

Community Capacity and Connection Strategy 2026–31

Supporting an informed, active,
creative and empowered community

DRAFT



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Kurna Nation and its people as the traditional owners and custodians of the Land in the ancient area that has only recently become known as the City of Onkaparinga

We recognise that this local living culture has developed over tens of thousands of years and that in today's contemporary context, Kurna and other Aboriginal people are actively engaged in community life and bring their rich cultural heritage to the connected community and sustainable future to which we aspire.

We are mindful of Kurna people's spiritual relationship with country when we make decisions about this region and that protecting places of importance to Kurna culture has an impact on the wellbeing and prosperity of Kurna and other Aboriginal people.

We recognise our important opportunity to facilitate positive change in the way the community works together across Aboriginal communities,

non-Aboriginal communities, local businesses, and service agencies, by actively engaging in a shared journey towards reconciliation.

Our work on strengthening community capacity and connection is mindful of the cultural processes of Kurna and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We recognise the richness of cultural ways of knowing, the direct connection between human and environmental wellbeing, the importance of freedom to undertake cultural and spiritual practice, and strong leadership grounded in cultural knowledge, purpose and responsibility.

We value access to full social and economic participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and recognise that particular attention is needed to amplify voices and improve equity in opportunities and outcomes to close the gap.

Our work aims for cohesion across celebrated cultural differences towards a more inclusive community, and we recognise that to effectively contribute to social progress in these ways, the council must have a culturally capable workforce.



Mayor's foreword

We are part of a tapestry, woven by passionate individuals and groups with deep care for this place and its people. This is built on the foundations of nearly 3000 generations of Kaurua.

Together with more recent arrivals, our generation is contributing to the wellbeing, connection and community self-determination of all who call the City of Onkaparinga, home.

There are many, varied parts of local life that we value in what makes Onkaparinga a special place to be proud of. From rich cultural heritage to vibrant creative arts, to inclusive sporting clubs, to connection and conversations, learning new skills in our libraries and community, youth and positive ageing centres, and to community organisations supporting people to connect and thrive.

We welcome the challenges and opportunities of our times, as Onkaparinga's population continues to grow. The signs of the times we are noticing are our population ageing, mortgage and rental stress, more of our residents working from home, and changes in technology in how we learn, work, transit, care for each other, and relax.

The council's Community Capacity and Connection Strategy 2026-31 is designed to be responsive to the future trends and support this generation and the next.

In line with the Community Vision 2034, created with input from over 5,000 local voices, this strategy outlines a community development approach to working with our communities. Our mission is to unlock and unleash an informed, active, creative, and empowered community, to drive, deliver and celebrate each other's contributions.

Our work covered by this strategy aligns with our responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 1999* to deliver equitable outcomes across the whole council region. Therefore, the principles of social justice, equity and inclusion underpin it. This means we have an obligation to building trust to ensure no one is left behind. We do this in partnership with a range of community, business and government stakeholders.

It takes a village to build anything of true value. Consider this your invitation to bring your voice and actions and join us in response to these times, so together the next generation is set up for success from our shared efforts.

Moiri Were AM

Mayor, City of Onkaparinga





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1. Introduction

This section sets the scene for the council's work on strengthening community capacity and connection.

1.1 Why we need this strategy



We work with the community on strengthening capacity and connection to support people in the Onkaparinga region to live well by participating in and shaping local community life. This involves working with individuals, groups, organisations, and society-wide to address challenges and maximise opportunities that enable local improvements to quality of life and inspire local pride in a safe, inclusive and thriving region.

We do this work in many ways. Examples include delivering a range of services, programs and activities at various community facilities, working in outreach mode by meeting people and groups where they are at, providing relevant information, providing opportunities to get involved in decision-making and leadership, supporting community led activity that addresses local matters, and partnering with stakeholders to support coordinated efforts in improving quality of life.



The *Local Government Act, 1999* sets out what the main roles, functions and principles are for a council, including a core responsibility for a council to develop its community and resources in a socially just manner. The City of Onkaparinga Community Vision 2034 articulates our community's preferred future across broad social, environmental and economic domains.

This strategy – Community Capacity and Connection 2026–31:

- responds to the Community Vision 2034
- articulates the strategic direction for what the council aims to affect through a wide range of its community services
- provides clear structure for our approach to the work of building community capacity and connection across the Onkaparinga region to support an informed, active, creative, and empowered community
- is based on socially just community development principles, per the Act.

1.1 Why we need this strategy

This strategy provides guidance for our work on strengthening community connections and networks, improving social equity, encouraging healthy active lifestyles, fostering cultural and creative expression, and supporting access to information and technology, to enhance wellbeing and improve quality of life.

Community Capacity and Connection Strategy 2026–31

Supporting an informed, active, creative and empowered community.



Informed Community

Customer Interactions

Communications

Libraries



Active Community

Sport

Active recreation



Creative Community

Cultural development

Arts



Empowered Community

Reconciliation

Inclusivity

Community development

Community engagement

Grants

Events

1.1 Why we need this strategy

The strategy includes a set of focus areas and strategic objectives that is relevant across the 4 streams. An implementation plan for each stream will detail the main actions the council will deliver towards achieving the strategic objectives.

This first iteration of the strategy is presented with its Empowered Community stream fully incorporated, as an evolution of our inaugural Community Capacity

Strategic Plan 2021–24, and the other 3 streams accommodated to varying degrees. It will be further developed over time, with improvements to be made when its 3 other implementation plans are introduced.

The strategy recognises community capacity building as a valuable frame for an increasing range of the council's community services and programs.

The diagram below demonstrates the long-term

strategic approach to how our work on strengthening community capacity and connection is becoming a more central focus in how we operate as an organisation.

	Past	Present	Future
Strategy	Community Capacity Strategic Plan 2021-2024	Community Capacity and Connection Strategy 2026–31	TBD
Maturity	Building community capacity is an integral part of our work as an organisation	Strengthening community capacity and connection is the frame for an increasing amount of our work as an organisation	We are a community capacity building organisation
Strategic frame	Strong vibrant communities People, Place, Prosperity, Performance	Connected communities, sustainable future Community, Environment, Liveability, Leadership	TBD
Community development approach	Used in our community services and programs	Shared more widely across the organisation and community	Broadly adapted as an empowerment tool
Council staff members view their work as contributing to community capacity	Some	Many	Most

1.1 Why we need this strategy

The capacity of the Onkaparinga community, and how connected it is, are important factors in how well it is, how fully it caters for the needs of its members, and how well positioned it is to achieve its preferred future as expressed in the Community Vision 2034.

This strategy aims for:

- people being active and well, feeling connected, experiencing belonging, and participating in local community life
- members of under-represented groups experiencing equitable access to opportunities and fair outcomes
- visibility of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and improved outcomes linked with Closing the Gap
- people being better prepared to face challenges such as security of access to healthcare, food, and shelter, cost of living pressures, digital inclusion and safety issues, and natural disaster and climate change readiness
- people having access to technology and accurate, relevant, interesting, and timely information
- people having opportunities for cultural and creative expression
- the development of skills, networks and resources
- high levels of community volunteerism
- high levels of community engagement, participatory involvement, active citizenship and leadership

- high-functioning community groups, clubs and organisations
- community facilities operating as safe, welcoming, inclusive, flexible hubs
- shared ways of working with community members and groups that build current and future capacity.

The strategy is designed to provide guidance to various parts of the City of Onkaparinga organisation in coordinating our many different efforts across the business that relate to enhancing wellbeing and strengthening community capacity and connection. Leadership of the strategy sits in the Strategy, Engagement and Community Directorate of the organisation structure, however it is designed to support collaboration across all relevant organisational directorates, sections and teams to achieve the best possible results with and for our community.

The implementation plans that detail action across the 4 streams to achieve the strategic objectives will involve many parts of the organisation in working together to strengthen community capacity and connection.

This strategy also aims to strengthen collaboration, partnerships, and collective action with and between our community stakeholders, by embedding community development practice in broader service delivery, activity and community life.



1.2 What is community capacity and connection?

We define community capacity and connection as being based on positive personal and collective wellbeing, to support an informed, active, creative, and empowered community.

A community with high capacity can identify challenges, opportunities and preferences, and mobilise resources to act on them in meeting its needs and aspirations.

Participating in and shaping local community life requires knowledge, skills, resources, leadership, and power. Public institutions have a pivotal role in helping to unlock these contributions by embracing lived experience leadership, opening systems and sharing power through participatory and collaborative practice to enable inclusion in civic life.

Wellbeing is a critical underpin to active citizenship, including people having their basic needs met and living enjoyable, purposeful, meaningful lives. Connectivity, between individuals, groups and systems, is also a fundamental aspect.

Based on this, the work of strengthening community capacity and connection is addressing barriers to participating in and shaping community life, such as social isolation, equity of access and cost, and taking deliberate action that supports:

- physical and mental wellbeing, meaningful connection and local belonging
- the development and maintenance of the knowledge, skills, abilities, confidence, networks, and resources a community needs to be well and to participate in and shape local community life
- access to opportunities to make change and achieve community-driven goals through local leadership
- compassionate, effective, integrated and transparent social structures and systems.

Activities integral to our work on strengthening community capacity and connection include:

- facilitating access to timely, accurate, relevant, and interesting information
- encouraging healthy, active lifestyles
- celebrating cultural and creative expression
- acting on the social determinants of health¹ within the core roles of local government
- professional community development practice enhancing innate community assets and strengths

- providing and attracting grants to support community activity
- holding and supporting events
- facilitating public participation in local democratic and decision-making processes
- volunteerism in all its forms
- encouraging and strengthening community leadership
- working with service providers, government agencies and others to coordinate approaches to the provision of social support and opportunities for personal and community development.

These activities are actioned through our own service and program delivery and those delivered by others, such as:

- government health, housing and education services
- community-led activity such as sporting clubs, community groups, service clubs, special interest groups, and religious groups and organisations.

We value the important work done at libraries and youth, arts, community, positive ageing and recreation centres, as well as by a wide range of community organisations, associations and clubs, in bringing people together for informal and formal activity that contributes to strengthening capacity, social connection and levels of engagement in community life.

1.2 What is community capacity and connection? _____.

A council's role is to serve its community – doing things for the good of the Onkaparinga region and its people. A central principle of this strategy is that we believe our community is best served when we work together with community members, organisations and groups, and a range of other strategic partners, to address challenges and maximise opportunities; sharing the knowledge, skills, abilities, confidence, networks, and resources that contribute to a community being informed, active, creative, and empowered.

In this strategy, the term 'working with and for' community members and groups is used to describe the way we preference strengthening community capacity and connection in participatory, collaborative, and developmental ways. It also recognises that our role in this is fulfilled on behalf of, rather than with, community members when necessary and appropriate.



¹ World Health Organisation, Social Determinants of Health, <https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health>

2. Context

This section explores the strategic landscape that the council's role in strengthening community capacity and connection exists in.



2.1 Challenges and opportunities

We draw on a variety of statistical data as well as insights from our community and staff engagement to better understand local needs and guide how the council can respond to current and emerging matters.

Key current and anticipated challenges and opportunities relevant to enhancing wellbeing and strengthening community capacity and connection are listed in this section.

Generally, per our strengths-based community development approach (see page 27), challenges are seen as opportunities to increase social equity and improve quality of life.

Embedding the value of community services

Strengthening community capacity and connection requires recognition of the essential role that community services play in the contemporary social fabric. These services are often the first to identify emerging needs, are trusted by local residents, and are the most effective at recognising grassroots strengths and mobilising a community's inherent resources.

The important work across the 4 streams is essential social infrastructure that underpins a healthy, functioning local society; from libraries and literacy to sport and recreation, from creative and public art

to youth and community development, community services provide early support, prevent issues from escalating and ensure people can access the resources they need to participate fully in community life in the Onkaparinga region.

By valuing community services as providing protective factors against critical issues like social isolation, and not simply as providers of support, but as partners in shaping thriving, resilient neighbourhoods, we unlock the opportunity to build deeper connection, shared purpose and long-term wellbeing.

Investing in their capability, sustainability and visibility enables communities to lead solutions, foster stronger networks between council and residents, and ensures that support is accessible, culturally responsive, place-based, and grounded in lived experience.

Recognising and showcasing the contribution of community services can strengthen communities to grow, adapt and flourish together.

Consistent with other government and community focused organisations, council is experiencing pressure from escalating costs of materials and service provision, combined with increasing community needs and expectations. This presents challenges around meeting everyday service demands and investing in new or improved community programs and facilities to further strengthen community capacity and connection.

To keep pace with community needs and aspirations in this context, council must be forward-thinking,

support existing community strengths and assets, focus on continuous improvement to deliver efficiencies, embrace approaches that inspire collaboration and collective action, and attract resources to support these services and activities in new and innovative ways.



2.1 Challenges and opportunities

Loneliness and social isolation

Loneliness is being recognised as both a public health and social issue, particularly for young people, older people, people with disability, those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage and geographical isolation.

It has impacts on mental health, general wellbeing and community resilience. In response, the South Australian Legislative Council recently referred an inquiry into loneliness to the Social Development Committee of the Parliament of South Australia.

Local government plays an important role in addressing loneliness by creating safe and inclusive places, supporting opportunities for social connection and enabling community participation. Research from Flinders University further reinforces this need; its report on nurturing social connection and addressing loneliness provides practical guidance for community centres in South Australia to plan and implement initiatives that strengthen social connection and reduce isolation².

This is particularly relevant to the Onkaparinga region, as lone-person households are projected to become the most common household type in the future, and the geography of the region means that some locations are more physically isolated than others.

Ageing population

REMPAN forecasting data indicates the greatest projected growth in our council area is occurring among residents aged 80+ years, with this cohort expected to grow by about 59 per cent between 2021 and 2031. This is followed by those aged 65–79 years, at about 15 per cent for the same period.

This large growth in the number of older people will increase demand for aged care services, including those that support safety and accessibility, information and inclusion, wellbeing and connection, independence and ageing in place, as well as community transport. A lack of adequate aged care services is already emerging as a significant challenge and this gap places additional expectations on council to strengthen community based supports, advocate for system level reform and plan for an ageing population with more complex care needs.

Cost of living

Ongoing cost of living pressures are affecting a variety of individuals and households across the community, with growing impacts on fuel and food security, housing affordability and risk of homelessness.

On average, households in the Onkaparinga region have a lower level of income than Greater Adelaide.

In addition to this, anecdotal evidence suggests a growing number of residents who aren't traditionally classified as being on a low income are now also experiencing financial stress, reducing their ability to fully thrive and participate in community life.

Data from the City of Onkaparinga Community Survey show that the proportion of respondent households finding their income sufficient to meet their needs has fallen to its lowest level since 2019, dropping below 50 per cent for the first time in that period, to 45 per cent in 2025. These pressures also affect community capacity more broadly, including reduced volunteerism as retirement age increases, people are working longer hours or prioritising paid work over unpaid contribution. This places increased demand on local services and community supports, while reducing the informal networks that underpin connection, resilience and participation.

The 2025 Mission Australia Youth Survey further found that 60 per cent of young people in the City of Onkaparinga identified cost of living as Australia's most significant issue, and anecdotal feedback suggests this pressure is contributing to a growing sense of hopelessness for young people about the future.

² Ben Lohmeyer and Ros Wong, 2022, Nurturing social connection and addressing loneliness in Community Centres in South Australia, Flinders University College of Education, Psychology and Social Work, https://www.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/documents/swirls/Loneliness_in_the_Community_SA_Report_Online.pdf

2.1 Challenges and opportunities

Health and wellbeing

South Australian Population Health Survey data indicates that adults in our region experience poorer long term health outcomes when compared to metropolitan Adelaide and South Australia across a range of areas including mental health, suicidal ideation, obesity, asthma, diabetes, arthritis and general health. This data also indicates the percentage of children aged 5–15 years treated for a mental health or behavioural issue rose from 54 per cent in 2018 to 67 per cent in 2024.

Community concern about access to general and mental health services has also increased significantly, driven by long wait times, difficulty securing appointments and rising costs. City of Onkaparinga Community Survey data shows reported difficulty accessing GP services increased from 17 per cent in 2018 to 63 per cent in 2024, while difficulty accessing mental health services rose from 34 per cent to 74 per cent over the same period.

These trends demonstrate increasing pressure on individuals, families and communities and highlight the importance of accessible, preventative and connection focused supports that reach beyond the traditional health system. In this context, services delivered and supported by the council play an important role in providing information, promoting active lifestyles, fostering self-expression and resilience, and supporting social connection to contribute to improved health and wellbeing.

Safety, respect and non-violence

South Australia is experiencing escalating levels of domestic, family and sexual violence, as highlighted by the findings of the State's Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence released in August 2025. The Commission identified violence as widespread and increasing, placing significant pressure on strained response systems and emphasising the need for stronger prevention, early intervention and whole of community approaches.

Locally, Community Vision 2034 wellbeing indicator data, drawing on South Australia Police records, shows a 114 per cent increase in reported family and domestic violence offences between 2013/14 and 2024/25. While improved reporting mechanisms may have contributed to this increase, the data points to a significant challenge within the community.

Beyond formal response services, there is a broader opportunity for the council to promote safety, respect and non violence as shared values and responsibilities in all aspects of community life. Through its various roles, the council can support environments, programs and partnerships that strengthen social cohesion, build awareness and reduce risk factors, contributing to inclusive, respectful and connected communities where people feel safe to participate and belong.



2.1 Challenges and opportunities



Closing the Gap and other First Nations matters

First Nations people are an integral part of the Onkaparinga region's contemporary cultural, social and community life. The Kaurna Nation is recognised for its traditional ownership here and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from many other places now call the Onkaparinga region home.

It is recognised via national reporting against the Closing the Gap outcomes and targets that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to experience worse life outcomes than the remainder of the Australian population.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan coordinates key activities in strengthening relationships, deepening cultural understanding and developing opportunities with local First Nations communities, including demonstrating how these actions contribute to Closing the Gap. Central to this work is supporting First Nations people to exercise their agency and leadership and be authentically represented in our community. It is a core matter of importance in seeking a more fair, just and inclusive society that First Nations people and non-First Nations people should enjoy the same level of opportunity in all aspects of life. Critically, this includes in the Closing the Gap target areas, which cover health and wellbeing, culture, education, economic participation, housing, justice, safety, and access to information and services.

2.1 Challenges and opportunities

City of Onkaparinga Community Survey results (2025) showed that 60 per cent of respondents saw Aboriginal cultural heritage as an important part of the community, down from 74 per cent in 2021. This recent decline highlights the importance of action to achieve the Community Vision 2034 goal of elevating respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

The highest proportion of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents live in our Central North-West District, and our Central North-East and Southern districts have the second highest population. Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre is located in the Central North-West District near Noarlunga Regional Centre. Challenges of distance and transport barriers to accessing this and various other services highlight the need to expand outreach by offering programs in additional locations and creating more spaces across the region that are mindful of cultural safety.

Cultural diversity

City of Onkaparinga Community Survey results show a decline in sentiment toward cultural diversity, with agreement that it benefits the community decreasing from 82 per cent in 2021 to 66 per cent in 2025, the lowest level since 2018.

Over the same period, the proportion of respondents who felt safe to express their culture remained relatively stable, ranging from 55 to 61 per cent between 2021 and 2025. There is opportunity to better support diverse communities to feel safe, welcomed and that they belong.

In 2025, 69 per cent of respondents agreed that their local community accepts people from different backgrounds, the second highest result since 2018, demonstrating a solid foundation to build on.

By providing safe spaces for cultural expression and encouraging positive intercultural interactions, we aim to strengthen cultural diversity sentiment and foster a more inclusive and resilient community.

Neurodivergence

For people in the Onkaparinga region actively participating in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Autism is the most common primary disability group, with statistics reflecting a continued increasing trend (noting this occurs within the context of a broader range of neurodivergent profiles).

This is supported by our observations of an increase in neurodivergence in our community, particularly in young people. South Australia has a high concentration of neurodivergent individuals and as the number of people identifying as neurodivergent continues to rise, the demand for inclusive spaces and services, carer support and understanding is increasing.

LGBTQIA+

The visibility and representation of LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse people in the community continues to grow, particularly in young people. Residents who identify as LGBTQIA+ may face challenges including discrimination, social isolation, lower levels of wellbeing, and barriers to accessing supports.

The Australian Government reports that people who identify as LGBTQIA+ experience homelessness at more than twice the rate of the general Australian population. Additionally, 75 per cent of people identifying as LGBTQIA+ have experienced a mental health disorder at some time in their life, compared to 42 per cent of people who do not identify as such³.

The 2025 Mission Australia Youth Survey indicates that out of the 30 per cent of people who reported experiencing unfair treatment or discrimination, rates were significantly higher among gender diverse respondents (66 per cent).

This emerging diversity brings valuable opportunities to increase awareness and strengthen social cohesion, enrich community culture, and create services and spaces that are welcoming for all. By recognising diverse experiences and fostering inclusive policies, programs and environments, council can help people feel safe, supported and able to participate more fully in community life.

³ <https://humanrights.gov.au/education/stats-facts/statistics-about-LGBTIQA-rights> (sources include ABS 2024 data, as well as other studies).

2.1 Challenges and opportunities

Individual and group community participation and leadership

Community participation, leadership and strong governance within local groups, clubs and organisations are critical to strengthening community capacity and connection across our city. The 2025 Community Survey shows participation in community groups has fallen to 42 per cent, its lowest level since 2018, while the rate of people taking on leadership roles within community groups has declined sharply from 22 per cent in 2019 to just 7 per cent in 2025.

Furthermore, less than half of residents reported being actively involved in their local community, and only 27 per cent felt they could change something about where they live. The 2025 Mission Australia Youth Survey similarly found that over half of young people in the City of Onkaparinga felt they had no say in what happens in their neighbourhood. These sustained declines present ongoing challenges for council service delivery and for fostering connected, self-reliant communities, especially as drivers of participation become more complex. Council must continue to evolve and innovate how it influences participation and maximises the utilisation of community spaces.

Despite these trends, 2025 City of Onkaparinga Community Survey results showed improvement in community sentiment, with more respondents believing their neighbourhood is a good place to live (85 per cent), being proud of where they live

(79 per cent), believing they have something to contribute to the community (68 per cent), feeling hopeful about their local neighbourhood (70 per cent), and feeling connected with neighbours (61 per cent). These positive shifts present a strong foundation for continued work on strengthening community capacity, engagement and active citizenship.

Supporting the effective functionality and independent governance of community groups, clubs, and organisations including volunteer boards of management, is central to this work. These bodies face increasing regulatory, financial and asset-management pressures alongside changing volunteering patterns and increasing community expectations. Targeted support to build governance capability, manage risk and accountability, and encourage place-based leadership, shared stewardship and co-design will help enable resilient, community-led structures that reflect local needs and aspirations.

Volunteerism

Participation in voluntary work has declined in recent years, both within our local region and across the broader volunteering sector, making it increasingly difficult to recruit, develop, and retain volunteers.

Contributing factors include rising expectations around training, compliance and role complexity. Cost of living pressures are also reducing people's availability, with more people working longer or



2.1 Challenges and opportunities

irregular hours, older adults providing childcare for grandchildren, and many delaying retirement and prioritising paid employment over unpaid community contribution out of necessity.

Despite these challenges, the value of volunteering remains substantial, delivering strong economic returns and measurable benefits to individual wellbeing and community cohesion, particularly as people age. With nearly half of volunteers in South Australia choosing to contribute within their local community, councils are well placed to harness this potential through monitoring trends and encouraging high rates of volunteerism by strengthening local support structures, fostering positive volunteer experiences, and creating flexible, meaningful opportunities that reflect contemporary volunteering aspirations.

Climate change and environmental concerns

City of Onkaparinga Community Survey data from 2021 to 2024 shows a decline in resident concern and action on climate change, with only 47 per cent in 2024 agreeing that effects of climate change have had an impact on the Onkaparinga region. However, 68 per cent still expressed concern and 64 per cent agreed that failing to act poses a risk.

In the 2025 City of Onkaparinga Community Survey, new questions centred around the current algal bloom with 96 per cent of residents worried about the impact on local marine ecosystems and 83 per cent worried about the associated health risks. Further to this, 74 per cent avoided walking on beaches altogether, 51 per cent visited coastal businesses less often and almost 40 per cent reported effects on their mental health and wellbeing.

Climate driven environmental disasters such as this, together with increased frequency in extreme weather events, can significantly disrupt community wellbeing and local economies, but they can also create opportunities for community development and connection, including creative responses and new volunteering pathways.

The 2025 Mission Australia Youth Survey showed that young people in the City of Onkaparinga rated climate change and the environment as the second most important issue in Australia today (38 per cent compared with 33 per cent in South Australia). It is also important to recognise that older residents remain particularly vulnerable to climate impacts. To address these challenges, councils can strengthen climate preparedness through education, adaptation planning, community resilience programs, and targeted support for vulnerable groups.



2.1 Challenges and opportunities

Digitalisation, artificial intelligence and e-safety

The rapid rise of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming how communities connect, access services and engage with information. As AI and digital systems increasingly mediate communication and service delivery, there is a growing risk of reduced face to face interaction and weakened community cohesion. This is of particular concern to our ageing population who are less likely to engage with digital systems to access information and services, as well as people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage who may have limited access to technology, connectivity or digital skills.

Councils face growing pressure to adopt AI responsibly and maintain community trust in digital systems, ensuring that technology strengthens rather than undermines community capacity and connection. Conversely, advances in AI and digital technologies are also driving strong demand for new skills, new learning pathways and emerging occupations, creating both significant opportunities and challenges for communities and local governments.

Further to this, the increasing influence of online platforms and emerging safety risks, particularly relating to misinformation, data privacy, harmful content and the need for stronger protections for children and young people, requires consideration.

Literacy

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data shows that children in the City of Onkaparinga have a slightly higher risk of vulnerability in language and cognitive skills compared with South Australia and Australia. Data from the AEDC between 2015 and 2024 shows this vulnerability risk increasing slightly over time⁴. Evidence indicates that early language and cognitive development has a direct and strong influence on later academic achievement⁵. National and state indicators also show that around 44 per cent of Australian adults have literacy skills below those needed for everyday life⁶, which is strongly linked to lower educational attainment, reduced social and workforce participation, socio-economic disadvantage and poorer health outcomes.

While responsibility for literacy outcomes sits across multiple spheres, including the education system as a state government responsibility for children and young people, the council can contribute to



improvements across the life stages. This includes through its community services, programs, initiatives, and partnerships. Through opportunities such as playgroups, libraries, child friendly public spaces, parent education initiatives, and community based learning and literacy programs, councils can help create the conditions that enable improved literacy, with an opportunity to focus on priority suburbs.

⁴ <https://www.aedc.gov.au/community-data-explorer/>, accessed 23/04/2026

⁵ <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/summaries-explainers/research-summaries/skills-future-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-research-summary-~:text=2.,across%20Numeracy%2C%20Reading%20and%20Writing>, website accessed 23/04/2026

⁶ 2024 Australian Industry Group survey, <https://statedevelopment.sa.gov.au/news/historic-14m-investment-to-boost-adult-literacy-and-numeracy-skills> website accessed 22/04/2026

2.1 Challenges and opportunities

Participation in physical activity

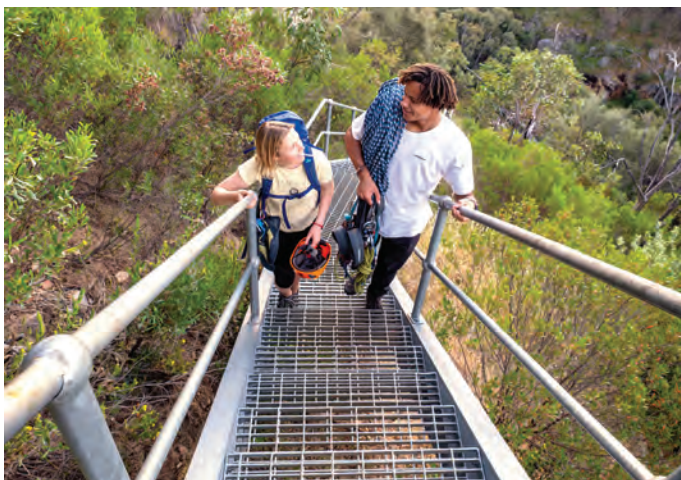
Adult participation in recommended weekly levels of physical activity has declined from 71 per cent in 2018 to 65 per cent in 2024. Participation among older people and children has increased over the same period, however rates remain below 50 per cent, indicating significant scope for improvement. Given the clear benefits of physical activity for health, wellbeing and social connection, there is a strong case for councils' role in encouraging healthy, active lifestyles and addressing barriers to participation.

The quality of our facilities and other relevant assets such as trails and public spaces, is an important factor to encourage high levels of participation in physical activity and maximise facility utilisation.

Cost is a major barrier to participation (e.g. club membership fees, equipment, uniforms), which can be addressed by promoting low cost or free options, with particular consideration for members of under-represented groups.

Locally, and across the state and country, more people participate in active recreation than sport, with walking, cycling, swimming, and fitness the most popular activities, with our foreshore and recreational trails popular local areas for physical activity. Maintaining and enhancing services and facilities that support these preferences is a key enabler of physical activity.

People wanting to participate in sport are seeking more flexibility via modified, social or casual sport programs. Commercial sports and coaching programs as an alternative to traditional sporting club based, volunteer driven experiences is an emerging factor in the physical activity landscape. Children are more likely to participate in sport than other types of physical activity, presenting a significant opportunity for sporting clubs and for encouraging healthy active lifestyles from an early age.



2.2 Our strategic guidance

Community Vision

The council's lead strategic direction is set via the Community Vision 2034, developed with the participation of over 5,000 community voices. With a 10-year horizon, it expresses the preferred future for the city shared by our community. It details 8 key result areas and a total of 32 goals that contribute to realising the vision of connected community, sustainable future. The goals provide guidance for collective action by many parties and community stakeholders, including the City of Onkaparinga.

The vision, shaped by and with our community, guides the development of the council's strategies and plans, so that they organise direction and action on specific topics as contributions to achieving agreed goals for the region.

This strategy contributes to goals across all 4 themes of the Community Vision 2034, being Community, Environment, Liveability, and Leadership. It is organised under the 4 Community Vision 2034 themes, with particularly strong alignment to the goals under the themes of Community and Leadership.

A range of indicators has been collected under each of the Community Vision 2034 themes to monitor how the city is tracking in relation to the intent of the vision. They highlight what we need to see shift across the region's 182,000+ strong community to indicate movement towards the vision.

Community Vision 2034	Community Directorate Strategic Direction
Themes	
Community	Drive meaningful involvement
Environment	
Liveability	Enhance spaces and services
	Strengthen community resources
Leadership	Enable community leadership

Refer to Appendix 3 for the indicators associated with the Community and Leadership themes of the Community Vision 2034.

Community Directorate Strategic Direction

The City of Onkaparinga organisation is structured in the 4 directorates of:

- Strategy, Engagement and Community
- Planning, Governance and Regulatory Services
- Operations
- Corporate and Commercial

While strengthening community capacity and connection requires concerted efforts across all 4 of these administrative directorates and is becoming the frame for an increasing amount of our broader work as an organisation, this strategy is led and coordinated by the Strategy, Engagement and Community Directorate.

The Community Directorate Strategic Direction outlines how the directorate plans and delivers its work to provide for best impact on the council's objectives. It is expressed under 4 themes, with alignment to the community vision themes per the above table.

⁷ South Australian Population Health Survey (SAPHS), Wellbeing SA, Government of South Australia, City of Onkaparinga Indicators Report 2024. Quoted in City of Onkaparinga Community Vision wellbeing indicator data, <https://www.onkaparingacity.com/Council/Documents/Community-Vision>, website accessed 23/04/2026

2.2 Our strategic guidance

Key state and federal plans and policies

Our work on enhancing wellbeing and strengthening community capacity and connection is informed by a wide range of plans and policies. The following is a key range of these, across the 4 streams

Empowered

- Closing the Gap – The parties to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap

All Australian governments are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their communities, organisations and businesses to implement the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap at the national, state and territory, and local levels across 17 socio-economic outcomes and under 4 priority reforms:

- SA Youth Action Plan 2025–28 – Department for Human Services (state)

The plan, which outlines 27 targeted actions, is a roadmap aimed at providing young south Australians, particularly those facing isolation, disadvantage and discrimination, with more opportunities to thrive.

- Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety final report (2021) (federal)

136 recommendations to improve the provision of aged care services in ways that better meet the needs of the community, providing for safety, care, dignity and respect.

- South Australia's Plan for Ageing Well 2026–36 Department for Human Services (state)

With 4 key priorities, this plan aims to ensure that older South Australians can live longer, healthier, and more connected lives. Emphasizes the importance of staying active, connected, and included by improving accessibility, strengthening communities and ensuring fairer opportunities for those facing barriers to ageing well.

- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability final report (2023) (federal)

222 recommendations on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to ensure a more inclusive and just society that supports the independence of people with disability and their right to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation

- Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence final report (2025) (state)

136 recommendations for change across the 5 areas of prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing, and coordination.

- South Australia's Volunteering Strategy (2021–27) Department for Human Services and Volunteering SA (state)

Aims to modernise volunteer management, reduce barriers, and encourage new participation models.

Refer to Appendix 4 for a further range of relevant plans and policies.



2.2 Our strategic guidance

Informed

- Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries – Australian Library and Information Association (national)

Updated in 2021, this provides philosophical context for quality service, serves as a tool to identify strengths and improvement opportunities, and assists in planning, design and development.

- Tomorrows Libraries 2019 – Future directions of the South Australian public library network 2019 – Libraries Board of South Australia, Local Government Association of SA and Public Libraries SA (state)

The strategies for success include five key areas of connected community places, creative content and knowledge centres, innovative and digital hubs, partnering with intent and delivering a sustainable future.

- Local Government Community Engagement Charter – Office for Local Government (state)

Outlines the principles and minimum actions that councils must comply with to engage effectively with their communities

Active

- Play Well: Everyone has a place in sport- Australian Sports Commission (federal)

Published in 2023, Australia's national sport participation strategy aims to create safe, welcoming, inclusive and enjoyable sporting environments for all, achieve through six priority areas.

- Sport Horizon: National Sport Strategy 2024–2034 Office for Sport (federal)

The strategies vision is to build healthy, active connected communities and a thriving sport system to create positive, meaningful change.

- Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030 (state)

The purpose is to place sport, active recreation and racing at the heart of a thriving state which positively impacts the people, culture and economy of South Australia.

Creative

- Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place - Office for the Arts (federal)

A plan to renew and revive Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural sector, based on the 5 pillars of First Nations first, a place for every story, centrality of the artist, strong cultural infrastructure, and engaging the audience.



- Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design - National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) (national)

Updated in July 2025, NAVA is the national advocate for artists establishing frameworks to protect artists and support equity and inclusion across creative communities' experiences and opportunities.

- A Place to Create - CreateSA (state)

South Australia's state policy for the arts, culture and creative industries 2025-2035, which aims to enrich the state's future by strengthening our communities, enlivening our places, building skills, relationships and confidence in connecting us through arts, culture and creativity.

2.3 Council roles and strategic partners

Council takes on various roles in delivering its broad range of services, programs, projects, activities, and events, all of which are relevant to taking action on the various objectives in this strategy. Depending on context, council's roles vary between:

- service provider (regulator, direct, part-contributor, agent)
- owner/custodian
- advocate
- information provider (advisor, promoter).

Examples of these roles in our work on enhancing wellbeing and strengthening community capacity and connection include being a direct service provider of youth services, an agent service provider of aged care and NDIS services, an owner of sport and recreation facilities, arts facilities, and community centres, a direct service provider of libraries, an advocate for local community outcomes, and an information provider regarding ways to engage with local community life.

To deliver actions linked with this strategy, council will collaborate with a broad network of strategic partners, peak bodies and stakeholders across the community, service, business, and government sectors. As examples, these include schools, service and sporting clubs, community associations and

organisations, and government agencies. These relationships play a vital role in strengthening community capacity, enabling coordinated action, sharing resources and expertise, and ensuring our initiatives are responsive to local needs and opportunities. By working collectively, we can achieve more sustainable, inclusive and community led outcomes than would be possible through efforts of the council alone.

Our relationships with strategic partners for defined purposes occasionally require a more formal approach and instrument, such as a written agreement or memorandum of understanding. Wherever this is needed, there is a preference for a consistent way of identifying shared aims and partner roles and responsibilities in working together to achieve them.



3. Policy

This section covers the broad strategic direction the council will take in strengthening community capacity and connection.



3.1 Elements of our approach

Recognising community strengths and assets is central to how we work with the community on strengthening community capacity and connection.

With this in mind, we tailor our approach to suit the people and circumstances involved in each instance of working together. While this strategy sets out a clear structure for the work, it allows for the achievement of its strategic objectives via flexible, organic, community-driven processes that are relevant to each of the 4 streams.

How we work is adapted per situation to suit factors such as age/life stage, location, cultural needs and preferences, abilities, interests, and purpose. For example, council service delivery under this strategy may look different with younger people and with older people, in Aberfoyle Park and in Aldinga, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and depending on how people choose to connect with what the council offers.

The following section outlines various elements of our approach to strengthening community capacity and connection.

Community development principles and practice

Our work on strengthening community capacity and connection is informed by the principles and practice of community development. The Community Development National Occupational Standards (CDNOS) published in the UK describe community development as a long-term process that enables people to work collectively in bringing about positive social change. It starts from people's own experience and enables communities to work together to:

- identify their own needs and actions
- take collective action using their strengths and resources
- develop their confidence, skills and knowledge
- challenge unequal power relationships
- promote social justice, equality and inclusion.

The CDNOS express community development as being underpinned by the following set of values:

- Social justice and equality
- Anti-discrimination
- Community empowerment
- Collective action
- Working and learning together.



We apply these principles and practices by working with community members, groups and organisations to build on their strengths and grow skills, knowledge, networks, and resources to take meaningful action.

Asset-Based Community Development provides a foundation for our approach. This way of working values and builds on the inherent skills of residents, power of local groups, and supportive functions of organisations, to draw upon existing community strengths in building stronger, more resilient communities for the future. With this strengths basis for how we work, we support collective action that meets personal and community needs, taps into passions and interests, provides opportunities, improves quality of life, and encourages people to take on both formal and informal roles as active citizens.

3.1 Elements of our approach



As often as is possible, we use co-design processes to work together collaboratively with community members and groups on how local matters are addressed, programs are developed and opportunities are maximised. This approach provides for better community capacity building outcomes and more sustainable social solutions, due to them being informed and owned by the people they are intended for.

Part of the intent of this strategy is to build on internal partnerships and collaboration to support strengthening community capacity and connection. We will share the value of community development practice with parts of the organisation that may not traditionally work this way, to improve our organisational impact and move towards a position where developing community is central to our work.

We will also promote community development practice across other sectors in the region, recognising that paid and volunteer workers who understand these approaches are a vital resource for strengthening community capacity and connection.

Social equity, under-represented groups and human rights

Under the *Local Government Act 1999*, a council has a principal role to develop its community and resources in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner. This social justice backdrop to the role of a council is particularly relevant in strengthening community capacity and connection, and is central to community development practice, as described above.

While our work considers the needs and aspirations of all community members, social justice and equity principles drive us to work within our role to seek a fairer local society by addressing challenges that often have a greater impact in certain places (for example, locational disadvantage) and on certain community cohorts (for example, under-represented groups).

We address locational disadvantage by remaining mindful of where focussed efforts are needed to achieve greater social equity. Sometimes this means allocating higher levels of resource and effort to where they are needed most. This social justice and equity approach is assisted by understanding local characteristics via the districts that comprise the region (refer to Appendix 2 for more detail).

3.1 Elements of our approach

In state government health plans and policies, such as the draft 2025 State Public Health Plan, under-represented groups are often referred to as 'priority populations'.

We pay particular attention to the needs and aspirations of members of these groups. This is so we can help create more balance across the community in the level of opportunities people have access to. The delivery of council's services, programs, activities, and events are considered in terms of their accessibility and suitability to members of under-represented groups, in addition to being relevant to the wider community.

In our work on strengthening community capacity and connection, under-represented groups include (but are not limited to):

- children and young people
- older people
- people living with disability
- people on a low income
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- culturally and linguistically diverse people
- neurodiverse people
- members of the LGBTQIA+ community
- new citizens.

Our approach to working with community members and groups on strengthening community capacity and connection is also strongly grounded in human rights as a fundamental aspect of social justice.

As per the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission⁸, this includes the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the rights of children and young people, the rights of older people, the rights of people with disability, the rights of LGBTQIA+ people, and a range of other basic rights humans have to fair treatment per the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁹ adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

We are an advocate for these rights and our work includes seeking a fairer society in relation to these matters, including things like anti-racism, safety from bullying and harassment, and addressing discrimination based on gender, gender identity or disability.

Broadly, we support and deliver initiatives that foster inclusive social connection, ensuring opportunities for engagement are accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, and that there is consideration for equity of access across the Onkaparinga region.

Social determinants of health

The World Health Organisation (WHO) broadly defines the social determinants of health as being the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and also as including people's access to power, money and resources.

These non-medical, social matters are recognised as having a strong influence on health inequities, with research showing that they can outweigh genetic factors or healthcare access in terms of influencing health outcomes.

Further, the WHO acknowledges that, at all levels of income, health and illness follow a social gradient, meaning that, at a whole-of-population level, the lower the socio-economic position the worse the health. People who have limited access to quality housing, education, social protection, and job opportunities are found to have higher risk of ill health and shorter life expectancy.

The work of local government on strengthening community capacity and connection, and in other areas of our responsibilities, can positively impact on the social determinants of health. This includes by providing opportunities for social connection and the pursuit of interests and passions, facilitating civic participation, fostering local economic prosperity, encouraging healthy, active lifestyle choices, and building skills and social networks. Our approach is mindful of the place these matters have in the broader societal context of supporting better health outcomes for the community.

⁸ Australian Human Rights Commission, <https://humanrights.gov.au>

⁹ United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

3.1 Elements of our approach

Life stage

Council has a role in relation to the wellbeing, capacity and connectivity of the community across the human lifespan. To coordinate and effectively shape the ways in which our service delivery responds to community needs and aspirations, we think about this in the 4 broad age cohorts of:

- children
- young people
- adults (and families)
- older people.

While community needs and aspirations differ in important ways between individuals, these life stage cohorts assist us in grouping similar service delivery types for effective coordination, while remaining mindful of connections across all diversities, including age/life stage.

Some of the ways we work with people on supporting wellbeing and strengthening community capacity and connection at the 4 life stages are listed below, with some of the activities spanning across a range of the life stages. Fundamental to all of these activities is creating and facilitating welcoming, safe and inclusive spaces where people can engage with social opportunities and service provision, and ensuring people are valued and recognised for their contributions to community life.

Children

- Provide story time and other programs in libraries.
- Provide playgroups and after-school activity programs at community centres.
- Opportunities to stay active at recreation and aquatic centres.

Young people

- Support young people to socially connect and build a strong sense of belonging, including through participation in age-appropriate recreation, creative activities, and events, both within youth centres and across the broader community.
- Support personal growth and the development of confidence and life skills. This includes exploring interests, making healthy lifestyle choices, and strengthening pathways into mainstream and/or alternative education, training and employment.
- Empower and recognise youth leadership and entrepreneurial initiatives, creating opportunities for young people to contribute to, shape and lead their communities.

Adults (and families)

- Provide programs that support community connection and skill development at community centres and other facilities, such as recreation centres and libraries.
- Support social networks, community groups, sporting clubs, community leadership, volunteering, and active citizenship.
- Provide grants to ignite community imagination and support community-led activity.
- Provide National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services to people living with disability.

Older people

- Support ageing in place by providing programs that support people to continue living independently and safely at home.
- Provide opportunities to maintain social connections and enhance social cohesion.
- Provide fellowship and healthy meals at community centres and positive ageing centres.

3.1 Elements of our approach

Local characteristics by district

The Onkaparinga region is large and diverse. There are urban areas, rural living townships, places with different levels of convenient access to our regional centre (Noarlunga), and varying socio-economic characteristics.

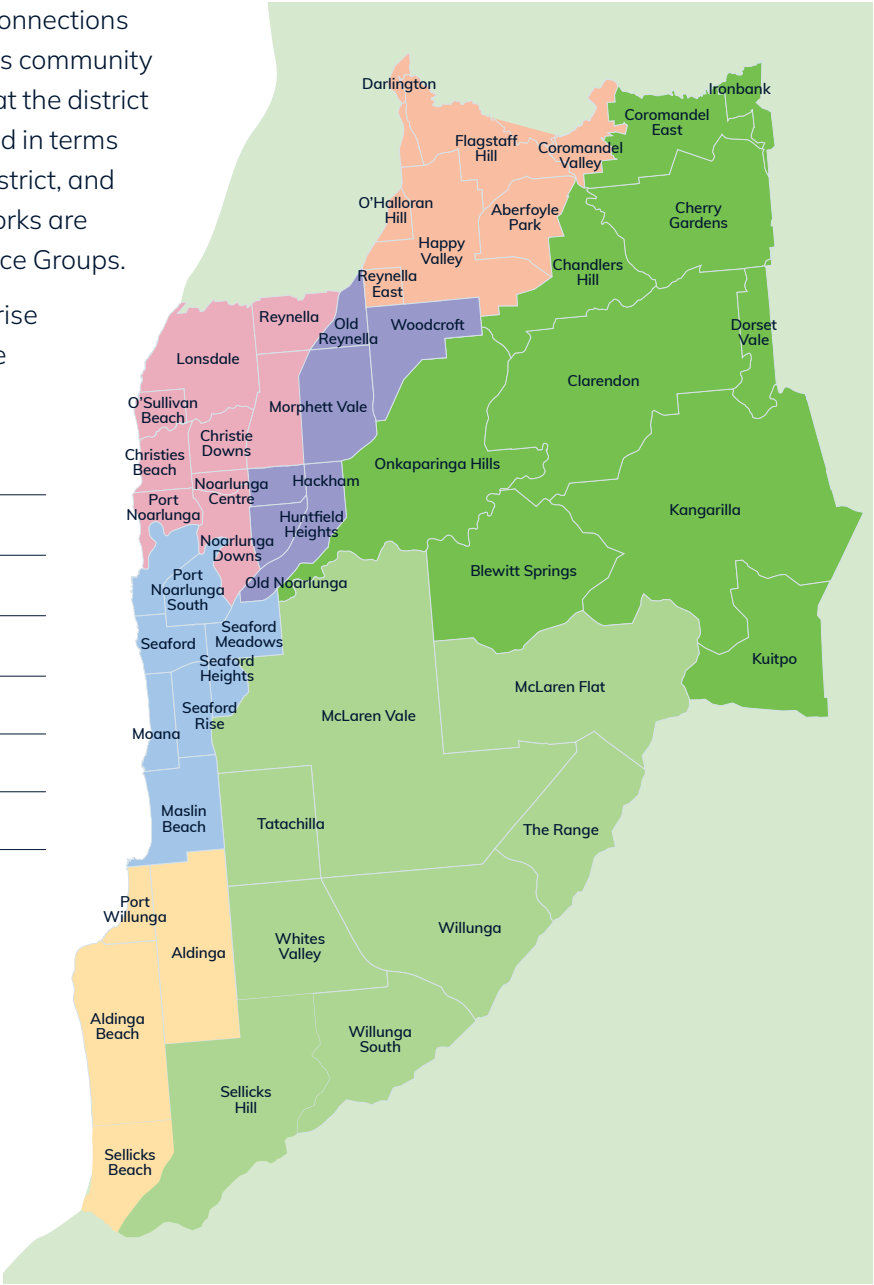
Our communities vary across these and other localised factors and so our approach to strengthening community capacity and connection must be flexibly tailored to be mindful of local community assets, resources, values, needs, and aspirations.

Districts are a planning construct we use to organise the planning and delivery of various council services and programs. In our community capacity building work, they are used to denote district communities for a locally focussed approach.

Our work on strengthening community connections and linking community resources, such as community facilities, is often planned and delivered at the district scale. Community facilities are considered in terms of the network of facilities within each district, and the related social connections and networks are supported by facilitating District Reference Groups.

The districts we have defined that comprise the Onkaparinga region are shown in the following map:

- Northern District
- Central North East District
- Central North West District
- Central South District
- Southern District
- Hills North District
- Hills South District



3.1 Elements of our approach



Community facilities

Community facilities play a valuable role in strengthening community capacity and connection as places for social gathering and activity, creative and cultural expression, sport and recreation, access to technology and information, and to participate in community service delivery.

Facilities owned by council, other levels of government and community organisations are all vital parts of the community facilities networks in our districts that enable a wide range of pursuits contributing to individual and collective wellbeing, capacity and connection.

We aim for council's community facilities to be safe, welcoming, accessible, conveniently located buildings that facilitate inclusive community activity for social connection, creative and cultural expression, active lifestyles, learning, organising, and enjoyment. These buildings offer spaces for the delivery of free and low-cost formal programs, services, activities, sports, events, group meetings, and other less-structured social gatherings in spaces available for hire by community members and groups.

Our Community Facilities Guidelines, approved by the Council in 2016 and 2024 (update), contain aspirational standards for our service delivery and the design and location of council-owned community facilities. Policy directions expressed in the guidelines include matters such as maximising facility utilisation, managing equitable access and moving towards a

universal facility provision approach where various uses and facility types are combined in multi-purpose, flexible facilities and spaces that conveniently meet contemporary expectations.

Provision of the council's community facilities is considered via a range of planning processes, including its Social Equity Model – Community Facilities Provision, approved by the Council in 2017 and 2024 (update). This model provides total community facilities floor area targets for our 5 urban districts to guide provision levels.

Key council-owned community facilities that support strengthening community capacity and connection across the region include:

- children's centres
- youth centres
- community centres
- community halls
- positive ageing centres
- arts facilities
- sport and recreation facilities
- libraries.

3.1 Elements of our approach

A number of council-owned community centres and sports facilities are managed by community organisations via a board of management, which is a critical voluntary resource in providing these places for community activity. Many other, smaller council-owned facilities (often single-purpose facilities) are also leased and managed by community groups as places for them to operate their social programs and activities. This includes service clubs and other special interest groups needing space to facilitate activities for their members and other community participants.

The community facilities network in the region is strengthened by other facilities such as those for educational and religious purposes, and community-owned and managed halls and sporting facilities.

The human aspects of our work on strengthening community capacity and connection are far more important than bricks and mortar. This work can and should take place in all manner of places, including natural outdoor spaces and via online platforms. Facilities, however, act as convenient places of gathering and important beacons of local belonging, and this supports effective service delivery towards achieving the intended social outcomes.

Our four streams of strengthening community capacity and connection

The 4 streams flow together to collectively strengthen community capacity and connection in working towards the Community Vision, through socially equitable and inclusive participation in community life. They flow across the life stages, cultural factors, districts, and community facility types, using community development approaches to address the social determinants of health and support an informed, active, creative, and empowered community.

Informed

This stream strengthens community capacity and connection through a socially driven focus on access to information, technology and learning.

It encompasses a range of the work of the council in its support and delivery of community services, including via libraries.

Libraries are valued hubs for access to knowledge, interests, digital technology and various forms of program delivery and engagement in social activity.

The council's communications and interactions with Onkaparinga community members and groups are important opportunities for providing accurate, relevant, interesting, accessible, and timely information that contributes to community strength.

The council's main strategic objectives under this stream are currently organised via the Libraries

Strategic Plan 2018–21, which remains our lead strategic document for these matters until such time as an Informed Community Implementation Plan is developed in association with this strategy. At that time, it will also include matters relating to the council's communications and customer interactions.

Active

This stream strengthens community capacity and connection through a focus on encouraging healthy, active lifestyles.

It encompasses a range of the work of the council in its support and delivery of community programs, services and sporting codes, including via recreation centres and sporting facilities.

Sport and recreation is a very important aspect of community life. It is widely known that regular physical activity can improve outcomes relating to health and wellbeing and that there are lots of social connection opportunities in sport and being active. Formal, organised sport, and less formal recreational pursuits, bring people together, encourage healthy lifestyles, build skills and networks, and provide opportunities for people to engage in local community life.

Local sporting clubs are an invaluable community resource with a huge number of volunteers working passionately to coordinate and facilitate community member involvement in a large range of sporting codes and the community processes required to support the sporting activity.

3.1 Elements of our approach

The council's main strategic objectives under this stream are currently organised via the Sport and Active Recreation Action Plan 2021–25, which remains our lead strategic document for these matters until such time as an Active Community Implementation Plan is developed in association with this strategy.

Creative

This stream strengthens community capacity and connection through a focus on enabling opportunities for creative and cultural expression.

It encompasses a range of the work of the council in its support and delivery of community programs and services, including via arts and cultural centres.

Arts and the vibrant creative sector in Onkaparinga are very important aspects of community life. It is widely acknowledged that participation in cultural experiences, creative pursuits and the arts are fundamental parts of our individual and collective humanity and contribute positively to wellbeing.

The council's main strategic objectives under this stream are currently organised via the Arts and Cultural Development Action Plan 2022–25, which remains our lead strategic document for these matters until such time as a Creative Community Implementation Plan is developed in association with this strategy.

Empowered

This stream strengthens community capacity and connection through a focus on empowering community management of local matters.

It is based in enhancing wellbeing, and in working with community members and groups to pursue opportunities across the life stages in participation, personal and community development, leadership, and active citizenship.

Ultimately, it involves supporting people to identify what matters to them and to work together to maximise opportunities and address challenges and problems.

It encompasses a wide range of the work of the council in its support and delivery of community programs and services, including via youth centres, community centres, and positive ageing centres and with groups and organisations in the community.

The council's main strategic objectives under this stream have previously been organised via the Community Capacity Strategic Plan 2021–24. An Empowered Community Implementation Plan has been developed in association with this strategy, which also includes matters relating to grants, events and community engagement. As such, this strategy is now our lead strategic document for these matters and the main actions are detailed in the implementation plan.





regional responses to climate change. Climate impacts don't start and stop at council boundaries and many responses are better done in partnership.

A recent Flinders University study ranked Resilient South second out of 44 globally benchmarked climate resilience networks.

Case Study
We piloted heat and tree canopy mapping within councils and then worked with Green Adelaide via Resilient South and the other Regional Climate Partnerships to build a metro-wide coordinated approach to data collection, canopy targets and planting programs. Working together in this way allowed us to build on successes, avoid replicating failures and saved us all money.

- Coordinating the state wide capture of canopy and heat mapping for tracking progress at council.
- Grant funding for a variety of programs aimed at making our city cooler, greener and more resilient.
- Support of local food production and community gardens in our area such as the 'Grow' program.
- Provision of a range of resources used by our Sustainable Onkaparinga program.
- Assistance with threatened species protection such as the Hooded Plover protection program.

The beating heart of a cooler, greener, safer and climate-resilient city is community involvement and action.

Everyone has a role. We can all care in our own way. Connecting to the natural world improves our wellbeing.

Nature education needs to resonate with the cultural diversity of the whole population and be accessible for everyone. It spans biodiversity, water, coast, climate change, sustainability and more.

It delivers developmental, physical and mental health benefits.

Green Adelaide is partnering with the community, schools, businesses and government to deliver nature education that builds upon existing activities and programs.

Environment

Do you have any comments about this?

Handwritten comments on sticky notes:

- Nothing about restoring biodiversity
- Need to protect local character & uniqueness of each area
- Standard of housing that is Eco friendly & energy efficient
- The council have a beautiful area of green community space in the heart of the city
- Water with environmental groups, village, Environmental Centre, York, Palms etc.
- More water conservation
- Improving natural resources must be a priority
- Water vs food - we are building resilience - think this is food security
- RE Development of coastal areas - we should retreat, this sends a message that this does something very important and sustainable in the long term
- More greenery
- More greenery - we need more greenery in our urban areas - more greenery in our urban areas
- STREETSCAPES - Trees/village style
- Advocate to State to stop housing but no livability
- lots more trees in urban areas, car parks etc
- Unsealed footpaths in natural areas
- More trees in urban areas
- Need wildlife corridors!
- I was distracted on a hot day and the difference between a leafy street and a bare street is painful
- Dark houses and roof tops dark roads vs light roads
- More greenery in urban areas - think this is important and sustainable in the long term
- Need 500 years into the future
- Coastal adaptation - look after the coastline & biodiversity
- Freelance - very free to create sustainable outcomes
- Sickness in people reflects sickness of country - they are inter-related

Focus areas and strategic objectives

This section sets out what we aim to affect and achieve via this strategy; 10 focus areas help to organise 30 strategic objectives, which articulate what we aim to have an impact on.

3.2 Focus areas and strategic objectives

Community Vision 2034 theme: Community	
Focus area 1: Wellbeing	
Strategic objectives:	
1.1	Support First Nations people with a focus on strong wellbeing, culture and self-determination
1.2	Facilitate, coordinate, support, promote, and advocate for services, programs, activities, events, and information sources that enhance physical and mental wellbeing
1.3	Undertake our work on strengthening community capacity and connection in ways that respond to the needs and aspirations of key age cohorts
Focus area 2: Social inclusion and cohesion	
Strategic objectives:	
2.1	Support under-represented community cohorts with a focus on social equity, including equity of inclusion, opportunity and dignity
2.2	Encourage connections between people, including across diversities, including of culture and identity
Focus area 3: Community vibrancy and pride	
Strategic objectives:	
3.1	Encourage curiosity, wonder, intrigue, and high levels of literacy in a range of contexts to inspire lifelong learning
3.2	Support a robust local sports and recreation sector to maximise opportunities for healthy, active lifestyles, and enjoyment
3.3	Support a vibrant local arts and cultural sector to maximise opportunities for cultural, creative and self-expression, and enjoyment
3.4	Work with community members, groups and leaders to deliver social projects and initiatives that address local matters and celebrate local values

3.2 Focus areas and strategic objectives

Community Vision 2034 theme: Environment

Focus area 4: Environmental care

Strategic objectives:

- 4.1 Encourage people to **care for the environment and respond to climate change**
- 4.2 Mobilise community resources in being prepared for and responding to natural disasters to **enhance disaster resilience**

Community Vision 2034 theme: Liveability

Focus area 5: Food, shelter and safety

Strategic objectives:

- 5.1 Support a thriving local food system to **maximise opportunities for food security**
- 5.2 Respond compassionately and effectively to people experiencing homelessness
- 5.3 Contribute to community safety

Focus area 6: Social economics

Strategic objectives:

- 6.1 Support people and households on a low income and/or experiencing **cost-of-living pressures** with a focus on accessing support and equity of opportunity
- 6.2 Support people to develop **knowledge and skills** towards employment and self-employment opportunities
- 6.3 Facilitate and advocate for access to resources that **enable community-led activity**

3.2 Focus areas and strategic objectives

Community Vision 2034 theme: Liveability

Focus area 7: Community places

Strategic objectives:

- 7.1 Facilitate place-based community development at a scale that helps to **recognise local strengths assets, characteristics, and identity**
- 7.2 **Provide and promote safe and welcoming facilities** that enable effective service provision, vibrant community activity and meaningful social connection
- 7.3 Maintain equity in our focus across the council region to **respond to district needs, aspirations and characteristics**
- 7.4 Facilitate, promote and advocate for transport options that **enhance people's access to places of importance to them**

Community Vision 2034 theme: Leadership

Focus area 8: Active citizenship

Strategic objectives:

- 8.1 Inspire and assist people to **develop leadership skills and support community leaders in their work**
- 8.2 **Empower people** to contribute to and participate in decision-making and lead action on matters that affect them and their communities
- 8.3 **Support strong community volunteerism**

3.2 Focus areas and strategic objectives

Community Vision 2034 theme: Leadership	
Focus area 9: Access to information	
Strategic objectives:	
9.1	Provide convenient and transparent access to accurate, relevant, timely information about community life to cultivate high levels of awareness and participation
9.2	Strengthen public trust of council in achieving valuable community outcomes
Focus area 10: Strategic approach	
Strategic objectives:	
10.1	Build, strengthen and maintain partnerships that help to address identified community priorities and amplify community voices
10.2	Support the strength and independence of community networks, groups and organisations , including community governance processes
10.3	Use social research data and best-practice evidence to respond flexibly to evolving community needs and aspirations and social issues
10.4	Encourage broader understanding and adoption of community development principles and practice across the organisation and community

Action towards achieving the strategic objectives is set out in the implementation plan for each of the 4 streams. At this stage of development, action towards the intent of the strategy is organised per the below:

- Informed Community: Libraries Strategic Plan 2018–21 plus other related work of the council
- Active Community: Sport and Active Recreation Action Plan 2021–25
- Creative Community: Arts and Cultural Development Action Plan 2022–25
- Empowered Community: Empowered Community Implementation Plan 2026.

Progress towards the strategic objectives, through the delivery of actions in the relevant implementation plans associated with this strategy, will be reported to a regular meeting of the Council every 2 years.

Appendix 1: About Onkaparinga

The Onkaparinga community is vibrant, diverse and strong. From suburban locations, coastal destinations to rural townships, we enjoy a rich social fabric that makes Onkaparinga a great place to be.

There are many ways to get involved in community life, both formal and informal. From service clubs to interest groups to community sporting bodies, the social opportunities are many and varied. Council has a role to play in encouraging and supporting the community processes that create these opportunities.

As a snapshot of community life in Onkaparinga, there are opportunities for social gathering and connection, enjoyment, celebration, community program participation, exercise, sport, learning, worship, and interest-based activity across:

- 8 council-owned community centres, either managed by a community incorporated body or supported by a community advisory group
- 1 council-owned Aboriginal community centre, with services and programming provided in partnership with Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Incorporated
- 3 dedicated council-owned youth centres, plus youth spaces and activity in other centres
- 2 council-owned positive ageing centres
- many community halls, including some that are community-owned
- numerous council-owned single-purpose facilities leased by community organisations and/or available for hire
- 1 regional arts centre, a regional performing arts theatre, a culture exchange facility, and a rich local creative culture
- 6 colourful council-operated libraries, with 2 delivered in collaboration with secondary schools and 1 being our regional library at Noarlunga Regional Centre
- 69 council-owned sport and recreation facilities, 5 community-owned sports complexes/facilities, 1 SANFL league ground, and numerous outdoor courts locations, all bustling with over 200 sporting clubs and casual use
- 1 council-owned aquatics centre and a number of smaller, private learn-to-swim options
- the culturally important Ngangkiparri/Onkaparinga River
- 31km of coastline with some of the best beaches in the world
- over 900 council-owned parks and reserves with around 250 playgrounds, plus state government-owned areas such as Onkaparinga River National Park and Wangkuntilla–Aldinga Conservation Park
- more than 130 kilometres of shared use pedestrian/cyclist paths
- 24 bike jump sites and 18 skate facilities
- over 90 education facilities across pre, primary and secondary schools, between state government and private providers, plus a TAFE
- around 60 churches/religious facilities
- a wide range of vibrant community organisations, service clubs, boards, committees, forums, and groups
- countless grassroots and larger-scale community events
- more than 10,000 businesses, with the vast majority being small-to-medium locally owned enterprises that provide a rich blend of services, retail, food and beverage, and health options.

The City of Onkaparinga is a vibrant place. In 2024, the region had an Estimated Resident Population of 182,821 people . Population forecasting by REMPLAN has this projected to grow to 191,706 people by 2031 (growth of 8,885 people or 4.9 per cent).

The needs and aspirations of our growing community must be considered in how we maintain what is loved and valued about this place, help to improve quality of life, support wellbeing, and build community capacity and connection.

Appendix 1: About Onkaparinga

Some key demographic highlights across the Onkaparinga region are described below .

- **We have a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than Greater Adelaide**

In 2021, 1.9 per cent of residents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, a higher proportion than Greater Adelaide (1.7 per cent) but lower than South Australia (2.4 per cent) and Australia (3.2 per cent).

- **We are getting older**

In 2021, 19.9 per cent of residents were aged 65 years and over, a higher proportion than Greater Adelaide (18.6 per cent) and Australia (17.2 per cent) and on par with South Australia (20 per cent).

Population projections by REMPLAN show that, by 2031, 22.8 per cent of our residents will be aged 65 years and over.

- **We have more disengaged youth**

In 2021, 10.6 per cent of 15–24 year old residents were not employed or in education, a higher proportion than Greater Adelaide (8.3 per cent) and South Australia and Australia (both 9.1 per cent).

In 2021, Onkaparinga's Year 12 completion rate was 49.2 per cent, lower than Greater Adelaide (57 per cent), South Australia (52.6 per cent) and Australia (56.8 per cent).

- **We have more children who are developmentally vulnerable**

In 2024, 27.3 per cent of Onkaparinga's children were vulnerable on one or more Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) domain, more than South Australia (24.5 per cent) and Australia (23.5 per cent).

Also in 2024, 14.9 per cent of Onkaparinga's children were vulnerable on 2 or more domains, more than South Australia (13.2 per cent) and Australia (12.5 per cent).

AEDC data from 2015, 2018 and 2021 shows an upward trend over time in child development vulnerability in the Onkaparinga region.

- **We have some literacy challenges**

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data shows that children in the City of Onkaparinga have a slightly higher risk of vulnerability in language and cognitive skills compared with South Australia and Australia. Data from the AEDC between 2015 and 2024 shows this vulnerability risk is increasing slightly over time.

National and state indicators also show that around 44 per cent of Australian adults have literacy skills below those needed for everyday life .

- **We are increasingly living alone**

Population projections by REMPLAN show lone person households in Onkaparinga are forecast

to increase from 25.1 per cent of households in 2021 to 27.2 per cent by 2031 and are expected to become the region's most common household type by 2046.

- **We generally have more disadvantage and lower levels of income**

In 2021, Onkaparinga's score on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) was 987.5. This score indicates more disadvantage than Greater Adelaide (992) and Australia (1001) but less disadvantage than South Australia (982).

In 2021, 25.1 per cent of households here were classed as low income, a higher proportion than Greater Adelaide (23.5 per cent) and Australia (21.2 per cent) and on par with South Australia (25.2 per cent).

2025 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research data shows that annual household disposable income in Onkaparinga was 10.5 per cent below Greater Adelaide, 11 per cent below South Australia and 26 per cent below Australia.

- **We have more young people needing help due to disability**

In 2021, 6.9 per cent of residents needed help due to disability, similar to Greater Adelaide (6.6) and South Australia (6.7), but more than Australia (5.8 per cent).

⁸ Unless otherwise stated, data in the following section is derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing (2016, 2021).

⁹ Lower score indicates higher level of disadvantage.

Appendix 1: About Onkaparinga

In 2021, residents aged 80 and over were the most likely in Onkaparinga to require assistance due to disability.

The largest increase since 2016 was among people aged 10–19 years.

- **We have higher rates of mental health and long-term health conditions**

In 2021, 11.8 per cent of residents had a mental health condition, a higher proportion than Greater Adelaide and South Australia (both 9.8 per cent) and Australia (8.8 per cent).

The 2025 Mission Australia Youth Survey reflected that young people in the City of Onkaparinga identified mental health and wellbeing as their third most significant source of stress at 49 per cent, compared with 41 per cent for South Australia.

In 2021, 39.2 per cent of residents had a long term health condition, a higher proportion than Greater Adelaide (34.5 per cent), South Australia (35.1 per cent) and Australia (31.7 per cent).

- **We enjoy the arts**

The 2024 City of Onkaparinga Community Survey indicated that 94 per cent of Onkaparinga residents attended at least one arts event in the previous year, slightly up from 91 per cent in 2022. Cinema ranked as the most popular, with live music, festivals, and exhibitions/galleries close behind.

- **We enjoy active recreation**

The 2025 City of Onkaparinga Community Survey found that 85 per cent of Onkaparinga residents participated in active recreation in the last 12 months, compared to 18% participating in sport.

- **We need to move our bodies more**

South Australian Population Health Survey results in 2024 indicate that City of Onkaparinga adult participation in recommended weekly levels of physical activity has declined from 71 per cent in 2018 to 65 per cent in 2024.

Participation in physical activity among older people and children has increased over the same period, however rates remain under 50 per cent.

- **We have less food security**

The 2024 South Australian Population Health Survey shows that 11.9 per cent of Onkaparinga residents experienced food insecurity, above the state average of 9.1 per cent and representing a 65.3 per cent increase from 2023.

The 2024 City of Onkaparinga Community Survey similarly found that 29 per cent of Onkaparinga households experienced some level of food insecurity, including 16% facing severe food insecurity, though these figures are likely underreported.

- **We have more unemployment, but the rate is improving**

Updates from September 2025 show Onkaparinga's unemployment rate at 4.7 per cent, higher than Greater Adelaide (3.9 per cent), South Australia (4.4 per cent) and Australia (4.3 per cent). However, the local rate has been trending downward recently, while state and national rates have risen.

- **We have more tradespeople**

In 2021, 26.9 per cent of residents held a trade qualification certificate, a higher proportion than Greater Adelaide (19.7 per cent), South Australia (20.7 per cent) and Australia (19.1 per cent).

- **We are volunteering less**

In 2021, 15 per cent of residents aged 15 and over had volunteered in the last 12 months. This was lower than Greater Adelaide (15.5 per cent) and South Australia (17 per cent) but slightly higher than Australia (14.1 per cent).

In the Onkaparinga region, this was a decrease from 19.3 per cent in 2016, consistent with similar declines elsewhere.

Refer to Appendix 2 for a breakdown of some key demographic attributes of the districts that comprise the Onkaparinga region.

Appendix 2: District breakdown

This section provides comparisons between our districts, highlighting some of their key demographic attributes per current data and projects to 2031 where available.

Table 1: Level of disadvantage by districts from most to least (IRSD*)

Rank	District	Score**	Percentile***
1	Central North West	921.8	12
2	Central North East	954.1	21
3	Southern	970.5	27
-	City of Onkaparinga	987.5	35
-	Greater Adelaide	992.0	38
4	Central South	999.5	42
5	Hills South	1044.7	69
6	Northern	1051.3	74
7	Hills North	1078.0	89

*IRSD is Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (2021, Australian Bureau of Statistics)
** Lower score indicates higher level of disadvantage
***Percentile shows each district's position relative to all other areas in Australia, expressed as a percentage.

Appendix 2: District breakdown

Table 2: Projected population growth by district

District	Population					
	2024 ERP*	2031 Forecast**	Growth	Growth rate	Proportion of Onkaparinga population	
					2021	2031
Northern	41,905	42,000	95	0.2%	22.9%	21.9%
Central North East	42,191	45,386	3,195	7.6%	23.1%	23.7%
Central North West	36,857	39,971	3,114	8.4%	20.1%	20.9%
Central South	28,161	28,922	761	2.7%	15.4%	15.1%
Southern	16,777	17,722	945	5.6%	9.2%	9.2%
Hills North	6,774	6,720	-54	-0.8%	3.7%	3.5%
Hills South	10,171	10,985	814	8.0%	5.6%	5.7%
City of Onkaparinga	182,821	191,706	8,885	4.9%	100%	100%

*ERP is Estimated Resident Population published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics mid each year for the previous year

**Population forecasting provided for the City of Onkaparinga by REMPLAN

Appendix 2: District breakdown

Table 3: Service age groups used to further detail our 4 main life stage cohorts

Life stage	Service age group	Proportion of Onkaparinga population	
		2021*	2031**
Children	Pre-schoolers (0–4 years)	5.4%	5.1%
	Primary schoolers (5–11 years)	8.6%	7.6%
Young people	Young people (12–24 years)	15.2%	15.1%
Adults and families	Young workers (25–34 years)	12.2%	11.6%
	Workers (35–49 years)	19.2%	19.0%
	Older workers (50–64 years)	19.5%	18.8%
Older people	Retirement age (65–79 years)	15.4%	16.2%
	Older people (80+ years)	4.5%	6.6%

*Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census of Population and Housing

**Population forecasting provided for the City of Onkaparinga by REMPLAN

Appendix 2: District breakdown

The service age groupings in the table above are used to inform our service delivery planning and the following district highlights.¹⁴

Northern District

- Currently second most populated district and expected to remain so, with a very low projected growth rate between 2024 and 2031 of 0.2 per cent and 21.9 per cent of Onkaparinga residents living in the district in 2031
- Second least disadvantaged district in 2021
- Highest proportion in 2021 of recent arrivals (8.5 per cent) and persons speaking languages other than English (9.3 per cent)
- Highest proportion of year 12 or equivalent completion in 2021 (57.2 per cent)
- Projected to have the highest number of older people by 2031 (3,266 people, at 25.9 per cent of the region's older people population)
- Projected to have the second highest number of young people by 2031 (6,457 people, at 22.3 per cent of the region's young people population)

Central North-East District

- Currently most populated district and expected to remain so, with a high projected growth rate to 2031 of 7.6 per cent and 23.7 per cent of Onkaparinga residents living in the district
- Second most disadvantaged district in 2021
- Equal second highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents (2.1 per cent)
- Equal highest proportion of residents needing assistance with a disability in 2021 (8.4 per cent)
- Second highest proportion of residents in low-income households in 2021 (27.6 per cent)
- Equal second highest proportion of disengaged youth in 2021 (11.8 per cent)
- Equal highest incidence of food insecurity in between 2022 and 2024 (12.2 per cent)
- Highest proportion of unemployment in 2021 (7 per cent)
- Second highest prevalence of developmental vulnerability in children in 2024
- Projected to have the highest number of pre-schoolers by 2031 (2,454 people, at 25.1 per cent of the region's pre-schoolers population)
- Projected to have the highest number of primary schoolers by 2031 (3,815 people, at 26 per cent of the region's primary schoolers population)

Central North-West District

- Equal fastest growing district, with a very high projected growth rate to 2031 of 8.4 per cent and 20.9 per cent of Onkaparinga residents living in the district
- Most disadvantaged district in 2021
- Highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in 2021 (3.2 per cent)
- Equal highest proportion of residents needing assistance with a disability in 2021 (8.4 per cent)
- Highest proportion of residents in low-income households in 2021 (30.9 per cent)
- Highest proportion of disengaged youth in 2021 (14.9 per cent)
- Equal highest incidence of food insecurity between 2022 and 2024 (12.2 per cent)
- Highest prevalence of developmental vulnerability in children in 2024
- Projected to have the highest prevalence of one-parent families by 2031 (15.7 per cent)
- Projected to have the highest number of pre-schoolers by 2031 (2,141 people at 21.9 per cent of the region's pre-schoolers population)
- Projected to have the highest number of young workers by 2031 (5,499 people at 24.7 per cent of the region's young workers population)

¹⁴ Data in the following section is sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (2021), REMPLAN forecasting data, South Australian Population Health Survey (2022-24), Australian Early Developmental Census (2024).

Appendix 2: District breakdown

Central South District

- A low projected growth rate to 2031 of 2.7 per cent and 15.1 per cent of Onkaparinga residents living in the district
- Second highest incidence of food insecurity between 2022 and 2024 (6 per cent)
- Equal second highest proportion of disengaged youth in 2021 (11.3 per cent)
- Projected to have a comparatively high proportion within the district of primary schoolers and young workers, and the highest proportion of young people (at 16.5 per cent of the region's young people population)
- Projected to have a comparatively low proportion within the district of retirement age and older people

Southern District

- A moderate projected growth rate to 2031 of 5.6 per cent and 9.2 per cent of Onkaparinga residents living in the district
- Equal second highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in 2021 (2.3 per cent)
- Third highest proportion of residents in low-income households in 2021 (26.6 per cent)
- Equal second highest proportion of disengaged youth in 2021 (11.3 per cent)

- Highest proportion of people renting privately in 2021 (23 per cent)
- Projected to have a comparatively high proportion within the district of primary schoolers and young people
- Projected to have a comparatively low proportion within the district of retirement age and older people

Hills North District

- Currently least populated district and projected to remain so to 2031, with a growth rate of 0.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent of Onkaparinga residents living in the district
- Least disadvantaged district in 2021
- Highest proportion of homeowners in 2021 (41.7 per cent)
- Highest proportion of volunteers in 2021 (22 per cent)
- Projected to have the highest district proportion of older workers and retirement age

Hills South District

- Second least populated district but projected to have close to the highest population growth to 2031, at a growth rate of 8.0 per cent and 5.7 per cent of Onkaparinga residents living in the district
- Projected to have the second highest district proportion of older workers and the highest district proportions of retirement age and older people



Appendix 3: Indicators and Measures

Indicators and measures under the Community theme of the Community Vision 2034.

Community

Indicator	Measure
Mental health condition	Current mental health condition Percentage of people aged 16+ who have been told by a doctor they have a mental health problem
	Psychological distress (K-10) Percentage of people aged 18+ reporting high or very high psychological distress
	Children treated for mental health concern Percentage of children aged 5 to 15 treated for mental health or behavioural problems
Physical activity levels	Adults achieving recommended weekly physical activity levels Percentage of adults aged 18 to 64 engaging in 150 or more minutes of intensive physical activity
	Older people achieving recommended weekly physical activity levels Percentage of older people aged 65+ engaging in at least 30 mins of moderate intensity activity 7 days a week
	Children achieving recommended weekly physical activity levels Percentage of children aged 5 to 17 engaging in at least 60 mins of moderate intensity activity 7 days a week
Childhood developmental vulnerability	Developmental vulnerability on one key area Percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one of five key areas
	Developmental vulnerability on two key areas Percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on two of five key areas
Criminal offences	Reported offences against the person and property Rate per 1000 population
	Reported family and domestic violence offences Rate per 1000 population

Appendix 3: Indicators and Measures

Indicator	Measure
Community connectedness	Connection with neighbours Percentage of people who are connected with their neighbours
	Help from neighbours Percentage of people who can get help from someone in their neighbourhood other than family if needed
	Crisis support from neighbours Percentage of people who believe that their neighbours would support each other in the event of a crisis or natural disaster
Community group participation	Participation in community groups Percentage of people actively participating in a community group
Food security	Food insecurity Percentage of people who ran out of food and couldn't afford to buy more in the last 12 months
Acceptance of cultural diversity	Cultural acceptance Percentage of people who believe that their local community accepts people of different backgrounds
	Safe expression of culture Percentage of people who find it safe to express their culture
	Importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage Percentage of people who believe that Aboriginal cultural heritage is an important part of the local community
Participation in arts events and activities	Arts event attendance Percentage of people who attended an art event at least once in the last 12 months (i.e. cinema, dance, exhibition, theatre, festival, live music, circus)

Appendix 3: Indicators and Measures

Indicators and measures under the Leadership theme of the Community Vision 2034.

Leadership

Indicator	Measure
Volunteer rates	Volunteers Percentage of volunteers (aged 15+)
Cultural diversity sentiment	Positive impact of cultural diversity Percentage of people who believe that cultural diversity has a positive impact on the community
Active community participation	Local community involvement Percentage of people who are actively involved in their local community (e.g. signed petitions, contact a local councillor, Member of Parliament or the council)
Community contribution and change	Community voice Percentage of people who believe that if they want to change something about where they live, they can
	Community contribution Percentage of people who believe they have something to contribute to their community
Neighbourhood pride	Neighbourhood pride Percentage of people who are proud of where they live
Neighbourhood hope	Local neighbourhood hope Percentage of people who feel hopeful about their local neighbourhood

Appendix 4: State, federal and international plans and policies _____.

This is a non-exhaustive list of plans and policies that further inform our work on strengthening community capacity and connection, in addition to those included in section 2.2.

Local

- Regional Public Health Plan 2022–27
- Affordable Housing Strategy 2025–28
- Economic Growth and Tourism Strategic Plan 2025–30
- Climate Change Response Plan 2022–27
- City of Onkaparinga Homelessness Principles
- Open Space Strategic Management Plan 2025–30
- Trails and Cycling Strategic Management Plan 2016–21
- Skate Facilities Management Plan 2016–21
- Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024
- Long Term Financial Plan 2024–25 to 2034–35
- Community Facilities Guidelines 2024
- Social Equity Model – Community Facilities Provision 2024
- Public Art Framework 2013 (under redevelopment)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate) 2026–28 (under development)
- Inclusive Communities Action Plan 2026–30 (under development)

State and federal

This strategy is considered in terms of its alignment with relevant policy directions of the South Australian Government and Australian Government. Their relevant plans and policies are presented in this section under our 4 key age cohorts of children, young people, adults and families, and older people, plus the cohorts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples, and people with disability (recognising the some have relevance beyond the age cohort category they are listed under).

Children

- Child Safe Environment Program – DHS (state)
- Early Years Strategy 2024–34 – Department of Social Services (federal)

Young people

- Engage! Strategy (2024) – Office for Youth (federal)

Adults and families

- Draft 2025 State Public Health Plan – SA Health (state)
- National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030 – Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (federal)

- Preventative Health Strategic Directions – Preventative Health SA (state)
- SA Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020–30 – SA Housing Authority (state)
- National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–32 – Department of Social Services (federal)
- South Australia's Women's Safety Strategy 2023–33 – Office for Women, DHS (state)
- Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Framework – 'Break the Cycle' – DHS (state)
- SA Mental Health Services Plan 2020–25 – SA Health (state)
- SA Suicide Prevention Plan 2023–26 – Preventative Health SA (state) (under redevelopment)
- Strong, Resilient Communities: South Australia's Disaster Resilience Strategy 2019–24 – South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (state)
- South Australian Multicultural Charter (2023) – Department of the Premier and Cabinet (state)
- Creating a Secure Food System in South Australia (2025) – DHS (state)

Appendix 4: State, federal and international plans and policies

- South Australia Food Relief Charter (2021) – DHS & Foodbank SA (state)
- Valuing our Food Waste 2020 – Green Industries SA (state)
- Circular Economy Strategy – Green Industries SA (state) (under development)
- National Strategy for Volunteering 2023–2033 – Volunteering Australia (federal)
- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2024 – Volunteering Australia (federal)

Older people

- Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards – Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (federal)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2024 26 – SA Attorney-General's Department (state)
- Closing the Gap policy position – Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) (national)

People living with disability

- Disability Strategy 2021 31 – Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (federal)
- Disability Inclusion Plan 2025 29 – Inclusive SA (state)

- Autism Strategy 2024 29 – Inclusive SA (state)
- National Dementia Action Plan 2024 34 – Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (federal)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practice Standards – NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (federal)

Other

- OneCard 2.0 Collection Reform – Libraries Board of South Australia (state)
- Value of SA Public Libraries Report 2020 – Public Libraries South Australia (state)
- Heart Foundation- Blueprint for an Active Australia (3rd edition) 2019 (national)

International

- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2015.
- World Health Organisation global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world

Legislation

There is a range of legislation that provides parameters and guidance for our work to ensure our compliance with relevant legal obligations. Examples are the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, the *Libraries Act 1982*, the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* and the *Aged Care Act 2024*.

As a baseline, we ensure our work reflects all mandatory standards and requirements, however our aim is to lean further than that into best practice in terms of the safety, wellbeing, capacity, and rights of all community members.



Appendix 5: Future service delivery planning considerations ._____.

Considerations for the Empowered Community stream per district – Location of council's key service delivery facilities relative to 2031 projected life stage demographics.

District ¹	Northern			Central North East			Central North West		
Dedicated service delivery facilities ²	Youth	Library		Youth	Library		Youth	Library	
	Community	Sport and recreation		Community	Sport and recreation		Community	Sport and recreation	
	Positive ageing	Hall for hire		Positive ageing	Hall for hire		Positive ageing	Hall for hire	
Age cohorts (2031) ³	#	%D	%R	#	%D	%R	#	%D	%R
Children (0–11)	4822	11.5	19.7	6269	13.8	25.6	4929	12.3	20.2
Young people (12–24)	6457	15.4	22.4	6621	14.6	22.9	5991	15.0	20.7
Adults (25–64) ⁴	20,153	48.0	21.3	22,523	49.6	23.8	20,444	51.2	21.6
Older people (65+)	10,568	25.1	24.2	9973	22.0	22.8	8607	21.5	19.7
Total	42,000	100	-	45,386	100	-	39,971	100	-
Proportion of region			21.9			23.7			20.9
Insights ⁵	Second highest population (21.9%) and an older profile.			Highest population (23.7%) and a younger profile.			Third highest population (20.9%) and an even profile.		
	High number of young people (22.4%) but only a youth space in a community centre.			Highest number of children (25.6%) and highest district proportion (13.8%).			Second highest number of children (20.2%).		
	Large number of adults (21.3%) and 2 community centres.			Highest number of young people (22.9%) and 1 youth centre.			High number of young people (20.7%) and 1 youth centre.		
	Highest number of older people (24.2%) but no positive ageing centre.			Highest number of adults (23.8%) and 3 community centres.			High number of adults (21.6%) and highest district proportion (51.2%) and 1 community centre.		
				Second highest number of older people (22.8%) but no positive ageing centre.			High number of older people (19.7%) and 2 positive ageing centres.		

Appendix 5: Future service delivery planning considerations

District ¹	Central South			Southern			Hills North		
Dedicated service delivery facilities ²	Youth	Library		Youth	Library		Youth	Library	
	Community	Sport and recreation		Community	Sport and recreation		Community	Sport and recreation	
	Positive ageing	Hall for hire		Positive ageing	Hall for hire		Positive ageing	Hall for hire	
Age cohorts (2031) ³	#	%D	%R	#	%D	%R	#	%D	%R
Children (0–11)	3950	13.7	16.2	2413	13.6	9.9	767	11.4	3.1
Young people (12–24)	4773	16.5	16.5	2802	15.8	9.7	777	11.6	2.7
Adults (25–64) ⁴	14,359	49.6	15.2	8735	49.3	9.2	3325	49.5	3.5
Older people (65+)	5840	20.2	13.4	3772	21.3	8.6	1851	27.5	4.2
Total	28,922	100	-	17,722	100	-	6720	100	-
Proportion of region			15.1			9.2			3.5
Insights ⁵	A younger population profile. High number of young people (16.5%) and highest district proportion (16.5%) but no youth centre. High number of adults (15.2%) and 1 community centre. High number of older people (13.4%) but lowest district proportion (20.2%) and no positive ageing centre			A slightly younger population profile. Moderate number of young people (9.7%) and 1 youth centre. Moderate number of adults (9.2%) and 1 community centre. Moderate number of older people (8.6%) and no positive ageing centre.			Lowest population (3.5%) and a slightly older profile. Lowest number of children (3.1%) and lowest district proportion (11.4%). Lowest number of young people (2.7%) and lowest district proportion (11.6%) and no youth centre. Lowest number of adults (3.5%) and no community centre. Lowest number of older people (3.1%) and no positive ageing centre.		

Appendix 5: Future service delivery planning considerations ._____.

District ¹	Hills South		
Dedicated service delivery facilities ²	Youth	Library	
	Community	Sport and recreation	
	Positive ageing	Hall for hire	
Age cohorts (2031) ³	#	%D	%R
Children (0–11)	1305	11.9	5.3
Young people (12–24)	1471	13.4	5.1
Adults (25–64) ⁴	5120	46.6	5.4
Older people (65+)	3089	28.1	7.1
Total	10,985	100	-
Proportion of region			5.7
Insights ⁵	Second lowest population (5.7%) and an older profile. Second lowest number of young people (5.1%) and no youth centre. Second lowest number of adults (5.4%) and lowest district proportion (46.6%) and no community centre. Second lowest number of older people (7.6%) but highest district proportion (28.1%) and no positive ageing centre.		

1 See page 31 for a map of the districts and their suburbs.

2 Community service delivery takes place in a wide range of settings, however dedicated facilities provide convenient bases and important opportunities for belonging.

2 Arts facilities also offer opportunities for service delivery, however have not been included due to being provided on a regional basis.

3 REMPLAN population forecast for City of Onkaparinga, 2024.

4 18–24 year olds are adults, however our main service delivery in this age group is usually considered in terms of youth services

5 See Empowered Community Implementation Plan for how the insights are informing relevant action. Other insights will be considered when developing an implementation plan for each of the other 3 streams of the strategy.

Key:

Projected 2031 population number in the age cohort residing in the district.

%D Proportion of the district's 2031 projected population that is in the age cohort.

%R Proportion of the council region's projected 2031 population in the age cohort residing in the district.

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