

COUNTRY CABINET

Whyalla and Central Outback

November 2016

State Government Response

Better Together

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Premier's Foreword

The Whyalla and Central Outback region is a resilient, attractive and enterprising part of South Australia, and State Cabinet was very pleased to visit the area in November 2016.

Ministers and I spoke to many people and organisations as part of our three-day Country Cabinet, and we gained valuable insights into the hopes, concerns and aspirations of citizens.

By far the most important topic on people's minds was economic development and the need to secure new opportunities for the region.

This report summarises the issues raised and, perhaps most importantly, details the actions the State Government will take to address them and to bring about practical, measureable change.

The Government's support includes nearly \$70 million, allocated in the 2016-17 State Budget, to support steelmaking, supply-chain businesses and the Whyalla community following Arrium Limited entering into voluntary administration in April 2016.

With a highly skilled workforce, an enviable lifestyle and a beautiful natural environment – plus a bold, new “Unearthed” brand – Whyalla is rich in potential, and I feel fundamentally optimistic about its future.

The South Australian Government is a strong supporter of the Whyalla and Central Outback region, and will continue to work on a number of fronts to help the region diversify its economy, create jobs and build on its reputation as a great place to live and to visit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Weatherill".

Jay Weatherill
Premier of South Australia

Minister for Regional Development's Foreword

It is an ongoing pleasure to be a part of Country Cabinet, visiting regional communities with the Premier and my fellow Ministers to discuss ideas and challenges relevant to each area.

There is no substitute for genuine, face-to-face discussions with local residents – and in the three years we have been making these visits, I am sure that my Cabinet colleagues are as impressed as I am with the dedication, passion and innovation shown by regional communities across South Australia.

Our visit to Whyalla and the Central Outback in November 2016, taking in the Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs communities, was a particularly important one given the challenges the area is currently facing.

The visit included public events in the three townships of Whyalla, Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs where the Cabinet met with a number of community members. I was also able to meet with the Andamooka Town Management Committee during my time in the area.

A number of announcements were made as part of our Country Cabinet visit; I personally was able to meet with and announce the recipients of three grants for local projects.

\$397,000 has been committed through the Regional Development Fund (RDF) to Cu-River Mining Australia for its new mining and processing operation at the Cairn Hill mine, near Coober Pedy. This project will create more than 60 jobs and play an important role in enhancing the economic prosperity and social wellbeing of the town.

The RDF has also supported the upgrade of the Roxby Downs pool facilities through the Council to feature a splashpad interactive water play space, shaded barbecue area, baby change facilities, seating and removable fencing.

The State's inaugural Regional Summit was held in Whyalla in 2015, and following the launch of the new Whyalla brand, unveiled by Premier Weatherill on 20 November, I announced the provision of \$85,000 to the City of Whyalla from the Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program to support the upgrade of the visitor facilities for the giant cuttlefish attraction and the cuttlefish aggregation area.

I'm proud to be part of a government that supports such initiatives in regional communities, recognising the importance and the distinct needs of our regions.

But most of all, I'm proud to represent regional South Australians.

The regions are vitally important to the State's growth and success, and we will continue to support and build on the passion that helps them to thrive.

Thank you to everyone who brought their ideas to Country Cabinet Whyalla and Central Outback.



Geoff Brock
Minister for Regional Development

Introduction

Our regions

Three in every 10 South Australians live in a regional community. Regional communities make a major contribution to South Australia's identity, quality of life and prosperity.

Regional South Australia generates much of our state's wealth, contributing more than \$20 billion to our economy and producing more than 50 per cent of South Australia's overseas exports. Building stronger regions is a priority for the South Australian Government.

Our regions help to define our state - breathing life into our sense of self, culture, traditions and place in the nation. Country South Australia not only provides an economic engine for the State, it contributes to our unique character and helps define what it is to be South Australian.

The importance of the Whyalla and Central Outback region

Whyalla is one of largest cities in South Australia and makes a significant contribution to the State's economy. Known as the place 'where the Outback meets the sea', Whyalla has a rich maritime and mining history and is the largest breeding ground for Giant Australian Cuttlefish. The State Government is working hard to support the Whyalla community through this difficult period and to secure a prosperous future for the city.

While challenges exist, there are great opportunities ahead for Whyalla. The launch of the City of Whyalla's new brand during Country Cabinet is symbolic of our collective focus on the future. The new tagline 'Unearth' has been adopted to promote Whyalla's tourism and economic development activities and highlights the attributes and strengths of this great region.

Coober Pedy is the opal capital of the world and is synonymous with underground living, making it a truly unique tourist destination. While the town is undergoing economic transition, the Government is committed to securing economic development opportunities, including growing the area's tourism industry.

Roxby Downs is the youngest town in South Australia's outback, having been established in the late 1980s to service the Olympic Dam mine. Olympic Dam is Australia's largest underground mine, producing copper, uranium, gold and silver and is a critical component of South Australia's economy. Since its inception, Roxby Downs has grown rapidly and children now make up about one-third of its population.

Country Cabinet

From 20 to 22 November 2016, Premier Jay Weatherill and Ministers visited the Whyalla and Central Outback region.

It was the third Country Cabinet held in 2016, as part of the Government's Charter for Stronger Regional Policy.

More than 400 people attended Country Cabinet events across the three days. This included a community barbecue and public forum in Whyalla on Sunday, 20 November 2016. The event provided an opportunity for the community to raise issues and ideas for the region directly with the Premier and Ministers.

A Cabinet meeting was held the next morning in Whyalla and provided the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of the City of Whyalla the chance to present to Cabinet on regional issues. Council presentations to the Premier and Ministers were also held in Roxby Downs and Coober Pedy on Monday afternoon.

Cabinet met with business and industry leaders, local councillors and members of the community during a range of different activities throughout the region.

Events included:

- **A community barbecue and public forum in Whyalla**
- **Meet-A-Minister meetings with the Premier, Ministers and community members in Whyalla**
- **The launch by the Premier of the City of Whyalla's new brand 'Unearth'**
- **Presentations by the Mayors of the City of Whyalla and the District Council of Coober Pedy, as well as the Acting Administrator of the Roxby Downs Council**
- **Morning teas with community, business leaders and volunteers in Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs**
- **A tour of the above-ground Olympic Dam mining site**
- **Site visits by the Premier and Ministers**

Fund My Idea

Fund My Idea gives the community the chance to submit and vote on projects that will benefit the region. Up to \$50,000 of funding is provided by the Government through *Fund My Idea* for each Country Cabinet.

The community put forward 10 proposals for *Fund My Idea* in the Whyalla and Central Outback region. The ideas were published on the YourSAy website at www.yoursay.sa.gov.au and over a five week period the community voted on how they felt the money should be spent.

The top-voted proposals are currently being assessed and the successful project(s) will be announced soon.



What we heard

The message Cabinet took away from the Whyalla and Central Outback Country Cabinet was one of a region very concerned about the future of Whyalla. The region is seeking the support of the State Government to grow existing businesses and to secure new opportunities to diversify its economy.

Whyalla's steel making industry is facing significant challenges, which is impacting local businesses, workers, their families and the broader community. The Whyalla community is very concerned about their future and want to know more about how the State Government is supporting the city.

The region's unique natural environment is a significant asset, but requires careful management to ensure it is protected for the long term.

This report gives a snapshot of the Government's response. It is not an exhaustive list of everything being done in the region, but gives a sense of the Government's commitment to work with local government, business and the community to build a stronger region.

Actions taken in response to what we heard

Increasing regional tourism

Tourism is a significant economic opportunity for the region. The City of Whyalla has been working with the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) to develop a tourism strategy for the area. The SATC has also been involved in the development of a new tourism plan for the District Council of Coober Pedy.

In July 2016, the City of Whyalla hosted a visit by the SATC, State Government agencies and Tourism Eyre Peninsula. The group visited local tourism sites and discussed key opportunities, focusing on Whyalla and Point Lowly reaching their potential by capitalising on their unique assets. The City of Whyalla is also investigating the revitalisation of the Whyalla foreshore precinct and Point Lowly.

During the November 2016 Country Cabinet, the State Government announced that Whyalla would receive an Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program grant of \$85,000 towards upgrading visitor facilities at the cuttlefish aggregation area near the city. Additionally, it was announced that Fringe in Whyalla will be held during the Easter long weekend in 2017. The State Government has committed \$40,000, through Arts South Australia and the SATC, to ensure the event is a success.

Tourism is also a key opportunity for Coober Pedy. The SATC will work with Regional Development Australia Far North, the District Council of Coober Pedy and the Tourism and Events Committee to provide strategic advice and direction to support the local tourism industry.

Expanded childcare services for Roxby Downs

BHP Billiton has introduced a 50:50 gender target for its workforce by 2025. This is a positive change in workforce demographics, but it will increase demand for different services in Roxby Downs, particularly child care.

During the November 2016 Country Cabinet, the State Government and BHP Billiton announced they will invest \$2 million each to deliver improved early childhood services for the community at the Roxby Downs Area School. The new Children's Centre for Early Childhood Development and Parenting will include long day care, preschool, community development, health and family support services for children and families from prenatal to age eight. It is expected that the Children's Centre will be completed in 2018.

Funding for Coober Pedy Swimming Pool

The State Government has stepped in to cover all costs to ensure the Coober Pedy Swimming Pool will remain open. Coober Pedy's public swimming pool was to have reduced opening times in December 2016 and January 2017 due to local government funding cuts. The pool is a community hub and vitally important for local children and other members of the community, including people who use the pool for rehabilitation. Under the new arrangements, the State Government will provide the local school with funding to keep the pool open, including outside of school hours to June 2018, when the arrangements will be reviewed.

Additional funding provided to the region

During the November 2016 Country Cabinet, the State Government announced various other grants for the region:

\$397,306 towards Cu-River Mining Australia Pty Ltd's new mining and processing operation at Cairn Hill near Coober Pedy, through the Regional Development Fund. The grant will assist in establishing the infrastructure required for the operation including the processing plant, road upgrades for heavy vehicle traffic, bores, water lines and electrical supply. This will create 60 new jobs, most of which can be sourced from local communities.

\$200,000 towards Roxby Downs' new splashpad, through the Regional Development Fund's Community Infrastructure Program. The splashpad is part of an upgrade of the town's pool facilities.

\$100,000 to ensure Bedford Group can continue to provide meaningful work to its supported employees in the Whyalla area. The grant will be made available to the City of Whyalla so that the council can engage Bedford to carry out essential collection of illegally-dumped rubbish, which had spiked in recent months.

\$49,000 to Whyalla twins, Zia and Cyanne Westerman, for a new van to better accommodate their wheelchairs.

\$25,000 to the City of Whyalla to fund the waiver of ground fees for local sporting clubs for 12 months. Ground fees for clubs and associations based at Bradford Street Reserve, Jubilee Park, Memorial Oval and Schulz Reserve will be waived and a range of sports will benefit, including cricket, athletics, softball and football.

\$15,000 to the Whyalla Men's Shed, which aims to improve the social and emotional well-being of older men in the community.

Planning for the future of Whyalla

A number of public events were held in Whyalla during Country Cabinet. The Premier and Ministers heard directly from Whyalla residents about their concerns regarding the future of Arrium Limited and the impact ongoing uncertainty about the future of the city's steel industry is having on the community. The voluntary Administration process has put significant strain on local supply-chain businesses, workers at the steelworks, their families and the Whyalla community as a whole.

The conversations held during Country Cabinet are informing our planning for the future of Whyalla. While the Arrium sale process is ongoing, the State Government is working with local groups to develop opportunities for economic growth and diversification for the city and to ensure local services continue to meet the needs of the community.

The State Government has implemented a range of measures to support the Whyalla community, including:

- Appointing a Regional Coordinator for Whyalla to engage with the community to understand its needs and ensure that appropriate services are being delivered in a timely manner.
- Establishing a \$9.6 million Whyalla Small Business Loan scheme to support Arrium's directly affected creditors. This includes interest-free loans of up to \$750,000 for eligible businesses.
- Funding free financial counselling and legal advice to businesses that have been affected by the Arrium administration.
- Providing \$8.5 million over four years to restore mental health services in Whyalla, which had been scheduled to close following Commonwealth Government funding cuts.
- Supporting the Arrium workforce through career development, training and employment services.
- Convening the Whyalla Services Group, comprising government and non government agencies, focused on building the capacity and resilience of the community and service system.
- Committing \$50 million to support the Whyalla steelworks.

What is the process for the sale of Arrium Limited's assets?

Arrium entered into external administration in April 2016 and is now subject to a Deed of Company Arrangement, with KordaMentha appointed as Deed Administrators. The Administrators are working towards completing the sale of the Australian operations (Whyalla operations and the east coast businesses) as a single going concern, with a view to maximising returns to creditors, by 31 March 2017.

Bidder's proposals differ greatly from each other. The South Australian Government Steel Task Force and Commonwealth Government have held discussions with each of the bidders.

The Steel Task Force has developed, and negotiated with the Administrator, key principles for agreements relating to a \$50 million grant and environmental indemnity (historical liabilities) for a new owner. On 31 January 2017, the South Australian Government provided these key principles to the Administrator for placement in its sale data-room to enable bidders due diligence.

In July 2016, the Commonwealth Government provided a \$49.2 million secured loan to Arrium for new wash plants at two mines, required by Arrium to maintain its targeted 10 million tonnes per annum export rate.

These initiatives are about giving the Whyalla operations the greatest chance of being sold as a going concern to a new owner in the Administrator's sale process.

How are the State, Local and Commonwealth Governments working together?

The South Australian Government and Commonwealth Government are collaborating under the auspices of the joint Steel Task Force on all matters relating to the Arrium administration and sale process. Meetings are held weekly to ensure our efforts are aligned.

The Department of State Development's Regional Manager and the Whyalla Regional Coordinator, based at the Whyalla Response Centre, are working collaboratively with the City of Whyalla to provide guidance on the city's future strategies and vision. The Whyalla Response Centre is ensuring that work across State and Commonwealth Government agencies, community organisations and service providers is coordinated.

What support is available for Whyalla businesses?

The State Government has provided \$9.6 million for the Whyalla Small Business Loan program to support creditors directly affected by the Arrium administration. Interest-free loans of up to \$750,000 are now available to eligible businesses to assist these creditors to overcome severe cash flow issues. Loans totaling \$5.53 million have already been approved in support of Whyalla businesses.

Although retail businesses in Whyalla have been significantly and visibly impacted, sub-contractors to Arrium, including beneficiaries of the \$10 million interest free loan, have found a form of stability now in purchasing and supply and are managing to continue operations in the current environment. Small businesses in Whyalla are able to access a range of state-wide business support programs, including the new \$10 million South Australian Early Commercialisation Fund and the Business Transformation Voucher Program.

How are Whyalla's community services being supported?

Since May 2016, the State Government has convened the Whyalla Services Group and is working with a range of community and government service providers. The State Government is supporting Whyalla community services to respond to community needs arising as a result of industry adjustments. This includes increasing demand for community services, such as general counselling, financial counselling, emergency relief and youth services.

The City of Whyalla has commenced a strategic planning process to provide frameworks for the future provision of community services. Modelling by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies is also informing planning for these future service models.

How is the State Government supporting diversification of Whyalla's economy?

The Upper Spencer Gulf (USG) Economic Transition Forum, a tripartite government partnership with the Regional Development Australia network, is developing an Action Plan to drive economic diversification in Whyalla. The Commonwealth Government, through its recently established Local Planning Committee, will invest \$20 million over two years across the USG region to drive business investment and create jobs, under the new Regional Jobs and Investment Package program.

The State Government has commissioned the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (SACES) to develop an Economic Diversification Strategy for Whyalla. This report was submitted in mid-December 2016 and the State Government is currently formulating its response to the recommendations of the SACES report.



Economic Development

The region has a number of key economic growth opportunities, including the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which is forecast to create hundreds of new jobs for local people. Tourism is also an important growth industry. The Government remains committed to supporting the region's Arrium workforce through career development, training and employment services.

Key Issues

Job opportunities through the rollout of the NDIS

Our Response

The State Government is working with industry bodies and service providers to maximise regional opportunities through the implementation of the NDIS. The disability workforce in the Eyre and Western region is forecast to grow from approximately 100-150 jobs currently to 400-450 jobs when the NDIS is fully implemented in 2018-19.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has released a Market Sector and Workforce Strategy, which provides a broad vision of how this growth can be achieved. The State Government is working with the NDIA to monitor market growth and identify local employment opportunities.

More diversification and small business grant programs are needed in Whyalla

The Regional Job Creation Grant Program, a dedicated business grant program for Whyalla and Port Augusta, was open for applications in the first quarter of 2016, but the program was under-subscribed and as such, was not continued. Small businesses in Whyalla are able to access a range of statewide business support programs, including the new \$10 million South Australian Early Commercialisation Fund and the Business Transformation Voucher Program.

Concern about business interruption and costs due to the statewide blackout

The State Government has initiated a number of measures to address the potential for supply disruption while the electricity market is undergoing its low emission transformation:

- Consideration of additional interconnection with the eastern states by providing \$500,000 to ElectraNet to conduct the regulatory investment test for transmission (RIT-T).
- A new regulation on power-system security.
- Submitting a package of National Electricity Rule change proposals on power-system security.
- Legislated a change to the National Electricity Law to have better monitoring of the electricity wholesale market by the Australian Energy Regulator.
- Put in place a \$24 million program to incentivise companies to extract more gas and supply it to the local market.
- Launched a tender in October 2016 to procure 25 per cent of the State Government's electricity needs from dispatchable renewable energy providers that utilise technology, such as battery storage, and 75 per cent from a source that introduces new competition into the energy market.
- Launched the Energy Productivity Program, which provides \$31 million over two years to help large energy-consuming businesses with their energy costs.

Reduction in BHP staff has created a depressed housing market in Roxby Downs

The depressed housing market in Roxby Downs is largely caused by imbalance between supply and demand of land and houses in the town. The land supply is primarily controlled by BHP Billiton, which has exclusive right under the *Roxby Downs (Indenture Ratification) Act 1982* to develop land in the town for residential (and other) purposes. All residents in the town are there in support of BHP Billiton's Olympic Dam operations, whether directly or indirectly. When the BHP Billiton workforce is expanding, and indirect employment is also more buoyant, land and houses are in short supply and prices increase. Conversely, when the company is employing fewer people and cutting back on contracts etc, as has been the case in the last couple of years, demand for land and housing decrease markedly, and prices and occupancy rates decrease accordingly. As BHP Billiton begins to employ more people, the market can be largely expected to self-correct.

Lack of high-speed internet connection in Whyalla

The infrastructure needed for commercial rollout in Whyalla may be possible through AARnet (university research network), which could provide significant bandwidth, performance and reliability improvements in Whyalla. Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula is in discussions with NextGen and AARnet about running a series of workshops in Whyalla in the first quarter of 2017 to assess local business internet needs and demand.

Transport, Energy and Infrastructure

Maintaining regional road networks is important for road safety and the viability of the region's economy. The community is seeking more overtaking lanes between Whyalla and Port Augusta. Additionally, a lack of public transport services between Adelaide and the Central Outback region was raised by community members.

Key Issues

Our Response

More overtaking lanes are required between Whyalla and Port Augusta

Two overtaking lanes are to be built between Whyalla and Port Augusta as part of the State and Commonwealth Government joint-funded 'Regional Roads Program'. Construction of the following is scheduled to commence in September 2017:

- a northbound overtaking lane on Eyre Highway, located approximately 25km south-west of Port Augusta, commencing near the Lincoln Highway junction
- a southbound overtaking lane on the Lincoln Highway located approximately 39km south-west of Port Augusta.

Concern about inadequate public transport in Whyalla

While there will always be issues of viability of services due to small, dispersed populations being served by such passenger services, the State Government will continue to look to partner, support and invest in regional passenger services.

Whyalla is currently well serviced by public transport compared with most other regional areas. Bus services between Whyalla and Port Augusta are reliant on patronage to be viable to operate; any changes to the service must continue to meet the demands of the majority of the community, while being operationally efficient. The State Government, through the Community Transport Vehicle Program, has recently provided \$55,000 to the Australian Red Cross in Whyalla to support the purchase of a bus for community transport.

The Fund My Community program is currently accepting applications for projects of up to \$100,000 that support disadvantaged, isolated or vulnerable South Australians. Applications for the current round are open until 31 March 2017 at http://yoursay.sa.gov.au/fmc_rounds/fund-my-community-2017.

Funding is also available through Grants SA for one-off projects that aim to improve community participation, wellbeing and quality of life for South Australians. Community organisations can contact Grants SA on **1300 650 985** or email grantsSA@sa.gov.au.

Concern about the process for property valuations in Coober Pedy

Property valuations for rating and taxing purposes are undertaken by the Valuer-General, who undertakes a revaluation of site and capital values of all properties in South Australia on an annual basis, with the date of valuation being 1 January each year. In establishing the adjustments to be made to rating values, the Valuer-General considers sales evidence and market movement trends, as well as information provided by councils, and manual inspections by valuation field staff.

The property market in Coober Pedy is generally considered to be experiencing a decline in demand and, consequently, the Valuer-General determined it was appropriate that, in general, based on sales evidence, rating values in Coober Pedy be reduced for the 2016-17 general valuation.

Representatives from the Valuer-General's Office continue to visit the area on a programmed basis and undertake property inspections and update rating values as required.

Concern about the potential financial impact of power purchasing arrangements in Coober Pedy

The Coober Pedy Hybrid Renewable Project was first advocated in June 2013 through an approach to the District Council of Coober Pedy by Energy Developments.

The State Government sought independent advice on the technical and financial merits of the project, which was shared with the Council. In addition, the Crown Solicitor's office reviewed the Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) and Deed of Grant to identify any concerns or risks.

The risk of bankruptcy is extremely low, as the State Government pays the difference between the revenue the Council can recover from customers (tariffs are set by the Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy annually) and the reasonable cost of supply under the Deed of Grant. Tariffs under the Remote Area Energy Supply scheme are set at the average price charged to metropolitan consumers in Adelaide.

Under the PPA, the Council has the ability to roll out 400kw of distributed solar in the community. The Council has been advised to develop a policy (as the licensed electricity retailer) to determine how this can best meet the needs of the Coober Pedy community.

Proposal for solar power generation plant in Roxby Downs

Lyon Solar is seeking to construct a 120 MW solar PV plant and minimum of 100 MW of storage near Roxby Downs that is known as the Kingfisher Project. The project was one of the finalists in ARENA's \$100 million funding round for large-scale solar, but was notified in early September 2016 that it was ultimately unsuccessful. The project is, however, fully funded. The proposed plant would connect to the national grid and also power the town, mine and surrounding area.

Health and Community Services

The region is home to some excellent health and community services, which are highly valued by the community. This includes the redeveloped Whyalla Hospital and Health Service, although there is difficulty in attracting some specialist health services to the area. In Coober Pedy there is concern about the range of aged care accommodation options available and isolation is contributing to mental health issues in Roxby Downs.

Key Issues

Our Response

More support is needed for aged care in Whyalla

Whyalla has been working to implement an Aged Care and Disability Master Plan over the past 12 months. This is being led by Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula with support from the City of Whyalla and involves a number of agencies in the Whyalla area. A key focus in relation to improving disability services is maximising the opportunities created by the expansion of the disability sector under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Commonwealth Government's aged care and disability reforms will bring new employment opportunities in the areas of disability and aged care services. This may include the development of new services or the introduction of new providers of existing services. The State Government is working with the National Disability Insurance Agency, local disability service providers and training providers to develop training and employment opportunities. Training has already commenced through TAFE for the Certificate III in Individual Support.

Transport is critical to enable people to participate in their community. Public transport options can be more limited in regional areas and options need to be explored to support older community members to maintain their independence. The Australian Red Cross in Whyalla has recently been awarded \$55,000 to support the purchase of a bus for community transport through the Minister's Social Priorities Fund – Community Transport Vehicle Program.

Attracting specialist health services to Whyalla is difficult

Two new salaried anaesthetists commenced in July and October 2016 at the Whyalla Hospital and Health Service. The obstetrics service is currently being reviewed to provide a model of care that aligns with the hospital's service capability framework. Locum specialists currently provide 24/7 service while this is finalised with Country Health SA Local Health Network (Country Health). The preferred obstetric service delivery plan is to have a model in partnership with Port Augusta Hospital.

Country Health is currently planning an upgrade of the renal dialysis unit at Whyalla to enable the service to increase from four renal patients per session, to six patients per session, to enable the unit to meet increasing demand for dialysis services. The proposed unit will allow for future expansion depending on future demands. Country Health will continue to work to recruit specialists to the area to ensure high quality health services are maintained.

Support is needed to expand financial counselling services in Whyalla

The State Government has provided additional funding support to Centacare in Whyalla to secure additional resources to address the pressure on its services. The State Government is working with the South Australian Financial Counsellors Association and the Wyatt Trust to address this issue, including training and supervision requirements and improving access to the workforce for regional services. Centacare Whyalla has recently recruited a position in its financial resilience team. The State Government recently opened a public tender for financial services, seeking service provision for a six-year period. This will provide significant stability within the industry and will enhance recruitment opportunities.

There are concerns about social isolation of vulnerable people in Whyalla

The State Government is a partner in the collective impact initiative known as the HOPE Collective. The initiative is working towards the Whyalla Stuart community living every day with a sense of HOPE. HOPE is an acronym for the four key results areas of Healthy, Optimistic, Pride (for community) and Empowerment. The State Government is in discussion with the HOPE Collective to identify how it can continue to support the initiative.

Local service providers will continue to work together to address existing and emerging issues faced by the Whyalla community. The State Government will meet with the HOPE Collective to discuss future support needs for the work. The State Government provided \$36,800 in January 2017 towards the HOPE Collective Stage 2: (RBA, Conversation, Community Hub Scope) through the Grants SA program.

The Fund My Community program is currently accepting applications for projects of up to \$100,000 that support disadvantaged, isolated or vulnerable South Australians. Applications for the current round are open until 31 March 2017 at http://yoursay.sa.gov.au/fmc_rounds/fund-my-community-2017.

A greater range of aged care accommodation options is needed in Coober Pedy

The Commonwealth Government is responsible for the provision of funding in the area of aged care. Country Health SA operates a number of aged-care programs funded by the Commonwealth Government in Coober Pedy. This includes a Multipurpose Service for residential clients.

The Commonwealth Government's trend for alternate options for aged care clients is to assess people for Home Care Packages. The Home Care Packages have four levels and can provide for a high level of care to assist the client to remain in their own home. The Commonwealth Home Support Program is also

available to clients living in the community. This program provides basic support to maintain clients' independence. This support can assist clients who might otherwise require supported or hostel type accommodation.

Concern about crime rates and anti-social behaviour in Coober Pedy

SA Police (SAPOL) advises that crime rates and antisocial behaviour have declined overall in Coober Pedy over the past five years.

During the past four to six months, there has been some seasonal increase in transient population and opportunistic crime incidents, similar to previous years in Coober Pedy. SAPOL has worked closely with business owners and the community, using surveillance cameras in affected areas, providing crime prevention advice and literature and patrols to door knock patrons with vehicles identified as being unsecure or potentially at risk. Additional policing support from Port Augusta Bike Patrols, SAPOL Dog Operations Unit and the State Tactical Response Group has also been used in proactive policing operations.

Although Coober Pedy does not have a 24 hour police station, police are rostered to work day, afternoon and night shift, which ordinarily ends at either 1am or 2.30am. After hours, officers are available on call and will respond as needed. Since the introduction of the Centralised Despatch System in 2013, residents have been encouraged to call **000** in an emergency or **131 444** if they require police attendance.

Support is needed for children affected by domestic violence in Coober Pedy

The Family Safety Framework, developed to drive improved, integrated service responses to violence against women and children in South Australia, functions in Coober Pedy. The Framework includes Family Safety Meetings, held at the local level, focusing on individual high-risk domestic violence cases, and common risk assessment, to ensure consistency in assessment. The Framework meetings occur fortnightly and are chaired by SA Police. Participants at the meetings include the Department for Child Protection and the Department for Education and Child Development. All participants are able to make referrals to the Framework.

Difficulty recruiting and retaining staff at Coober Pedy Area School

All country sites move through a similar cycle of staff transferring on an annual basis. For example, in 2014 the retention rate for Coober Pedy was more than 75 per cent. As an incentive to staff to work in country locations, teachers can exercise a 'right of return' to the metropolitan area after four years of service. After two years of service, teachers are eligible to transfer to another, less remote, country location. While this incentive works to attract staff, it can contribute to the turnover rate.

Staff in Coober Pedy are able to access teacher housing at a heavily subsidised rate and are also entitled to a locality allowance, which is paid for the tenure of each appointment. Attraction and retention allowances are added to Principal advertisement for Coober Pedy. The State Government advertises ongoing teaching positions in Coober Pedy and other remote locations before other country and metropolitan sites as a way to attract the largest possible pool of applicants.

Drop-in centre proposal for Coober Pedy

The District Council of Coober Pedy proposed that a drop-in centre for community services would help to improve social cohesion and community safety in the area. The State Government will investigate and discuss with the Council and other community organisations, about applying for funding through Grants SA to establish a drop-in centre.

The State Government currently funds the Council to run a Services to Aboriginal Youth program. The service aims to ensure young people are better informed of, connected with, and able to access service options that meet their needs, as well as increasing their skills, knowledge and individual development. Funding is provided through Grants SA, which aims

to improve community participation, wellbeing and quality of life. Community organisations within the Coober Pedy region can apply for funding to Grants SA for financial support for relevant initiatives. Community organisations can contact Grants SA on **1300 650 985** or email **grantsSA@sa.gov.au**.

The cost of transport to Adelaide is compounding mental health issues arising from isolation in Roxby Downs

Services in regional areas are highly reliant on patronage. The considerable distances that services are required to travel and the smaller population densities in outlying areas make it challenging to provide frequent and inexpensive regional public transport services. Regular (5-6 days per week) air services are operated by Alliance Airlines from Adelaide to Olympic Dam (10km from Roxby Downs by sealed road) and are priced from \$125 to \$453 one way. A spot check revealed seats available for \$125 at short notice. Daily bus services are operated by Greyhound Express to and from Pimba. Fares are approximately \$90 one way.

To assist in providing services closer to where people live and minimise the need for transportation to Adelaide, Country Health Mental Health Services offer the following services for Roxby Downs for young people and adults aged 16 and over:

- Tele-health including psychiatric assessment and review
- Emergency Triage and Liaison Service available 24/7 for telephone-based assistance and referral
- The Port Augusta Community Mental Health team provides monthly outreach services
- Tele-psychology services are available through the Port Augusta Mental Health Team as part of a partnership with the University of SA.

Country SA Primary Health Network also funds Country and Outback Health Inc to provide support services through its shared care program.

Environment

Protecting the environment is critical for coastal and marine productivity in Whyalla. In the Central Outback, particular focus is needed to adapt to the impacts of climate change. In December 2016 the Government released its Far North and Outback SA Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Key Issues

Concern about marine parks and the loss of fishing access

Our Response

The City of Whyalla overlooks the Upper Spencer Gulf Marine Park. The zoning is designed to minimise the impact on recreational fishing. Three of the parks and nine sanctuary zones are located near Whyalla and protect rich fish nurseries of saltmarsh, mangrove and seagrass habitats, Giant Australian Cuttlefish and their rocky reef habitat and habitat for many of the life stages of the prized snapper. Cowleds Landing Sanctuary Zone was already an existing Aquatic Reserve, and a Special Purpose Area to allow for recreational shore line fishing covers half of the Cuttlefish Coast Sanctuary Zone.

The State Government undertakes public education programs about marine parks. State Government staff have been present at seven of the last nine Whyalla Snapper Competitions (as well as Fishy Fringe Festivals) with marine park information stalls, and in recent years, marine park sanctuary zone compliance (shore and boat patrols). Numerous media releases about marine parks have been distributed and marine park brochures are available at various outlets in Whyalla.

Protecting sand dunes along the Point Lowly peninsula

The stranded shingle ridges north of Point Lowly have been impacted by the proliferation of ad hoc vehicle tracks and inappropriate use by 4WDs and motorbikes. The State Government has worked with the Cultana Jenkins Shack Owners Association, the City of Whyalla and Conservation Volunteers Australia to reduce impacts on the shingle ridges. Works have included rationalising vehicle tracks over and around the shingle ridges and promoting natural regeneration of remnant coastal vegetation to reduce erosion. Interpretive signage has also been developed and installed.

Uncontrolled vehicle access is damaging Whyalla saltmarshes

The State Government has been actively working with the local community to improve an understanding of saltmarsh ecosystems and the importance of them in the landscape. A direct outcome of this has been the development of a “Saltmarsh Group”, which includes local high schools and community volunteers who are interested in helping protect this important ecosystem.

A collaborative project between the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board, Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and affected councils has resulted in the development of the *Coastal Vehicle Access Decision Making Framework*. The document provides a multi-level decision-making framework that considers environmental, social and economic values. This Framework provides clear recommendations, a suite of management options and consistent guidelines for the protection of coastal natural resource assets.

Concern about the welfare of the Whyalla Marina dolphins

A resident pod of dolphins at Whyalla exhibit highly modified behaviours caused by a long history of feeding and interaction with people in and around the marina/boat ramp. Dolphins are a protected marine mammal. Feeding, touching and approaching within prescribed distances of dolphins is not permitted under the *National Parks and Wildlife (Protected Animals – Marine Mammals) Regulations 2010*. The City of Whyalla has previously expressed an interest in tourism centered on dolphin interactions and suggests that benefits could extend to improving dolphin welfare by managing the currently unregulated interactions and potential research opportunities.

There is concern about the high cost of waste management

Waste levies play an important role in reducing waste in South Australia. The levies provide a price signal to the market, diverting waste from South Australian landfills and into recycling and productive use. The Solid Waste Levy is being increased in stages, with the most recent increase to \$76 a tonne (from 1 September 2016), to \$103 a tonne by 2019-20 in metropolitan Adelaide. The levy in regional areas is half that of metropolitan Adelaide.

A higher price on waste will encourage councils and the waste and resource recovery industry to dispose less to landfill, as well as to expand and create new industries in waste processing and reuse. Local government will receive additional funding for waste and resource recovery, infrastructure (including organic waste), waste education, household hazardous waste and innovate solutions for problematic waste.



Government of
South Australia