



Media Release.

Fast-growing Southern and Hills region still waiting for 'Community-Ready' investment

The 2026–27 South Australian State Budget was, as anticipated, focused on delivering previously announced commitments from the March State Election.

While the Southern and Hills Local Government Association (SHLGA) welcomes several positive investments across the region, the Budget represents a missed opportunity to address the infrastructure and service pressures facing one of South Australia's fastest growing communities and its most economically productive region.

SHLGA's pre-budget advocacy focused on securing investment in enabling infrastructure, regional transport connections, community facilities, workforce development and services required to support population growth and economic activity.

SHLGA Deputy President Mayor Darryl Houston said councils across the region continue to face growing demand for roads, community facilities, transport connections, recreation infrastructure, workforce development and essential services.

"While there are several welcome initiatives in this Budget, there remains a significant gap between the pace of growth occurring in our region and the level of investment needed to ensure communities remain liveable, connected and prosperous," Mayor Houston said.

"Community-ready growth funding remains one of SHLGA's highest advocacy priorities. Growth should be accompanied by the infrastructure and services needed to support residents, businesses and visitors."

The Budget does include several initiatives that align with SHLGA advocacy priorities and will benefit Southern and Hills communities, including:

- \$80 million over five years to upgrade the Adelaide Road and Hawthorn Road intersection in Mount Barker.
- \$25.5 million over four years to construct and operate a new multi-trade vocational training workshop at the TAFE SA Mount Barker campus.
- \$7.5 million for the acquisition of Mundoo Island, Ewe Island and Long Island to expand national park areas and strengthen environmental resilience across the Murray Mouth.
- \$800,000 over two years to support the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board's feral cat eradication program.
- \$1.2 million in 2026–27 to improve the Heysen Trail through land acquisition near Cudlee Creek and infrastructure upgrades at Flinders Chase National Park.
- \$5 million over three years to regional landscape boards to support river and waterway restoration, ecosystem regeneration and habitat protection.





Southern & Hills
Local Government Association

E. admin@shlga.sa.gov.au

W. www.shlga.sa.gov.au

T. 0424 795 935

- \$1 million over two years to increase community awareness of lithium battery disposal and recycling pathways.

The Association will continue to advocate for a dedicated community-ready growth funding approach that recognises the unique challenges facing rapidly growing peri-urban and regional communities.

ENDS

Media Contact:

Lisa Teburea

Executive Officer

Southern and Hills Local Government Association

0424 795 935

