



Rural City of Murray Bridge

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2020-2032



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# Acknowledgement of traditional owners

We acknowledge the Ngarrindjeri people as the traditional owners of this land on which we meet and work. We respect and acknowledge their spiritual connection as the custodians of this land and that their cultural heritage beliefs are still important to the living people today.

We recognise the living culture and combined energies of the Ngarrindjeri people our global pioneers and community members today for their unique contribution to the life of our region.



# MAKE IT YOURS

**MURRAY BRIDGE IS CHANGING.  
WE'RE CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT  
WHERE YOU CAN MAKE YOUR  
OWN OPPORTUNITIES, MAKE  
A HOME, MAKE AN INVESTMENT,  
AND MAKE MEMORIES.**



# FOREWORD

## Mayor's Message



Murray Bridge is on a fast-track to becoming South Australia's major regional centre, faster than any of us anticipated when we produced the first iteration of this strategy five years ago. Set in the heart of South Australia's Murraylands, the Rural City of Murray Bridge has experienced an astonishing level of investment over the last five years, and there's more in the pipeline.

Murray Bridge is located on one of the state's major transport corridors, including the 'corridor of opportunity' running from Murray Bridge to Mount Barker, boasting access to key utilities in addition to its transport infrastructure. The Murray Bridge Township is the service centre for a large region, which gives us shopping, services, government agencies- and provides a strong basis for future growth.

We are the regional centre for a growing food production and processing industry, and our location on the banks of the River Murray positions us as the place where visitors from across the state gather to holiday and indulge in water sports. For many, it is 'Adelaide's playground'.

As Adelaide's population and economy expands over the coming decades, the Murray Bridge region will become increasingly important to the state's economic growth: we are not constrained by the requirements of intensive wine production, water catchment, or land availability. We have land and opportunity in abundance.



Our residents know the benefits of living in Murray Bridge and the townships in our Council area. The Murray River is at the core of our lives, providing water, recreation, jobs, and a country lifestyle that is the envy of other regions.

We also know that the Murray Bridge region has high youth unemployment, an economy that is quite dependent on food production and processing, and a large number of unfilled job vacancies.

This Economic Development Strategy provides the Council with a sound roadmap to guide our transformation into a vibrant, progressive economic centre that provides opportunities and jobs for our residents, and positions us to compete successfully in the global economy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brenton Lewis'. The signature is stylized with a large, looping 'B' and a trailing flourish.

Brenton Lewis  
Mayor  
Rural City of Murray Bridge

# FOREWORD

## Summary and Introduction



Murray Bridge is changing and is one of the fastest growing regional centres in South Australia.

With consistent population, GDP, business and visitor growth, Murray Bridge is ready for future prosperity.

The last five years has seen significant work to position the Rural City of Murray Bridge for that future. Significant investment within the region has targeted developing a sense of place and identity that will attract people to live, invest and develop businesses in the region.

With over \$1b in business investment already committed, opportunities for further economic growth have been identified.

This Economic Development Strategy identifies specific opportunities and commits Council to a series of strategies to see them realised.

Over the 12-year remaining life of the plan, the Rural City of Murray Bridge intends to continue its investment in the public realm, to strengthen its commitment to ensure business growth is a priority and to plan for and deliver infrastructure that leads development within the community.

With three clearly articulated stages of four years each, this Strategy aims to guide Council and our region down a path of economic development and opportunity.

The key themes over the period are:

- Continue investment in the public realm to support the positive perception of our region
- Strengthen the commitment to ensure business growth is a priority
- Plan for and deliver infrastructure that supports and leads economic development
- Ensure a strong, skilled and resilient regional workforce

## INTRODUCTION

Murray Bridge is changing with a focus on creating an environment where you can make your own opportunities, make a home, an investment, and make memories.

Our city was established in 1874 as a vital link in South Australia's fledgling trade routes. Its proximity to the river, and convenient distance from Adelaide and the eastern states, has seen Murray Bridge transform into the Murraylands' largest regional, commercial hub.

The mighty Murray River, home to the Ngarrindjeri people for centuries, is the lifeblood of Murray Bridge, providing water, recreation, jobs, and a lifestyle that is the envy of other regions.

As Adelaide's population and economy expands over the coming decades Murray Bridge will see unprecedented growth and is on track to become one of the largest regional cities in South Australia.

The last five years have seen significant investment in the region, beyond the aspirations of the previous Economic Development Strategy. With over \$1b in private and government investment set to be realised over the coming five years, the Rural City of Murray Bridge must position itself to ensure that the development results in a sustainable, thriving community.

The City's population is forecast to rise from 22,000 to 28,000 by 2041 underpinned by an additional 13,000 jobs which are forecast to be added to the region.

Murray Bridge has land, skills and opportunities in abundance. The riverfront is being transformed to provide dynamic community spaces, creating connections with the business district and welcoming new development into our city centre.

Council's aim is to continue to invest in the public realm to ensure that its growth complements and supports the projected residential, commercial and tourism needs of the future.

# FOREWORD

## Background



In 2015, the Council formulated its Economic Development Strategy 2015-2030 to be delivered in three stages, with a review at the end of each stage.

The 2015 strategy identified the stages as:

- Stage 1            2015-2020    Game changers
- Stage 2            2020-2025    Developing opportunity
- Stage 3            2025-2030    A vibrant future

The Economic Development Strategy 2020-2032 constitutes the 2020 review and reforecast, and realigns the strategy with Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and Community Plan 2020-2032, to be presented in four-year stages. The stages are now identified as:

- Stage 2            2020-2024    Developing opportunity
- Stage 3            2024-2028    Consolidating the benefits
- Stage 4            2028-2032    A creative and dynamic future

This realignment resulted in an additional two years of objectives being included in the strategy and provides opportunities for a community consultation process to occur in parallel with the review of the Strategic Plan every four years.

This document supports the key theme of Dynamic Economy contained in the RCMB Community Plan 2020-2032 and contributes to the vision of Thriving Communities.

The Strategy reflects feedback and ideas provided through an extensive consultation phase with key stakeholders. The overwhelming message was support for Council to be pro-active in its push to position Murray Bridge as a dynamic river city and to ensure that its potential for growth and employment was promoted and understood.





# FOREWORD

## Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges



### STRENGTHS

**Murray Bridge's economy has outperformed the broader RDA Region and South Australian averages in recent years, with the region's agriculture and food manufacturing industry being the main drivers of economic growth.**

The City's proximity to national transport routes has resulted in a surge in intensive animal production and processing industries with significant investment currently underway to expand poultry, pork, lamb, beef and sheep facilities. Forecasts show that these processing facilities will continue to grow to meet future domestic and international demand.

Murray Bridge has flat, fertile land in abundance and the infrastructure to support future growth. Access to clean water, sandy soils and world class technology enable the region to yield quality produce including stone fruit, vegetables, grains and livestock.

As a large service centre featuring shopping, schools and health facilities, Murray Bridge has the infrastructure to support not only the immediate population, but also that of the surrounding area and future growth. This is complemented by easy access to more extensive facilities and services in Mt Barker.

The City has excellent health services and facilities and features one of the largest regional hospitals in the state.

There are three senior schools, Murray Bridge High, Unity College and Tyndale Christian School, as well as junior schools and numerous preschools and childcare facilities.

The Murray River Study Hub provides opportunities for Murraylands and Riverland

students to pursue tertiary education and VET alternatives without having to travel or relocate outside of the region. Courses are offered online and mix mode by our education partners, CQ University Australia, Flinders University and TAFE SA.

For investors and developers requiring a skilled workforce, the introduction of the new Designated Area Migration Agreement for regional South Australia will attract more migrants to live and work in the region.

Home affordability attracts many residents with a median house value in Murray Bridge of \$241k as at June 2018 \$161k lower than the median house valuation for the rest of South Australia. Renting is also an affordable option with a wide range of rental properties on offer and the median rent in Murray Bridge almost 25% less than the median rent in Adelaide. High end homes, with easy access and river views, are popular with professionals living and working in the region.

Several cultural and entertainment spaces provide access to exhibitions and performances including the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery and the Murray Bridge Town Hall.





# FOREWORD

## Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges



There are over 20 sporting or social clubs scattered throughout Murray Bridge. These include cricket clubs, tennis associations (hard court and grass), a shooting range, rowing club, a large popular basketball stadium, netball clubs, a golf club (currently undergoing expansion), a new greyhound racing track, new horse racing track and the popular Murray Bridge Speedway.

Murray Bridge Racing Club and the creation of a new, state-of-the-art racecourse and thoroughbred training facility at Gifford Hill on the outskirts of the City includes a state-of-the-art function centre, with seating for up to 600 people.

Further development in future years will see a retail and commercial precinct and up to 4,000 residential allotments to support the City's growth expectations over the next 30 years.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**With over \$1b of projects completed or in the pipeline, creating thousands of new jobs, Murray Bridge will need to expand its workforce and attract and retain skilled people in the years to come.**

In the CBD a revitalised Sixth Street cultural precinct, along with the refreshed retail precinct on Bridge Street has created new investment and business opportunities.

With the City's population forecast to increase by 28% the community will demand quality cafés and restaurants and more choice in services.

The previous Murray Bridge racecourse site in the centre of Murray Bridge will be redeveloped into residential housing. This new community will be known as Newbridge and will encompass



both the old racecourse and the adjacent fairways of the golf course with a total development area of 45.78 hectares. This development will include, and integrate, an upgraded and expanded par-71 championship golf course, a linear park with pedestrian and cycle paths and over 400 residential allotments.

To build on existing popular tourist opportunities the Council has developed the Sturt Reserve Masterplan which will completely transform the riverfront. Spaces will be created to help interpret Murray Bridge's rich cultural heritage and additional paths and bikeways are planned to improve access from the riverfront to the CBD. An expanded skate park, world-class adventure playground, a wetland splash play area and a place for music and other events will complement newly established restaurants offering stunning river views.

An increase in visitation requires an increase in accommodation.

The construction of a new six-story, Bridgeport four-star hotel on the corner of Bridge Street has commenced, when completed it will feature

# FOREWORD

## Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges



99 guest rooms, undercover car parking, a restaurant with al fresco dining, a gym, a swimming pool and a function room.

Monarto Zoo will construct a new, \$17m visitor centre as part of their Wild Africa project expansion and have also announced the planned construction of a \$35m accommodation facility. The visitor centre will include a café, nature play space, gift shop and potentially a restaurant or function space. When fully completed, the Wild Africa project will incorporate a safari resort, luxury camping and other experiences.

Murray Bridge has relatively high unemployment in the context of a high number of job vacancies, which employers are frequently forced to fill with migrants. Meanwhile, younger people are leaving the region to find other work or to study.

Key employment industries in Murray Bridge include healthcare, manufacturing and retail trade, with these industries accounting for more

than a third of total employment in 2017-18. These industries are ranked in the bottom half of industries by value per employee, this partly explains the lower median personal and household incomes in Murray Bridge.

### SUMMARY

Whilst having a consistently growing economy and increasing development and investment, Murray Bridge suffers from high unemployment, low rates of youth retention and low socio-economic indicators.

The focus of economic development in the region should not only be to expand the opportunities but also to ensure that the benefits are available throughout the community.





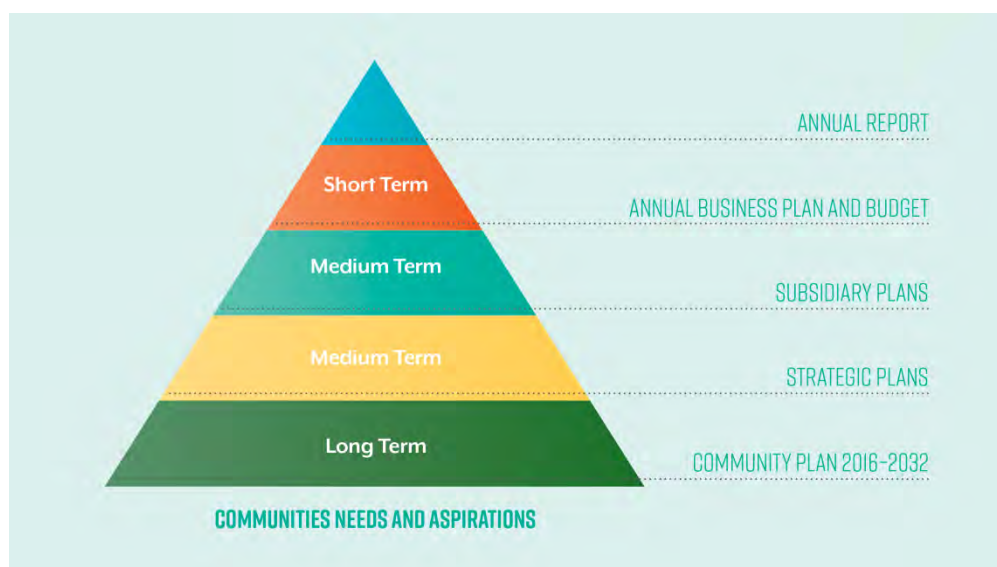
# STRATEGIC LINKAGES

## Relationship to Strategic Plans



Our Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework details that the Rural City of Murray Bridge has adopted the following documents which comprise its strategic management plans:

- Strategic Plan(s)
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Asset Management Plans
- The Murray Bridge Council Development Plan



Additional subsidiary plans, such as Economic Development Strategy 2020-2032 are developed and adopted where a focus on a particular location, service or program is required.

## COMMUNITY PLAN

The Community Plan 2016-2032 sets the vision for the future of our city of 'THRIVING COMMUNITIES'. The Community Plan 2016-2032 contains four key themes that articulate the desired future of our community. The next eight years of the Community Plan 2016-32 are focussed on delivery and development.

The themes are:

- Valued Environment
- Great People and Lifestyle
- Dynamic Economy
- Connected Communities

Valued Environment	Great People and Lifestyle	Dynamic Economy	Connected Communities
Developing the environment	Delivery focussed community services	Developing Opportunities	Developing the community

# STRATEGIC LINKAGES

## Relationship to Strategic Plans



### STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan 2020-24 is Council's second four year commitment to the community to support the Community Plan 2016-2032. This plan sets out the priorities for the current period, it identifies the programs and projects under each theme that Council intends to deliver.

The Economic Development Strategy 2020-32 current four year period of 'Developing Opportunity' 2020-24 forms the Dynamic Economy section in the Strategic Plan 2020-24.

### INTERNAL SUPPORTING STRATEGIES AND PLANS

To support the delivery of this Strategy, Council has developed of a suite of supporting strategies and plans to progress economic development in the Rural City, as outlined below.

- Riverfront Strategy and Sturt Reserve Masterplan
- Adelaide and Swanport Road Masterplans
- Tourism Development Plan
- Events Strategy
- CBD Activation Plan
- Murray Bridge Council Development Plan
- Primary Production DPA

We are in the progress of developing a community infrastructure plan that will guide infrastructure requirements for the expected growth.

We will continue to develop plans and strategies as future requirements dictate.



### RELATIONSHIP TO EXTERNAL STRATEGIC PLANS

The Rural City of Murray Bridge has relationships with a number of other agencies which drive local economic development, including the Murray River, Lakes & Coorong Tourism Alliance, Murray River Alliance, Murraylands Food Alliance, as well as its neighbouring councils of Mid Murray and Coorong District.

Regional and external strategies include:

- 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide
- Murray Mallee Regional Plan



# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland



The Council works in partnership with the Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland (RDAMR) and as such, this Strategy has been developed to complement the RDAMR's strategies and plans as listed below.

- 2020 Strategic Plan RDA-MR
- Murray River, Lakes & Coorong Strategic Tourism Plan 2017–2020
- Infrastructure Audit: Murraylands and Riverland 2019
- Townships of the Future Survey 2019
- China and Asia Trade and Investment Strategy 2016-2020 (2017 Update)

The RDAMR are a not for profit association that acts as a conduit between all levels of government and the Murraylands and Riverland community. They actively assist businesses to flourish and collaborate with one another to facilitate economic stability and growth.

The RDAMR facilitate regional development across the Murraylands and Riverland through delivery of:

- Business Building

- Regional Investment Attraction
- Export Pathways
- Workforce Building and Career Connections
- Disability Industry Support
- Tourism Industry Support
- Grant Funding

They have delivered significant employment initiatives such as the career development centre, workforce skills programs, Ticket for Training, Jobs 4 Murraylands and the Murray River Study Hub. Over the years, employment and training programs such as these have supported thousands of locals through their career journeys, from basic resume and application assistance, up-skilling and re-training, right through to working with individuals to harness their potential, grow their confidence or even achieve their dream degree.

RDAMR has assisted businesses through grant funding support and regional initiatives such as the Murraylands Food Alliance, the "SHIFT", experts in residence and Business 2 Business programs.



At Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland, our vision is to create a vibrant, resilient region that capitalises on change, embraces economic development and prosperity, and provides an inspirational living, investment and working environment.

We are part of a national network of 55 organisations aiming to grow and strengthen Australia's regions, through advocacy, facilitation and funded service delivery.

We raise organisational capabilities, enable more targeted and productive collaboration, encourage priority infrastructure investment to be brought forward through government support, advocate to address regional constraints, and help to close the gap on workforce planning needs.

# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

## The End Game



Our desire is for the Rural City of Murray Bridge to be the focus of South Australia's regional economic growth over the next twelve years, to deliver opportunity, resilience and an enviable lifestyle that attracts and retains skilled and innovative people and businesses.

This will be delivered in three phases focusing on the three themes identified in the RCMB Community Plan 2016-32 being:

- A robust and diverse regional economy
- A desirable place to live, work, invest and visit
- A progressive, productive community





# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

## Stage 1 – Game Changers (2015-2020)



The 2015 strategy identified stage 1 as the 'game changer' stage, it focused on addressing the urgent and important tasks to deliver 'quick wins' as well as providing a sound basis to build on over subsequent stages. The Game Changers stage included a focus on:

- Identity
- Appealing and affordable housing for growth
- Career, education and entrepreneurship pathways
- Tourism is contributing to a diverse economy and creating opportunity
- Regional collaboration

Council has delivered a number of initiatives, projects and programs to address the focus areas, some of the already visible items included:

- Town entrances that are visually appealing and include improved amenities such as Adelaide Road Linear Park, new branding and signage welcoming visitors to our towns
- Updates to our city centre including Bridge Street tree lighting and amenity updates, Market place garden beds replanting, public art installations
- Delivery of large scale events and festivals such as Tour Down Under, Fringe, New Year's Eve fireworks and the Splash Festival
- 'Murray Bridge – Make it Yours' Campaign including promotional videos and a prospectus which repositions the image and brand of Murray Bridge, promoting the many attractions of the region to potential investors, residents and visitors

Some of the less visible initiatives that ensure a foundation to build on moving forward have included:

- RCMB recognised as a migrant friendly community through 'Welcoming Cities'

- Development of strategies, masterplans and detailed design work such as the Riverfront Strategy, Tourism Development Plan, Events Strategy, Digital Strategy and Sturt Reserve Masterplan that will guide its transformation into a world class tourist destination
- Development of new and amendments to current, development policies and settings. To enable growth and forward planning, such as Monarto South DPA, Integrated Water DPA, Regional Town Centre Expansion DPA, Primary Production (Flagstaff) DPA, Residential Growth Area DPA and Swanport DPA.
- Regional collaboration and partnerships have been forged or enriched to ensure alignment of vision across the region.



# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

## Stage 1 – Game Changers (2015-2020)



Improvements in Council's ability to support private investment development have contributed to the success in attracting large scale businesses to make the region their home. Over the last five years significant private investment commitments have demonstrated the confidence in Murray Bridge as a long term investment. There is over \$1b of planned, currently under construction or recently completed major investment projects in or near the Murray Bridge including:

- Newbridge residential development
- Gifford Hill residential development
- Gifford Hill Racetrack and community function centre
- Bridgeport Hotel redevelopment
- Sturt Reserve riverfront redevelopment
- Multi-stage expansion of Monarto Zoo and Wildlife Park
- The Bend Motorsport Park
- Construction of Ingham's feedmills
- Expansion of Costa Mushrooms
- Expansion of Beston Global Food Company's cheese and dairy factory
- Expansion of Big River Pork processing facility
- Thomas Foods rebuild
- Renewable energy projects
- Several tourism projects





# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

## Stage 2 – Developing Opportunities (2020-2024)



With the commitment of private investment in the order of \$1b, it is clear that there is a need to stay ahead of the game. Infrastructure must be adequate and ready in time for growth requirements.

However, there is a delicate balance to be met between readiness and sustainability, as built infrastructure requires maintenance costs which add pressure to income requirements predominately serviced through rates collection.

This phase therefore focusses on building upon the sound economic basis laid during the last 5-years whilst accommodating the more ambitious goals set for 2020-2024.

Our region's amazing and diverse investment and lifestyle benefits will be promoted to ensure investors and potential new residents know about and are attracted to the region. A focus on tourism and events will expand our visitor offerings with visitors staying longer and promoting the area to others as a destination of choice.

Existing and emerging businesses will be supported to grow and flourish with the support they need to prosper. Infrastructure priorities will aim to build our local economy and encourage paddock to plate initiatives, supporting the region to be Adelaide's 'food bowl'.

The community consultation focus areas identified through the Strategic Plan 2020-24 consultation held in September 2019 are:

- Accommodation, events and tourist attraction
- Educational Services
- Investment attraction and local business development
- Right people / right jobs
- Digital Services - Commerce and Education



To deliver on these community expectations Council is committed to achieving the following objectives during the 2020-24 period:

- Attractive Murray Bridge  
*The opportunities that the Rural City of Murray Bridge (RCMB) offers both to investors and potential residents are well communicated and easily understood*
- Rural City Murray Bridge is a destination of choice  
*RCMB is a highly desirable destination for short and long term visitors to the region*
- Resilient, innovative businesses  
*New and existing businesses can access the support they need to grow and prosper*
- Effective economic infrastructure  
*Development of economic infrastructure is prioritised to ensure it enables the region to put its best foot forward*
- Skilled workforce  
*Building our local workforce to meet the needs of key industry sectors*

# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

## Stage 3 – Consolidating the Benefits (2024-2028)



It is anticipated that by 2024 the committed private investments will be operational and the economic benefits will have started flowing into the local economy.

Employment opportunities will be realised with an additional 13,000 jobs forecast to be added to the region during this period. Council will then turn its focus to maximising the outcome from these opportunities and continuing to encourage sustainable growth through ongoing attraction and development.

To continue to support businesses in the region we will need a workforce and places for them to live, so the focus during this period will be on opening land developments and supporting education pathways to employment.

We will enhance our visitor offerings to further grow the region into Adelaide's Playground. Locals will enjoy enhanced lifestyle amenities such as upgraded community and sporting facilities and the evolution towards a smart city will be ensuring we are making the most of technological enhancements.

Areas of focus will include:

- Fully operational investment zones
- Balanced business investment
- Paved pathways to employment
- There's something for everyone
- Online: fast, connected, informed





# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Stage 4 – A Creative and Dynamic Future (2028-2032)



It is our aspiration that by 2032 the Rural City of Murray Bridge will become South Australia's second city, a national food production, processing and manufacturing hub and the heart of water tourism in South Australia.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge will be positioned to enter a period of diversification enabling us to build on the achievements of the past 13 years whilst continuing to be leaders in technology adoption and innovation, particularly in the areas of food production.

Areas of focus will include:

- Iconic event delivery
- International visitor attraction
- Entrepreneurial support
- Gaining a reputation for
  - Being a leader in learning for food manufacture roles
  - Successful industry clusters with a culture of ongoing growth and innovation
  - Being an early adopter city that encourages and supports new technology advances



# ECONOMIC PROFILE

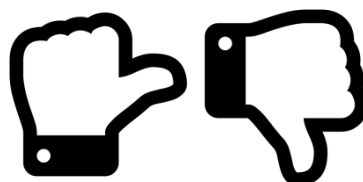


## Aging Population

**21% 65+** by 2041

By 2041 the largest age group by population will be the 25-55 groups.

- Under 25 30%
- 25-55 38%
- over 55 32%



## SEIFA Index of Disadvantage

**894**

This places Murray Bridge as one of the most disadvantaged communities in the state

Source: id.

**40**

## AVERAGE AGE

Population forecast to increase by

**28,143** by 2041

## Current population

**22,165** in 2018

Population growth for Murray Bridge has been considerably stronger than both the RDA Region and South Australian averages since 2002.

Source: ABS ERP 2018



**28%**

The population of Murray Bridge is expected to increase to 28,143

Source: Forecast ID May 2018

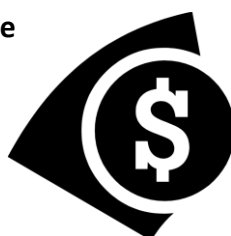
## Average household income

**\$973** in 2016

The Rural City of Murray Bridge in 2016 compared to Greater

Adelaide shows that there was a smaller proportion of high income households (those earning \$2,500 per week or more) and a higher proportion of low income households (those earning less than \$650 per week).

Source: ABS (2017) and ID (2019)



## Affordability

### Median house value

At June 2018, the median house valuation in Rural City of Murray Bridge was \$160,785 lower compared to South Australia. At June 2018, the median weekly rental for houses in Rural City of Murray Bridge was \$100 lower compared to South Australia.



### Median house values

House \$240,925

Unit \$184,819

### Median weekly rental

House \$250

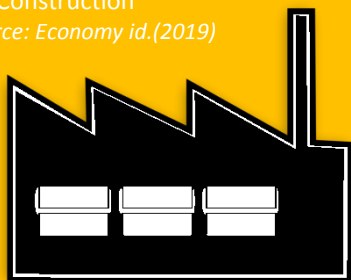
# ECONOMIC PROFILE



## TOP 4 INDUSTRIES BY VALUE ADD

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Wholesale trade
- Manufacturing
- Health care and social assistance
- Construction

Source: Economy id.(2019)



## REGISTERED BUSINESSES

**1,364**  
BUSINESSES



## EMPLOYMENT

**13,000**

## ADDITIONAL JOBS BY 2026

there were 9,725 residents employed and 10,730 jobs located in the Rural City of Murray Bridge in the year ending June 2019

Source: Forecast ID 2019

## GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT

**\$1.23**  
**billion**

The Rural City of Murray Bridge's Gross Regional Product is estimated at \$1.23 billion, which represents 1.15% of the state's GSP (Gross State Product).

Source: ID June (2019)



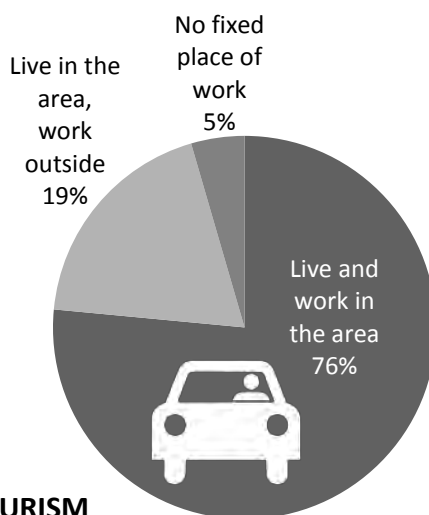
## UNEMPLOYMENT

**9.23% Total**

In June 2019 the Murray Bridge labour force was 9,725 showing continued steady growth over the past 10 years.

Rural City of Murray Bridge shows a lower proportion in the labour force (43.8%) compared with Greater Adelaide (59.5%)

Source: id. 2019



## TOURISM

**546,500** DAYTRIP  
VISTORS (2018/19)

**\$86.1M** Dollars

80% Day trippers

Tourism accounts for 3.3% of industry value add in 2017-18

Source: Forecast ID May 2018



## INDUSTRIES BY EMPLOYMENT

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Agriculture
- Education and Training

Source: DESSFB (2019)

# CONSULTATION

## Community Engagement & Reporting



### COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON THIS STRATEGY

Following an economic analysis of the Murray Bridge Council area, in-person interviews were conducted with key stakeholders addressing the following discussion points:

- Key competitive advantages and disadvantages of operating a business in Murray Bridge
- Key economic growth opportunities for Murray Bridge
- The role of Council in economic development

In addition meetings were held with the following key stakeholders:

- RDA Murraylands & Riverland
- Murraylands Food Alliance
- Murray River, Lakes & Coorong Tourism Alliance



A Business Advisory Forum was attended by representatives from 15 of Murray Bridge's biggest businesses, industry sectors and service agencies.

The major themes emerging from the consultation were:

- Lack of appropriately skilled workers across key industry sectors
- Persistent poor perceptions of Murray Bridge
- Underuse of social media to promote the region to potential new residents and businesses
- Young people leaving the region for study or work
- Desire to activate the riverfront for residents and visitors

Other important feedback was also received and the development of this strategy has been informed by that, as well as the themes above, the economic analysis, broader community consultation on the Council's draft Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and the input of Council members and staff.

### REVIEWING AND REPORTING

The Economic Development Strategy will be reviewed at the end of each stage, and reforecast for the remaining periods. This approach provides clear detailed direction for the short term, and allows the Strategy to be dynamic and responsive over the long term.

The detail of these stages is set out in the following pages.



# DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES (2020-2024)



# DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES

2020-2024



We will ensure investors and potential new residents know about and are attracted by our region's amazing and diverse investment and lifestyle benefits.

That our visitor offerings increase tourism in the region with visitors staying longer and promoting the area to others as a destination of choice. That existing and emerging business grow and flourish with the support they need to prosper. That infrastructure priorities build our local economy and encourages paddock to plate initiatives and supports the region to be Adelaide's 'food bowl'.

## 1 ATTRACTIVE MURRAY BRIDGE

The opportunities that the Rural City of Murray Bridge (RCMB) offers both to investors and potential residents are well communicated and easily understood

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 1.1 Put the Rural City of Murray Bridge 'on the map' through brand promotion
- 1.2 Attract large scale investors through implementation of an investment attraction program
- 1.3 Improve attractiveness and linkages within the city centre
- 1.4 Visually appealing retail precincts through engaging with business owners and investment support
- 1.5 Make the Rural City of Murray Bridge attractive to start-ups and home-based businesses through establishment of business hubs/co-working spaces
- 1.6 Promote the lifestyle benefits of living in the Rural City of Murray Bridge to attract workers and other residents to live in the region

## 2 RURAL CITY MURRAY BRIDGE IS A DESTINATION OF CHOICE

RCMB is a highly desirable destination for short and long term visitors to the region

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 2.1 Tourists will be enticed to visit our region through packaged attractions and access to cultural and environmental experiences
- 2.2 Visitors to the region will be encourage to stay longer through increased accommodation offerings
- 2.3 Capitalise on our neighbouring regions' tourism appeal through improving linkages and accessibility
- 2.4 Events will enliven spaces introducing visitors to the charms of our region

# DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES

2020-2024



## 3 RESILIENT, INNOVATIVE BUSINESSES

New and existing businesses can access the support they need to grow and prosper

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 3.1 Improve local business capability through programs that support developing skills in adaptability, diversification, export markets, emerging technologies, digital economy and social media
- 3.2 Ensure access to information for the business community through development and implementation of smart city initiatives, information automation and big data
- 3.3 Involve local small businesses that are recognised as significant contributors to economic development in the region, to ensure they are ready to take advantage of future initiatives

## 4 EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Targeted infrastructure is developed to support the region's economic growth and development

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 4.1 Maintain and improve currency of infrastructure in relation to digital technologies
- 4.2 Improve access to local and external markets through provision of transportation routes and infrastructure

## 5 SKILLED WORKFORCE

Building our local workforce to meet the needs of key industry sectors

*Role: Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 5.1 Improve availability of a skilled workforce for key industry sectors through local training and development pathway programs



# CONSOLIDATING THE BENEFITS (2024-2028)



# CONSOLIDATING THE BENEFITS

2024-2028



**Council will turn its focus to maximising the outcomes from the Developing Opportunities period and continuing to encourage sustainable growth through ongoing targeted attraction and development.**

To ensure successful businesses in the region we will need a workforce and places for them to live. During this period will open up land developments and support education pathways to employment.

We will enhance our visitor offerings to further grow the region into Adelaide's Playground. Locals will enjoy enhanced lifestyle amenities such as upgraded community and sporting facilities and the evolution towards a smart city will be ensuring we are making the most of technological enhancements.



## 6 THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Enhanced visitor offerings grow the region into Adelaide's Playground and locals enjoy enhanced lifestyle amenities

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 6.1 Attract iconic events and festivals making the most of the riverfront
- 6.2 Attract major water sports events and accelerate the development of recreational river activities
- 6.3 Encouraging businesses that create river-based activities so that visitors can access water based recreation
- 6.4 Support, promote and evolve the tourism experiences and offerings
- 6.5 Facilitate the provision of enhanced lifestyle amenities (entertainment, sport, culture)
- 6.6 Encourage work life balance across the community such that people feel empowered to attend to family matters when required while also respecting the needs of their employer.
- 6.7 Identify opportunities where key land parcels or locations can be developed for tourism related development
- 6.8 Attract conferences and conventions with the riverfront as a key component of the attraction package

# CONSOLIDATING THE BENEFITS

2024-2028



## 7 OPERATIONAL AND BALANCED INVESTMENT

The committed investments from the previous period are fully operational and their potential realised. A robust economy, resilient to economic and climatic shock, is created through a balanced portfolio of small, medium and large business

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Part Funder); Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 7.1 Continue to refine our internal services to meet the changing needs of the business community
- 7.2 Identify emerging opportunities to enable targeted investment promotion
- 7.3 Promote successful investment outcomes to generate further interest and accelerate additional investment
- 7.4 Provide incentives to attract a diverse portfolio of business investments
- 7.5 Ensure that the planning and development system remains responsive to the needs of the community
- 7.6 Pathways are identified to create Indigenous economic development opportunities
- 7.7 A range of housing options is available that meets community needs and expectations.
- 7.8 Considerations for access and energy use and sustainability in all development, project and planning decisions
- 7.9 Build sustainable employment options that allow people to live fulfilling and comfortable lives

## 8 ONLINE: FAST, CONNECTED, INFORMED

Murray Bridge is up to date with current technologies and required digital infrastructure and poised to take advantage of emerging technologies

*Role: Service Provider (Part Funder); Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 8.1 Ensure the community and businesses throughout the region are able to be connected to the globe through digital infrastructure
- 8.2 Support and promote the integration of digital technology and the internet of things
- 8.3 The Rural City of Murray Bridge embraces Smart City concepts and identifies opportunities to deliver





# CONSOLIDATING THE BENEFITS

2024-2028



## 9 PAVED PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

Murray Bridge will become a vocational and tertiary education hub for local key industry career pathways

*Role: Service Provider (Part Funder); Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 9.1 Facilitating the development of a multi-institution campus for tertiary education
- 9.2 Support development and delivery of tertiary courses with application to key growth industries of this region (food manufacturing, aged care)

- 9.3 Foster an environment of continual learning and improvement within the community
- 9.4 Programs are delivered that break the cycle of long term unemployment
- 9.5 Through expanding and diversifying the economy, promote employment opportunities and forge closer links between education providers and industry to develop and ensure a workforce that is well-equipped to meet challenges.
- 9.6 Recognise, support and celebrate work safe practices in the community.
- 9.7 Think 'outside the square' so that all members of the community have employment opportunities.



# A CREATIVE AND DYNAMIC FUTURE (2028-2032)



# A CREATIVE AND DYNAMIC FUTURE

2028-2032



**It is our aspiration that by 2032 the Rural City of Murray Bridge has become South Australia's second city, a national food production, processing and manufacturing hub and the heart of water tourism in South Australia.**

We hope to have positioned ourselves now to enter a period of consolidation, enabling us to build on the achievements of the past 13 years whilst continuing to be leaders in technology adoption and innovation in food production.

We will ensure Murray Bridge becomes a highly desirable River-based destination only an hour from the capital - for travellers, day trippers, and retirees.

Our focus will include:

- Entrepreneurial support
- Gaining a reputation for
  - Being a leader in learning for food manufacture roles
  - Successful industry clusters with a culture of ongoing growth and innovation
  - Being an early adopter city that encourages and supports new technology advances

## 10 ADELAIDE'S PLAYGROUND

**Locals, interstate and overseas visitors are enjoying the delights of Murray Bridge**

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 10.1 Evolve the visitor attraction marketing strategy in line with evolving attractions to target new markets interstate and internationally
- 10.2 Facilitate iconic events that become part of the fabric of Murray Bridge
- 10.3 Facilitate and support development of unique cultural tourism experiences
- 10.4 Attract bespoke and diverse accommodation offerings throughout the region





# A CREATIVE AND DYNAMIC FUTURE

2028-2032



## 11 INNOVATIVE BUSINESS

**Our businesses are working smarter and are leaders in research and innovation in key industry sectors**

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 11.1 Facilitate research, innovation and collaboration through relationship building between industry, research institutions and supply chains
- 11.2 Provision of information to businesses through the ongoing evolution of smart cities, smart technology and other key information sources
- 11.3 Develop a proactive business expansion and retention program
- 11.4 Support business to access exportation markets and global economies

- 11.5 Develop and map an entrepreneurial ecosystem and support budding entrepreneurs
- 11.6 Continually review and evolve training and support offered to local businesses to ensure it remains relevant and industry leading

## 12 FUTURE CITY

**The Rural City of Murray Bridge is known as a digital pioneer and first adopter of new technologies**

*Role: Service Provider (Direct); Service Provider (Indirect); Service Provider (Part Funder); Service Provider (Regulatory); Service Provider (Agent); Owner/Custodian; Information Provider/Promoter; Initiator/Facilitator; Advocate*

- 12.1 Facilitate and enable fast-tracking of new initiatives and piloting of new technologies



# OUR PARTNERS

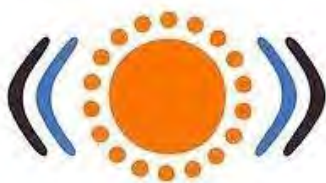
Partnership Organisations



**Local Government Association**  
of South Australia



**Government of**  
**South Australia**



**Ngarrindjeri**  
Regional Authority



**Australian Government**



**Government of**  
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