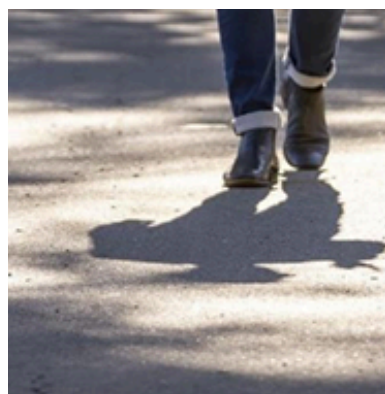
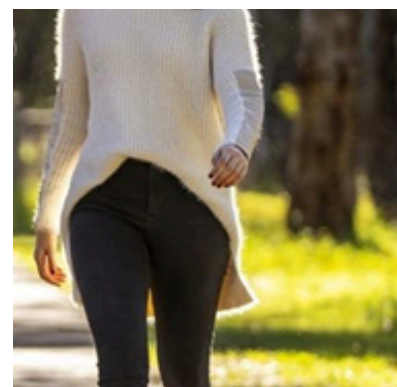
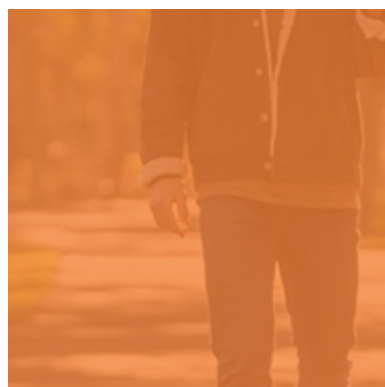
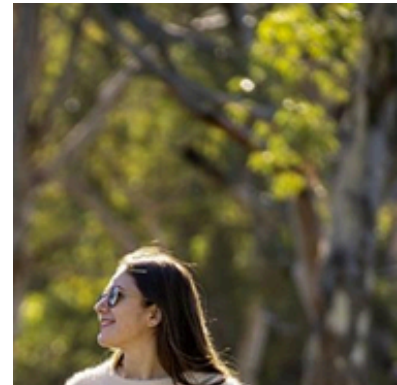
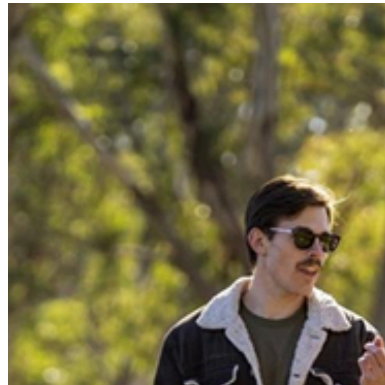
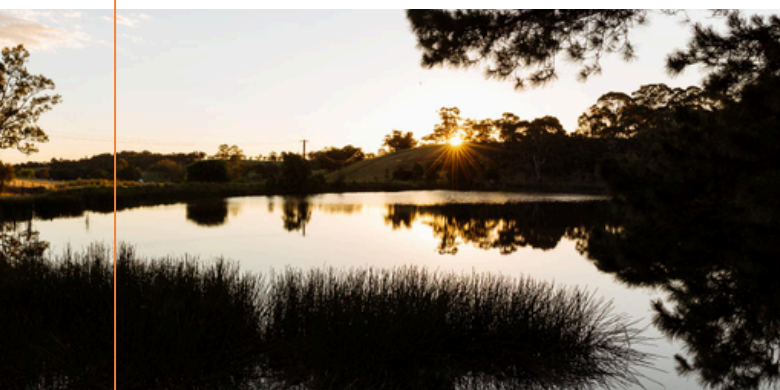


Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

2024-2026 Summary Report

A snapshot of regional action creating healthier, safer, connected and resilient communities.





Introduction

The Southern and Hills Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan brings together six councils around a shared vision:

Healthy, liveable, connected and resilient communities for all.

Under South Australia's Public Health Act 2011, councils are responsible for assessing public health needs and planning for the health and wellbeing of their communities. Adelaide Hills, Alexandrina, Kangaroo Island, Mount Barker, Victor Harbor and Yankalilla councils meet these responsibilities collaboratively through the Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

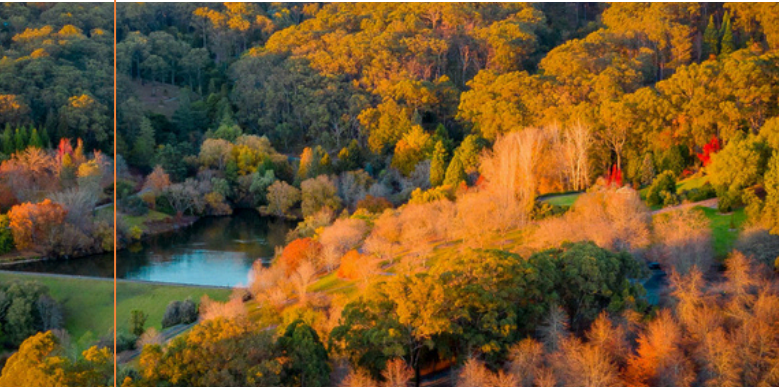
The Act requires councils to report every two years to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing on implementation of their plans. SHLGA has prepared the 2024–26 Biennial Report on behalf of its constituent councils, covering progress from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026.

This Summary Report complements the statutory report. Rather than reproducing every action, it highlights achievements and tells the broader story of how local government contributes to public health across the Southern and Hills region.

Public health is about much more than health services. Where we live, opportunities to connect and be active, resilience to emergencies and climate change, and access to safe and inclusive environments all influence wellbeing. Councils contribute through planning, infrastructure, environmental health, recreation, community development, emergency management and other everyday services.

This snapshot highlights examples from 2024–26 under the Plan's five themes: Promote, Protect, Prepare, Prevent and Progress.

SHLGA acknowledges all council staff who contributed to the preparation of this report.



Our region

The Southern and Hills region stretches from the Adelaide Hills through Mount Barker and the Fleurieu Peninsula to Kangaroo Island. Covering around 8,650 square kilometres and more than 650 kilometres of coastline, it includes growing peri-urban communities, regional centres, rural towns and remote communities.

The region's diversity creates different public health needs, influenced by population growth and ageing, access to services, socioeconomic circumstances and exposure to climate-related risks. Its natural environments, open spaces and strong community networks also provide significant opportunities for active lifestyles and social connection.

Through planning, infrastructure, environmental health, recreation, community development and partnerships, councils help create the conditions for healthy, connected and resilient communities.



Reporting Snapshot

114

plan commitments reported on

84

commitments ongoing

13

commitments completed

9

commitments in-progress

7

commitments deferred

79

commitments identified a delivery partner

39

commitments reported evidence of change or impact





Promote

Stronger communities and healthier environments

The places where people live, work, learn and spend time have a major influence on physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Under this theme, councils are seeking to create communities that are inclusive, accessible, connected and supportive of participation across all stages of life.

The focus is not only on physical infrastructure, but on creating places and opportunities that help people feel connected to their community, participate in local life and maintain their independence. Our Plan specifically recognises the importance of well-designed public spaces, walkable environments, social networks, volunteering and community participation in supporting health and wellbeing.

Southern and Hills councils contribute through:

- parks, reserves, playgrounds and community facilities;
- libraries, community centres and cultural facilities;
- planning and design of streets and public spaces;
- disability access and inclusion planning;
- community development, events and volunteering programs; and
- engagement with communities.

The 2024–26 reporting period provides examples of this work through Universal Design and accessibility initiatives, investment in open space and recreation, volunteering programs and community participation initiatives.



Promote Snapshot

Creating inclusive, connected places and communities

Adelaide Hills Council — Uraidla Playspace

The new Uraidla Playspace was developed through community involvement from concept through to completion.

Alexandrina Council — Recreation, Open Space and Sport Strategy

Council developed its first Recreation, Open Space and Sport Strategy 2026–2036, establishing a long-term framework for equitable and inclusive recreation and open space.

Kangaroo Island Council — Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

A new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2026–2030 was endorsed following consultation with the disability community and other community groups.

Mount Barker District Council — Disability Reference Group
Council established a Disability Reference Group in 2025, bringing people with lived experience of disability directly into Council decision-making.

City of Victor Harbor — Caring Neighbourhood Program

The Program continued to connect socially isolated older residents through around 40 volunteers providing approximately 1,000 hours support each month.

District Council of Yankalilla — Accessible communities

Council improved accessibility through new pathways, accessible public toilet mapping and free hire of an all-terrain accessible chair and beach wheelchair.

Regional collaboration — Universal Design

Across the region, councils continued to embed Universal Design and accessibility into planning, infrastructure and service delivery.





Protect

Protecting communities from public and environmental health risks

Protect is about the essential systems and services that keep communities safe. Much of this work is preventative and largely invisible when it is working well, but it underpins everyday public health.

The region aims to ensure communities are protected from environmental health risks, communicable disease, unsafe food and water, waste and wastewater risks, nuisance and pollution, and the health impacts of emergencies and disasters. Our Plan also recognises that increasingly frequent extreme weather events can create significant physical and mental health impacts, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Southern and Hills councils contribute through:

- food safety inspections and regulation;
- wastewater and onsite wastewater management;
- immunisation programs;
- environmental health monitoring and enforcement;
- waste management and sanitation;
- emergency management and recovery;
- public health information and community education;
- coastal and environmental risk management; and
- collaboration with emergency services and State agencies.

During 2024–26, these responsibilities included routine environmental health services as well as responding to emerging challenges such as the harmful algal bloom and strengthening community preparedness for emergencies.



Protect Snapshot

Strengthening preparedness and responding to new risks

Adelaide Hills Council — Community Support Hubs

Council established 12 Community Support Hubs and the Hills Emergency Resilience Disability Network through its community-led emergency resilience work.

Alexandrina Council — Coastal flood preparedness

Council worked with affected communities to develop a Community Coastal Flood Emergency Plan for Mundoo and the Goolwa Channels.

Kangaroo Island Council — Emergency coordination

Council strengthened emergency preparedness through participation in regional emergency management networks and collaboration with emergency services.

Mount Barker District Council — Climate Risk Assessment

Council completed a Climate Risk Assessment identifying and prioritising 11 climate-related risks to inform future planning and decision-making.

City of Victor Harbor — Coastal monitoring

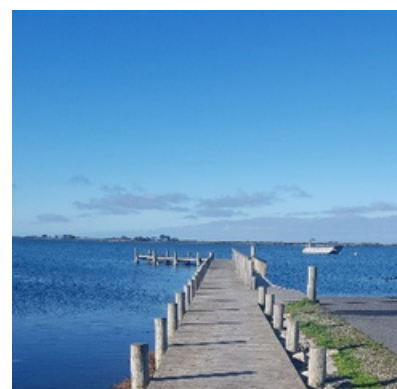
Council continued its coastal monitoring program, building the local evidence base for future coastal adaptation and risk management.

District Council of Yankalilla — Emergency management

Council contributed to Zone Emergency Management planning and provided detailed post-bushfire feedback that informed recommendations on local government's role in emergencies and State support for communities.

Regional collaboration — Emergency preparedness

All six councils participate in regional emergency management arrangements, strengthening coordination and capacity to respond to emergencies and emerging public health risks.





Prepare

Communities resilient to the health impacts of climate change

Prepare recognises that climate change is not only an environmental issue - it is also a public health issue. Extreme heat, bushfire, storms, changing disease risks, pressure on food and water systems and impacts on mental wellbeing can all affect community health.

The region is seeking to build communities that understand these risks, are better prepared to respond and recover, and can adapt over the longer term. Particular attention is needed for people who are more vulnerable to climate impacts, including older people, children, people with existing health conditions and disadvantaged communities.

Southern and Hills councils contribute through:

- climate adaptation and resilience planning;
- emergency preparedness and community resilience programs;
- urban greening, shade and cooling;
- coastal adaptation;
- natural-area and biodiversity management;
- waste and emissions reduction; and
- participation in regional climate partnerships.

A major feature of 2024–26 was the strengthening of the Resilient Hills and Coasts partnership, adoption of the new Regional Climate Action Plan, climate-risk training and continued community-facing adaptation work.



Prepare Snapshot

Building climate-ready communities

Adelaide Hills Council — Community-led resilience

Council completed its Towards Community-Led Emergency Resilience program, strengthening community preparedness for bushfires and other extreme events.

Alexandrina Council — Climate adaptation

Council progressed community education and behaviour-change initiatives to build understanding of climate change adaptation and resilience.

Kangaroo Island Council — Greener townships

Council progressed tree planting and sustainable land-management initiatives supporting township shade, cooling and environmental resilience.

Mount Barker District Council — Aboriginal land management

Council supported Aboriginal leadership and participation in bushfire recovery, cultural burning and land management.

City of Victor Harbor — Climate Agenda 2030

Council continued implementing annual priorities under its Climate Agenda 2030, alongside community climate-awareness and adaptation activities.

District Council of Yankalilla — Greener public spaces

Council reviewed green spaces to reduce lawn areas where appropriate, increase planting and expand in-house propagation of native trees.

Regional collaboration — Regional Climate Action Plan

Resilient Hills and Coasts partners adopted the Regional Climate Action Plan 2025–2030 and renewed their commitment through a new five-year Regional Sector Agreement.





Prevent

Communities empowered for healthy living

Prevent focuses on creating the conditions that help people make healthy choices and reduce the risk of preventable disease and injury.

Our Plan recognises that chronic disease is strongly influenced by factors such as physical inactivity, poor diet, smoking, alcohol use and other lifestyle risks. Councils have an important role in shaping environments and opportunities that make healthy behaviours easier and more accessible.

Southern and Hills councils contribute through:

- walking, cycling and active-transport infrastructure;
- parks, trails, sporting and recreation facilities;
- youth and family programs;
- community gardens and food initiatives;
- recreation and physical-activity programs;
- public health promotion and education; and
- partnerships with schools, sporting clubs and community organisations.
-

During 2024–26, councils invested in active-travel infrastructure, recreation and open-space networks, and programs supporting children, young people and communities to be active and connected.

SHLGA also strengthened regional advocacy for State investment and policy settings that support healthy communities and active transport.



Prevent Snapshot

Creating opportunities for healthier lives

Adelaide Hills Council — Active communities

Council delivered community exercise and active recreation opportunities and continued working with sporting clubs to support healthier club environments.

Alexandrina Council — Stay Connected, Stay Healthy

Around 50 young people participated in the innovative Stay Connected, Stay Healthy program, offering activities including paddling, hiking, geocaching and skateboarding.

Kangaroo Island Council — Community gardens

Community gardens were established in Penneshaw, American River and Parndana, supporting healthy food, outdoor activity and social connection.

Mount Barker District Council — Youth Music Program

Council supported the Youth Music Program through its Local Drug Action Team partnership, with the program continuing beyond its initial grant funding.

City of Victor Harbor — Fleurieu Families

Fleurieu Families delivered early-intervention children and parenting services, including family support, parenting workshops and respectful relationships education.

District Council of Yankalilla — Yankalilla Community Garden

A community garden was established in Yankalilla, supported by Council infrastructure and managed by Fleurieu Environment Centre volunteers, with a seed library and regular education and working bees.

Regional collaboration — Active travel

Councils continued investing in walking, cycling and recreation infrastructure, supported by regional advocacy for active transport and healthy communities.





Progress

Councils, communities and partners working together

Progress is about the systems that make effective public health action possible: strong partnerships, good evidence, shared learning, coordination and regional advocacy.

The Plan recognises that many public health challenges cannot be addressed by councils acting alone. Strong relationships between councils, health organisations, government agencies, community organisations and regional partners help build a more coordinated and consistent approach to health and wellbeing. It also identifies quality data, research, evaluation, communication and information sharing as key enablers of effective public health planning.

Southern and Hills councils contribute through:

- the Regional Public Health Plan Working Group;
- partnerships with health, community and government organisations;
- participation in State and local-government networks;
- identifying and pursuing funding opportunities;
- sharing data, resources and emerging issues;
- collaborating on research and regional projects; and
- monitoring and reporting on community wellbeing.

During 2024–26, the Working Group continued to connect all six councils with LGA South Australia and broader public-health networks. SHLGA also established the SHaRe initiative, progressed the ‘State of the Region’ concept and continued to explore opportunities for joint projects and funding.

Progress Snapshot

Partnerships turning priorities into action

Regional Public Health Plan Working Group

All six councils continued to participate in the regional Working Group, sharing emerging issues, opportunities, information and approaches to public health planning.

Stronger health partnerships

Councils continued to build partnerships with health, community and government organisations to support local programs, improve coordination and respond to changing community needs.

Community and sporting partnerships

Councils worked with sporting clubs, community organisations and volunteers to extend the reach of programs supporting physical activity, inclusion, connection and wellbeing.

Mental health and wellbeing

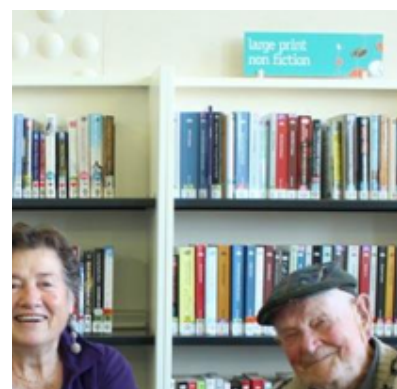
Councils collaborated with community and service partners on mental health and wellbeing initiatives, including targeted programs for young people, farmers and other community groups.

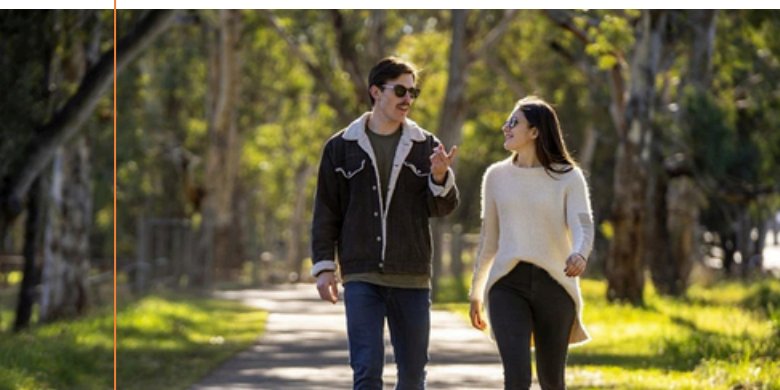
Advocating for better services

Councils continued to advocate for improved access to health, housing, transport and community services, particularly where service gaps affect vulnerable or higher-need communities.

Better evidence for decision-making

Councils shared population health data and local intelligence to better understand changing needs, while SHLGA progressed a broader State of the Region approach to strengthen the regional evidence base.





Looking Ahead

The 2024–26 reporting period has highlighted both the breadth of local government’s contribution to public health and a number of challenges that will shape the region’s next Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan in 2027.

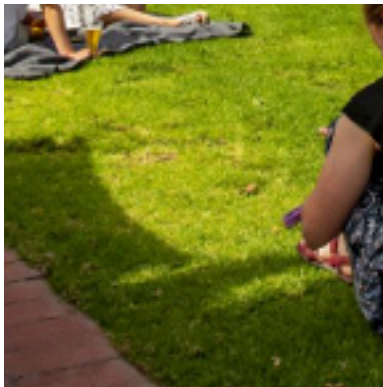
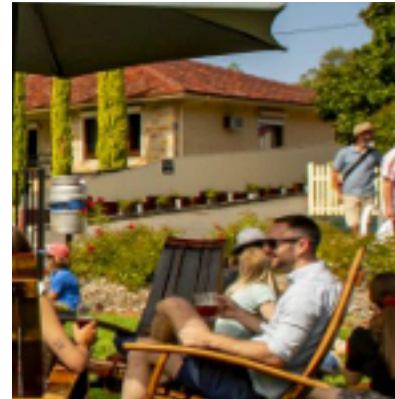
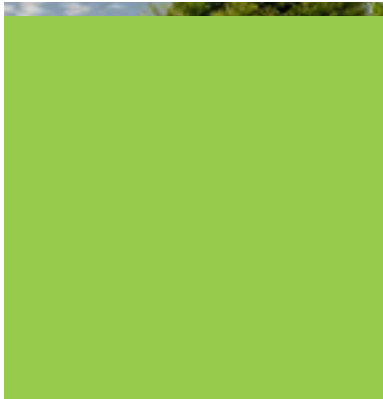
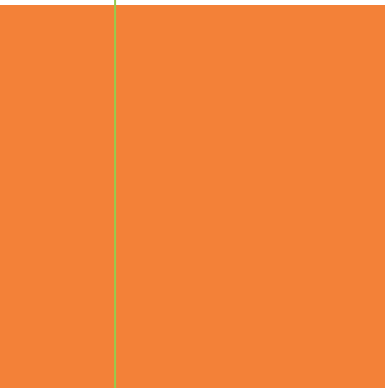
Housing affordability, housing quality and homelessness are placing increasing pressure on community wellbeing, while an ageing population is changing demand for accessible places, services and opportunities to remain healthy, independent and connected. Maintaining social cohesion and community connectedness will also remain important as our communities grow and change.

Some longstanding and complex issues, including hoarding and squalor, continue to require coordinated responses across councils, government, health and community services. At the same time, the harmful algal bloom has demonstrated how quickly new environmental health risks can emerge and affect community health, wellbeing and confidence.

Climate change and increasing exposure to extreme weather will continue to influence how the region plans for resilience and public health emergencies.

As we develop the next Plan, we will also consider how regional collaboration can be made more effective. Limited delivery capacity, reliance on external project funding and gaps in consistent local population-health data have constrained some initiatives.

The 2027 Plan provides an opportunity to reassess our priorities, respond to emerging evidence and focus collective effort on the issues where councils and regional partners can achieve more by working together.



Contact Us

If you would like more information about the Southern and Hills Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, please contact us.

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