

SAROC Annual Business Plan 2023-24

July 2023

Foreword

I have great pleasure in presenting the South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils (SAROC) committee's 2023-24 Annual Business Plan.

Regional councils play an essential role in the liveability, sustainability and wellbeing of regional South Australia and SAROC is a strong, united voice for these councils, representing their shared interests for the benefit of the sector and local communities.

As a committee of the LGA, SAROC supports the LGA Board of Directors to advocate, assist and advance sector issues for regional councils. Working with our partners in the regions, State and Federal Governments, industry bodies and other stakeholders SAROC provides leadership, engagement and capacity building which benefits councils and their communities.

Working within the LGA's strategic framework, SAROC recognises the importance of remaining agile and supporting the LGA Secretariat to balance the delivery of outcomes for the benefit of all members. To assist SAROC has identified 4 strategic priorities that we think are critical to regional communities and which we can support regional councils in multiple, effective ways. These priorities will guide our work over the next year:

1. Liveability
2. Regional housing
3. Regional health
4. Regional skills and workforce

Member councils within the SAROC Regional Grouping have been consulted on the ABP and the objectives and actions that will support our members.

I commend this Annual Business Plan to you and look forward to working with our members and partners to achieve our objectives, while remaining agile enough to deal with new issues as they emerge providing ongoing leadership and support to our regional councils.

Mayor Leon Stephens

Chair of the South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils

Introduction

The object of the Local Government Association (LGA) is to achieve public value through the promotion and advancement of the interests of local government by:

1. Advocating to achieve greater influence for local government in matters affecting councils and communities.
2. Assisting member councils to build capacity and increase sustainability through integrated and coordinated local government.
3. Advancing local government through best practice and continuous improvement.

The South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils (SAROC) is established as a committee of the LGA and is responsible to the LGA for the discharge of its functions. SAROC is a strong, united voice for regional councils and represents their shared interests for the benefit of regional communities.

SAROC supports the LGA Board of Directors to provide advocacy, policy initiation and review, leadership, engagement and capacity building for the benefit of regional South Australian councils and their communities.

The role of SAROC is to provide a forum for regional advocacy, develop policy consideration for the sector and provide strategic advice to the LGA Board, leadership, engagement and capacity building for the SAROC region. The SAROC region is the combined local government area of each LGA Member listed in Appendix 1.

The table below summarises these roles, which will drive its strategic objectives and underpin achievement of its purpose, consistent with the LGA Strategic Management Framework.

Role	SAROC will:
Regional Advocacy	Represent members' interests on issues that matter to all regional councils to the LGA, State and Federal Government and with key stakeholders.
Policy Initiation and Review	Consider policy that is of strategic importance to all regional councils. Review items of business put forward by member councils and advise on policy matters as requested by the LGA.
Leadership	Initiate actions and lead activities that provide benefit to all regional councils. Develop and maintain relationships with the State and Federal Governments.
Engagement and Capacity Building in the Region(s)	Engage with members within the SAROC Regional Grouping and keep them informed of the activities of SAROC. Actively promote communication between members and between members and the LGA.

SAROC Guiding principles:

SAROC has developed the following guiding principles to operate under, we will:

1. Be a strong partner and voice representing the LGAs regional members.
2. Work closely with key stakeholders on matters of joint interest.
3. Prioritise and address issues that are common to all regional members.
4. Carefully consider items of business from any regional member council or items raised independently by SAROC members, for consideration by the LGA Board of Directors or at a General Meeting
5. Collaborate closely with the LGA and Greater Adelaide Regional Organisation of Councils (GAROC).
6. Be nimble, agile and responsive to the needs of regional councils.

Our stakeholders & partners

SAROC recognises that to be successful and deliver value for regional councils on behalf of the LGA Board we, and the LGA Secretariat on our behalf, need to work in close collaboration and engagement with our key stakeholders and partners including:

- Regional councils
- GAROC Committee
- Regional Local Government Associations
- State Government and its agencies
- Federal Government and its agencies
- Regional Development Australia
- Members of Parliament
- Other peak bodies, associations and statutory authorities

As a committee of the LGA, SAROC operates within the LGA Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and prepares an annual plan within that framework. SAROC supports the LGA to 'advocate, assist and advance' the interests of local government.

SAROC Budget

To support the delivery of its Annual Business Plan (ABP), SAROC and GAROC each receive an allocation of \$100,000 from the Local Government Research and Development Scheme. GAROC also receives an additional allocation of \$40,000 in lieu of the funding allocation made to Regional LGAs to enable the delivery of capacity building activities via regional groupings of councils.

The budget/resources allocated to items within the SAROC ABP indicate whether it is a carryover from a previous resolution of SAROC (project underway) or whether it will be approved with the adoption of this ABP.

Terms of Reference

As a committee of the LGA, SAROC operates in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) given effect in January 2020. Accordingly, SAROC will assess its performance against the ToR and include this assessment as part of the annual report provided to the Board by September each year.

There is also a review of the LGA Constitution and ancillary documents underway, including the SAROC ToR. The SAROC committee will contribute to this review as will member councils through the consultation process. This work is imminent and will be significantly undertaken in the 2023-24 financial year.

2023-24 Strategic themes and objectives

In accordance with the LGA Constitution and its terms of reference, SAROC will fulfil its functions in a manner consistent with the 'LGA Strategic Management Framework'. The SAROC annual plan has therefore been developed linking the LGA's strategic objectives outlined in the [LGA Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#), objectives/initiatives identified through the [LGA Advocacy Plan](#) and Policy Manual, and annual planning input from SAROC members, and consultation with member councils.

These priorities will help guide the activities and actions SAROC in 2023-24.

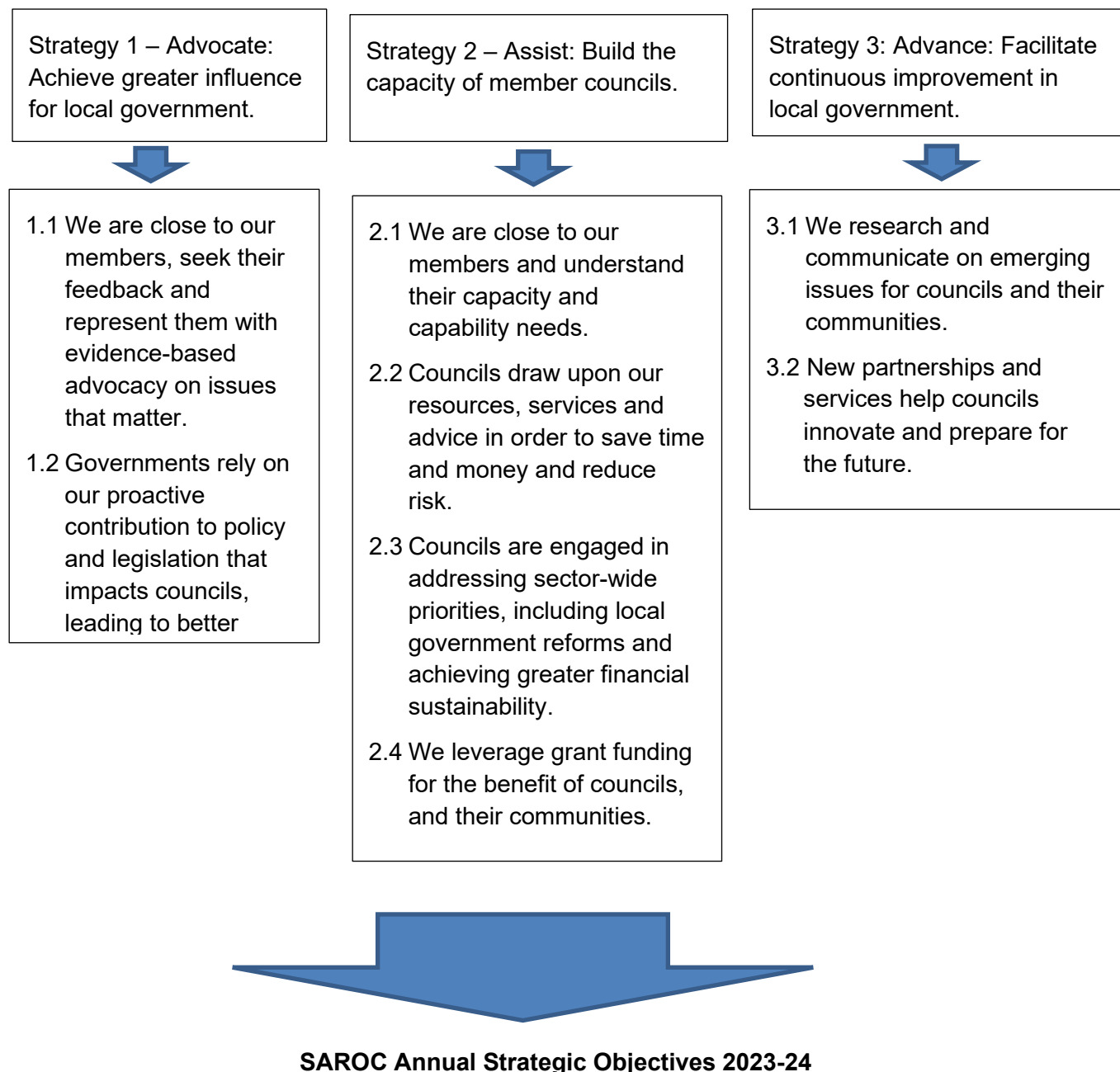
The engagement activities which may be coordinated through SAROC (e.g. workshops, networking, leadership forums) are consistent with the [LGA Communications Strategy 2021-2024](#).

Each of the priorities are interconnected which provides an opportunity to focus on these areas delivering on outcomes that will have a direct, positive benefit for our regional members.

SAROC Priorities	Related Key LGA Strategies from 2021-2025 LGA Strategic Plan	Related Key LGA Outcome from 2021-2025 LGA Strategic Plan
1. Liveability 2. Regional Housing 3. Regional Health 4. Regional skills & workforce	<p>Strategy 1 – Advocate: Achieve greater influence for local government.</p> <p>Strategy 2 – Assist: Build the capacity of member councils.</p> <p>Strategy 3: Advance: Facilitate continuous improvement in local government.</p>	<p>1.1 We are close to our members, seek their feedback and represent them with evidence-based advocacy on issues that matter.</p> <p>1.2 Governments rely on our proactive contribution to policy and legislation that impacts councils, leading to better outcomes for communities.</p> <p>2.1 We are close to our members and understand their capacity and capability needs.</p> <p>2.2 Councils draw upon our resources, services and advice in order to save time and money and reduce risk.</p> <p>2.3 Councils are engaged in addressing sector-wide priorities, including local government reforms and achieving greater financial sustainability</p> <p>2.4 We leverage grant funding for the benefit of councils, and their communities.</p> <p>3.1 We research and communicate on emerging issues for councils and their communities.</p> <p>3.2 New partnerships and services help councils innovate and prepare for the future.</p>

Graphically this can be shown as:

LGA Strategic Plan 2021-2025



SAROC Priorities			
Liveability	Regional Housing	Regional Health	Regional Skills & Workforce

Priority 1: Liveability

Objective 1 – To continue to advocate for increased State and Federal government funds for the maintenance and upgrade of regional roads (Road Safety strategies and Action Plans).

Objective 2 – Advocate for State and Federal Government funding, initiatives and legislation that assists with growth and development of regional South Australia.

Objective 3 - To continue to advocate to Federal/State governments to recognise the specific needs of regional councils when developing and implementing regional economic development strategies and associated policy, programs and commitments that impact on the regions. These needs include a focus on social impacts and improved digital connectivity, infrastructure, access to services and utilities, health, housing and jobs.

Objective 4 – Advocate for State and Federal Government funding to support investment in climate-ready infrastructure to protect against and repair damage from sea-level rise, flooding, fire and extreme weather.

Objective 5 – To continue to advocate that South Australia’s planning system reflects leading practice and that the Planning and Design Code and associated instruments deliver quality planning and design outcomes that improve the amenity, liveability, social connectivity and sustainability of communities.

Objective 6 – To continue to advocate to Federal/State governments for the decentralisation of South Australia’s population to support regional South Australia. Successful regions make successful states.

Objective 7 – Pursue opportunities to work collaboratively with government agencies and other organisations with aligned goals and values on projects, programs and campaigns that will assist local government action to mitigate the social, economic, and physical impacts of climate change.

Actions	Timing	Budget / Resources	Link to SAROC role
1. Supporting advocacy via ALGA to increase federal Financial Assistance Grants and secure long-term certainty of supplementary road funding for SA.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy
2. Incorporate advocacy for increased State Government funding for the maintenance and	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy

upgrade of safe and high-quality regional roads into LGA's State Budget submissions.			
3. Investigate Native Vegetation Act 1991 (SA), Native Vegetation Regulations 2017 and relevant guidelines to consider effect on councils particularly from road safety/function and cost perspective (as per SAROC resolution 2 March 2023).	June 2024	\$35,000 proposed	Leadership Regional advocacy Policy initiation and review
4. Finalisation and implementation of LGA Model Waste Documents (suite of tendering materials).	December 2023	LGA Secretariat - \$35,000 carryover from 2022-23	Leadership
5. Advocate for specific funding commitments from State and Federal Government that assist regional councils and communities to recover from centralisation of SA population and support decentralisation initiatives.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Regional Advocacy
6. Appointment of a LGA Climate Change Policy Officer to provide guidance to member councils and coordinate access to resources to understand climate risks and the prioritisation of risk reduction action.	Ongoing	\$120,000 R&D Application – awaiting approval \$50,000 from SAROC for 2023-24 (joint with GAROC)	Leadership Regional advocacy
7. Incorporate funding requests in State and Federal Budget submissions for more, well-placed mobile phone towers and improved digital connectivity – fast and reliable NBN / internet and batteries.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy
8. Liaise with Federal and State Government, Regional Development Australia Boards and key regional stakeholders to support regional	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy

economies and advocate for public service representation in regional communities.			
9. Support member councils with implementation of Regional Plans.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership
10. Assist councils with funding submissions on priority Mobile Phone Blackspot funding.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership
11. Collaborate with State Govt on opportunities created by the decarbonisation of the economy and the Local Government sector's role (forms part of State-Local Government Economic Development Accord).	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy
12. Advocacy and support for member councils with the implementation of South Australia's Regional Development Strategy.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional Advocacy

Strategic Priority 2: Regional housing			
Objective 1 - Develop roadmap with State and Federal Governments for increasing regional housing supply that includes better incentives for private development in regional areas and alternative funding models for affordable housing projects and associated infrastructure, including a process to secure government funds.			
Objective 2 – Advocate for national plan to end homelessness by 2030.			
Actions	Timing	Budget / Resources	Link to SAROC role
1. Ongoing advocacy to the Federal Government including their National Housing Supply and Affordability Council targeted at ensuring South Australian councils and stakeholders receive appropriate grant funding and concessions/subsidies to increase housing supply.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Regional Advocacy Leadership
2. Continue to lobby for State Govt / Local Govt / Industry forum to include development of response to statewide housing supply and affordability.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Regional Advocacy Leadership
3. Liaise with Office for Regional Housing (ORH), and support member councils, on wider regional housing advocacy/assistance initiatives to support increased housing development.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership
4. Continue to work with ORH and council staff to assist with collation and format of data on regional housing shortages (supply and demand factors).	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership
5. Ongoing collaboration with the State Government and the South Australian Alliance to End Homelessness through the Local Government Homelessness Network.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat Assisted by \$20,000 from GAROC	Leadership

Priority 3: Regional health

Objective 1 – Continue to advocate to the Federal and State Governments for the provision of improved health services in regional areas.

Objective 2 – Establish a formal role for the sector to shape state-wide and community-based initiatives to better address medical workforce shortages in regional areas.

Objective 3– Advocate for improved and equitable primary health services in regional Australia to attract and retain General Practitioners and so there is less reliance on local government intervention (front-line medical services) to detriment of preventative health activities.

Objective 4 – Secure additional State Government investment to provide ongoing sustainable and equitable funding for councils to deliver immunisation services.

Objective 5 – Continue to support councils with capability building for community wellbeing in alignment with LGA/Wellbeing - SA Public Health Partnership Authority Agreement.

Actions	Timing	Budget / Resources	Link to SAROC role
1. Advocate for measures to improve regional access to primary health care services with consideration given to measures included in the Regional Health Workforce toolkit.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy
2. Development and delivery of learning sessions, tools and resources, informed and co-designed with councils, advice and support to councils and State Government regarding community wellbeing, in partnership with Wellbeing SA.	To June 2024	Co-funded by Wellbeing SA and LGA (R&D)	Leadership Regional advocacy Policy initiation and review
3. Coordinate Early Childhood funding and support – including Grants, advocacy on issues arising from Royal Commission on Early Childhood.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy

4. Advocacy through new Service Level Agreement and updating MoU with State Government – review of school-based immunisation funding and models.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy
5. Monitor outcomes of Australian Government’s review of Medicare system and scope potential advocacy opportunities through State and Federal Government policy reforms.	June 2024	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy Policy initiation and review
6. Lobbying for State Government leadership to provide ongoing operational support to ensure an effective response to hoarding and squalor in SA.	June 2024	LGA Secretariat - \$30,000 Carryover from 2022-23	Regional advocacy

Priority 4: Regional skills & workforce

Objective 1 – Advocate and implement strategies to support the Local Government sector with addressing skills and capability needs.

Objective 2 - Establish networks and relationships with education sector to raise awareness of local government careers and education hub options.

Objective 3 – Establish networks and relationships with industry training providers to inform integrated solutions and advocacy to address skills shortages in regional areas.

Objective 4 – Establish a formal role for the sector to shape state-wide and community-based initiatives to better address medical workforce shortages in regional areas.

Objective 5 – Collaborate with State Government to build Climate Risk Capacity in regional councils to increase skills, knowledge and capacity for councils to take local action on emission reductions and adaptation strategies.

Actions	Timing	Budget / Resources	Link to SAROC role
1. Support councils with strategies including workforce planning, remuneration benchmarking for critical roles and local-government specific training programs.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy
2. Advocate for funding for and assist to coordinate or facilitate regional skills showcase as pilot for potential rolling program of events across regional SA.	Ongoing	Subject to funding	Leadership
3. Collaborate with State Government and industry groups on guidance and training for councils to better understand carbon accounting, carbon reduction planning, offsetting, and procuring carbon neutral products and services (focus on high emissions services like waste management and road building and maintenance).	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Policy initiation and review

4. Advocate for an investigation into the benefits of establishing (or extending) the <u>Rural Workforce Agency Victoria</u> model to South Australia.	Ongoing	LGA Secretariat	Leadership Regional advocacy
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Strategic and Annual Plan Implementation and Review

Under SAROC's Terms of Reference, the Committee is required to develop an Annual Business Plan (ABP) which supports the delivery of the Strategic Plan and present it to the Board of Directors for approval by June each year.

In accordance with the LGA Constitution and structure of the SAROC as a committee of the LGA, the Strategic Plan is that of the LGA.

SAROC will assess its performance against the ABP each quarter; and provide an Annual Report to the LGA Board of Directors by September each year summarising its performance against the ABP strategic objectives and actions.

The SAROC 2023-24 ABP provides the specific actions against which the activities of SAROC may be monitored.

Appendix 1

List of Regional Groupings of Members within SAROC

Regional Grouping of Members	Members
Southern & Hills Councils	<p>Alexandrina Council</p> <p>Mount Barker District Council</p> <p>City of Victor Harbor</p> <p>District Council of Yankalilla</p> <p>Kangaroo Island Council</p>
Legatus Councils	<p>Adelaide Plains Council</p> <p>The Barossa Council</p> <p>Barunga West Council</p> <p>Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council</p> <p>Copper Coast Council</p> <p>Regional Council of Goyder</p> <p>Light Regional Council</p> <p>District Council of Mount Remarkable</p> <p>Northern Areas Council</p> <p>District Council of Orreroo Carrieton</p> <p>District Council of Peterborough</p> <p>Wakefield Regional Council</p> <p>Yorke Peninsula Council</p> <p>The Flinders Ranges Council</p>
Eyre Peninsula Councils	<p>District Council of Ceduna</p> <p>District Council of Cleve</p> <p>District Council of Elliston</p> <p>District Council of Franklin Harbor</p> <p>District Council of Kimba</p> <p>District Council of Streaky Bay</p> <p>District Council of Tumby Bay</p> <p>Wudinna District Council</p> <p>District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula</p> <p>City of Port Lincoln</p>

Limestone Coast Councils	District Council of Grant Kingston District Council City of Mount Gambier Naracoorte Lucindale Council District Council of Robe Tatiara District Council Wattle Range Council
Murraylands and Riverland Councils	District Council of Loxton Waikerie Mid Murray Council District Council of Karoonda East Murray Coorong District Council Southern Mallee District Council Berri Barmera Council Renmark Paringa Council The Rural City of Murray Bridge
Spencer Gulf Cities	Port Augusta City Council Port Pirie Regional Council City of Whyalla

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