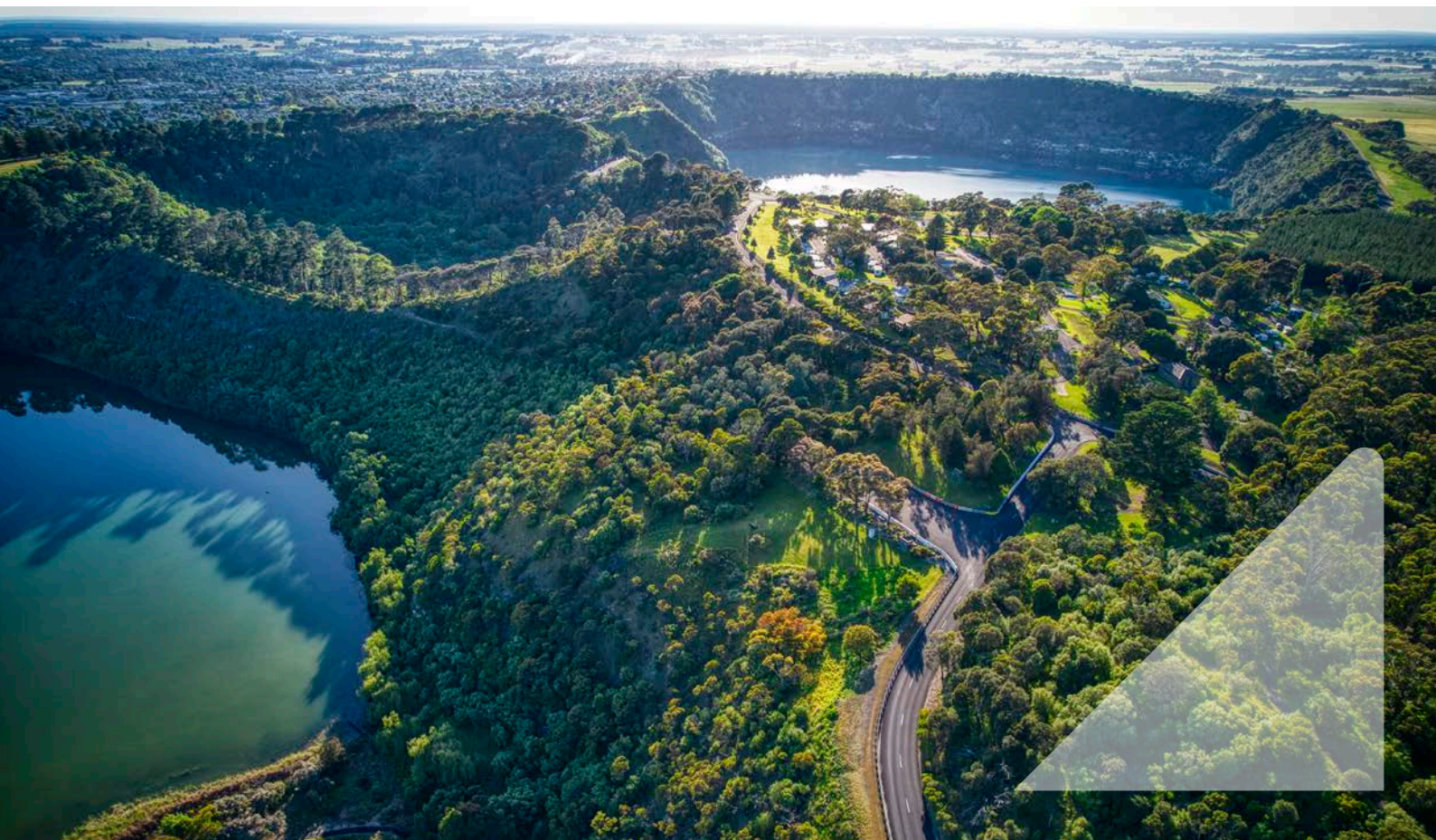
Various established trails are used for different activities and events in alignment with the City of Mount Gambier's ongoing commitment to promote the area for outdoor recreational activity for locals and visitors to the city.

As part of the Crater Lakes Activation Plan project, Council developed the Crater Lakes Trails Plan to guide the sustainable provision, management, and maintenance of the park's trail network. This work supports the State Government's goal of becoming a leading destination for trail experiences as outlined in the Statewide Trails Strategy.

Council is also actively pursuing the opportunity with public and private partners to explore developing a range of accommodation options and experiences to take advantage of the Blue Lake/Warwar and Crater Lakes precinct.

Partnership opportunity

Investment opportunities to be developed in alignment with the Crater Lakes Activation Plan. Indicative cost \$5+ million.



CBD Activation

In the context of the Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre build, previous work to complete the Railway Lands and current discussion on the future use of the old Railway Station building and platform, combined with events in the Cave Garden/Thugi and Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre, there are multiple opportunities to activate the CBD.

Outdoor Dining

To encourage social interaction by slowing speeds, increasing connectivity and economic spend, projects to create a better outdoor dining space along Commercial Street East (between Penola Road/Bay Road and Ferrers Street/Mitchell Street), enabling local traders to improve vibrancy, pedestrian movement and economic activity within the city centre are being explored.

This re-capture of public space will include widening the footpath and adding more bike parking and greenery without blocking the traffic lane in front of businesses. This activates a new public space open to anyone to enjoy and maintained by the shop owner. Activation levers to create thriving public spaces help bring neighbours together, create more breathing room and support local businesses.

Funding support

Indicative funding support - \$250,000.

Signage

City of Mount Gambier has developed a signage strategy and implementation plan to increase connectivity of the CBD with our city’s built and natural assets. This will assist in increasing awareness and visitation while sharing our stories to maximise benefits for Mount Gambier.

Improved wayfinding and interpretive signage will align with international signage standards and incorporate dual naming of significant cultural sites.

The Blue Lake/Warwar, Crater Lakes precinct and Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul present the opportunity to significantly enhance visitor experiences to be creative, accessible, informative and dynamic in a context of rapidly changing technologies.

Funding support

Funding for implementation of signage strategy. Indicative cost \$1 million.



Road, Rail and Freight Infrastructure

Australia’s ongoing investment in infrastructure to enable a world-class supply chain requires evaluation of the reinvigoration of rail in the Limestone Coast and South West Victoria as an opportunity to future proof the connection to this vital new supply chain.

The City of Mount Gambier supports Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast with CSIRO commissioned work to map the region’s freight task and model the economic benefits of rail with infrastructure and intermodal connections. This will not impact the Rail Trail in the CBD.

The study examined commodities and tested forestry and wood products, dairy, grains, pulses, livestock (beef and sheep), wool and horticulture. Mount Gambier to Heywood was identified as the most attractive option with an estimated \$15.6 million in savings for regional producers per year.

With an estimated reinstatement cost of between \$120-\$150 million, based on a reinstatement cost of similar rail lines in Victoria, the return on investment (ROI) without considered avoided costs would be 7.7 years to 9.6 years. The diversion of 254,413 tonnes of freight from the road network to rail would also incur additional savings such as a reduction in both road maintenance and road crash costs. It is estimated these savings would be \$1.7 million annually. This reduces the ROI to 6.9 years to 8.6 years.

Partnership opportunity

Advocacy for ongoing consideration of study.
Estimated reinstatement cost of rail line
\$120 - \$150 million.

In addition, the opportunity exists to remove rail easement/encumbrances from the title of land previously gifted to City of Mount Gambier between Wehl Street and Bay Road, as well as the 14 acres of rail land backing onto Hastings Cunningham Reserve. This would present an opportunity for the City of Mount Gambier to further activate the area as per the Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy.

Partnership opportunity

Consideration to gifting the 14 acres of rail land to City of Mount Gambier to further enhance Hastings Cunningham Reserve.

Consideration of the removal of outdated rail encumbrances from land titles gifted to the City of Mount Gambier.

The city of Mount Gambier is a community that relies on adequate road infrastructure. A commitment to fix numerous roads in the city area where bad wear and potholes are an increasing concern is urged from government partners. Leaning on the work of Green Triangle Freight Action Plan and leveraging opportunities with the Special Local Roads Program (SLRP).

Funding support

Funding commitment of \$2-4 million to support maintenance and renewal of Mount Gambier roads.

Increase DIT maintenance and renewal funding for roads to meet the current shortfall of estimated \$10 - 20 million.

Establish DIT depot in Mount Gambier to improve maintenance response and delivery.



Regional Collaboration

Regionalisation of government services to regional areas are important activators to strengthen South Australia's economy. Advocating for more region based government services is important to the Limestone Coast and to the City of Mount Gambier.

The City of Mount Gambier recognises the importance of the Regional Australia Institute and their framework to rebalance the nation through the Regionalisation Ambition 2032. To strengthen our position as a growing regional capital city and contribute to policy settings and decisions, Council is a member of the Regional Activators Alliance.

We value the significant appointment of the Cross-Border Commissioner who will be an integral voice connecting and advocating for cross-border communities, businesses and organisations working closely with local, state, and federal governments to identify, analyse and resolve issues.

Council is actively engaged in regional planning efforts to support and promote sustainable growth within the region, ensuring that growth is aligned with the provision of hard and soft infrastructure.

Funding support

Investment in critical regional infrastructure to support the state and nation's economy.

Forestry

The Green Triangle forest and timber sector is the backbone of South Australia's regional economy, employing more than 18,000 people and injecting \$3 billion into the state economy annually.

However, it faces one of the biggest challenges of its 145-year history. The forestry plantation estate is in decline.

This once productive plantation estate is being transferred to general agriculture at a time when the nation is experiencing a critical lumber shortage for housing construction.

Despite investor interest in plantations and global and domestic demand for wood products, which is anticipated to quadruple by 2050, the Green Triangle estate is shrinking at approximately 5,000 hectares a year, resulting in a significant loss of carbon sequestration value.

The loss of plantation estate is a critical policy issue that requires urgent government resolution to protect South Australian jobs in forestry, timber and construction industries. The Green Triangle Forestry Industry Hub in partnership with National Institute Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) is building a comprehensive scientific evidence base

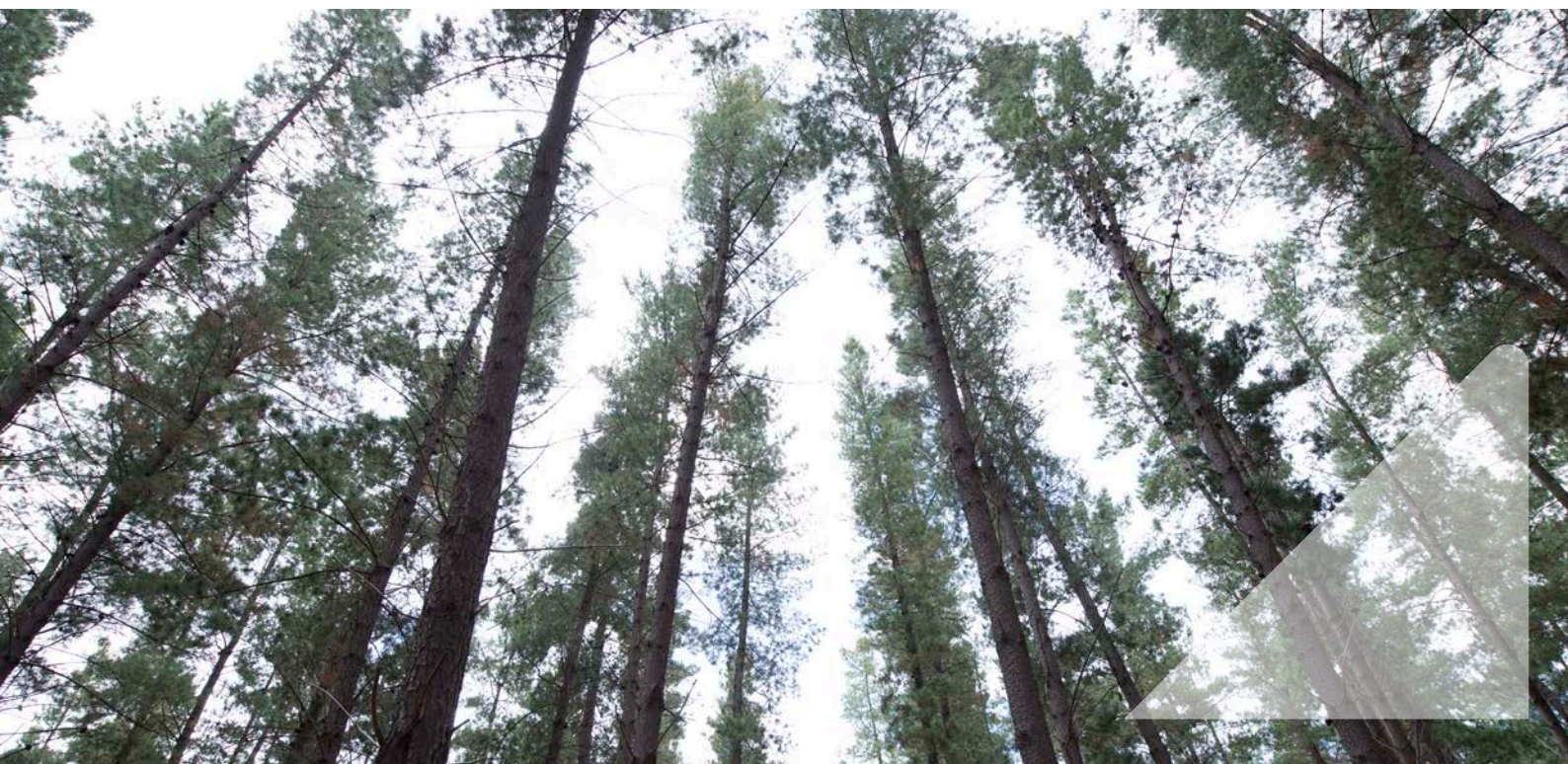
to support government in delivering sustainable policy solutions to ensure the sector is no longer disproportionately impacted by water reductions.

Early findings have indicated that plantation tree water use is far less than previously assumed, providing an opportunity for both primary industries and environmental gain at the 2023 Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan (LLCWAP) review.

The City of Mount Gambier provides support for the industry to seek government support to arrest the forest decline and stop the ongoing impacts of the LLCWAP. The sector seeks an open and independent review of the existing plan in the short term, working proactively with all primary industries to deliver a plan that can achieve sector demands while protecting the finite resource.

Policy resolution

Government resolution to adjust policy settings to address the loss of plantation estate to protect South Australian jobs in forestry, timber and construction industries.



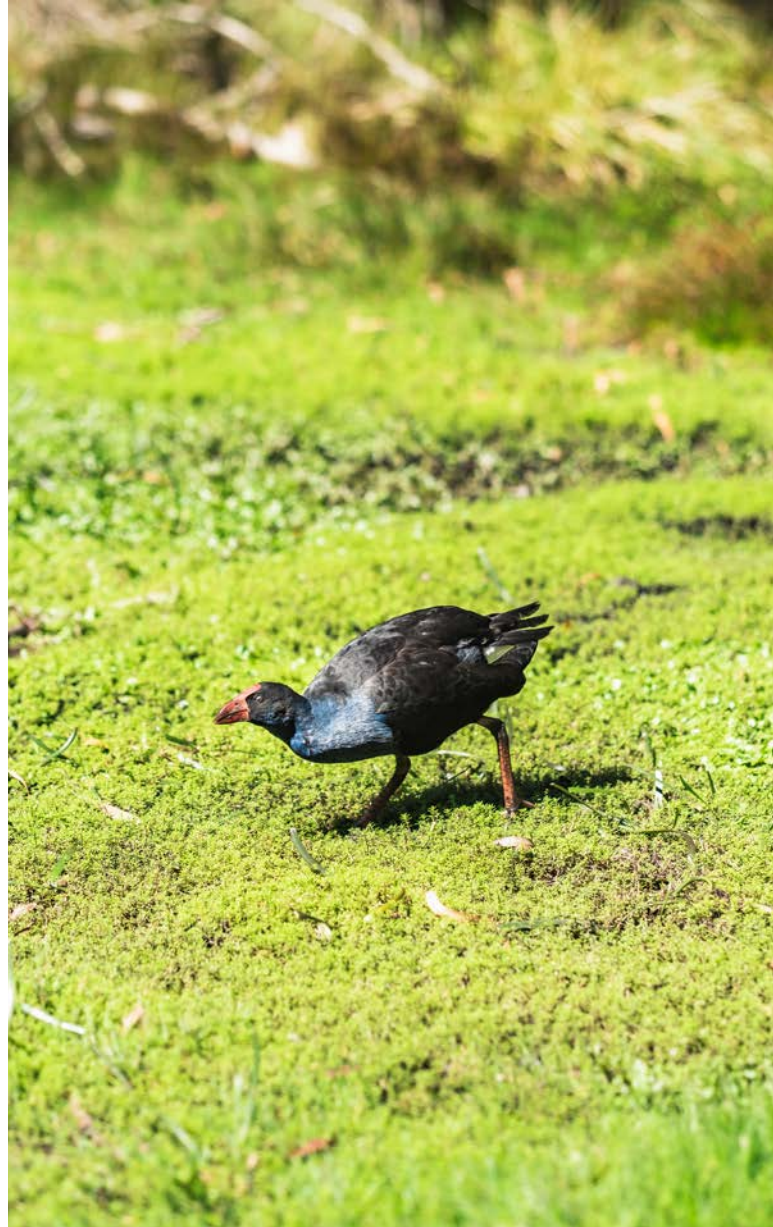
Native Vegetation

In partnership with the Limestone Coast Landscape Board and Traditional Owners, environmental restoration of the Crater Lakes precinct will provide integrated land management with economic development and tourism and create a liveable city where people respect nature.

The collaboration aligns with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. A significant opportunity exists to maximise the City of Mount Gambier's current resourcing and to develop a network of urban volunteers to help eradicate weeds, revegetate native plants and support the restoration of missing wildlife species to the Crater Lakes.

Partnership opportunity

Funding support in partnership with the Limestone Coast Landscape Board.



Digital Connection

Mount Gambier continues to provide clean, healthy living conditions and aspires to achieve this with digital infrastructure to improve operational efficiency, share information and provide a better quality of service and wellbeing.

Funding support for digital solutions to assist Mount Gambier to take its current community amenities, including benches, bins, lighting, devices, and the use of data to be more interactive and efficient is an ongoing focus.

Subsidy support

Funding support for digital solutions to enable Mount Gambier to lead the region to be connected, efficient and sustainable.

OUR ECONOMY

Waste and Circular Economy

Regional Materials Recovery Facility

A Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) accepts commingled recycling – the materials from the household recycling bin. The facility then sorts these recyclables into a series of commodity streams ready for sale to various recycling markets. The Limestone Coast Local Government Association Regional Waste Management Steering Committee successfully secured funding from the Local Government Association of SA research fund to undertake a study in partnership with UniSA into the risks and feasibility of a regional MRF.

In alignment with Green Industries SA and the ongoing evolution of the circular economy, the City of Mount Gambier is seeking funding to unlock the regional potential to develop infrastructure to process and create new products from waste, new technologies, and commercialisation.

The City of Mount Gambier is exploring opportunities and addressing the regional challenges in managing resources and waste more sustainably, which requires a holistic understanding of relevant issues to conserve resources, reduce pollution and carbon emissions while maintaining human wellbeing within a supportive economy.

Funding support

Funding support based on MRFs operating in South Australia and operated by local government. Indicative cost - \$5 million.

Circular Economy Trial Projects

In 2022/2023 Council operations diverted more than 6,700 tonnes away from landfill to organics, recycling and reuse, demonstrating the City of Mount Gambier's ongoing commitment to playing an active role in the evolution of the circular economy.

The ReUse Market has been particularly popular with the community and provides both an avenue to dispose of many household items for free and reduce waste to landfill. Council is currently undertaking a trial to divert food waste from food businesses. To date more than 100 tonnes of food waste has been collected and processed at a local composting facility. The quality compost products are then used on gardens and farms, supporting a circular economy. Without the trial this material goes to landfill.

Council has supported local plastic recycling projects through the collection of materials. Plastic lids and bread tags are collected at the Civic Centre. The bread tags go to Transmutation in Robe and the lids go to the Precious Plastic program at Tenison Woods College. These materials are recycled into new products in our region. Additionally, Council has supported a local recycling start up 'Ecoplas'. This company recycles plastics such as milk bottles and wheelie bins and turns them into park benches, stakes, fencing materials etc. Council has provided space at the Waste Transfer Station for Ecoplas to test the business concept.

Advocacy and support

Support through policy and regional funding opportunities for Council to ensure the city is active in moving from waste to commodity and commercialisation.

Tourism and Major Events

Tourism Development

Mount Gambier is in the land of volcanoes, sinkholes, caves and crater lakes, with a moody and overcast landscape to pursue a sense of curiosity and wonder. Our unique landscape and story position us nationally and globally with a strong, authentic offering.

Mount Gambier offers the opportunity for a new economy with Victoria's strong self-drive connector market at our doorstep. The Limestone Coast achieved a \$441 million spend in 2022, with 30% of this derived from Victoria.

Our landscape story connects us through the Kanawinka Geopark across Western Victoria. With the recently announced funding to Great Ocean Road and the established Budj Bim, we are in a position to increase the spend from visitors to our area.

A cross-government approach would support the activation of high-visitation sites with authentic storytelling and connection, explore regeneration and soft-activation of natural assets, support new and enhanced tourism experiences and operators, and increase destination brand recognition.

Major Events

Centrally positioned between Melbourne and Adelaide, Mount Gambier presents an ideal meeting place for South Australian and Victorian audiences.

Mount Gambier offers a diverse range of venues and locations suitable for events and conferences of all sizes and formats.

Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre provides Mount Gambier with a home for large-scale indoor events, with a capacity for more than 2000 patrons, increasing Mount Gambier's profile and ability to host major sporting competitions, conferences, events and performances, providing significant social and economic benefits.

Partnership and funding

Funding support to attract large scale signature events and business events that generate significant economic benefits for the region.

Investment in cross border tourism opportunities.





Before the Bounce - AFL Gather Round

Mount Gambier is a proud sporting community with a particular love for Australian Rules Football. AusPlay data highlights AFL as the most popular organised sport in Mount Gambier and local league feature matches are known to capture crowds of up to 4,000 people.

Mount Gambier is the ideal location for the official launch of the Countdown Clock to Gather Round - 10 days out from the first game in South Australia in 2024.

Before the Bounce will signal the start of the Festival of Footy, which will include exhibition matches in Mount Gambier - potentially part of the points round in SANFL or AFLW, club development programs, footy clinics, school visits, gala dinner with keynote speakers, and an AFL Premiership Cup visit. A clock will be centrally displayed in Mount Gambier with associated PR activities during the ten days to build moment for Gather Round in South Australia.

Given our proximity to the Victorian border, we will be the 'welcome party' for those travelling through to Adelaide for the Gather Round.

Funding support from the State Government to invest in marketing collateral, Vansittart Park upgrades to grand stand, toilets and changerooms, and the Festival of Footy in Mount Gambier will have a total economic impact on the Limestone Coast region of \$3.86 million and a total impact on the South Australian economy of \$4.05 million.

Located within the CBD and connecting to the main street through curated gardens, Vansittart Park is the ideal venue for Mount Gambier to showcase Australian Rules Football in a regional setting. The venue provides suitable capacity for such an event and, due to its direct connection to a mix of licensed venues, cafes, restaurants, and retail outlets, will build a showcase game into a true festival environment catering for a broad range of patrons and spectators.

Funding support

Funding support to invest in marketing collateral, Vansittart Park upgrades and the Festival of Footy in Mount Gambier.
Indicative cost - \$2 million.

Workforce Attraction and Retention

Regional business growth is significantly impacted by a lack of staff. Many businesses are not taking advantage of contract offers as they cannot complete projects within suitable timeframes due to staffing shortages. The lack of rental accommodation and transport options creates issues for job seekers and regional businesses.

The migration of people from the cities to the regions has exacerbated an already tight housing market, forcing rental and sale prices up and vacancies down to near zero – a significant barrier to job seekers wishing to move to the region.

Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast is delivering the Regional Work SA project in partnership with the State Government, connecting job seekers to employment opportunities across our region.

The City of Mount Gambier advocates for affordable housing measures combined with adequate transport options to meet the needs of a modern city and support for businesses to access planning services adapted for regional South Australia.

Financial Sustainability

The value of Financial Assistance Grants provided to local government has declined over the past three decades from around 1 per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue to around 0.55 per cent.

Financial Assistance Grants support the financial sustainability and health and wellbeing of every Australian community.

Local Government Financial Assistance Grants are provided by the Commonwealth Government to help councils provide local services and infrastructure. The grants are not tied and can be used by local government bodies at their discretion to meet the needs and priorities of local communities.

Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) 2021 National State of the Assets report indicates that around 10 per cent of the infrastructure owned and managed by Australian councils is in poor condition and requires intervention.

City of Mount Gambier support ALGA's advocacy for increasing the Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of total Commonwealth taxation revenues. This increase would provide \$5,125 million in funding to local government in 2021-22, which is an additional \$2,429 million in funding. An additional \$2,429 million would increase the Gross Regional Product (GRP) by \$3,439 million and support an additional 22,814 jobs full-time equivalent jobs.

Advocacy and support

Restoring Financial Assistance Grants to at least one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue via a phased approach.

OUR CLIMATE, NATURAL RESOURCES, ART, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Open Space Strategy and Implementation

Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy

The City of Mount Gambier is home to an abundance of parks, reserves and sporting facilities that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy. Council knows recreation and open spaces are important to our community, whether it's for sporting activities, exercise, socialising with family and friends or walking the dog.

To continue to provide quality, well-planned spaces and guide the future direction of open spaces and facilities in Mount Gambier, Council has developed a Sport, Recreation and Open Spaces Strategy (SROSS).

The strategy is a first of its kind for the city and provides strategic direction for the future development and management of Council's 58 open spaces, including recreation, sporting, nature and public realm spaces.

The SROSS addresses the current gaps in sport, recreation and open spaces throughout the city, based on the needs of the community now and into the future.

The strategy proposes short, medium and longer term recommendations to provide and/or improve public spaces. This includes the development of additional site/precinct specific master plans and strategies and undertaking scoping projects for future works.

Planning and partnership opportunities

Funding support for fitting and adapting spaces in Mount Gambier based on the Sport Recreation and Open Space Strategy in order to maximise community benefits through sport and recreation.

Estimated cost \$20 million.

Blue Lake Sports Park Master Plan

The Blue Lake Sports Park is a significant multi-purpose site for sport and recreation in Mount Gambier, offering large open-plan green space that enables multiple simultaneous sporting activities to occur in a single location.

Council worked with Outerspace Landscape Architects and InsideEDGE Sport and Leisure Planning to develop a master plan for the area in consultation with site users and the community.

The high level document provides a road map for future development at the site, informed by the SROSS, current and future participation trends, sporting compliance and feedback from the community and key stakeholders.

Mount Gambier has a strong sport and recreation culture and this plan aims to future proof the facilities, deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes and develop the park as a destination that the wider community can engage with.

Council has commenced an implementation planning process which will include the development of a shared funding plan so that grant funding opportunities for the development of the Blue Lake Sports Park can be pursued in the future.

Funding support

Funding support for detailed design and implementation of the Blue Lake Sports Park Master Plan.

Railway Lands

Since its official opening in 2015, the Mount Gambier Railway Lands has fast become an active, inner-city public space enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

The Railway Lands precinct is approximately 44,000m² of public open space located in the heart of the CBD and provides a centralised access point for the Rail Trail, retail/business centre, and the recently built multi-million dollar Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre.

The Railway Lands has successfully hosted a range of significant events and attractions, including Blue Lake Carols, food and wine events, live music concerts, outdoor cinema and large-scale community fundraising events.

The Old Mount Gambier Railway Station Building

The City of Mount Gambier is inviting expressions of interest for the commercial occupancy of the old Mount Gambier Railway Station building. A landmark site, the historic building presents a unique opportunity to extend on the success of the award-winning Mount Gambier Railway Lands redevelopment, further fulfilling community aspirations for this intergenerationally significant inner-city location.

A range of boutique traders now front the precinct including a craft brewery, bakery and antiques store, embracing and enhancing the commercial potential of the area.

The ideal occupant will:

- Further the Railway Lands precinct as a premier destination in Mount Gambier through the provision of high quality, regionally connected products and/or services,
- Propose a concept that considers and further diversifies the existing offering within inner-city Mount Gambier,
- Build additional vibrancy within the precinct with

a particular focus on a high degree of ongoing activation of both the station building and the surrounding platform area,

- Embrace the heritage character of the building and considerable community sentiment attached to the site, and
- Demonstrate capacity to deliver the concept to the standards expected of a landmark tenancy through prior experience or execution of similar projects.

The addition of Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre, a new premier regional multi-functional indoor sporting and cultural facility located only 150 metres to the south, positions the Railway Station building as a direct connector between this facility and the CBD.

Other opportunities to continue to maximise the success of the Railway Lands and extension to the Rail Trail include working with neighbouring councils to extend the Mount Gambier to Penola section of rail trail to link with the soon to be constructed Penola to Naracoorte trail.

Funding support

Commit funds to build Mount Gambier to Penola section of rail trail to link with the soon to be constructed Penola to Naracoorte section. Funding commitment \$3 - 5 million.

Railway Lands Play Space

Following significant community consultation and the endorsement of the SROSS, Council intends to redevelop the play spaces to include a nature play space, learn to ride and youth space incorporating skate and basketball elements.

The space will encourage children, youth and adults to engage in active and passive recreation through diverse play opportunities. The Inclusive Play guidelines will inform the precinct design to ensure accessible play for all ages and all abilities, promoting social inclusion.

The design will encourage use by protecting and enhancing the environment and promoting cultural and heritage values. This will assist with place-making through the construction of unique attributes throughout the play precinct.

Council is in the process of tendering for the design of the play precinct.

Funding support

Funding support for the redevelopment and construction of the Mount Gambier Railway Lands play space.



Sustainability and Environment

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The State Government is investing up to \$13.4 million to leverage approximately \$25 million of private investment in the statewide public electric vehicle charging network. The government sought registrations of interest from property owners and tenants interested in hosting electric vehicle chargers to be part of the statewide public network.

The State Government selected the RAA to coordinate the roll out of this new infrastructure. Council is working with RAA to identify suitable location in the city centre.

Energy Efficiency

Since 2014/2015 the City of Mount Gambier has allocated an annual amount of \$50,000 for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. Since that time the funds have been used for the following projects:

- Solar system installed on Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre, the Library, Waste Transfer Station, Depot, Carinya Gardens Cemetery and Crematorium.
- LED lights fitted throughout the Civic Centre, Visitor Information Centre and the Library,
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning audit undertaken to assess the efficiency of Council's heating and cooling systems.

Council's current solar systems have generated more than 830 MWh of electricity which is the equivalent of power to 125 South Australian homes for an entire year.

Opportunities for incorporating hybrid and electric vehicles into the fleet are being actively explored as renewal opportunities arise, and consideration is included in the tender specifications for new vehicles.

The Federal Government is partnering with local governments to deliver energy upgrades for community facilities as part of the \$100 million Community Energy Upgrades Fund. The assistance will help councils cut their emissions and reduce energy bills.

Policy and subsidy support

The City of Mount Gambier continues to seek funding support to benefit the community in upgrading infrastructure and systems.



Arts and Creative Industry

As a regional city, Mount Gambier has a strong focus on the local arts and culture scene as an avenue to inspire civic pride and emphasise the positive impact arts and culture has on community well-being. The Country Arts SA strategic plan and priorities are intricately aligned with the arts and cultural aspirations of the City of Mount Gambier.

Supporting the modernisation of the Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre as proposed will complement the Library and The Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre offering that currently exists within the civic and cultural precinct of the Mount Gambier CBD and demonstrates Council's commitment to strengthening arts as the multi-faceted industry that it is and add value to the further growth of cultural capital.

Advocacy and partnerships

Support for the upgrade of the Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre and Civic Centre complex.

The Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre

The Riddoch Art Gallery is the largest regional gallery in South Australia. It was first opened in the Mount Gambier Institute in 1887. The gallery employs professional staff, maintains international art museum standard conditions and is the only State Government funded regional gallery. It provides gallery space for local artists and community groups and hosts both state and national touring exhibitions.

The Riddoch's collection of more than 1,500 items includes important paintings and prints that depict the people and history of the Limestone Coast, a significant collection of Aboriginal art from Utopia and a large collection of 20th Century Australian art.

The Riddoch is an important community asset and a significant economic activator. Developing national and international exhibitions and events to benefit from the Riddoch's unique CBD location is a key focus for the City of Mount Gambier.



Partnership opportunities

If you are interested in partnering with Council to assist in delivering any of the initiatives outlined in this document, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch with us via phone or email.



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