Draft

City Adelaide

Community Wellbeing Strategy

'A Place to Thrive'

February 2026

Contents

Our Vision 4

Our Principles 4

Our Goals 4

What is Community Wellbeing? 5

City Data 7

Community Data 8

Our Role in Community Wellbeing 11

Goals and Priorities 13

Priorities for Goal One: People feel welcome and connected 15

Priorities for Goal Two: People are active and healthy 18

Priorities for Goal Three: People can shape their community 22

Priorities for Goal Four: People can adapt and recover 24

Priorities for Goal Five: People keep learning throughout their lives 28

Priorities for Goal Six: People feel safe where they live, work and spend time 31

Priority Groups 36

Implementation 37

Monitoring and Learning 37

References 37

Introduction

Adelaide / Tarntanya is the Capital City and the cultural, civic and commercial heart of South Australia. Built on the traditional lands of the Kaurna people with a rich and deep Aboriginal heritage, the current layout of our City was designed by Colonel William Light in 1837. The plan for Adelaide proposed an inspired idea: an active city centre and an abundance of open space for our community with the River Torrens / Karrawirra Parri at its heart.

City of Adelaide is known for being progressive, resilient, bold and enterprising. The trailblazing Adelaide spirit has seen us withstand the times of global social and economic disruption, and emerge with a reputation for being safe, liveable, walkable and green. As South Australia's economic centre, Adelaide is surrounded by the nationally listed Park Lands and is Australia's Festival Capital - the nation's first and only, UNESCO City of Music.

Located within a metropolitan region of 1.4 million people, we are a capital city of almost 30,000 people with an ambition to grow toward 50,000 residents by 2036.

Our growing population will underpin our city's economic vitality and the need to support community wellbeing. To ensure success, we must: prioritise social wellbeing; create inclusive and accessible spaces; facilitate learning and recreational experiences; foster community resilience and participation; and manage environmental sustainability. This will help address potential challenges quickly and effectively to build a resilient and healthy community.

Our city in the future will be a strong interconnected collection of unique neighbourhoods and precincts which offer diverse local experiences and that promote social connectivity by making sure our streets are lively and accessible, and putting people and nature first when we design our public spaces.

We aspire to strengthen Adelaide's reputation as one of the world's most liveable cities. We are leveraging our past and looking to the future to grow an exceptional Capital City that is vibrant, connected and inclusive and where people who live, work and visit are supported to thrive across all life stages.

Council invests in initiatives, programs, projects and partnerships that support the health and wellbeing of our community above and beyond our core public health responsibilities, such as waste management and food safety regulation.

Our Vision

A vibrant, connected and inclusive city, where people who live, work and visit are supported to thrive across all life stages.

Our Principles

- Empowerment, self-determination, inclusion, social justice, capacity-building, partnerships and active participation in civic life.
- Strengthen social capital and social infrastructure
- Build resilience through people and place
- Advance a wellbeing economy for current and future generations.

Our Goals

The Strategy outlines six goals that reflect local government's role in wellbeing and health, as well as the City of Adelaide's unique population profile, opportunities and challenges.

Our goals will guide investment and action across Community Services, including but not limited to Community Planning and Development, Community Safety, Arts, Culture and Events, Library Services and Sport and Recreation.

Our goals are:

- Goal One: People feel welcome and connected
- Goal Two: People are active and healthy
- Goal Three: People can shape their community
- Goal Four: People can adapt and recover
- Goal Five: People keep learning throughout their lives
- Goal Six: People feel safe where they live, work and spend time.

What is Community Wellbeing?

Community Wellbeing is a holistic concept reflected in the conditions that allow individuals, families, and groups to thrive. It spans social, environmental, economic, physical, mental, emotional, cultural, and spiritual dimensions, and is deeply connected to a sense of belonging and connection to the natural world.

Consultation feedback highlighted that, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, definitions of wellbeing must recognise strong connections to community and culture. In response, this document also adopts the following definition from the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Organisation (1979).

> *Aboriginal health does not (just) mean the physical wellbeing of an individual, but refers to the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community…Health care services should strive to achieve this (whole-of-life) state where every individual is able to achieve their full potential as human beings and must bring about the total wellbeing of their communities.*

Wellbeing and health are closely linked. Our Strategy recognises this and has a focus on the social determinants of health, including:

(1) Socioeconomic position – educational attainment, occupation and income
(2) Early life – healthy physical development and emotional support
(3) Social exclusion – social disadvantage and lack of resources, opportunity, participation and skills
(4) Social capital – benefits obtained from the links that bind and connect people within and between groups
(5) Employment and work – participation in quality work is health-protective, instilling self-esteem and a positive sense of identity, while also providing the opportunity for social interaction and personal development
(6) Housing – safe – affordable and secure housing is associated with better health, which in turn impacts on people's participation in work, education and the community. It also affects parenting and social and familial relationships.
(7) Residential environment - the residential environment has an impact on health equity through its influence on local resources, behaviour and safety. Communities and neighbourhoods that ensure access to basic goods and services are socially cohesive which promote physical and psychological wellbeing; and encourages protection of the natural environment.[i]

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (WHO 1946). This definition recognises that health is multi-dimensional, and a person’s health is linked to

their wellbeing. For example, a person may have positive wellbeing in part, because they have good physical and mental health and timely access to quality, affordable health services and support.



Image: Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2021-2025, adapted from The Dahlgren-Whitehead rainbow (1991)



Image: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on Social and Emotional Wellbeing adapted from Gee et al,. (2014)

City Data

Our community is vibrant and dynamic, with almost 30,000 residents and 400,000 daily city visitors. The Adelaide Park Lands welcome 10 million visitors annually. Our resident base is diverse, with 45% of our residents born overseas and 36% speaking a language other than English. Adelaide is also home to the young and young-at-heart. Nearly half of our residents are aged 18 to 34 and one in five have chosen to spend their later years (65 Years +) living in the city. Our demographic profile creates a unique mix of students, early-career professionals, and older residents, each with different housing and service needs and suggests that our city acts as a demographic entry point, facilitating movement from within Adelaide and SA, interstate and overseas.

The City of Adelaide is also home to over 12,000 businesses and contributes close to 18% of the state's economic value. Financial and insurance services; professional, scientific and technical services; and public administration and safety form the city's three largest industries in terms of economic contribution. Adelaide is also the international gateway for migration and education in South Australia.

At a glance.....	**Housing...**	**Diversity...**
29,118 residents (2% of Greater Adelaide)	Median house price: $1.22 million (Greater Adelaide: $880,000)	45% of residents were born overseas (27.6% in Greater Adelaide). Top countries of birth include China, United Kingdom and India
12,717 local businesses (10.2% of Greater Adelaide)	Median weekly rent: $680 per week (Greater Adelaide: $620 per week)	45,978 international students studying in SA (Jan-Sept 2025) across Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students.
172,652 local workers (22.1% of Greater Adelaide)	53% high-density housing	43% of residents are young adults 20–35 years (21% in Greater Adelaide)
4.1% population growth (highest in South Australia)	41% lone person households - particularly among older people and international students	15% of residents are older adults 65+ years (19% in Greater Adelaide)
Residents aged 15 and over span the full income spectrum, reflecting both affluence and financial vulnerability: 30.8% are in the highest income quartile, 29.3% in the lowest.	1,422 households have an unmet need for affordable housing in Adelaide (12.8% of all households, compared to 4.8% for Greater Adelaide)	High rates of mobile populations (students, short-term renters, tourists). Between 2016 and 2021, 73.9% of the population turned over

Community Data

The City of Adelaide regularly collects sentiment and service data to better understand our Community. Our Resident Survey, Business Survey and City User Profile (CUP) surveys form the core components of our community data collection:

Goal One: People feel welcome and connected
In terms of community, 75% of residents feel confident they could rely on family, friends, or neighbours for help when needed, and 57% trust people in their neighbourhood. However, only 53% of residents feel a strong sense of belonging to their local community. Overall, 68% of residents perceive their community as either "Very inclusive or Somewhat inclusive," indicating a generally positive view of inclusivity within local communities. This perception is consistent across gender, age, and region. (2024 Resident Survey) Engagement through Sport: Watching sports in the City of Adelaide is a popular activity, with 35% of respondents engaging, especially among city workers. Men were more likely than women to participate in sports and recreational activities, with a total of 46% compared to 32%. A similar pattern emerges by country of birth, with Australian-born respondents more likely to watch sports (37%) than those born overseas (30%). Income levels also play a role; those with a household income of $150k or more were far more likely to watch sports in the City of Adelaide (42%) compared to those earning $75k or less (24%). (CUP 2025)

Goal Two: People are active and healthy
A majority of residents (54%) rate their health as "Excellent" or "Very Good." Physical activity is common, with residents averaging between 3.4 to 4.7 days per week. When asked about various aspects of their lives, residents generally felt positive, rating the worthwhileness of their lives at an average of 7.1/10, their happiness at 7.0/10, and life satisfaction at 6.7/10. Those over 40 were more likely to agree with these statements, particularly those aged 65-74, who rated these aspects the highest at 8.4, 8.0, and 8.1, respectively. Residents generally exhibited low levels of anxiety, with 16% reporting no anxiety at all. However, those under 40, especially those aged 18-24 (5.1/10), were more likely to feel anxious the day before participating in the survey compared to the average of 3.9/10. While individuals aged 18-24 provided the lowest scores across all statements, this difference is not significant compared to other age groups. (2024 CoA Resident Survey) The City as a Health Hub: One-third of respondents (33%) reported visiting the City of Adelaide for health-related services. Medical appointments were a key reason for visiting the city, particularly for those aged 50 and above, with 37% reporting such visits. This trend was even stronger among individuals with a disability, with nearly half (46%) having attended appointments in the past year. (CUP 2025)

Goal Three: People can shape their community
The 2024 Resident Survey shows that 43% of residents are satisfied with how the City of Adelaide communicates with them, with a further 46% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This suggests a strong foundation to build on, alongside opportunities to strengthen engagement and reach. Residents value the City's website and social media channels as user-friendly and informative, with Instagram in particular performing strongly. Email communications are also viewed positively for their professionalism and timeliness. These findings indicate opportunities to further improve how residents feel informed about Council activities, particularly among older residents and in areas where satisfaction is lower. At the time of the survey, 40% of respondents agreed that they felt informed about the work undertaken by the City of Adelaide. Since then, Council has taken significant steps to strengthen communication and engagement, including the launch of the new *Our Adelaide* platform and the endorsement of the Community Engagement Charter in December 2025.

Goal Four: People can adapt and recover
In the City of Adelaide, 19% of the population reported doing some form of voluntary work in 2021. This was greater than the proportion of Greater Adelaide (15.5%). Note that volunteer numbers for the 2021 Census declined in many parts of Australia due to lockdowns and COVID-19 distancing measures. In 2024/25, the City of Adelaide engaged 260 volunteers who collectively contributed over 14,500 hours across 13 volunteer programs. Their contributions translated to a dollar value of over $733,500. 70% of the City of Adelaide volunteers reside outside the LGA. 93% of 2024 Volunteer Survey respondents reported high or very high levels of wellbeing connected to their volunteering.

Goal Five: People keep learning throughout their lives
Residents expressed interest in more offerings at libraries, particularly technology workshops (42%), arts and creativity programs (40%), and book clubs (38%). Events for children (25%) and one-on-one tutoring (16%) are also in demand, indicating a desire for a broader range of activities. Community centres also play a key role, with 19% of residents recently visiting one. There is strong interest in more wellbeing and fitness programs (52%), language classes (45%), and social clubs (42%). Cooking classes (42%) and arts activities (41%) are also popular, highlighting areas where community centres could expand their offerings. (2024 Resident Survey) Residents and students are most likely to visit City of Adelaide libraries, with 36% of resident responders and 39% of student respondents stating they have visited a City Library in the last 12 months. (CUP 2025)

Goal Six: People feel safe where they live, work and spend time
Libraries are highly trusted, with 91% of residents viewing them as reliable public spaces. Although 78% of people agree that libraries promote a sense of community and 71% of residents feel that libraries foster a sense of belonging, these findings indicate that there is still room for improvement in these areas. 75% of residents feel that the city is welcoming to people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and 74% agree that the city's parks and open spaces are well-maintained. While the majority of residents feel positively about the city, the 2024 Resident Survey identifies opportunities to further strengthen safety, effectiveness, and communication. For example, 65% of residents feel safe using public spaces, and 54% believe the Council is effectively revitalising City precincts. These insights provide a clear focus for ongoing improvements to ensure all residents feel secure and confident in the Council's initiatives. Perceptions of safety varied widely depending on the time of day, with 89% of city users feeling safe during the day, dropping to just 17% between 1am and 8am. Women, older individuals, and people with disabilities reported the lowest perceptions of safety at night. Suggestions for improving safety included better street lighting, increased police presence, and improved public space management, alongside calls for community engagement and social support to address issues such as homelessness and alcohol-related disturbances (CUP 2025).

Our Role in Community Wellbeing

This Strategy has been developed in a time of change and uncertainty for our city and community – the post-pandemic environment, inflation forecasts, housing and cost of living crisis, social isolation, international democratic upheaval and climate change are all impacting our community. Over the next decade, our population is expected to grow and become more diverse. Health, wellbeing, equity and inclusion will continue to play important roles in supporting a changing population. We also recognise that priority groups experience these challenges differently, often facing compounded barriers to wellbeing due to factors such as income, cultural background, language, disability, gender identity, and age. Intersectionality reminds us that these overlapping identities can intensify disadvantage, meaning tailored and inclusive approaches are essential to ensure equitable outcomes for all.

Council recognises the important role we play as part of a wider community wellbeing and health ecosystem. We work with other levels of government, community organisations, and industry to shape our places and spaces, deliver programs and services, and support inclusive, thriving communities.

Our role is broader than service delivery — we are also a regulator, educator, advocate, and partner. Through our policies, programs, partnerships, and placemaking efforts, we can positively impact community wellbeing and health.



Image: City of Adelaide Roles in Community Wellbeing

Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities in the Strategy are designed to build on our community's strengths and respond to local and global trends and community feedback. While attributed to one goal, the priorities contribute to all the goals. Goals and priorities are ranked equally.

Goal	Statement	Priority	Priority	Priority
Goal One: People feel welcome and connected	We will create opportunities for everyone to participate in community life, build strong connections, and reduce isolation.	Promote housing solutions that strengthen community wellbeing	Foster connection and inclusion for international students	Enable community initiatives through grant funding
Goal Two: People are active and healthy	We will provide and support accessible spaces for participation in programs and events that encourage movement, play, and recreation for people of all ages, abilities and means.	Promote inclusive participation through low-cost opportunities	Maximise the availability and use of community facilities	Support participation in physical activity for health and wellbeing
Goal Three: People can shape their community	We will support people to contribute their cultural knowledge and lived experience, engage in	Foster community leadership and capacity building	Establish a Lived Experience Workforce	Partner with the community to co-design services and programs

	decision-making, and shape outcomes that affect them.			
Goal Four: People can adapt and recover	We will strengthen people's ability to respond to challenges, support each other during difficult times, and build long-term resilience.	Increase access to safe, nutritious and affordable food	Recognise and support the contribution of volunteers	Foster connected, resilient and thriving neighbourhoods
Goal Five: People keep learning throughout their lives	We will provide accessible learning opportunities, programs, and resources that enable people to develop skills, knowledge, and confidence at any age.	Build skills and provide resources to engage in a digital world	Encourage creativity and resourcefulness through making and repairing	Celebrate diverse cultures and artistic expression in the community
Goal Six: People feel safe where they live, work and spend time	We will create and maintain safe, welcoming, and accessible places and spaces, while promoting community awareness and safety initiatives.	Ensure community centres and libraries are accessible, well-equipped and responsive to community needs	Implement initiatives that prevent gender-based violence and support survivors	Facilitate healthy environments that support physical, social and mental wellbeing

Priorities for Goal One: People feel welcome and connected

We will create opportunities for everyone to participate in community life, build strong connections, and reduce isolation.

Priority	Where we are	Where we want to be	Our role
Promote housing solutions that strengthen community wellbeing	Adelaide is ranked in the top 10 most unaffordable housing markets in the world. Many people who arrive in the City of Adelaide as international students, refugees, or asylum seekers stay in specialist or supported accommodation and are unable to remain in the city, even though they enjoy all that the city has to offer.	A city that supports people to stay across the life-course by offering affordable rentals, affordable housing, and accessible housing for people with disability.	Facilitate, partner and advocate – We will influence supply as a way of shifting affordability in the long term. This includes, through partnerships, innovation in supply, adapting existing buildings and leading by example on Council-led projects with a minimum standard of sustainability, community, accessibility and affordability outcomes.
Foster connection and inclusion for international students	South Australia welcomed 45,978 international students between January and September 2025 (Australian Government Department of Education, 2025). The students are generally distributed across three key education segments: Higher Education (HE), Vocational Education and Training (VET), and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS). Adelaide attracts international students from over 130 countries, with the largest cohorts from India, China, Nepal, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Bangladesh, alongside a growing presence of	A welcoming study destination, where all international students, regardless of institution, visa type, background, or life stage, can access equitable, culturally safe information and support to actively participate in community life.	Deliver, facilitate, partner, and advocate - As well as delivering programs and services that support international student wellbeing, we will facilitate forums that help build understanding of the international student experience, led by lived experience, and advocate for investment in international student wellbeing.

	students from Colombia and other Latin American nations. 40,000 students from over 130 countries chose to live and study in Adelaide in 2025/26.		
Enable community initiatives through grant funding	The Community Grants Program has funds available for distribution across two streams: Arts and Culture and Community Impact, and two categories: Major and Quick Response. Community Grants are in high demand, with 177 applications received in 2024/25. A 76% decrease in the funding available in the Community Grants Program since 2022/23, resulting from budget repair, has impacted the applicants' success rate, with 70 applications funded in 2024/25. This success rate is 15% lower than the 2022/23 rate.	We want to be a city that maintains a robust grants program capable of responding to rising demand and supporting arts, recreation, sport, culture, and community initiatives at a meaningful scale.	Deliver and partner – In addition to increasing our commitment to community grants, we will partner with other levels of government and sector partners to expand the funding available for community groups and organisations, supporting solutions aligned with community development principles.

Case Study:

Trees for Life: *Regenerate Adelaide* in the Adelaide Park Lands.





Images: Participants of Regenerate Adelaide

Delivered by Trees for Life and supported through the City of Adelaide Community Grants Program, Regenerate Adelaide is a free intergenerational and intercultural program for city residents over 55 years and international students. This annual event series offers monthly nature-based group activities in the Adelaide Park Lands (Tuthangga and Nanu Wana) and surrounding natural spaces, promoting wellbeing through social and nature connections.

I have been an avid bush-carer but am now inflicted with a genetic ataxia which has prevented me from walking long distances. A friend introduced me to the Regenerate project, and have found it enormously helpful, both for maintaining my mental equilibrium and for the opportunities to gain new knowledge. I also appreciate the opportunities to talk with other folk who are interested in bushcare and, in particular, to meet young tertiary students – Older participant

Taking part in Regenerate has been a truly rewarding experience. It gave me the chance to connect with others while learning practical skills in bushcare and conservation. Each activity felt meaningful and uplifting, from restoring native habitats to joining cultural walks that deepened my understanding of this land. I always left feeling recharged, connected, and proud to have contributed to our community! – International student participant

Priorities for Goal Two: People are active and healthy

We will provide and support accessible spaces for participation in programs and events that encourage movement, play, and recreation for people of all ages, abilities and means.

Priority	Where we are	Where we want to be	Our role
Promote inclusive participation through low-cost opportunities	29.3% of City of Adelaide residents are in the lowest quartile group ($0 to $377) for income, higher than the average for Greater Adelaide (24.7%). Of the 6,035 households in private rental in Adelaide, 33.3% (2,004) are in rental stress. This is higher than the average for Greater Adelaide. We heard through our consultation that one of the first things people forgo when they are struggling with the cost of living is wellbeing activities.	We want to ensure our residents and visitors have access to low-cost programs and events that support their wellbeing, including formal and informal recreation and sport.	Facilitate, partner, and advocate – We will work with local businesses, clubs and organisations to reduce costs to participants through partnerships and funding. We will review our fees and charges to ensure they are sustainable for clubs and facilitators. We will advocate for fee relief at other levels of government.
Maximise the availability and use of community facilities	A 2023 Social Infrastructure Assessment commissioned by the City of Adelaide found that, based on floorspace and population benchmarks, the city currently has a shortfall in community facilities, a gap that will increase as the population grows unless further investment is made. An external review of Adelaide Park Lands Community Buildings (Sport and Recreation) found that around 75 per cent do not meet the expected benchmark for a fit-for-	We want people to have access to a range of multi-purpose community facilities that cater to their needs, including both indoor and outdoor options.	Deliver, facilitate, partner and advocate – We will invest in community facilities that meet the needs of our growing population. We will work with organisations, including universities and schools, and the state and federal government to make community facilities available to those who want to access them for wellbeing activities.

	purpose sport and recreation facility. These buildings demonstrate notable deficits in their condition, functionality, and/or ability to support community benefit, indicating a substantial renewal need across the Park Lands network. Activity Hubs are valued by the community; they are a collection of informal recreation facilities that share amenities such as public toilets and drinking fountains. Examples of typical activity hub facilities are: - Children's playspaces - Kick about spaces - Basketball courts - Tennis courts - Petanque pistes - BBQ facilities - Walking and cycling tracks.		
Support participation in physical activity for health and wellbeing	A majority of residents (54%) rate their health as "Excellent" or "Very Good." Physical activity is common, with residents averaging between 3.4 to 4.7 days per week People who accumulate 150+ minutes of physical activity per week report better overall health, require fewer health services, enjoy better	We want more people to be able to choose active lifestyles, particularly those who report low levels of physical activity, such as students and those aged 18-24 years.	Deliver, partner and advocate – We will invest in infrastructure that supports people to choose active lifestyles. We will partner with state and federal governments to access funding and raise awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle. We will partner with sporting clubs and organisations, including universities and schools, to increase

	mental health, maintain stronger social connections and have greater self-efficacy. Overall wellbeing scores are higher when more than half of the physical activity is done with other people. [ii] Local Area Frameworks in the City Plan identified a number of additional open spaces to achieve the objective of “open space at your doorstep”.		participation in sport and recreation. We will advocate for increased investment in infrastructure and programming by the state and federal government.

Case Study: Quentin Kenihan Inclusive Playspace



Images: Quentin Kenihan Inclusive Playspace

This playspace in Rymill Park/Murlawirrapurka brings disability advocate, writer and actor Quentin Kenihan's vision to life, offering gardens with play experiences for all ages and abilities. Surrounded by lawns, all-access paths, sheltered seating, barbecue facilities, and 'Changing Places' toilets, it's designed for everyone to enjoy. The project was shaped by community input, including the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel, ensuring the space reflects local ideas and aspirations.

Priorities for Goal Three: People can shape their community

We will support people to contribute their cultural knowledge and lived experience, engage in decision-making, and shape outcomes that affect them.

Priority	Where we are	Where we want to be	Our role
Foster community leadership and capacity building	The Adelaide Community Leaders Program was one approach the City of Adelaide have used to support community leadership development; other examples from across local government include Youth Advisory Groups and Leaders Scholarships.	We want to support community leaders, particularly those from priority groups, with the training, networks, resources and opportunities they need to shape their local community.	Deliver, partner and advocate – We will deliver and partner with industry and community leaders on community leadership programs, build local networks and make resources and opportunities available for community leaders. We will advocate for opportunities for community leaders at the state and federal levels.
Establish a Lived Experience Workforce	The City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter outlines a commitment to actively seek community feedback and input to enable all community members to have an opportunity to participate in decisions that impact them. However, many priority groups do not contribute to traditional community engagement processes.	We want to develop a Lived Experience Workforce Framework that can guide how we engage with lived experience in a way that is authentic, trauma-informed and appropriately renumerated.	Deliver, partner and advocate – We will support and expand lived experience models, including the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel and Reconciliation Committee. We will partner with lived experience experts to embed co-design practice across services and programs and advocate for funding to support lived experience workforce development from the state and federal governments.
Partner with the community to	The City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter outlines a	We want to explore needs, aspirations and opportunities before	Deliver and partner – We will utilise existing models of co-design and

co-design services and programs	commitment to recognise the diverse needs of our community and create inclusive, accessible opportunities to share feedback. A commitment to co-design requires time, resources, skills and funding, which need to be built into project management.	drafting ideas or solutions. We want to co-create the scope, priorities and success measures for our projects. We aim to share decision-making power and support the engagement of priority groups.	scale these across projects. We will partner with local community leaders and organisations to engage priority groups in co-design.

Case Study: City of Adelaide Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel



Image: Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel

The Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel aims to connect the City of Adelaide with people's lived experience. The Panel meets quarterly to help shape access and inclusion outcomes for key projects, programs and policies across the city. The Panel is made up of six individual and six organisational members who provide timely and expert advice on real life deliverables. Panel members are paid a sitting fee in recognition of their contribution. Their advice creates better project outcomes and helps to make our great city safe, accessible and inclusive for all city users.

Priorities for Goal Four: People can adapt and recover

We will strengthen people's ability to respond to challenges, support each other during difficult times, and build long-term resilience.

Priority	Where we are	Where we want to be	Our role
Increase access to safe, nutritious and affordable food	One in six families in South Australia experiences food insecurity, caused by a lack of access to food, rather than a lack of availability. Paid employment is no longer considered a safeguard against poverty. Risk factors for waged poverty include being the sole earner in a household, engaging in precarious, low-paid employment (e.g. gig work), major life changes and under-employment. Research shows that people experiencing waged poverty fare poorly on a number of health-related indicators, including quality of life and mortality. [iii]	We want to collaborate with local partners to develop a "food plus" system, where people can access food in a range of welcoming, social environments that uphold dignity.	Deliver, partner and advocate - We deliver food safety through our environmental services, which with further investment could be broadened to consider wider food systems. We will establish partnerships to build social capital and enhance climate change adaptation capacity in the context of food, and advocate for increased investment in local government capacity by the state and federal governments.
Recognise and support the contribution of volunteers	In 2021, 19% of City of Adelaide residents (4,473 people) contributed to the local community as volunteers. While volunteer numbers declined by almost 200 people compared to 2016 census figures, City of Adelaide residents are more likely to volunteer than those in Greater Adelaide, with a	We want to be a city that reduces the financial burden on volunteers and volunteer managers by ensuring volunteering is supported, accessible, and sustainable for everyone.	Deliver, partner, facilitate and advocate – We will deliver volunteer support programs, recognise volunteers through awards, events and publications, offer training, induction and supervision. We will partner with organisations to share resources, expertise and networks. We will advocate for state and

	percentage of 15.5% of residents volunteering. In 2024/25, the City of Adelaide engaged 260 volunteers who collectively contributed over 14,500 hours across 13 volunteer programs. Their contributions translated to a dollar value of over $733,500. 70% of the City of Adelaide volunteers reside outside the LGA. 93% of 2024 Volunteer Survey respondents reported high or very high levels of wellbeing connected to their volunteering. The wider city volunteering network includes people contributing their time to festivals, hospitals, health services, sporting clubs and recreation. While the sheer breadth of volunteer contributions in SA is immense, this comes at a significant personal cost to volunteers. Research reveals an hourly cost of $14.92 to volunteer, with volunteers absorbing 83.3% of the total expenses of volunteering, compared to 16.7% for volunteer-involving organisations. Additionally, 9.5% of paid volunteer managers and 23% of unpaid volunteer		federal government policies and funding that support volunteerism.

	managers bear the brunt of costs related to volunteering activities.		
Foster connected, resilient and thriving neighbourhoods	In our 2024 annual Residents Survey, 75% of respondents said they could rely on family, friends, or neighbours for help when needed, and 57% said they trust people in their neighbourhood. However, only 53% reported feeling a strong sense of belonging to their local community. The National Social Capital and Social Infrastructure Framework (2025)[iv] found neighbourhoods across the City of Adelaide show a wide mix of social capital and social infrastructure levels. Some areas have strong social ties and a high density of places that bring people together. Others, however, show signs of low connection – where people are less engaged with each other and with local places, such as pubs, cafes, or community spaces. In many of these areas, people are studying or spending more time alone at home, which reduces everyday opportunities to connect.	We want everyone to feel a strong sense of belonging in their neighbourhood and support the development of mutual aid networks.	Deliver, partner and advocate – We will strengthen our role in neighbourhood development through our community facilities and community development practice, within libraries, community centres and sporting clubs, and through partnerships with local residents and businesses, to support placemaking and social connection. We will advocate to the state and federal government for funding to support resourcing and infrastructure that enhances neighbourhood amenity.

Case Study: Talk with a Local



Image: Talk with a Local volunteer with program participants.

The Talk with a Local volunteer program was established as an action from the 'Promoting International Student Resilience and Wellbeing through Community Engagement – Pilot Report' prepared by the UniSA, Centre for Research in Education and Social Inclusion in partnership with the City of Adelaide and Bupa. The program facilitates local connections and friendships, as well as English language practice and cultural exchange between local residents and international students.

> *"The program provided me with many benefits, such as learning more about Australia's lifestyle and meeting a wonderful volunteer whom I used to see every week." – International student*

Priorities for Goal Five: People keep learning throughout their lives

We will provide accessible learning opportunities, programs, and resources that enable people to develop skills, knowledge, and confidence at any age.

Priority	Where we are	Where we want to be	Our role
Build skills and provide resources to engage in a digital world	The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) – provides a comprehensive picture of Australia's online participation by measuring three key dimensions of digital inclusion: Access, Affordability, and Digital Ability. Around one in five (20.6%) Australians are excluded or highly excluded, and roughly one in ten (9.2%) are highly excluded. Rates of exclusion are much higher for people aged 75+ years (66.5%), those who did not complete secondary school (54.5%), public housing residents (45.2%) and First Nations people (40.9%). SA has a 71.3 index score, the lowest affordability index on mainland Australia. 9.7% of the population only have access to a mobile connection, limiting their ability to effectively access	We want to bridge the digital divide by providing access to digital technology and building people's capability to utilise digital technology to realise health and wellbeing benefits.	Deliver, facilitate, partner and advocate – We will facilitate access to technology and deliver workshops and training in our community centres and libraries. We will partner with industry to provide the Adelaide Free WiFi network. We will advocate to the state and federal government for investment to address the digital divide.

	education, work, healthcare and online government services.		
Encourage creativity and resourcefulness through making and repairing	Our community centres and libraries provide access to a range of programs and resources that support making and repairing. We also provide grant funding to support community partners to deliver programs and resources that encourage making and repairing.	We want to maintain and enhance our natural ecosystems and move to a circular economy.	Deliver, partner, facilitate and advocate – We will deliver making and repairing programs in our libraries and community centres. We will partner with industry and the community to progress circular economy initiatives. We will advocate for investment in local government capacity by the state and federal governments.
Celebrate diverse cultures and artistic expression in the community	Adelaide is Australia's first and only UNESCO Creative City of Music and is part of a global network committed to driving culture as foundational for the city's sustainable and inclusive development across economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. Honouring the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the City of Adelaide is committed to ensuring that everyone has the right to participate in, enjoy, and contribute to the city's cultural life.	We want to value, protect, champion and promote the city's unique history, identity, character, creativity and cultural life and strengthen Adelaide's role as a global cultural capital.	Deliver, partner, facilitate and advocate – We will facilitate the sharing of First Nations perspectives, addressing past injustices, and promoting cultural revitalisation through language, storytelling and creative expression. We will deliver and partner to provide equitable, culturally safe, and affordable access for communities of all abilities and backgrounds and actively celebrate diverse cultural expressions as central to social connection, wellbeing and belonging. We will advocate for expansion of the city's cultural infrastructure, including activating underutilised spaces, to enhance Adelaide's appeal, foster

			community and create a sense of belonging.

Case Study: Ageing Well Podcast Pilot Project



Image: Project participants with a staff member at the Hutt Street Library.

The Ageing Well Podcast Pilot Project brought together older city residents from November to December 2025 to create and share meaningful content about their stories of living in the city. Over eight weeks, participants learnt how to develop and produce a podcast series, using technology available through our library service. The project aimed to increase knowledge of local connection points, resources and services in response to findings of the COTA SA's The Plug- In Report for the city[v].

Priorities for Goal Six: People feel safe where they live, work and spend time

We will create and maintain safe, welcoming, and accessible places and spaces, while promoting community awareness and safety initiatives.

Priority	Where we are	Where we want to be	Our role
Ensure community centres and libraries are accessible, well-equipped and responsive to community needs	The Residents Survey found that in the past three months, 63% of residents visited a library, and 91% of residents see the library as a trusted public space. One in five residents (19%) recently visited a community centre, with higher usage among those aged 40 and older (24%). 52% of respondents would like to access more wellbeing programs. The 2023 Social Infrastructure Assessment highlights the strong value generated by our community facilities, including both community centres and libraries. The three community centres deliver $4.4 million in total benefits at a cost of $650,000, while the three library centres provide $16.5 million in benefits at a cost of $5.5 million. In both cases, there are opportunities	We want to be a city that enhances safety and wellbeing by ensuring our community centres and libraries are accessible, well-staffed, and able to meet the needs of all users.	Deliver, partner and advocate – We will realise the full value of our community centres and libraries by increasing our investment in staff and resourcing. We will partner with the state government to increase investment in our community centres and libraries, programs, and services. We will advocate for greater investment in community centres and library infrastructure by the federal government.

	to further increase impact through investment. Increasingly, community centres and libraries are serving as refuges for the community against extreme weather events driven by climate change, including heatwaves, as directed by state government "Code Red and Blue" alerts. Our centres also serve customers who cannot access in-person customer service from the state and federal government, such as Service Australia[vi]. Throughout our consultation, we heard that priority groups were more likely to seek help and safety at a library than other sources, such as security guards or police.		
Implement initiatives that prevent gender-based violence and support survivors	Violence against women is experienced across all communities and cultures. However, its nature, prevalence and risk factors differ within population groups. 94% of South Australians agreed that violence against women is a problem in Australia, but only 38% of	We want a community where respect, equality and accountability prevent gender-based violence before it occurs.	Deliver, partner and advocate – We will deliver primary prevention projects and campaigns. We will partner with sector leaders to raise awareness through public art and projects during the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. We will advocate for increased investment in primary prevention initiatives across local

	South Australians agreed it is a problem in their suburb or town[vii]. Two in five women (39%) have experienced violence since the age of 15. Men are more commonly the perpetrators of physical violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence. On average, one woman is killed every nine days by a current or former partner. In the year 2021/22, 4,620 women aged 15 years and over (an average of 13 women/day) were hospitalised due to family and domestic violence[viii]. The Royal Commission into domestic, family and sexual violence recommended that the government identify places and spaces across SA where people may seek help for DFSV and work to develop awareness of a central entry-point service within those places and spaces, which could include libraries and community centres.		governments by both state and federal governments.

Promote healthy environments that support physical, social and mental wellbeing	In partnership with the state government, local government provides foundational public health services to protect people from public health risks. Examples of the work undertaken by the City of Adelaide to protect public health include food safety checks, regulation of wastewater systems, vaccination programs and communicable disease management, monitoring of cooling towers, public swimming and spa pools, responding to climate change challenges, disaster response and public space management.	We want to work in partnership with the state government to promote and protect the health of residents and visitors and reduce the incidence of preventable illness, injury and disability.	Deliver, partner and advocate – Our community safety teams will deliver services that support public health and safety through regulation and education. We will partner with industry, community and government to manage public health and safety. We will advocate to the state and federal government for greater recognition and investment in local government as a frontline service for public health and safety management.

Case Study: *Creating a pathway to meaningful employment – a City of Adelaide / Catherine House partnership*



Image: Customer Centre staff.

The City of Adelaide partnered with Catherine House to create meaningful employment opportunities for women experiencing homelessness. Building on Catherine House's accommodation and trauma-informed support services, the program provides a safe, supported pathway back into work through paid, part-time internships within select Council teams.

This innovative initiative demonstrates the impact of purposeful collaboration between Local Government, community organisations, and dedicated staff. By combining compassion with strategic planning, the program delivers genuine social impact while offering a blueprint for Councils seeking to develop inclusive employment pathways within their communities.

Priority Groups

Some groups face greater barriers to health, safety, inclusion, or participation. These barriers can include discrimination, cost, limited access to services, language, disability, or social isolation. A priority groups approach helps address these gaps by prioritising investment to remove systemic barriers and create fairer outcomes.

Priority Group	Evidence for inclusion
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Overrepresented in homelessness data, face systemic barriers to culturally safe systems and supports. Connection to Country and culture is essential for wellbeing.
Children and families	Early intervention and support are needed for healthy development, especially in high-density, low-income households.
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people	45% of residents are born overseas; language, cultural stigma, and service navigation are key barriers to wellbeing.
International students	High risk of isolation, financial stress, workplace exploitation, food insecurity, and mental health issues. Often lack access to mainstream health and wellbeing services.
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual (LGBTIQA+)	Experience higher rates of discrimination, mental health challenges, and housing insecurity. Limited spaces and places for safe, inclusive recreation, such as nightlife.
Older people (50+)	Highly vulnerable to cost-of-living pressures and at risk of isolation and digital exclusion. Many people who are experiencing chronic health conditions and live alone.
People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage	Face compounding barriers to housing, health, and employment. Vulnerable to cost-of-living pressures.
People from refugee backgrounds and/or asylum seekers	Often experience trauma, language barriers, and limited access to culturally appropriate services.
People with disability	They often face social exclusion and housing challenges, requiring accessible environments and inclusive services.
Women	Disproportionately affected by gendered violence, the impact of caregiving responsibilities, and economic insecurity, leading to housing insecurity.
Young people (12–25)	High rates of mental distress, housing precarity, and unemployment. Higher rates of climate/eco-anxiety.

Implementation

An annual Action Plan will be developed to progress the Strategy. A costed Implementation Plan will be prepared to progress identified actions.

Monitoring and Learning

Our annual strategic reporting will summarise how well we have delivered, including:

- Participation and access metrics from Community Centres, Libraries and Volunteering
- Priority population engagement case studies
- Community satisfaction and inclusion indicators from the Residents' Survey and City User Profile
- Progress on pilot initiatives and bold moves via the annual report against the Business Plan and Budget
- Population Health Profile from Preventive Health SA
- Resilience indicators such as Sociabli by Resilient Ready

References

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[iv] Adelaide City Pilot Community - Sociabli by Resilient Ready
[v] report-social-program-co-design-consumer-insights.pdf
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[vii] royalcommissiondfsv.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1174695/With-Courage-Report.pdf
[viii] Our Watch | Quick facts about violence against women