

Your Place Your Space

Strategic Plan
2024



Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of country

Council acknowledges that we undertake our business on the traditional Country of the Peramangk and Kurna people. We pay our respects to Ancestors and Elders past and present as the Custodians of this ancient and beautiful land, for they hold the memories, traditions, spiritual relationships, culture and hopes of the First Nations of Australia.

We are committed to working together to ensure that Peramangk and Kurna culture and traditions are sustained, valued and continuing.

Contents

Messages	3
Our vision	4
Our guiding principles	5
Our goals	6
What is the strategic plan	7
Strategic planning framework	8
Our profile	9
About our region	10
Goal 1: Natural Environment	13
Goal 2: Community Wellbeing	16
Goal 3: Built Form and Economy	20
Goal 4: Organisation	23
Demonstrating our success	26
Our role	27
Council ward structure	29





Council Members' message

This Strategic Plan has been developed to guide our priorities and decisions over the next four to ten years. It has been crafted with your voices at its heart, ensuring that we address your immediate needs while laying a strong foundation for the future of our region. Our vision celebrates the uniqueness of the Hills character, environment and community.

Through collaborative efforts with stakeholders and the community, we have gained valuable insights into your aspirations and priorities, and from this we are able to develop guiding principles that will influence everything we do.

Our focus in the plan is on objectives and priorities that promote social, economic, and environmental benefits. This includes ambitious priorities related to sustainable lifestyle practices, protecting and improving our natural environment, building community resilience, and developing placemaking initiatives to enhance liveability across the region.

We look forward to nurturing partnerships and engaging with each of you to realise this vision. By working hand-in-hand, we can ensure that our community continues to be vibrant and inclusive, and that we remain responsive to the needs of our residents.

Mayor Jan-Claire Wisdom and Councillors



CEO's message

As we launch our new Strategic Plan, I want to take a moment to reflect on our shared journey and reaffirm our commitment to providing quality services in a financially sustainable manner. Our Council has worked diligently to align our goals with your aspirations, ensuring we are prepared to deliver on the vision outlined in this plan.

We acknowledge there will be challenges ahead, be they economic pressures or environmental considerations, but with resilience and innovation I feel confident our team can manage them.

As an organisation we are dedicated to supporting and building a skilled organisation that leverages technology to enhance customer experience and operational efficiency. As part of this we will be reviewing and evolving our services to ensure we are delivering outcomes in line with the strategic plan that are effective, efficient, and continue to meet the needs of our community now and into the future.

By staying focused on our strategic goals, we will create a pathway toward an Adelaide Hills region we can all be proud of.

Greg Georgopoulos



Our vision

Our vision is to preserve and celebrate the Hills' unique character and environment, with sustainable practices in rural landscapes. We aspire to cultivate a safe, resilient and welcoming community that honours our heritage, and encourages creativity and innovation.

Our guiding principles

Achieving our vision requires us to care for, protect and grow what is best about our community, people and places. In doing this we are committed to the following principles.



First Nations

We recognise Peramangk and Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of our region and are committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the reconciliation journey.

Natural Environment

We acknowledge the natural environment as the foundation of the character of the Adelaide Hills landscape. We seek to minimise negative impacts and pursue conservation and other positive environmental outcomes.

Inclusivity

We celebrate diversity in all its forms. We treat people fairly and equitably and are committed to listening, learning and encouraging open and honest discussions. We welcome people from all backgrounds and abilities, and are proud to be a Refugee Welcome Zone.

Connection

We value community and other stakeholder input to decision making. We encourage volunteering, creativity, cultural expression and collaboration in the achievement of shared objectives.

Climate Change

We are dedicated to reducing our impact upon climate change and seek to mitigate and adapt to its impacts in line with our declaration of a climate emergency.

Sustainability

We consider the environmental, economic, social and cultural implications of our decisions to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the Council and our community.

Built Form

We will ensure built form complements the natural environment and Hills character. It will serve to support sustainable living, resilience and safety, community capacity building, and sustainable commerce.

Change

We recognise the need for flexibility, resilience and adaptability in a changing global landscape.

Innovation

We seek opportunities for innovation and to continuously enhance the experience of living and working in the Hills, both now and for future generations.

Governance

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethics and probity.



Our goals



Natural Environment

NE 1 Pursue our adopted pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

NE 2 Support the community and businesses to decarbonise and transition to sustainable lifestyle practices (green communities).

NE 3 Protect, improve, expand and connect habitat.

NE 4 Build resilience in the natural environment to adapt to climate and other environmental changes.

NE 5 Improve landscape character and amenity value on Council managed land.

See more about this goal on page 13.



Community Wellbeing

CW 1 Promote and support reconciliation.

CW 2 Enrich, empower and support connected communities.

CW 3 Embrace diversity in our community and build on community strengths.

CW 4 Build community resilience for the future.

CW 5 Foster cultural identity and connection to place.

CW 6 Promote physical, mental and social wellbeing.

See more about this goal on page 16.



Built Form and Economy

BFE 1 Guide development that fosters vibrant and resilient communities, promotes appropriate design and enhances livability.

BFE 2 Nurture a distinctive sense of place, support activation activities and recognise and celebrate our rich heritage.

BFE 3 Develop and maintain infrastructure to support livability and sustainable economic activity.

BFE 4 Improve the utilisation of Council and community facilities.

BFE 5 Promote sustainable prosperity by supporting tourism, creative industries, primary production and vibrant townships.

See more about this goal on page 20.



Organisation

O1 Embrace technology solutions and digital transformation to enhance our organisation and the community experience.

O2 Operate with integrity using best practice governance processes.

O3 Support and develop a skilled organisation that is aligned to Council's priorities.

O4 Engage and advocate for our communities.

O5 Evolve Council's functions and services to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of our community.

See more about this goal on page 23.

What is the strategic plan?

The Strategic Plan sets out our key areas of focus for the next four years. It doesn't include everything we do, but it highlights areas for special attention and where we will be directing our efforts.

Council has sought to understand and reflect the community's aspirations by analysing data from our 2023 community survey and engagement processes from other initiatives such as the Annual Business Plan. We've engaged directly with a number of stakeholder groups, analysed the latest demographic data and considered contemporary research into areas of relevance to the Adelaide Hills community. From this, we've determined goals, objectives and priorities for focus over the coming years and outlined a number of principles to guide what we do.

The Draft Strategic Plan consultation held over September 2024 provided further opportunity for the community to contribute to the content of the final plan.

Our strategic planning framework

The Strategic Plan is influenced and supported by a range of strategies and plans as shown in Figure 1.

Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires all councils to have strategic management plans. The Strategic Plan is part of our suite of strategic management plans along with the Long Term Financial Plan and the Asset Management Plans. When designing the Strategic Plan, we consider the environment we operate in, the strategic risks, and the community's profile and trends, as well as the organisational capability we need to achieve our objectives.

Each year we use these strategies and plans to determine the priorities and allocate resources through the Annual Business Plan process. At that time, a suite of corporate performance indicators are incorporated which are then used in quarterly reporting and the Annual Report to demonstrate our performance in delivering on the Strategic Plan.



Figure 1: Strategic planning framework



Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan sets out the Council's key areas of focus for the next four years.

Asset Management Plans

Details the management and development of our assets and infrastructure.

Long Term Financial Plan

A view of our finances over a 10 year period that shows how we remain financially sustainable while delivering our strategic goals.

Annual Business Plan

Provides our annual budget and the details of how we will deliver our strategic management plans during the financial year.

Quarterly Performance Reporting

Shows our performance against the Annual Business Plan targets.

Annual Report

Shows our performance against our Annual Business Plan targets.

Our profile

District Area **795km²**

Townships and Localities **57**

Total Population **41,842**

Households **16,267**

Median Age **44**



Household Types

8%
One parent family

2%
Group households

18%
Lone person

37%
Couples with children

32%
Couples without children

Key Statistics

618km
Sealed roads

399km
Unsealed roads

124km
Footpaths

309
Council owned buildings

3.8%
Of people need help
at home

8,437
Dog registrations

1,426
Cat registrations

6
Libraries and community
centres

30%
Of people in our
population are
volunteers

39
Playgrounds

100+
Pieces of play equipment

\$5.5m spent on
Waste and recycling

4,243
Businesses

12,037
Local jobs

About our region

When we undertook our community survey and asked people to describe what they love about the Adelaide Hills, most people referenced our unique Hills' character.

They raised themes encompassing the natural environment, open spaces, welcoming communities, our unique townships and businesses, the rural living feel, agriculture and our attractions and events.

There is a strong sense for wanting to protect what is special about the Hills and to approach the future in a considered but adaptable manner.

Region

We have 57 townships, suburbs and localities scattered across an area of 795km². The large geographic region contributes to the challenges we face with limited public transport, an ageing population, a changing agricultural and economic base and some difficulties in accessing services.

Despite this, our dispersed population is well provided for with numerous facilities and community services including libraries, community centres, recreation facilities and halls. Some of these are Council owned while many are community owned and/or managed.

Our People

In 2023 we had an estimated population of 41,842 living in 16,267 households, with an average size of 2.61 people.

41% of our residents owned their home outright and 46% owned a home under mortgage, while the remaining are either renting or in another arrangement. Larger properties and rising house value present challenges in housing affordability and therefore the dominant households seen are often higher income and/or people in stable employment. Young people and lower income households have limited options for housing in the region.

21% of our residents were born overseas with the largest groups being from England, Germany, and New Zealand. At home 7.9% speak another language than

English which is significantly lower than the South Australia average of 19%.

281 people identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander which is 41 people higher than in 2016. The region's first people are the Peramangk and Kurna people and we recognise that there are many traditional custodians with a strong connection to country who live outside the region. We also know that the recognition of Aboriginal culture and heritage is important to many people in our region.

20.1% of our residents are aged 65 or older which is 2.6% higher than in 2016. These trends indicate that the demand for smaller accommodation, aged care and flexible 'age in place' options will continue to grow, along with the need for an increased level of associated support services and infrastructure requirements related to ageing.

With limited public transport in our region, the major form of transport is by car. As such, 74% of households have access to 2 or more vehicles. Challenges therefore arise for many non-drivers in the community in limiting their access to support services, work and/or education.

3.8% of our residents need help at home. With challenges already faced across the state with increasing healthcare shortages, this may place additional pressure on alternative community services.

About our region

Economy

The Gross Regional Product, which is an estimate of our region's contribution to the national economy, is \$2.1b a year. Our major output producing industries are manufacturing, construction and rental/real estate services.

We have more than 4,000 businesses in the region, 33% of which provide jobs for over 12,000 people. We have a small business dominated economy with only 2% of businesses in the region employing 20 or more staff.

Tourism businesses generate approximately \$215m for the Adelaide Hills, and the value added by tourism to the local area is estimated to be \$88.8m.

Economic uncertainty continues to create challenges for many sectors of our community. Inflation pressures and increasing property prices contribute to increased cost of living.

Environment

In 2019, we declared a climate emergency and continue our commitment to provide leadership in addressing climate change and in remaining resilient in the face of continuing extreme weather events.

The Adelaide Hills is a biodiversity hotspot with large tracts of native vegetation and numerous threatened species and communities. Around 24% of the land we manage is protected through Native Vegetation Heritage Agreements, Conservation Reserve status or roadside native vegetation blue marker system status.

Ongoing conservation management to preserve, restore and connect our habitats will be needed into the future.

Most of the land in our region is classed as high bushfire risk as it has steep topography, difficult access and higher fuel loads than urbanised areas due to vegetation cover. Striking a balance between protecting our community from bushfires and preserving the region's biodiversity is essential.



About our region

Development

Over the past 10 years we have had an average yearly population increase of 0.5% due to the limited opportunities for development in our region. There are however pockets of accelerated growth, including at Woodforde, Woodside (Inverbrackie) and Mount Torrens.

Development limitations are directly influenced by:

- The Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed, which covers 89% of the region contributing to a majority of metropolitan Adelaide's potable water.
- The regulated protections from residential development which cover the majority of land outside township boundaries.
- Infrastructure over the majority of the region lacking mains water, sewer or stormwater connections.

Negligible population growth is predicted in the near-medium term which reflects the limited opportunities for development coupled with a long term gradual reduction in average household size. Low development places less pressure on natural and agricultural landscapes, however it also limits the supply of smaller and/or affordable housing. Lower overall supply influences increasing house and rental prices. Low development also limits Council's ability to meet increasing community expectations through revenue growth

Footnote:

Demographic data has been sourced from the 2021 ABS Census available online at abs.gov.au.



Our goals



1

Natural Environment

Responsible custodians of our natural environment



Goal 1 Natural Environment

Responsible custodians of our natural environment.

We understand the vital role that healthy and resilient natural systems play in supporting our quality of life. These include the provision of clean air and water, natural elimination of waste and pollution, recycling of nutrients, pest regulation, pollination and supporting sustainable agriculture.

We have ambitious goals for mitigating our climate impacts and growing our vegetation coverage, while

supporting the community to do the same. It is important to adopt an integrated approach to vegetation management and bushfire mitigation.

Our parks and reserves are important to the community, economy and ecosystems and we will continue to maintain and enhance public spaces accordingly.

Objective NE1

Pursue our adopted pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions

Priorities

NE1.1 Deliver actions in the corporate carbon management plan to decarbonise Council operations, including embedded emissions.

NE1.2 Continue to decarbonise the vehicle fleet and other energy consuming processes.

NE1.3 Investigate opportunities for direct energy purchasing from renewable energy producers (power purchasing agreement) and/or community virtual power plants.

NE1.4 Demonstrate responsible governance by incorporating sustainable procurement (ISO 20400) into Council processes.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Sustainability program
- Corporate procurement

Objective NE2

Support the community and businesses to decarbonise and transition to sustainable lifestyle practices (green communities)

Priorities

NE2.1 Investigate the merits of a solar PV and battery bulk purchasing scheme and community virtual power plant to provide more affordable access to renewable energy, and explore other ways of supporting practical actions by the community to adopt sustainable living practices.

NE2.2 Continue to promote the highest principles in the waste management hierarchy – avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle – through education programs, services and by example.

NE2.3 Explore alternative kerbside waste collection models that divert more waste from landfill.

NE2.4 Support business, commerce associations, community associations and other groups to adopt sustainability targets and actions.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Kerbside waste collection
- Waste transfer station
- Economic development

Goal 1 Natural Environment

Objective NE3

Protect, improve, expand and connect habitat

Priorities

NE3.1 Protect remnant native vegetation from threats or threatening activities.

NE3.2 Promote the value of biodiversity protection and management on private lands.

NE3.3 Develop and implement a new Biodiversity Strategy detailing how we will protect and improve biodiversity, and expand native vegetation coverage where appropriate.

NE3.4 Nurture valuable community and stakeholder partnerships and collaborations to care for country.

NE3.5 Advocate for stronger native vegetation protection laws.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Biodiversity management and bushcare
- Friends of parks programs
- Partnerships with government and non-government organisations

Objective NE4

Build resilience in the natural environment to adapt to climate and other environmental changes

Priorities

NE4.1 Implement the opportunities identified in the Bushfire Mitigation Landscape Strategy.

NE4.2 Implement actions from the Tree Strategy.

NE4.3 Collaborate and advocate for greater investment in environmental protections and improvements.

NE4.4 Work with others toward the national '30 by 30' target to protect and conserve 30% of the land area by 2030.

NE4.5 Apply best practice approaches to protect soil and water quality and conservation.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Arboriculture
- Parks and reserves
- Regulatory services

Objective NE5

Improve landscape character and amenity value on Council managed land

Priorities

NE5.1 Continue rolling out water efficiency measures for the maintenance of parks and sports fields.

NE5.2 Implement a succession planting program for street trees and other vegetation in key precincts, with a focus on sustainable species selection.

NE5.3 Maintain parks and reserves to be fit for purpose and enhance liveability.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Parks and reserves maintenance
- Sport and recreation

Our goals



Community Wellbeing

A thriving, safe and welcoming community



Goal 2 Community Wellbeing

A thriving, safe and welcoming community.

Our region provides a unique environment and lifestyle for residents, business owners and visitors who value quality of life and wellbeing. A thriving community depends on high levels of wellbeing, which are influenced by various social and health factors leading to safe, engaged, healthy, inclusive, culturally rich, vibrant, creative and supported communities.

By working alongside our residents, we strengthen relationships and create opportunities for them to connect, learn, participate, grow and build resilience against unexpected challenges.

Objective CW1

Promote and support reconciliation

Priorities

CW1.1 Develop and implement our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with the support of the Adelaide Hills Reconciliation Working Group.

CW1.2 Create First Nations Engagement Protocols to better enable Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved in Council decision-making.

CW1.3 Seek cultural advice and guidance from First Nations people to support our activities.

CW1.4 Build awareness of cultural safety and respect among our Council members, staff, volunteers and community.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Community cultural development
- Fabrik Arts + Heritage
- Governance
- Communications, engagement and events

Objective CW2

Enrich, empower and support connected communities

Priorities

CW2.1 Partner to deliver positive ageing programs to support eligible older residents to maintain their independence, increase social participation, and improve wellbeing.

CW2.2 Support community groups and community-led initiatives that achieve wellbeing outcomes.

CW 2.3 Provide welcoming spaces, programs and services at our libraries and community centres that offer opportunities for connection, lifelong learning, digital inclusion, growth and literacy.

CW2.4 Support community members to gain skills, experience, and connections through our volunteering programs, and strengthen pathways to external volunteering opportunities in our region.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Positive ageing
- Youth development
- Libraries
- Fabrik Art + Heritage
- Volunteering
- Community programs

Goal 2 Community Wellbeing

Objective CW3

Embrace diversity in our community and build on community strengths

Priorities

CW3.1 Promote and encourage community-level action for the prevention of domestic and family violence.

CW3.2 Update and implement our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and continue to improve universal access to our community supports and services.

CW3.3 Explore contemporary models for young people to participate in and shape their communities by influencing decisions and policies that affect their futures.

CW3.4 Renew and implement a Youth Action Plan that promotes access to opportunities, resources and supports for young people.

CW3.5 Engage with diverse community groups to identify and address barriers to safe and equitable access to services, programs and facilities.

CW3.6 Foster multiculturalism through a range of events, programs and initiatives.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Community wellbeing
- Youth development
- Community programs
- Libraries

Objective CW4

Build community resilience for the future

Priorities

CW4.1 Promote grassroots community collaboration and preparedness on climate action, and assist our community to adapt and build climate resilience.

CW4.2 Using past experiences, lessons learnt, and contemporary knowledge support, the emergency services and the community before, during and after disaster events.

CW4.3 Support and train staff to participate in our incident management team and recovery team and ensure response requirements are adequately resourced.

CW4.4 Promote disaster preparedness as a shared responsibility by collaborating with relevant partners, including emergency services, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the community.

CW4.5 Review the sustainability and permanency of community resilience programs to ensure ongoing support to communities, townships, and at-risk groups to prepare for, respond to, and recover from bushfires and other emergencies.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Sustainability program
- Emergency management
- Community resilience program
- Regulatory services
- Communications, engagement and events

Goal 2 Community Wellbeing

Objective CW5

Foster cultural identity and connection to place

Priorities

CW5.1 Establish Fabrik Arts + Heritage as an arts and culture destination, attracting visitors from Australia and around the world.

CW5.2 Support and create opportunities for artists, performers and writers to showcase their work and contribute to community identity, events and placemaking.

CW5.3 Develop connection for people and place by fostering public art and supporting arts and cultural experiences, including events, markets and festivals.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Fabrik Arts + Heritage
- Community cultural development
- Township and landscape planning
- Communications, engagement and events

Objective CW6

Promote physical, mental and social wellbeing

Priorities

CW6.1 Adopt a strategic and evidence-based approach to plan for the provision of accessible sport and recreation opportunities and facilities.

CW6.2 Deliver our priority actions outlined in our Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022-27 and advocate for improved mental health services for our region.

CW6.3 Plan and promote walking and cycling projects and infrastructure that facilitate health and wellbeing as well as sustainable forms of transport.

CW6.4 Support and partner with clubs, groups, and other stakeholders to provide sport and recreation opportunities / activities and facilities for the community.

CW6.5 Promote opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing by spending time in our natural environments, bringing greater numbers of people into our parks.

CW6.6 Ensure cemetery offerings respond to changing community preferences and that public commemorative and memorial sites are kept in a state befitting their purpose.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Sport and recreation
- Community wellbeing
- Environmental health
- Cemetery management
- Communications, engagement and events

Our goals



3

Built Form and Economy

Building foundations for the future



Goal 3 Built Form and Economy

Building foundations for the future

We guide and advocate for sustainable development that enhances and protects our region. We build connections and participation across the community through effective facilities and infrastructure, such as sports grounds, community spaces, libraries, community halls, and community centres.

Supporting economic growth through business retention and attraction boosts our economic diversity and local job opportunities, improving the community's quality of life. Engaging with people who interact and do business in our region helps tailor our spaces to their changing needs, enhancing the sense of place.

Objective BFE1

Guide development that fosters vibrant and resilient communities, promotes appropriate design and enhances livability

Priorities

BFE1.1 Develop and implement a housing strategy that responds to the community's needs and balances expectations regarding character, growth, affordability and the natural environment.

BFE1.2 Explore and investigate opportunities to support and encourage adaptive, resilient and climate ready development.

BFE1.3 Investigate the merits of establishing a Local Design Review Panel to enhance the decision-making process for development.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Development services
- Policy planning
- Economic development

Objective BFE2

Nurture a distinctive sense of place, support activation activities and recognise and celebrate our rich heritage

Priorities

BFE2.1 Prepare and implement a new framework to guide Council's approach to placemaking initiatives across the district.

BFE2.2 Develop a strategic framework to town and precinct planning, with prioritisation guidelines to ensure equitable investment in public spaces.

BFE2.3 Ensure place development incorporates youth friendly spaces and infrastructure.

BFE2.4 Continue to strengthen Council's planning framework to preserve and enhance the unique heritage and character of the Hills.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Policy planning
- Economic Development
- Development services

Goal 3 Built Form and Economy

Objective BFE3

Develop and maintain infrastructure to support livability and sustainable economic activity

Priorities

BFE3.1 Continue to pursue co-funding for community infrastructure and road safety improvement projects.

BFE3.2 Continue to build and enhance resilience and reliability of the Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) service.

BFE3.3 Undertake a gap analysis to determine the need for additional and enhanced asset management planning.

BFE3.4 Assess appropriate service levels when reviewing asset management plans.

BFE3.5 Prioritise planning for new footpath, trail and cycling infrastructure where it will foster better health, wellbeing, economic and transport outcomes.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Asset management
- Civil services
- Property services

Objective BFE4

Improve the utilisation of Council and community facilities

Priorities

BFE4.1 Review staff office accommodation to optimise cost and service delivery arrangements and implement appropriate actions.

BFE4.2 Encourage greater utilisation and enhancement of community halls and facilities and foster multi-use spaces to maximise community benefit.

BFE4.3 Recognise and promote the value of community-based facility management in meeting local needs.

BFE4.4 Implement the Community and Recreation Facilities Framework.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Property services
- Community development
- Sport and recreation

Objective BFE5

Promote sustainable prosperity by supporting tourism, creative industries, primary production and vibrant townships

Priorities

BFE5.1 Explore opportunities to support the growth of eco-tourism in the Adelaide Hills.

BFE5.2 Support and encourage the growth of primary production, manufacturing, creative and other industries, including a focus on local supply chains.

BFE5.3 Support new and existing businesses to be resilient and successful, and to create local jobs.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Economic development
- Fabrik arts + heritage
- Policy planning
- Trails development

Our goals



Organisation

An accessible, accountable and representative organisation



Goal 4 Organisation

An accessible, accountable and representative organisation.

As an organisation, we aim to deliver effective and efficient services and facilities to the community with a focus on representation, informed and transparent decision-making, and financial sustainability.

Our people strive to be agile and capable. We consider the customer experience and continuous improvement in all that we do, with an aim to make it easy for our community, staff and stakeholders to interact with us.

Objective O1

Embrace technology solutions and digital transformation to enhance our organisation and the community experience

Priorities

O1.1 Use technology and digital solutions to improve and streamline the customer experience.

O1.2 Invest in technology solutions and skills to transform service delivery and maximise the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency.

O1.3 Enhance data governance to protect and secure information ensuring compliance with legislation.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Customer services
- Information services
- Communications
- Financial services
- People and culture

Objective O2

Operate with integrity using best practice governance processes

Priorities

O2.1 Demonstrate accountable and transparent decision making.

O2.2 Support decision making through the use of timely data-driven analysis and reporting.

O2.3 Enhance governance structures and systems to be agile and support our legislative obligations.

O2.4 Review and renew protocols for communication and work between the administration and elected body.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Governance
- Corporate planning and performance
- Communications

Goal 4 Organisation

Objective O3

Support and develop a skilled organisation that is aligned to Council's priorities

Priorities

O3.1 Develop and implement an internal communications strategy incorporating mechanisms for feedback on effectiveness.

O3.2 Develop and implement a workforce development plan (that incorporates recruitment, training, succession planning and ongoing support), to optimise our workforce retention.

O3.3 Enhance the culture of the organisation through the development of a revised set of organisational values incorporating a customer centric focus.

O3.4 Maintain a safe workplace centred around equity, inclusion, wellbeing and safe work practices including corporate emergency response.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- People and culture
- Corporate planning and performance
- Communications
- Emergency management
- Information services

Objective O4

Engage and advocate for our communities

Priorities

O4.1 Develop a robust Community Engagement Framework including exploring opportunities for community to participate in decision making.

O4.2 Advocate on behalf of the community to represent its needs and views with relevant stakeholders and decision makers.

O4.3 Work with affected communities across the region on boundary change issues to advocate for the most beneficial and appropriate outcomes.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Community engagement
- Communications
- Governance

Objective O5

Evolve Council's functions and services to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of our community

Priorities

O5.1 Undertake a high level review which considers the effectiveness, efficiency and opportunities of all council services.

O5.2 Demonstrate financial sustainability through long term financial planning and annual budget setting which aligns with adopted targets.

O5.3 Undertake regular customer surveys to seek feedback and measure customer experience.

Services and functions which help us achieve the objective

- Corporate planning and performance
- Financial services
- Information services

Each year we list specific corporate performance indicators in our Annual Business Plan as well as the strategic initiatives that will help us to deliver on the strategic plan.

Demonstrating our success

Each year we list specific corporate performance indicators in our Annual Business Plan as well as the strategic initiatives that will help us to deliver on the strategic plan. We have adopted service standards for a range of functions and conduct regular surveys with people who have requested Council services.

We further outline how we will deliver on our goals through the development and implementation of our functional plans, strategies and programs. Some examples of these include the Capital Works Program, Access and Inclusion plan, Economic Development Plan, Biodiversity Strategy, Sport and Recreation Strategy and Civil Zone Maintenance Program.

We inform the community and our stakeholders of our progress through regular reporting which includes the Annual Report, Quarterly Council Performance Report, Quarterly Budget Review reports, and Community Engagement reports.



Our role

We perform a broad range of functions and there are a number of roles we play to achieve our objectives.

Service provider

Fully or partially fund and provide a service

Partner

Working with others to achieve common objectives

Funder/facilitator

Enabling others to achieve outcomes through funding or facilitation support

Advocate

Representing the views of the community to others

Promoter/educator

Amplifying messages, referring to other service providers and informing the community

Regulator

Make and/or enforce rules, educate and encourage compliance

Governance arrangements

Council and Committees

Adelaide Hills Council was established on 1 July 1997 through the amalgamation of the district councils of East Torrens, Gumeracha, Onkaparinga and Stirling and is made up of a Mayor and 12 Councillors elected to represent the community across two wards (see Figure 2). The Ranges Ward elects seven councillors and the Valleys Ward elects five with the ratio of electors to Councillors close to the same across both wards. A representation review is in progress which will determine if the current composition and ward structure will continue to meet our future requirements. If any changes are made as a result, this will be reflected at the next Local Government Election in November 2026.

The elected Council's role is to provide for the governance and stewardship of the Council. They do this through representing the interests of the community, providing and coordinating public services and facilities, encouraging and developing initiatives to improve the community's quality of life, and exercising their functions under legislation and the strategic management plans.

Several committees have been established to assist the Council and administration to discharge their responsibilities in specific areas. These are the Audit Committee, Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Panel, Council Assessment Panel, Boundary Change Committee and the Building Fire Safety Committee.

Council Administration

The Council's Administration is led by the Chief Executive Officer appointed by the Council. The Chief Executive Officer appoints staff and engages other resources to carry out the functions and duties delegated to them and to implement Council decisions.

The Administration is organised into directorates, each with a specific area of focus and functional responsibilities. The arrangement of directorates provides for the separation of regulatory activities, as far as practicable.

Regional Subsidiaries

We are a member of four regional subsidiaries to deliver particular functions in collaboration with other councils. The subsidiaries are the Southern and Hills Local Government Association, the Eastern Waste Management Authority (East Waste), the Adelaide Hills Region Waste Management Authority, and the Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority.

We foster positive relationships with other Councils, relevant State Government ministers, and government departments and agencies.

Collaboration on public policy setting

We foster positive relationships with other Councils, relevant State Government ministers, and Government departments and agencies. The extent to which we collaborate in public policy setting is determined by the relevance to our community and on our ability to allocate the necessary resources. This includes:

- Actively seeking face to face Minister-Council interaction on an annual basis
- Council and the Executive Leadership Team monitoring opportunities to comment on proposals of other levels of government via the Local Government Association's regular circulars and prioritise effort and input according to district relevance
- Participating in the Eastern metropolitan regional group of councils and the Southern and Hills Regional Local Government Association, which are regular forums for collaboration and regional prioritisation setting
- Regularly inviting senior government staff to address Council and the Executive Leadership team on issues of district relevance in an informal and interactive manner

The state, national and regional objectives that were considered in the development of this plan, and the extent to which we plan to co-ordinate with State and Federal Governments on mutual objectives, are specified in the various functional strategies which expand on our Strategic Management Plans.



Figure 2: Council ward structure

