

Business Plan



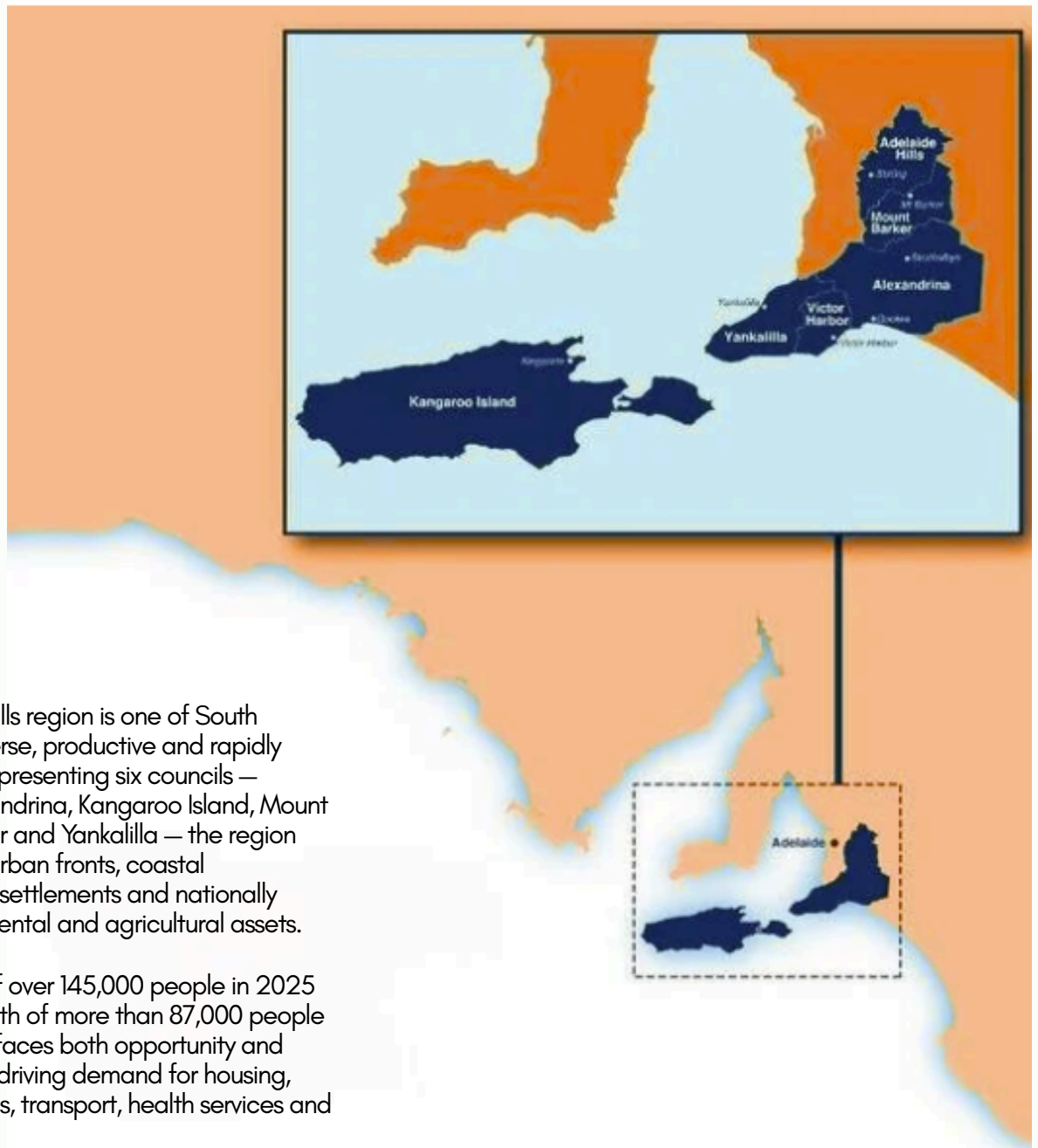
This Business Plan sets out the role, strategic directions and key priorities of the Southern and Hills Local Government Association (SHLGA) for the four financial years commencing 1 July 2026.

Prepared in accordance with Clause 8.2 of the SHLGA Charter and Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 1999, the Plan provides a rolling four-year framework that defines the services provided by SHLGA, identifies performance targets and measures, and outlines the internal processes required to achieve its purposes.

The Business Plan sits alongside the SHLGA Advocacy Plan and will be reviewed annually in consultation with constituent councils prior to adoption of each annual budget.



Southern and Hills



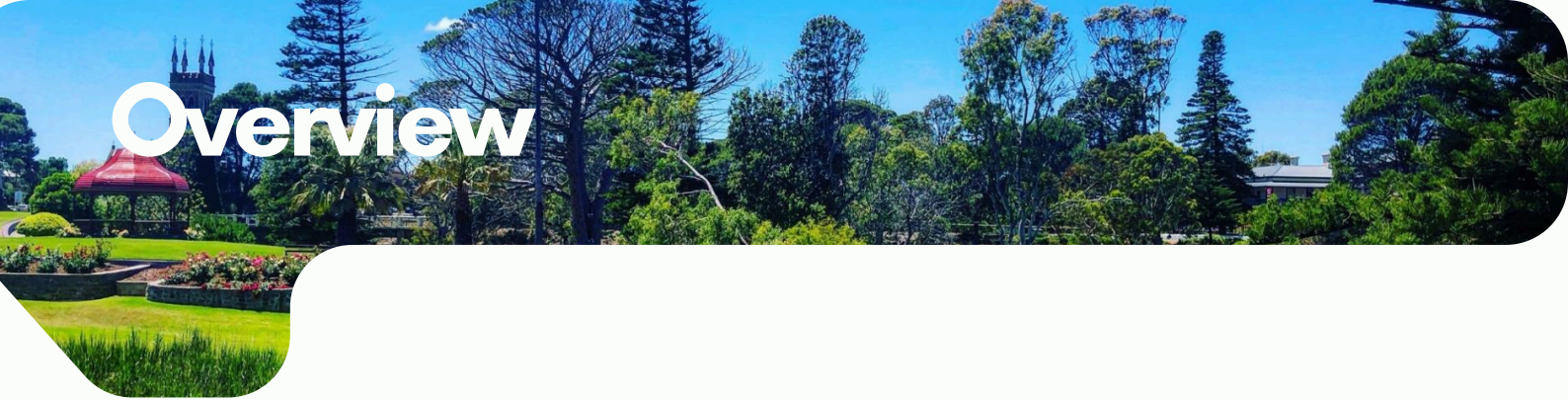
The Southern and Hills region is one of South Australia's most diverse, productive and rapidly growing regions. Representing six councils — Adelaide Hills, Alexandrina, Kangaroo Island, Mount Barker, Victor Harbor and Yankalilla — the region spans high growth urban fronts, coastal communities, island settlements and nationally significant environmental and agricultural assets.

With a population of over 145,000 people in 2025 and projected growth of more than 87,000 people by 2051, the region faces both opportunity and pressure. Growth is driving demand for housing, infrastructure, utilities, transport, health services and social infrastructure.

At the same time, councils are responding to increasing climate risks including bushfire, coastal erosion, heatwaves and ecological events, alongside structural financial pressures and evolving regulatory responsibilities.

Through SHLGA, our six constituent councils work together to support and advocate for the liveability, landscapes and economic strength that define the Southern and Hills region.





Overview

The Southern and Hills Local Government Association (SHLGA) is established as a Regional Subsidiary under the *Local Government Act 1999*.

SHLGA operates under its Charter and exists to enable our six constituent councils to work together to improve the quality of life for their communities, enhance the prosperity of the region and improve performance. We do this through:

Advocacy – Influencing issues of significance to our region.

Sharing – Collaborating on matters of common interest.

Delivery – Coordinating the delivery of services or projects that meet regional needs or advance regional priorities.

This Business Plan sets out what SHLGA will focus on in these three pillars and what we aim to achieve for our constituent councils over the next four years.

Business planning decisions are made by the SHLGA Board after consultation with constituent councils. The Board is supported by a Management Committee and two advisory Working Groups:

- Regional Public Health Plan Working Group
- Roads Working Group

This Business Plan should be read along side the SHLGA Advocacy Plan adopted by the Board in December 2025.

This four-year Business Plan has been prepared in response to the key challenges and opportunities facing our region over the coming years.

The strategic context for this Business Plan includes:

- Population growth and urbanisation in the region's growth fronts creating housing, infrastructure, service and utilities pressures.
- Frequent regulatory and policy reform across local government's responsibilities (planning, waste, governance, community services etc.)
- Continued expansion or shifting of responsibilities from state to local government without proportional funding or resources.
- Tight fiscal environment with competing state and federal priorities limiting grant and public investment opportunities.
- Cost-of-living and housing pressures influencing community expectations and council decision-making.
- Rising costs of materials, labour, and service delivery impacting council financial sustainability.
- Increasing frequency of climate-related events (bushfires, floods, heatwaves, coastal erosion) driving urgency for investment in resilience, recovery, and adaptation.
- Growing public and policy focus on energy transition, biodiversity protection, and sustainable water use.
- Ageing populations and service access challenges in smaller and island communities.
- Increasing reliance on local government to address complex social issues traditionally managed by higher levels of government.





Focus Areas

Six Outcomes for the Southern and Hills Region

SHLGA has adopted six long-term outcomes that councils are working towards collectively through Advocacy, Sharing, and Delivery.

Managing Growth, Housing and Liveability Southern and Hills is well-planned with community-ready growth that supports diverse, affordable housing while protecting the liveability and landscapes that define our region.

Integrated Transport and Connectivity

Southern and Hills communities are connected and productive because governments collaborate on the planning, timing and delivery of the major infrastructure investments needed in the region.

Environment, Coast and Climate Resilience

Southern and Hills communities are resilient and supported by long-term climate adaptation, healthy coastlines, and secure water resources.

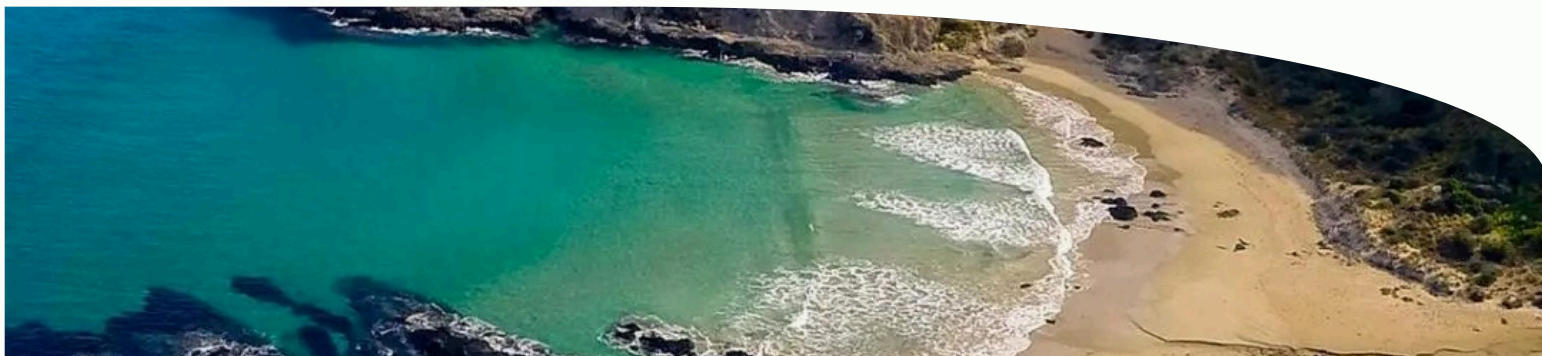
Economic Development and Local Jobs Southern and Hills is a thriving, diverse regional economy that supports local jobs, strengthens key industries, and attracts new investment and talent.

Community Health and Wellbeing

Southern and Hills communities are healthy, inclusive, and well-served; supported by strong social infrastructure and accessible services.

Financial Sustainability, Shared Services and Collaboration

Southern and Hills councils are part of a financially sustainable local government sector where collaboration and innovation improve service delivery and performance.



Advocacy



Influencing issues of significance to our region.

SHLGA leads and coordinates evidence-based, non-partisan regional advocacy in accordance with our adopted Advocacy Framework and Advocacy Plan.

SHLGA develops shared regional positions, prepares submissions, leads election and budget engagement strategies, builds strategic partnerships, meets regularly with decision-makers, and amplifies council priorities through consistent communication, ensuring the Southern and Hills region speaks with one clear voice.

Key focus areas are those identified in the SHLGA Advocacy Plan, including:

- Securing major State and Commonwealth investment to ensure communities are supported by essential infrastructure, services and diverse, affordable housing from day one
- Delivering coordinated investment in priority transport corridors, fairer local road funding, improved public transport and digital connectivity
- Long-term funding for local climate adaptation, disaster resilience, coastal protection, water security and algal bloom response to safeguard communities, industries and natural assets
- Protecting high-value rural and coastal landscapes, strengthening tourism capability, regulating short-stay accommodation, and attracting young people and key workers to the region
- Progress a sector-led reform agenda focused on long-term financial sustainability, workforce attraction and retention, and shared service models that improve efficiency without cost-shifting from other levels of government.



Advocacy

Each year SHLGA will undertake the following activities:

- Implement, monitor and review our Advocacy Plan
- Federal and State Pre-Budget Submissions
- Stakeholder engagement and partnerships aligned to our priorities
- Prepare submissions on topics of relevance to the region
- Participation in forums and events that help advance our Advocacy Plan
- Regular communication with members and stakeholders about our Advocacy actions and outcomes

Key Priorities and Projects

2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Research and Prepare 'Growth, Housing, and Livability' Position Statements	Collate data and research to build a 'Housing Affordability' Business Case	Collate data and research to build a 'Housing Incentives' Business Case	Identify and deliver a data and research project aligned to the Advocacy Plan
Build capacity of councils in Advocacy through training and resources	2028 Federal Election Strategy	Embed relationships with local Federal MPs and Cabinet / Shadow Cabinet Members.	2030 State Election Strategy
Facilitate engagement with decision makers on Local Area Plans	Facilitate engagement with decision makers on Local Area Plans	Support implementation of Local Area Plans	Support implementation of Local Area Plans
Contribute to a sector-led Local Government Reform Agenda	Contribute to a sector-led Local Government Reform Agenda	Contribute to a sector-led Local Government Reform Agenda	Contribute to a sector-led Local Government Reform Agenda

Sharing



Collaborating on matters of common interest.

SHLGA provides a forum for regional collaboration, peer learning and coordinated action.

We facilitate dialogue between councils and strengthen partnerships with key regional stakeholders.

SHLGA encourages and supports constituent councils to share information, identify joint outcomes and learn from each other's best practices. Through forums, working groups and engagement, we bring people together to share, learn and build public value.

Key focus areas for regional sharing are:

- Local government best practice and innovation
- Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Planning
- Regional Transport Planning
- Growth, housing, and infrastructure
- Economic development (through partnership with RDA Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island)
- Environment and climate (through partnerships with Landscape Boards, Resilient Hills and Coasts, and SA Coastal Councils Alliance)
- Drought resilience (as a partner in the Adelaide Hills Fleurieu and KI Regional Drought Resilience Plan)
- Building a strong culture of collaboration in local government across the region.



Sharing

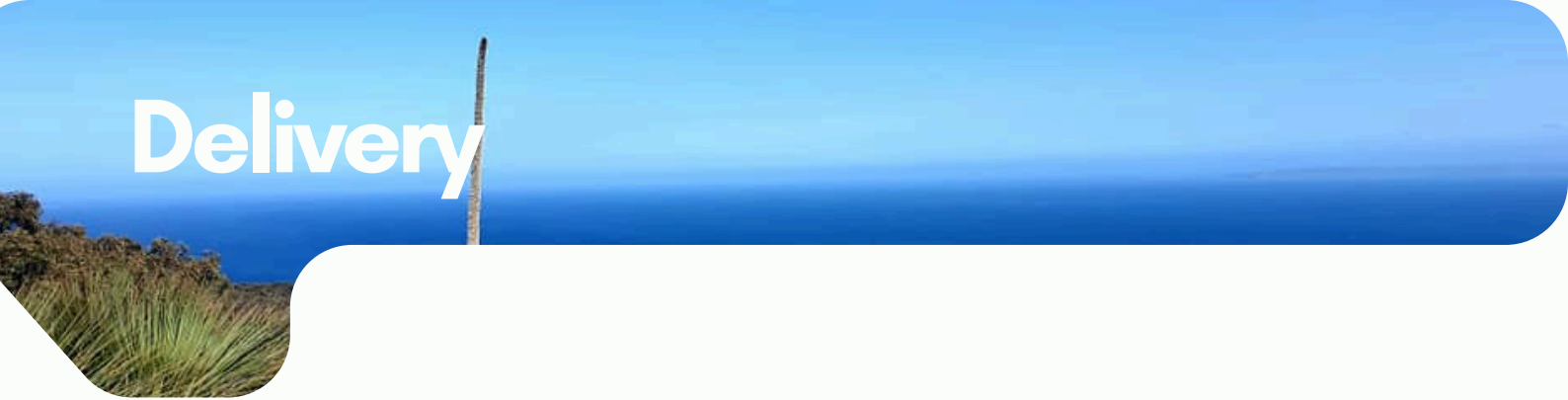
Each year SHLGA will undertake the following activities:

- At least four Board meetings per year hosted by constituent councils
- Facilitate Working Group meetings to encourage information sharing and collaboration between councils on health, wellbeing, and transport priorities
- Participate in the Regional Drought Resilience Plan Steering Committee
- Invite regional partners and stakeholders to attend SHLGA meetings and forums to share information on joint priorities
- Maintain up to date information on the SHLGA website
- Host, support, or participate in forums that keep councils informed and encourage collaboration on priorities for the region.

Key Priorities and Projects

2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Scope and launch a regional best practice and innovation forum	Host or support a regional partners forum	Evaluate the effectiveness of regional sharing mechanisms	Host or support a regional partners forum
Post-election engagement with new councils	Training and resources to support a strong culture of collaboration across the region	Training and resources to support a strong culture of collaboration across the region	Measurement and evaluation of regional collaboration progress
Review the SHLGA website and enhance user experience	Implement upgrades to the SHLGA website		
Review and update MOU with RDA - AHFK	Evaluate SHLGA Working Groups		Review Working Group Terms of Reference

Delivery



Coordinating the delivery of services or projects that meet regional needs or advance regional priorities.

SHLGA investigates and delivers targeted regional initiatives where there is clear regional benefit.

We develop and review regional plans and collate research, data and case studies that help progress common solutions to regional challenges.

Key focus areas for coordinated regional delivery are:

- Special Local Roads Program Funding
- Investigating new or expanded models for shared services and coordinated planning and delivery across councils
- Opportunities for resource sharing to address skills shortages across local government regulatory functions
- Projects arising from the Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Regional Transport Strategy.

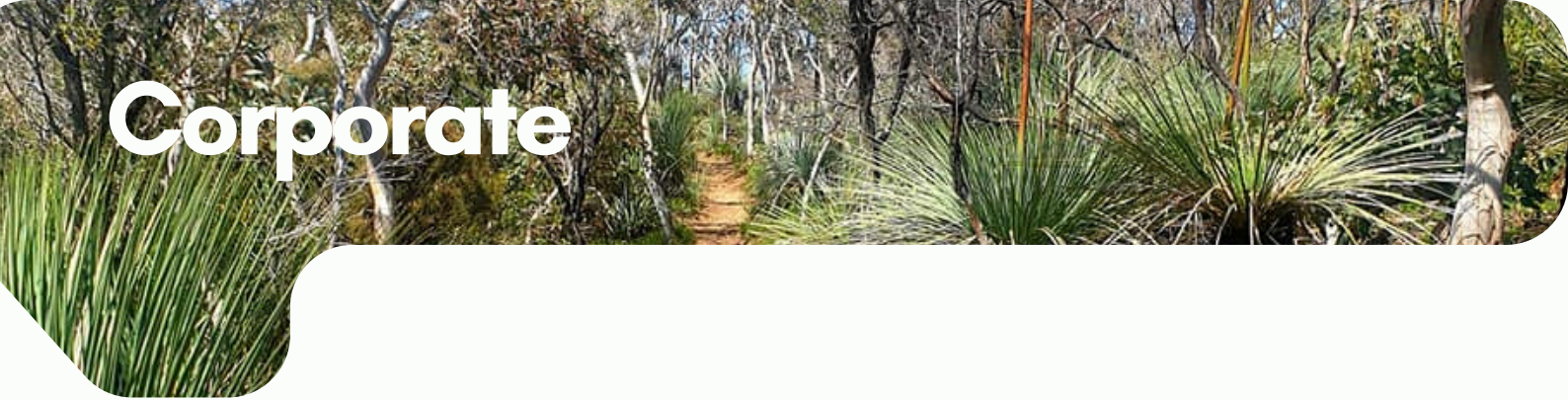


Each year SHLGA will undertake the following activities:

- Monitor and review Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Monitor and review Regional Transport Plan 2023
- Regional prioritisation of special local roads funding
- Scope and deliver projects that respond to shared regional challenges and objectives
- Provide practical support and assistance to councils to progress joint projects

Key Priorities and Projects

2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Investigate and prioritise shared service opportunities	Implementation of findings of shared services investigations	Implementation of findings of shared service investigations	Shared services project evaluation
Prepare new Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan		Biennial review of Regional Public Health Plan	
Minor review of Regional Transport Plan	Minor review of Regional Transport Plan	Commence major review of Regional Transport Plan	Adopt new Regional Transport Plan
ARC Linkages Research Project – Modern Construction Methods	ARC Linkages Research Project – Modern Construction Methods		



Corporate

Achieving best practice in governance and public administration.

SHLGA operates within an open and transparent environment that promotes trust and accountability.

The Corporate function ensures SHLGA operates as a well-governed, accountable and financially sustainable regional subsidiary that can effectively support its member councils and deliver on its strategic priorities. This includes:

- governance and corporate support to the Board and committees
- financial management
- compliance and reporting; and
- communications.

Through strong governance and sound business practices, SHLGA maintains the systems, relationships and organisational capacity needed to represent the interests of the Southern and Hills region and respond to emerging opportunities and challenges.

SHLGA Executive Officer services are delivered by an external contractor on 0.5FTE basis. Corporate Support is provided under a Service Agreement with the City of Victor Harbor on a 0.2FTE basis.



Corporate

Each year SHLGA will undertake the following activities:

- Comply with the requirements of the SHLGA Charter and Local Government Act 1999
- Maintain a suite of contemporary corporate policies
- Transparent reporting to the Board and constituent councils
- Sound management of SHLGA finances.

Key Priorities and Projects

2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Develop new Board Member induction process	Board and council satisfaction survey and value review	Corporate Policies review	Four-Year Charter Review
Appointment of SHLGA Office Bearers		Appointment of SHLGA Office Bearers	

Performance

To ensure transparency, accountability and continuous improvement, SHLGA will report annually on a set of practical performance measures aligned to its three pillars of Advocacy, Sharing and Delivery, together with its corporate governance obligations.

Performance Measure	Annual Target
Formal pre-budget submissions and election strategy engagement delivered	Minimum 2 pre-budget submissions and delivery of scheduled election strategy actions (in applicable years)
Regional advocacy position statements, business cases or major submissions prepared	Minimum 3 substantive advocacy documents per year aligned to the Advocacy Plan
Formal meetings or briefings with Ministers, Shadow Ministers, MPs or senior agency officials	Minimum 6 strategic engagement meetings per year
Advocacy updates provided to constituent councils and stakeholders	Minimum 4 updates per year (quarterly reporting)
Board meetings convened in accordance with Charter	4 Board meetings per year
Regional forums, partner sessions or collaboration activities hosted or supported	Minimum 2 regional engagement activities per year
All Regional Public Health Plan legislative milestones are met	100% of scheduled annual milestones completed or substantially progressed
Projects commenced or progressed in accordance with schedule and budget	All Board-endorsed projects commenced and completed within agreed timeframe and budget
Compliance with Charter, legislative obligations and governance review schedule	100% compliance with Charter and Act obligations

Budget Summary

2026-27 Profit / Loss

	2024/26 Actual	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Budget	Notes
Income				
Subscriptions	141,680	144,980	151,184	1
Grants	40,000	33,000	47,000	2
Investment Income	6,766	5,500	6,700	
Other Income	39,850	32,900	43,300	3 & 4
Total Income	228,296	216,380	248,184	
Expenditure				
Employee costs	42,391	98,521	0	5
Materials, contracts, other expenses	167,992	100,457	245,159	6 & 7
Finance charges	5,700	4,600	3,000	8
Total Expenses	216,083	203,596	248,159	
Net Profit/Loss	12,213	12,784	25	

Notes:

1. Base subscription indexed by 3.5% and special levy calculated at 1% of 2026 elector numbers per council
2. Regional Capacity Building Grant from Local Government Research and Development Scheme
3. Includes once-off Special Levy for new Regional Public Health Plan
4. Includes annual contributions passed on to SA Coastal Councils Alliance
5. New operating model adopted in 2025 - SHLGA now serviced by contractors
6. Reflects new operating model with increased contractor expenses replacing employee costs
7. Increased project activity in 2026/27
8. New audit arrangements in place from 2026/27



adim@shlga.sa.gov.au

0424 795 935

www.shlga.sa.gov.au