

Gawler

Economic Development Framework 2026–2028



Gawler

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Statement of Acknowledgement

The Town of Gawler acknowledges the Kurna people as the Traditional Custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.

We acknowledge their deep spiritual relationship with their Country and pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people and their connections to Country.



Abbreviations and Definitions

- **Australian Bureau of Statistics**..... ABS
- **Gawler Economic Development Framework 2026-2028**..... Framework
- **Gawler Business and Economic Development Committee**.....GBEDC
- **Greater Adelaide Regional Plan (2025)**..... GARP
- **Hectare** Ha
- **Regional Development Australia Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains**..... RDA BGLAP
- **Town of Gawler**..... Council

Executive Summary

The Town of Gawler’s Economic Development Framework has been developed during a period of significant growth in the region that will directly impact Gawler. With the Town of Gawler’s Economic Development Strategy 2020–2025 and Tourism Plan 2019-2024 at the end of their useful life, a transitional plan is now needed as Council seeks to resolve and plan for future growth in the next two years. Accordingly, the Framework comprises a workplan with focus areas that guide economic development initiatives across this period.

Direct input from a range of key stakeholders informs the Framework. A working group comprising RDA Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains, the former Business Gawler and Town of Gawler have developed a vision, pillars, objectives and actions.

In addition, Council’s S41 Gawler Business and Economic Development Committee (GBEDC) has now also reviewed and made submissions on the Framework – a critical element if the Committee is to prioritise its actions in coming years.

Vision – Gawler is recognised as a progressive economic centre, driving growth and regional prosperity.

Pillars – as set out below.

Introduction

The Gawler Economic Development Framework 2026-2028 (the Framework) sets out how the Town of Gawler (Council) will support a strong, resilient and inclusive local economy over the period 2026 to 2028. The Framework provides clear direction while remaining flexible and responsive to future opportunities.

Precinct Activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PlacemakingCelebrate Local Precinct Identity and HeritageImprove Movement and Connectivity
Investment Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investment Attraction Tools and StrategyTargeted Industry Investment
Visitor Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MarketingVisitor ServicingEventsExperience Development
Thriving Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Business SupportBusiness GrowthBusiness ResilienceInnovation and Entrepreneurship

Figure E1. Economic Development Framework Pillars



2 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Framework is to refresh Council's economic development priorities from 2026-2028. It will support informed decision-making, and maintain momentum in business support, investment attraction and place-based activation while a future comprehensive strategy is being developed.

The Framework spans the period 2026-2028 due to the significant scale of change in growth expected to occur within and adjoining Gawler as set out in the framework.



3 Development of the Framework

3.1 Origins of the Framework

The Town of Gawler Tourism Plan 2019-2024 and Gawler Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025 are critical strategies for directing and managing economic initiatives by Council. Both are substantively dated and reflect largely a world impacted by the COVID pandemic and different business conditions to those faced today. Council's goal in developing a new plan, was to consolidate strategic economic development and tourism initiatives into a single integrated document.

This Framework was developed by a reference group comprising representatives of Business Gawler, Regional Development Australia Barossa Light Gawler Adelaide Plains (RDA BGLAP) and Council. In December 2025, Council adopted the pillars and actions found within the Framework, having been the subject of a Council workshop the previous month.

Subsequently, Council's S41 Gawler Business and Economic Development Committee (GBEDC) has also reviewed and suggested further refinements to the Framework in May 2026. This committee was established in February 2026 and advocates on the needs of the local business community.

3.2 Interim role of the Framework

The Framework provides a transitional bridge between the Town of Gawler's Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025 and Tourism Plan 2019-2024. Under the Framework, these actions and commitments are effectively merged and simplified into a single workplan (see **Figure 1**).

The development of a future comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is expected to commence in 2028.

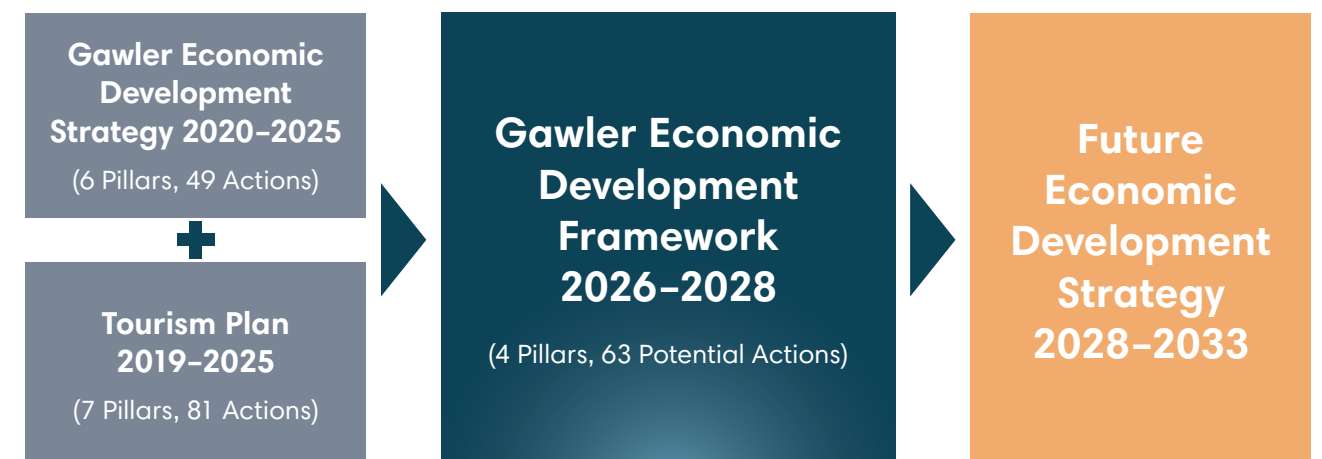


Figure 1. Strategic Pathway Towards a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with Built-In Modelling of the Impacts of Future Growth a Key Feature in Defining Actions and Priorities (Source: Town of Gawler)

More specifically, **Figure 1** shows a shift in Council’s role, reflecting both its growing capacity and rising community expectations for action on ground. It is also an acknowledgement that:

- (a) Integration of tourism and economic development initiatives are intrinsically connected
- (b) The extent of goals and actions needs to be carefully managed and streamlined (existing strategies comprise around 150 actions); and
- (c) The ultimate prioritisation of actions (hence the term ‘potential actions’) is a decision to be guided by the new GBEDC on behalf of Council, funded to a substantial degree under the Town Centre Separate Rate and annual Council operating budgets

Overall, change in philosophy is also provided in the draft Framework. Council is moving from primarily advocating for investment to actively partnering in growth, with dedicated economic development roles aligned to strategic planning and providing key support to the newly established GBEDC.

As an interim measure, this Framework (and the actions proposed in **section 9**) provides strategic direction during a period of significant change. Major

planning and growth initiatives are expected to reshape Gawler’s physical layout, employment base and economic role. These changes require a flexible, place-based framework that can adapt to evolving planning outcomes, infrastructure investment and market conditions. The key drivers of this transition are shown spatially in **Figure 2** and summarised as:

- **Concordia Growth Area** – rezoned in 2025, land divisions expected to occur in 2026-2027. Situated in Barossa Council area but substantively part of Gawler’s urban footprint, including road, rail and community infrastructure
- **Gawler Town Centre Structure Plan** – foreshadowing code and design changes to facilitate new investment and mixed use. Adoption timeline is August 2026
- **Northern Parklands** – located in Kudla, to be managed by the Northern Parklands Trust and to support significant investment in new sport and community infrastructure, as well as commercial opportunities. The Master Plan is due for completion in 2027
- **Kudla Structure Plan** – currently in detailed analysis stage. Potentially larger scale than Concordia. Rezoning timeline is currently 2027

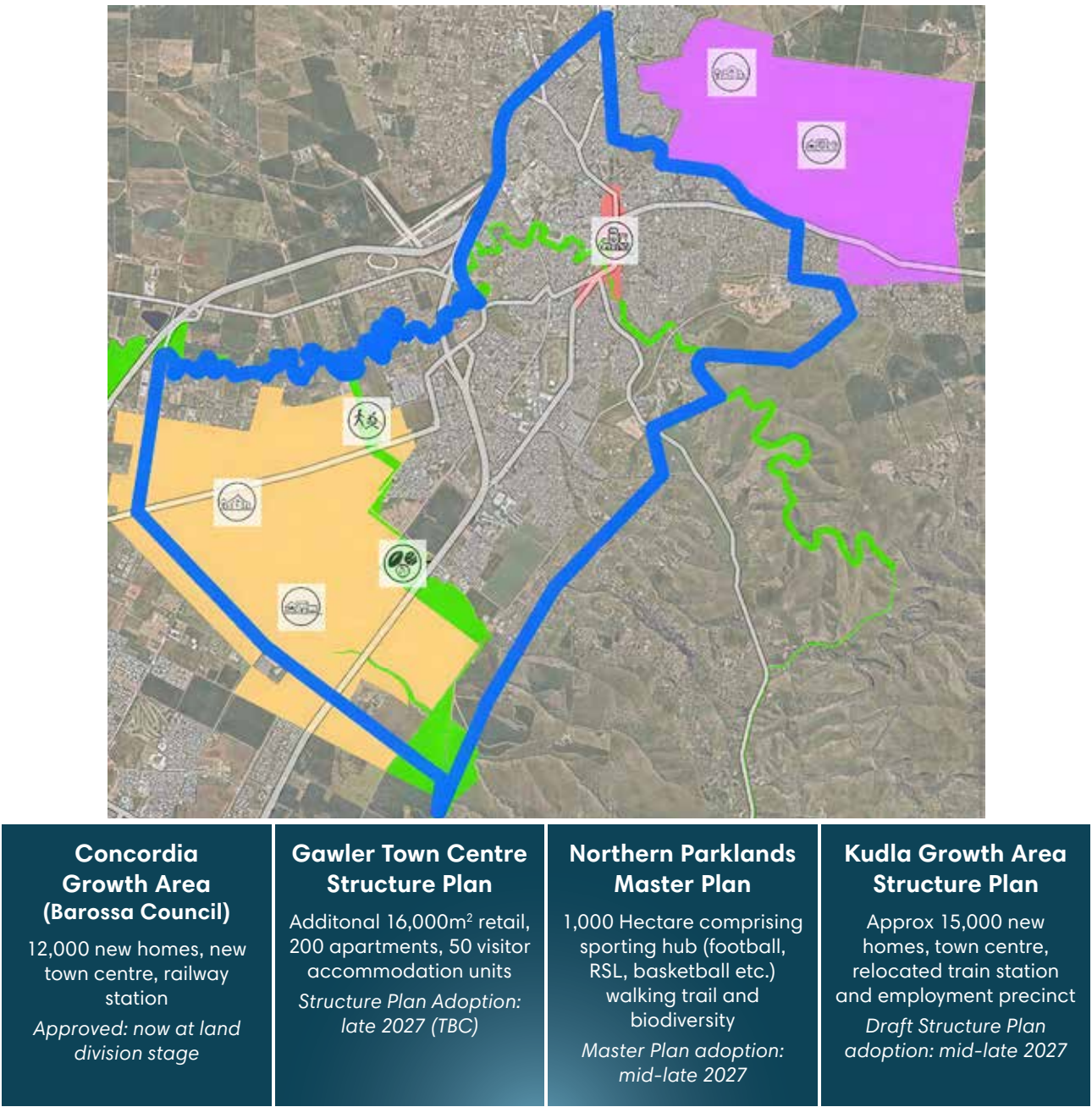


Figure 2. Key Influences on the Framework (Source: Town of Gawler, 2026).
The Town of Gawler is contained within the dark blue outline

Consistent with Figure 2, work toward a future comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will be progressively strengthened through the delivery of targeted data analysis to ensure:

- clearer understanding of future growth scenarios, including impacts on population, employment land needs, retail and commercial opportunities, and infrastructure requirements, informed by ongoing structure planning and infrastructure sequencing; and
- active involvement of the newly established GBEDC, providing strategic advice, market insights and stakeholder perspectives to inform both interim actions and development of a longer-term strategy

4 Gawler's Economic Context

Gawler (spatially located in **Figure 3**) performs a range of interconnected economic roles, including:

- being an historic regional town centre with a large supermarket, department store and main street function
- convenience and accessibility to a rapidly growing Outer North community
- performing as a key service hub for retail, health, education and civic functions; and

- situated as a gateway between metropolitan Adelaide and the mid north, Yorke Peninsula and Barossa regions

These roles collectively shape Gawler's economic opportunities, investment appeal, workforce function and place identity, and underpin the need for a flexible and integrated economic development and tourism delivery approach.



Figure 3. Regional Context (Source: Town of Gawler Community Plan)

4.1 Historic Context

Founded in 1839, Gawler is renowned for its strong heritage character and holds a unique place in South Australia's history. It is the oldest town in the state outside of Adelaide established in the early years of the South Australian Colony (Phillips Pilkington, 2026).

Founded on Kurna land, Gawler has significant cultural importance to the Kurna People, being strategically located at the confluence of the North and South Para Rivers.

Gawler is the only town outside Adelaide that was planned by and overseen by Colonel William Light. The town's layout was undertaken by Light, Finniss and Co. In a letter to his friend, George Palmer, Light described being approached by many colonists to "survey, plan towns, etc. for them ... [but] refused all but Gawler, which I have just planned" (Heritage SA, 2025).



Figure 4. Historical Image Murray Street in Gawler Town Centre (Source: Phillips Pilkington)

Perhaps not surprisingly given this history, Gawler has one of the highest concentrations of significant buildings in South Australia. The Church Hill area, which forms part of the original settlement, is recognised as a State Heritage Area, while a diverse range of built and natural heritage places across the town contribute significantly to Gawler’s identity and sense of place.

Heritage underpins place identity and community pride and represents a genuine economic driver. Gawler’s heritage creates a point of difference that cannot be replicated; every conserved streetscape, pub façade and landmark is a distinctive, story-rich asset that can be promoted, activated and invested in. Without its built heritage, Gawler’s identity risks becoming interchangeable with other growth suburbs.

With heritage tourism in South Australia projected to reach \$1.58 billion annually by 2030, Gawler is uniquely positioned to capture this growth with continued development that is respectful of, and leverages, our heritage assets (Dep. Env. & Water, 2021).

4.2 Growth Context and Regional Role

4.2.1 Population

Gawler is experiencing sustained population growth. Census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that between 2016 and 2021 the population increased from 23,034 to 24,988, representing growth of approximately 8.5% over the period. This growth rate exceeded the South Australian average of approximately 6% over the same timeframe. The pattern of Gawler exceeding metropolitan growth rates has been observed for several decades.

These trends are foreshadowed to increase significantly in the near future (and ongoing) as modelled in the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan (GARP). Released in early 2025, the GARP identifies the Town of Gawler and the wider Outer North region as a

key growth area within Greater Adelaide. Gawler’s population is projected to grow from approximately 27,564 in June 2025 to around 75,000 by 2051, with growth anticipated across all age groups.

The GARP also identifies the Outer North (as shown in **Figure 5**) as the primary location for future housing delivery in Greater Adelaide. Approximately 26% (around 82,000 dwellings) of all new housing across Greater Adelaide is planned to be delivered in the Outer North between 2021 and 2051.

Within the Gawler local government boundary, the Kudla growth area has been identified for significant development and is planned to accommodate between 11,600 and 16,000 dwellings, supporting a future population of up to 41,500 residents. This growth is expected to provide sustained population and housing expansion within Gawler for the next 30 years.

In addition, as set out in **Table 1** major growth areas of a scale similar to that of the existing population of Town of Gawler (~27,500 in 2026) are planned within a 5-10km radius of Gawler’s town centre. These include Concordia (Barossa Council), Roseworthy (Light Regional Council) and Kudla. Regardless of administrative boundaries, within which the growth occurs, the consequence will be the same – a changing and evolving primary and secondary catchment with a community expecting a range of needs to be met.

Development	Additional Dwellings	Estimated Population	Time Frame
Concordia	12,000	30,000	30 years
Kudla	11,600 – 16,000	30,000 – 41,500	30 years
Roseworthy	36,000	90,000	30 + years
Springwood, Gawler East	1,200	3,000	Ongoing
Gawler South	468	1,170	Ongoing
Evanston, Evanston South, Evanston Gardens	1,500	3,750	Ongoing

Table 1. Regional Population and Dwelling Projections (Source: David Snoswell Property Advisory, 2026)

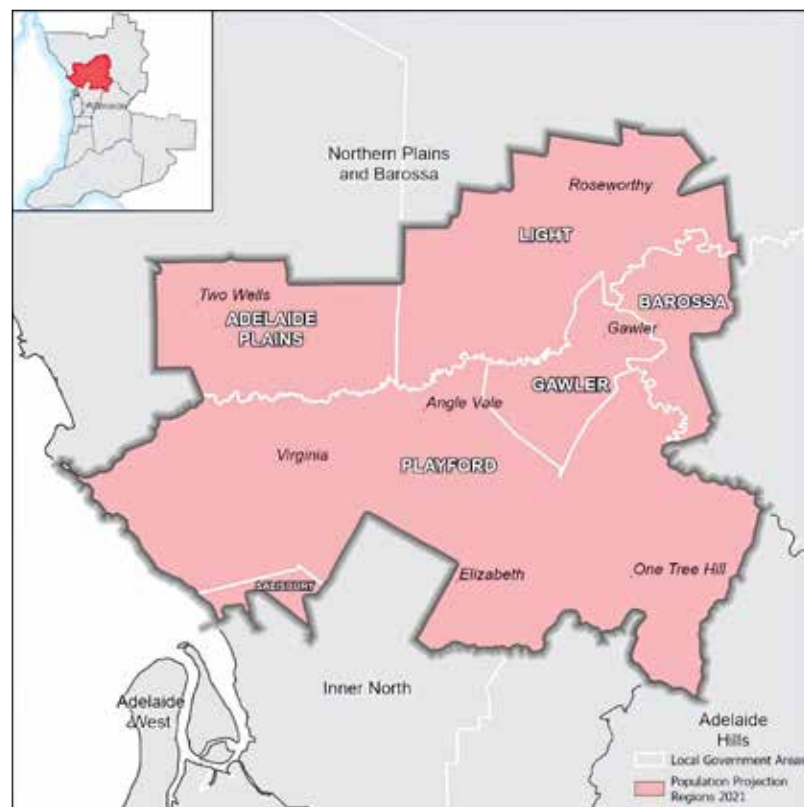


Figure 5. The Outer North will account for the majority of new housing in Greater Adelaide over the next 30 years
(Source: SA Planning Commission, 2025)

Collectively, these areas form a regional commercial and service catchment exceeding 200,000 people by 2041, reinforcing Gawler’s role as a major service, employment and activity centre within the Outer North (**Figure 5**).

4.2.2 Activity Centre Function

Gawler and specifically the town centre continues to be a significant meeting point for social and economic activity in the Outer North. This comprises both retail/commercial uses as well as support services, namely:

- Four major frontline supermarkets, two discount department stores (Big W and Target) and a range of local specialty stores (total floor area ~41,000m²)
- Major office development Council’s Administration Centre and Civic Centre
- SA Police as well as emergency services facilities in Murray Street south
- State agencies including Department of Child Protection and Service SA (Customer Service Centre)

- Gawler Health Services - Regional Hospital with upgraded Emergency Department
- A broad range of supporting allied health services
- Significant investment in aged care and childcare facilities throughout Gawler
- A dedicated industrial precinct at Willaston supporting a diverse range of businesses and employment (Alinea, 2023B)

It is also a location for significant events – Fringe Festival (typically February-March), Christmas Parade, monthly makers markets and other activities.

From this modelled growth we can expect to see significantly increased demand for goods and services by first home buyers setting up new homes, empty nesters and downsizers (households with children who have left home) seeking to sell larger family homes, as well as those entering retirement.

State Government population projections set out the modelled growth in **Figure 6** for the Outer North.

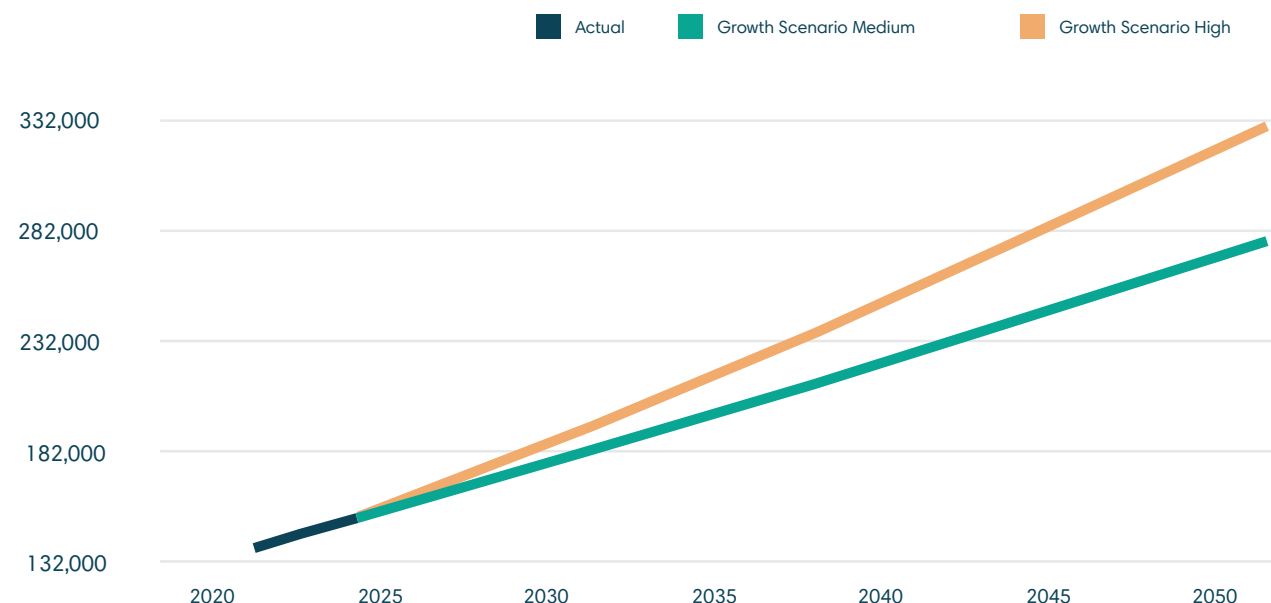


Figure 6. Projected Population, Outer North Region 2021-2051 (Source: SA Planning Commission, 2025)

Below are some recently commenced and/or completed projects within the Gawler Town Centre (**Figure 7**).

Ginos Development
77-83 Murray Street

Demolition of shop fronts for a new 3 storey mixed use development, including visitor accommodation. Sub-basement parking will be provided beneath



Aldi
7 Tod Street

The recently completed Aldi supermarket expands retail offer in the Town Centre



Petite Pear Salon
27 Murray Street

The previously vacant heritage building has recently been adaptively reused as a contemporary hair salon, retaining its original character and reactivating the Murray Street frontage. A shop-top apartment is proposed on the upper level to introduce residential use and support mixed-use revitalisation



Figure 7. Images of Recently Completed or Projects Underway (Source: Town of Gawler)

The Town Centre’s nearest major competitors (as at 2021) are set out in **Table 2**. As reflected in section 5 of the Framework, where data shows escape expenditure, centres within a 20-minute drive such as Munno Para Shopping Centre and Elizabeth provide a range of services that could reasonably be expected in a growing future Gawler.

Existing Centre	Centre Type	Major Retailers	Floor Area (sq.m)	Distance from GTC
Munno Para Shopping Centre	Regional Centre	Kmart, Foodland, Coles, 110 specialty stores	30,000+	12.5 km S
Elizabeth City Centre	Regional Centre	Big W, Target, Haris Scarfe, Coles, Woolworths, Reading Cinema, 130+ specialty stores	80,300	15.2 km S
Westfield Tea Tree Plaza	Regional Centre	Myer, most major retailers, over 240 specialty stores	100,000	36 km SE
Adelaide City	City Centre	Most major retailers	~900,000-1,000,000	43 km SE

Table 2. Retail hierarchy – nearest competitors to Gawler Town Centre (Source: Alinea, 2023A)

The GARP identifies the Gawler town centre as a District level centre, similar to Golden Grove, Burnside, West Lakes and Salisbury. Expected population growth will further fuel retail and commercial demand in all key activity centres into the future. GARP (p.162) states:

“The region is anticipated to need an additional 150,000 square metre retail floor space over the next 30 years, driven by the population growth of the area. This will result in a greater intensification of existing activity centres in Elizabeth, Gawler and Munno Para, and a network of new activity centres established to support equitable and convenient access to retail and services.”

4.2.3 Employment Lands

In economic terms employment precincts, typically precincts for big box activities such as Harvey Norman, furniture showrooms and similar activities (like Evanston Park, Gepps Cross Homemaker Centre). These provide both significant employment opportunities and meeting local needs and are best removed from traditional main streets due to their need for large building footprints, large carparks, trade industry needs as well as loading and unloading of product. A significant reason City of Playford and City of Salisbury have higher local job containment i.e. more jobs relative to working force population compared to Gawler is due to the presence of some of the largest employment zones in Greater Adelaide - Edinburgh Parks for instance (See Alinea, 2023B).

Gawler has approximately 36.8 ha of employment zoned land in six locations, the largest being in Willaston (~28 ha), followed by Gawler Park (5.3 ha). There are a small number of individual sites including Hill Street in Gawler South (0.6 ha) that supports Wintulichs Smallgoods and the former market garden site on the corner of Gordon Road and Main North Road (1.8 ha), known locally as the 'Peter Kittle' site. Employment lands in Gawler are estimated to support approximately 1200 local jobs (~30 jobs/ha).

None of the employment zones shown in **Figure 8** are regional in scale but they remain important at the local level, noting that of the 38 ha, less than 4 ha is currently vacant.

Council's modelling indicates that there will be a shortfall of employment zoned land of at least 20 ha by 2046. More recent internal estimates put the figure closer to 50 ha.

A key outcome to be monitored will be the opportunity for a dedicated employment precinct in the Kudla Growth Area. The extent of new housing modelled, and retail/commercial needs associated with new household formations will drive major employment land growth. These local needs should be considered additional to the needs set out in GARP that have a more regional focus.

The GARP indicates that the Outer North region hosts the largest reserve of identified future employment land. A significant portion of identified zoned vacant land sits within precincts at Roseworthy, Edinburgh North and Greater Edinburgh Parks. However, there are known infrastructure constraints limiting the ability to bring this land to market. Greater Edinburgh Parks is in the largest future industrial precinct in Greater Adelaide and is critical to support the state's manufacturing and defence capabilities. This precinct requires significant investment in infrastructure to make it available to industry.

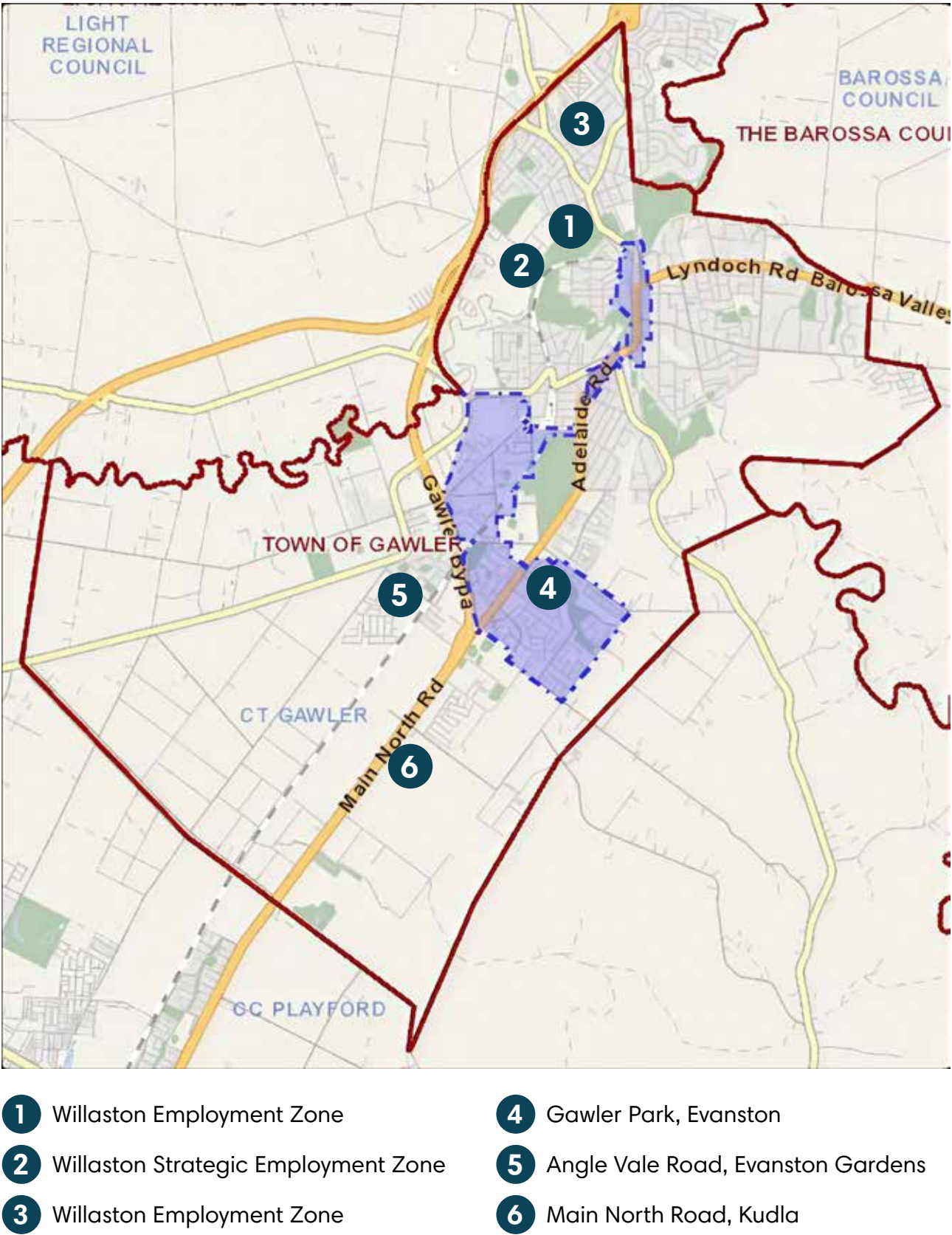


Figure 8. Employment Zones in Gawler (Source: Alinea, 2023B)

When planning for new employment zones, the specific needs of future key industries will need to be considered. The expected industry demands for employment lands have been identified in **Figure 9**.

Employment Sectors and Land Uses, Outer North Region, 2021–2051

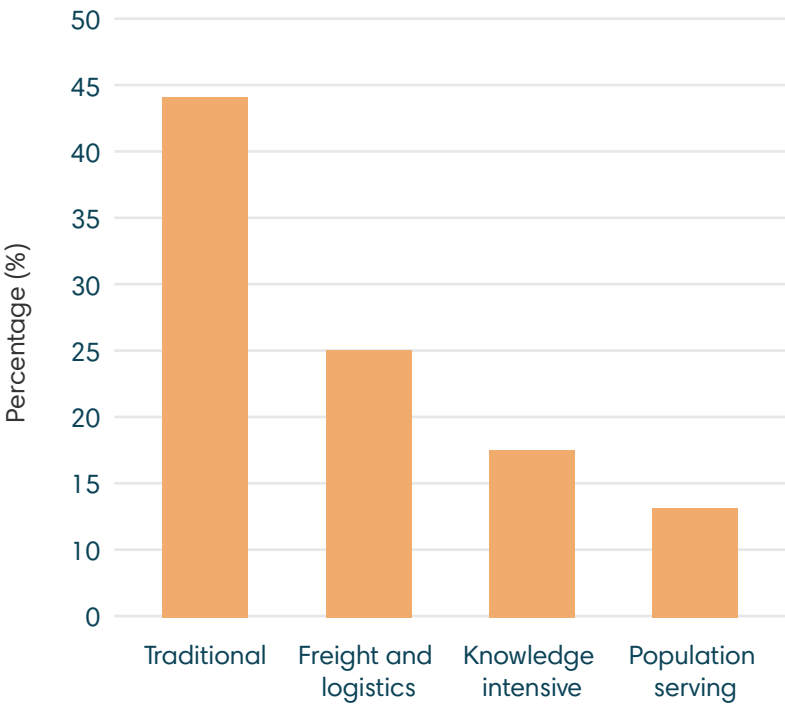
Development trends

Vacant land consumption (annual) 9 ha

Demand to 2051 956 ha

Total future area 3,295 ha

Employment land use mix



Current employment land supply

Occupied 1,235 ha

Vacant 94 ha

Figure 9. Employment Sectors and Land Uses, Outer North Region, 2021–2051 (SA Planning Commission, 2025)

4.3 Spending Analysis and Demographics

Relative to the State average, personal and household incomes in 2021 are reasonably similar with South Australian averages. The segment of the population earning over \$2,000 per week was 1 in 3 households (35.6%). This higher income cohort has greater spending potential, particularly on discretionary items (**Figure 10**).

When the ABS census data for 2026 is issued and available in 2027 this data should be remodelled for further analysis.

Household Income, Gawler Town Centre Trade Area, 2021

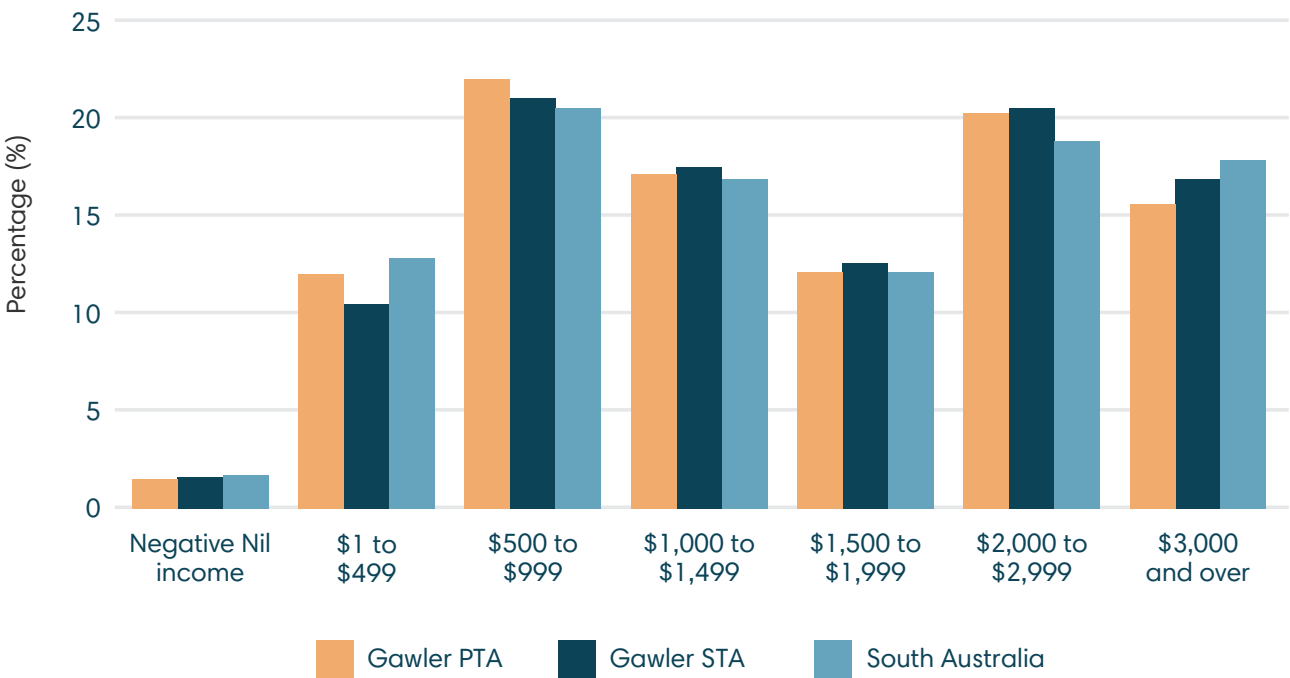


Figure 10. Household Income Analysis – Gawler v South Australia (Source: Alinea, 2023A)

For the map of the primary trade area (PTA) and secondary trade area (STA) refer to **Appendix A**.

Note: The PTA comprises the catchment where residents closest to the retail destination will access Gawler Town Centre. The STA comprises areas where Gawler Town Centre is not necessarily where the weekly shop is carried out but where visits occur due to the wider range of retail offer from time to time

A range of data sourced from Economy. id and Spendmapp is provided at **Figures 12-14** which cover a number of key indicators including:

- Demographics
- Building and development investment
- Escape expenditure
- Domestic visitor spend including by category of purchase

Age profile data (**Figure 11**) confirms that the over 65 age cohort is proportionally greater in Gawler than the South Australian average. This demographic trend is supported by the significant investment and infrastructure in aged care accommodation already in Gawler.

It also is consistent with the extent of allied health services provided in the town, focused on Adelaide Road and throughout the town centre.

The data for the 35-44 and 45-54 age cohorts is likely reflective of households moving into Gawler due to housing affordability advantages relative to Greater Adelaide. These age cohorts also may also support the child-teen cohort being above the State average (5-14 years), noting also the significant investment in childcare and early years learning spaces, 867 approved in Gawler during 2021-2023 and maintained at this level to 2026.

Age Profile, Gawler vs South Australia, 2023

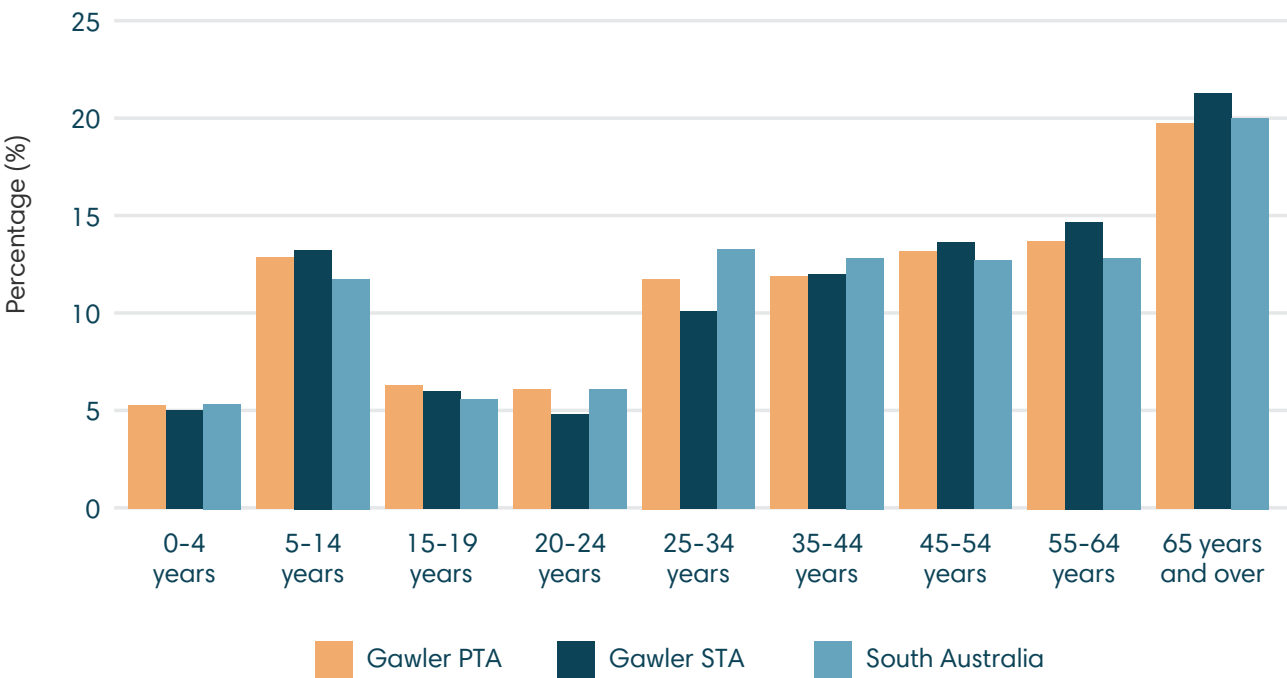


Figure 11. Age Profile – Gawler v South Australia (Source: Alinea, 2023A)

The Spendmapp data (**Figure 12**) shows significant expenditure by visitors from across the country spending time in Gawler, whether it be to enjoy local heritage, use local services or as a stop into the Barossa, Australia’s most famous wine region.

Escape spend analysis indicates that the significant leakage of local expenditure occurs in the following market segments (amongst others):

- Departmental stores and retail
- Dining, entertainment and travel
- Specialist services—sectors that are closely linked to town centre vitality and the night-time economy.
- Light industry (expected to reflect lack of employment land capacity in Gawler)

This pattern highlights areas where strong local demand exists but is not currently being met within Gawler. Rather than indicating economic weakness, escape spend represents an opportunity to strengthen local business offerings, support employment growth, and enhance the vibrancy of activity centres through targeted, achievable initiatives.

By addressing these gaps over time, Council can retain more economic value locally while supporting sustainable business growth aligned with Gawler’s scale and character.

Top Escape Spend Catagories, 2025

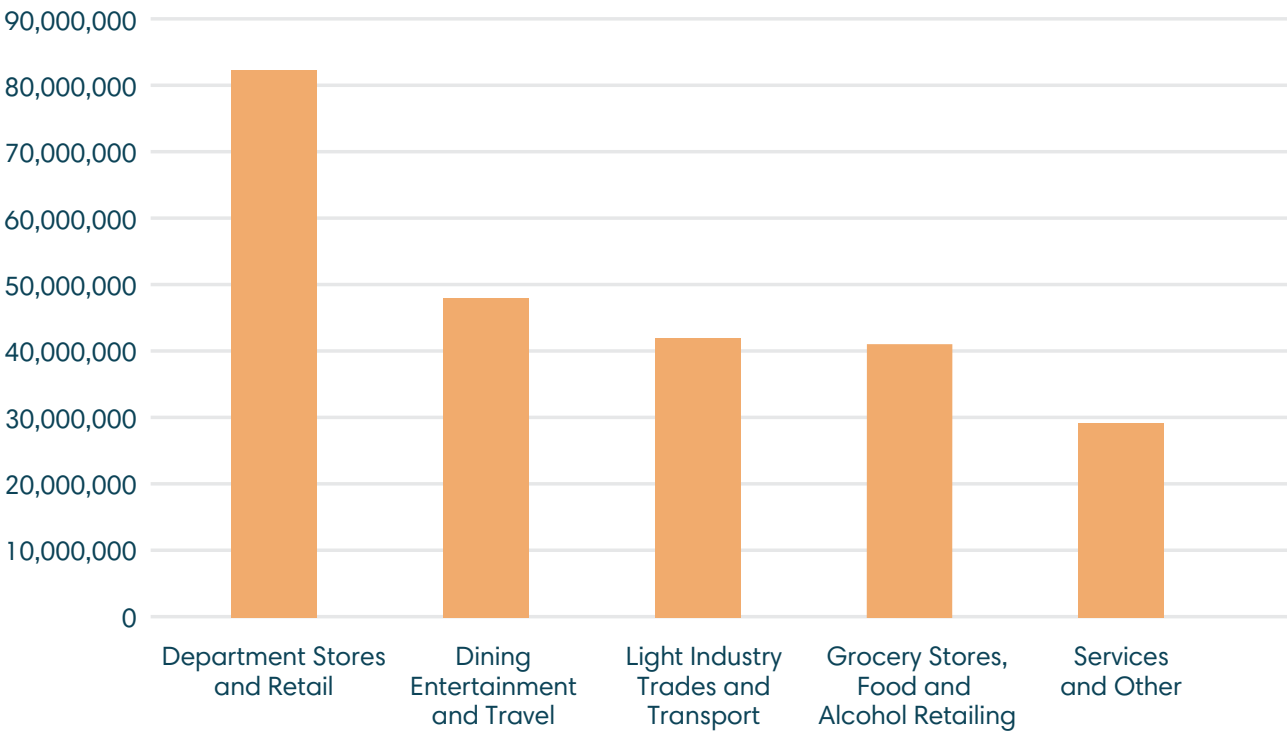


Figure 12. Escape Spend Outside Town of Gawler – 2025 (Source: Spendmapp)

Top Escape Spend Geographies, 2025

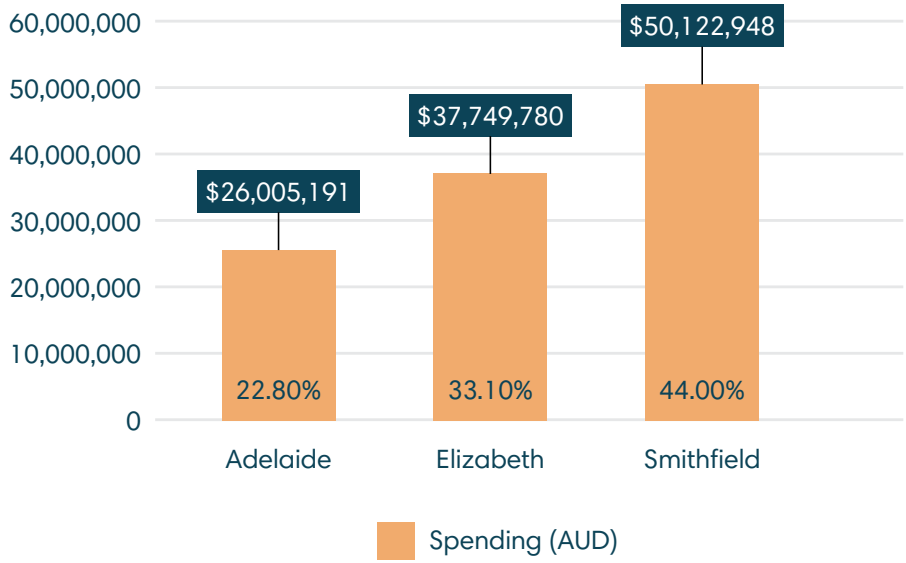


Figure 13. Escape Spend Outside Town of Gawler – 2025 (Source: Spendmapp). Smithfield is Munno Para Shopping Centre and adjoining large format retail precinct. Data shows top 3 escape locations. Other notable escape expenditure losses occur across over 10 locations including Tea Tree Gully, Golden Grove and Port Adelaide

This above pattern (**Figure 13**) is further illustrated by the concentration of escape spend to nearby higher-order centres. In 2025, the largest proportions of Gawler’s escape spend per annum was directed to Smithfield (approx. \$50.1M), Elizabeth (approx. \$37.7M), and Adelaide City Centre (approximately \$26.0M).

The proximity of these destinations highlights that escape spend is largely driven by convenience and access to a broader mix of retail, dining, entertainment, and specialist services, rather than long-distance travel.

In the context of this Framework, these figures reinforce that addressing escape spend is less about competing with metropolitan centres and more about strengthening local offerings where demand already exists.

This evidence supports a place-based focus on town centre vitality, night-time economy activation, and targeted business attraction as practical ways to retain a greater share of local spending within Gawler over time.

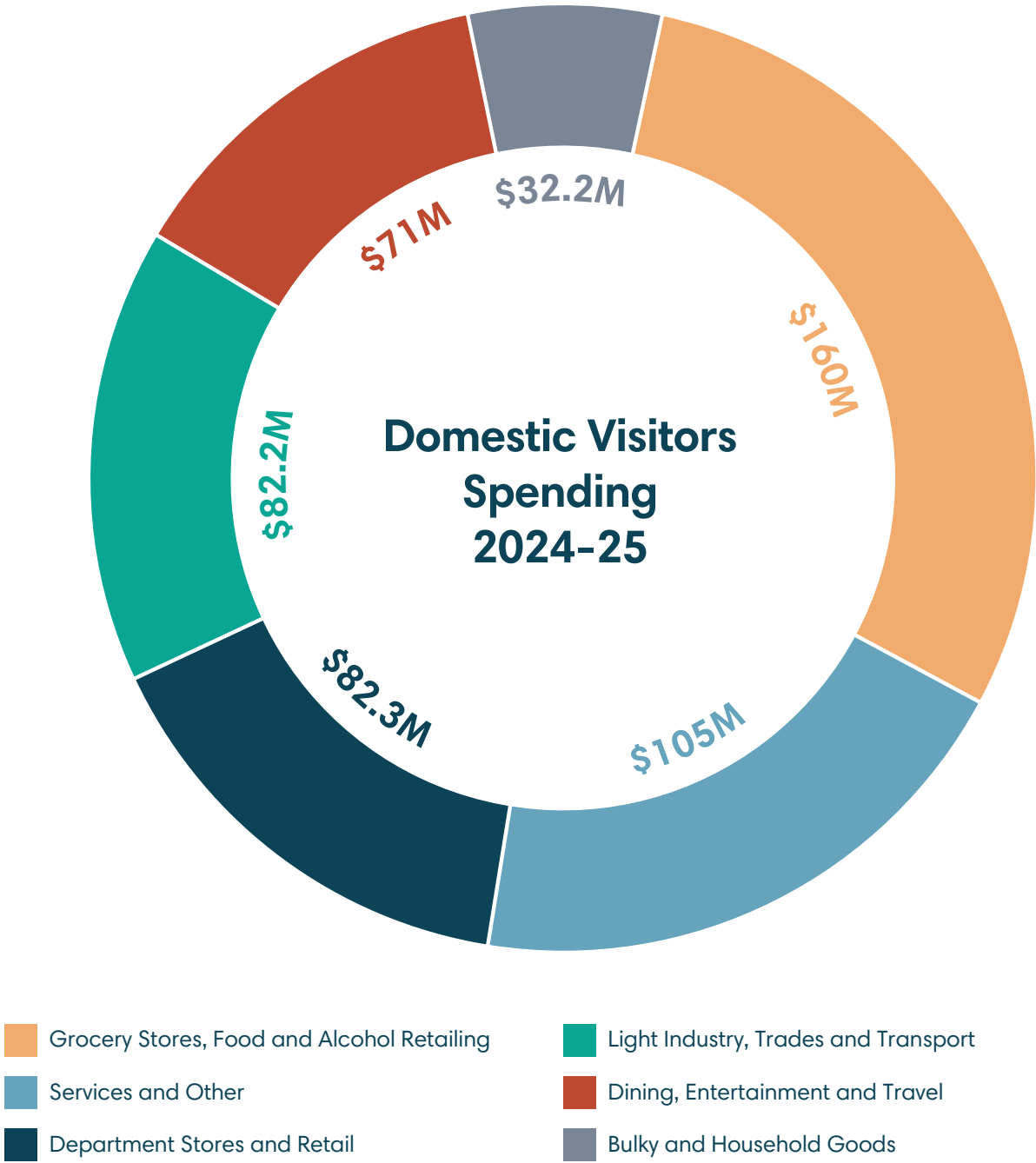


Figure 14. Spend by Domestic Visitors and by Category for 2024-2025 (Source: Spendmapp)

Domestic visitor spending in Gawler is strongly anchored in everyday retail and essential services in the categories Grocery Stores, Food & Alcohol Retailing and the Services Other categories (**Figure 14**). This dominant share signals that a significant portion of visitor spend is being captured due to the town’s role as a regional service centre and retail hub for visitors moving through the region.

More traditional tourism-aligned spending, such as Dining, Entertainment & Travel (\$71M), while still significant, sits behind these broader categories. This indicates an opportunity to grow Gawler’s visitor economy by strengthening hospitality, events, and experience-based offerings that encourage visitation and length of stay in the region.

4.4 Opportunities

As a regional centre these roles will evolve and change but there is scope and opportunity to be proactive and build on the structural advantages of Gawler, namely:

- Centrality to the growth areas of Roseworthy, Concordia and Two Wells
 - Historic investment in medical, allied health and aged care services
 - Recent significant investment in childcare and early years learning
 - Major investment in education, especially private sector – Trinity College, Xavier College
- Access to electrified rail link to Adelaide
 - Relatively affordable real estate (compared to the metropolitan average)¹
 - Business, employment and support services

The need to evolve is however ongoing. With growth and evolving community needs, Gawler will need to be responsive. This requires a framework that prioritises:

- Precinct activation over dispersed business parks
 - Mainstreet vitality
 - Mixed use, more intense (design informed) town-scale investment
 - Heritage-sensitive development, especially in the town centre
 - Business resilience during population growth
 - Actively investigates local scale employment lands needed for local industry, noting the absence of supply, strongly influenced by the Willaston employment zone being largely built out
- Retail and business mix being an opportunity to be addressed whether it be:
 - Converting home businesses into main street traders
 - Attracting tourist accommodation at scale into the town centre
 - Allied health services
 - Home wares, fashion and fine food experiences

A picture of opportunities and directions emerges from this analysis, as set out in **Figure 15**.

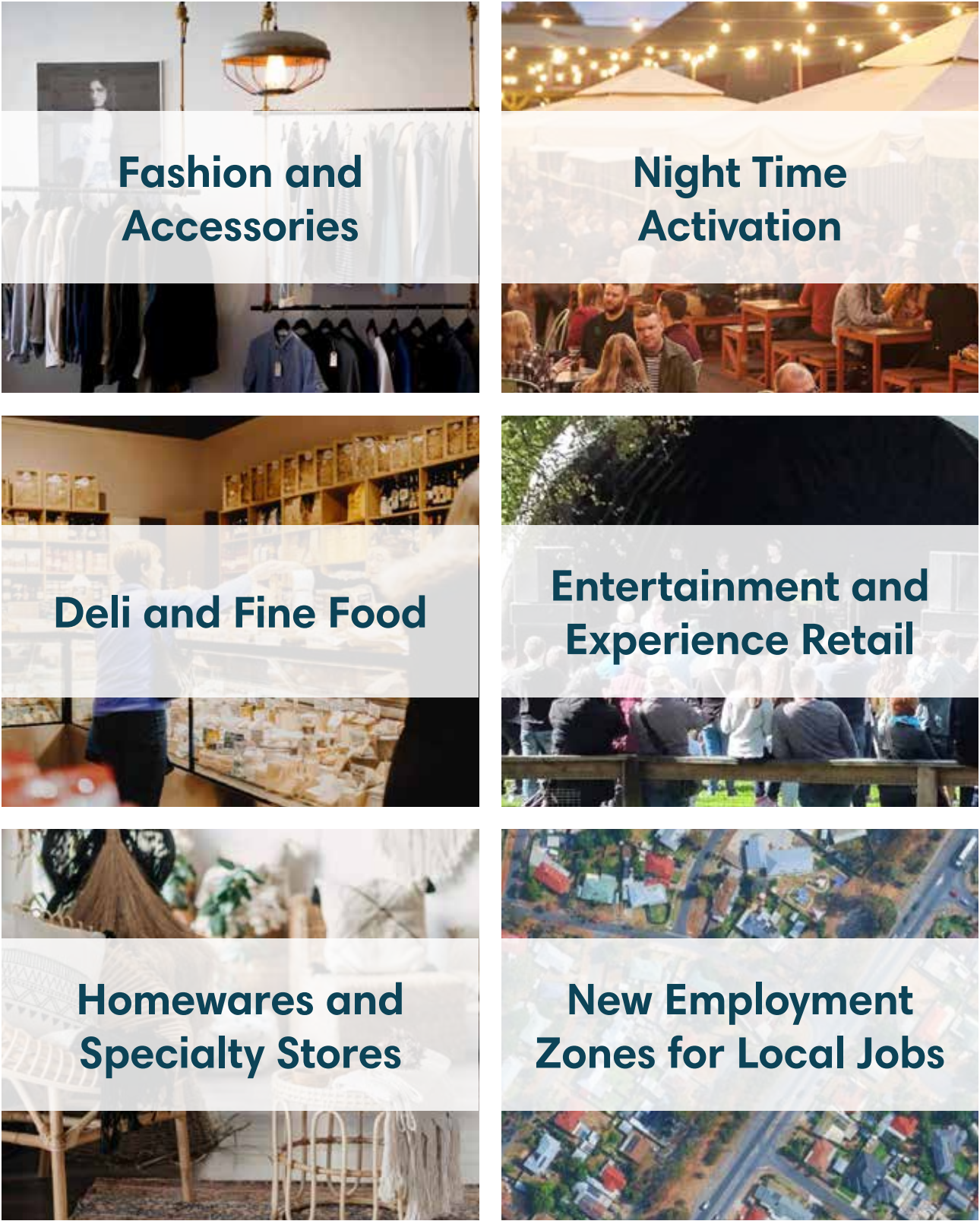


Figure 15. Opportunities Exist Across a Range of Sectors (Source: Alinea, 2023A & B)

¹ Gawler LGA median average for a 3-bedroom home at SA2 level is ~\$640,000 to \$650,000. Adelaide is \$1,020,000 (May 2025-2026) .A 30-35% differential. Gawler is a metropolitan edge affordability market. See Realestate.com.au

5 The Shape of the Economy (data snapshot)

Population	27,564 residents	41 median age	~1.5-2.0% population growth (over last 5 years)	~23 people per hectare
Employment and Workforce	~13,000 employed residents	~4000 people who live and work in Gawler		8609 total jobs
Business and Industry	~1400 local businesses	Majority small/ micro businesses or home-based businesses	~\$1.0-\$1.1B per year Gross Regional Product (GRP)	
Income and Living	~\$1500-\$1600 Median weekly household income		Strong local spending base with increasing demand driven by population growth	
Largest Employing Industries	Health care and social assistance	Retail trade	Education and training	Accommodation and food services

Figure 16. Key Indicators (Source: Economy.id). Where stated, ABS data is included

Economic Role	Regional service hub supporting surrounding growth areas (Concordia, Kudla, Barossa interface)
Education and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~8500 students enrolled in schools and early learning Strong volunteer participation across community and sporting organisations Significant open space and recreation assets supporting liveability
Development and Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building approvals: ~\$150-\$200 million annually (recent years, variable) Major growth drivers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concordia growth area Kudla employment and residential growth Town Centre renewal and infill development
Place and Role in the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic gateway between metropolitan Adelaide and the mid north, Yorke Peninsula and Barossa region Functions as a service, employment and retail hub for a rapidly growing catchment Increasing focus on town centre activation, events, visitor economy and local business growth

Figure 17. Other Key Indicators for 2025/2026 (Source: Economy.id)

6 Council's Role in Economic Development

The Town of Gawler Economic Development Framework provides a clear, coordinated and place-based approach to supporting sustainable economic growth, business confidence and employment opportunities across Gawler.

Whilst Council is not the primary driver of economic conditions, they play a critical enabling role through the actions listed in **Table 3**.

Council role	How	Examples
Leadership and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with neighbouring Councils, State and Federal Governments, agencies Operating within networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDA BGLAP Office for Small and Family Business Work with Small Business Commission
Strategic planning and place-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure Plans Urban design Frameworks Civic upgrades (place making) 	Kudla Structure Plan, Gawler Town Centre Structure Plan, Walker Place upgrade, civic art installations
Business engagement and facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting workshops, training and peer to peer engagement Sharing economic data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GBEDC Tammy's Table Business Engagement Forums and workshops Population projections, escape spend data modelling
Tourism and visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and activation of Gawler as a tourism destination Infrastructure to support tourism activities e.g. event spaces and facilities (sporting and cultural) Provision of visitor support infrastructure Use of paid and volunteer staff Curated experiences and information online and in person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gawler Visitor Information Centre operations Gawler Cultural Heritage Centre Accreditation through the Tourism Industry Council South Australia
Targeted investment attraction and activation	Attraction, support or delivery of key events, sponsoring or providing in-kind support (including venues)	Gawler Show, Fringe Festival, Christmas Parade and Carols

Table 3. Role of Council in Economic Development

7 Economic Development Framework (2026–2028) Key Pillars

A core element of the Framework is the use of four pillars that thematically establish the key areas of intent for economic development. This is an evolution of thinking from the previous Economic Development Strategy that had six pillars, noting that regional collaboration and regional investment potentially are relevant to all pillars.

Another feature of the Action Plan (see **Appendix A**) is that whilst there is less focus on partners and allocating roles, there is greater clarity on the actions themselves. This is the critical element, with the key stakeholders, namely GBEDC, Council and the RDA BGLAP to now prioritise the timing and sequence of actions.

7.1 Precinct Activation

A key priority is to strengthen precincts as active, welcoming, and economically productive places that support business, community life and visitor activity.

A key priority identified is targeted investment within the Gawler town centre. The structure plan, underway at time of writing, will set out key themes for how this activation can be achieved for this precinct as a priority project (**Figure 18**).

Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings achievable for a range of land uses	Promote main street and local shopping options within the town centre	Separate through traffic and main street functions in town centre street network	Rail station as a renewable hub
Medium-scale residential mixed use works for housing diversity and affordability	Multi-storey car parking a questionable public investment	Art and heritage activation can reshape regional city identity	Town centre joint venture developments a work in progress

Figure 18. Key Elements of Town Centre Structure Plan for Precinct Activation (Jensen, 2026)

7.2 Investment Attraction

Council should encourage investment that delivers jobs and services, respects local character and aligns with long-term growth and land-use outcomes.

Tools such as an investment prospectus are likely critical to delivering targeted investment, especially where market gaps exist. These can be on private land, where agreed with landowners or even Council-owned land (subject to legislative processes required for site disposal).

An investment prospectus is a key element of the Gawler Town Centre Structure Plan, expected to be finalised in September 2026. A wider perspective (investment prospectus) should also be developed, covering further opportunities across Gawler, including Kudla and the treatment of employment precincts to maximise investment and economic growth. That work will likely form a centre piece of the new Economic Development Strategy to be developed in the coming years.

7.3 Visitor Economy

A coordinated marketing focus on positioning Gawler as both a destination and a central hub for exploring surrounding South Australian regions will occur. This will contribute to building a distinctive visitor economy that leverages heritage, events and experiences while supporting local businesses and amenity.

By creating a more seamless, visitor-centred experience across digital and in-person touchpoints will provide a stronger connection to place. A proactive events strategy that activates local spaces will create a clear opportunity for increased visitation, strengthening Gawler's identity and driving sustainable economic development.

7.4 Thriving Business

Support a resilient, capable and innovative local business community through engagement, partnerships and enabling practices.

8 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

A key driver for delivering the Framework will be the GBEDC, with priorities being set annually as part of business planning, to acquit the separate funds collected from the local business community. They will expect visible action and on-ground investment to occur.

With respect to funding of priorities, the delivery of actions as set out in the Framework will occur through annual business planning, partnerships and advocacy. The Framework will remain in place until a full Economic Development Strategy is prepared following adoption of major structure plans, anticipated post-2028.

During the life of the Framework (2026-2028) Council staff expect to be monitoring and reporting on actions typically every 3-6 months to the GBEDC and Council more broadly. It is also expected that a number of priorities will need to be discussed, further developed and delivered in partnership with RDA BGLAP.

Given the broad nature of the tasks as set out in the Framework, it is expected that the GBEDC itself will set more specific tasks and priorities for initiatives to be delivered. There will be clear focus on how project delivery will occur and the measures of success. Such an approach is consistent with findings relating to the delivery of the previous Economic Development Strategy (see Bentleys, 2024).

9 Action Plan

The following Action Plan outlines the key focus area (set out below) that will guide Council's economic development efforts. It is structured around four (4) pillars, each designed to drive targeted outcomes and support sustainable growth across Gawler's economy, namely:

Pillar 1: Precinct Activation

- Focuses on enhancing key locations across Gawler to create vibrant, well-utilised spaces that support business activity, attract visitors, and encourage community engagement

Pillar 2: Investment Attraction

- Aims to position Gawler as a competitive destination for investment by supporting business growth, attracting new industries, and leveraging local strengths

Pillar 3: Visitor Economy

- Seeks to grow visitation and local spending by enhancing Gawler's appeal as a destination, supporting tourism-related businesses, and promoting unique experiences

Pillar 4: Thriving Business

- Supports the development and sustainability of local businesses through access to programs, skills, networks, and opportunities to grow and innovate

PILLAR

1 Precinct Activation

1.1 Placemaking

1.1.1	Activate public spaces
a.	Conduct an economic analysis for each Precinct to identify opportunities for business and industries
b.	Implement the Gawler Activation Strategy
c.	Deliver relevant Council programs (such as Community Neighbourhood Development, Gawler Civic Centre, Cultural Heritage Centre, Libraries, Youth, and Recreation) that activate indoor spaces
d.	Review Council's Public Art Strategy to ensure it contains an activation focus
e.	Review and simplify Council's policies governing outdoor businesses (such as mobile food vans and alfresco dining) to remove unnecessary red tape
f.	Critically review opportunities for the town centre via the structure plan and design and delivery framework to provide high quality public spaces that meet a wide range of community needs

1.1.2 Celebrate local precinct identity and heritage

a.	Identify key local precincts and consider brand development, encouraging private investment/support
b.	Identify barriers to activation and resolve where possible
c.	Examine opportunities for adaptive re-use of existing commercial premises, especially vacant upper storeys in buildings within Gawler town centre for uses that create viable opportunities to re-use without losing local heritage and character

1.1.3 Improve movement and connectivity

a.	Implement strategies associated with movement and connections from Council's Walking and Cycling and Disability Access and Inclusion Plans
b.	Integrate opportunities for connectivity in the Movement and Access Plan delivered as part of the Town Centre Structure Plan and Development Delivery Framework
c.	Identify impediments to active travel

1.2 Diversify economic activity		
1.2.1	Facilitate opportunities for new businesses and industries within each precinct	
	a.	Analyse escape spend data within Spendmapp to identify new business opportunities and communicate them to the business sector
	b.	Undertake a gaps analysis via the Town Centre Structure Plan and Development Delivery Framework that addresses preferred subprecincts and preferred uses to fully utilise the town centre as a vibrant main street
1.2.2	Facilitate the night economy	
	a.	Identify opportunities within the town centre that support the night economy
	b.	Investigate the feasibility of amending planning laws and regulations to introduce flexible, time-of-day car parking requirements for the town centre, reducing the burden on night economy businesses
1.2.3	Facilitate appropriate/sympathetic mixed-use development that integrate commercial, residential and recreational spaces	
	a.	Ensure consideration is given to mixed-use developments as part of the Town Centre and Kudla Growth Investigation Area Structure Plans
	b.	Develop Design Guidelines to support decision making

2 Investment Attraction

2.1 Investment Attraction Tools & Strategy		
2.1.1	Articulate Gawler's value proposition, advantages and opportunities	
	a.	Develop an investment prospectus that clearly articulates Gawler's value proposition, advantages and opportunities
2.1.2	Streamline investment pathways	
	a.	Streamline investment pathways through internal policy reform
	b.	Facilitate code amendments to catalyse investment in the Town Centre and Kudla Growth Investigation Area
2.1.3	Advocate for timely strategic investment	
	a.	Advocate for the planning and delivery of essential services, utilities and infrastructure concurrent with the approval process for new developments to ensure that infrastructure capacity keeps pace with growth
	b.	Collaborate with state agencies and developers to fund and deliver the strategic road connections required to support planned growth without overwhelming the existing network
	c.	Work with stakeholders including potential developers on opportunities for leveraged investment in such areas as new housing, commercial development and other critical uses where existing under-utilisation of land exists
2.2 Targeted Industry Investment		
2.2.1	Attract industries that are strategically matched to current and future employment lands	
	a.	Develop an industry selection framework that identifies and prioritises target industries strategically matched to current and future employment lands
	b.	Make provision for additional employment lands, within Gawler region, which provide future local employment for residents of Gawler
	c.	Critically review opportunities for investment in allied health services, including scope for a health hub in Gawler consistent with population growth needs
2.2.2	Attract startups and small businesses with high growth potential	
	a.	Promote the Gawler Business Innovation Hub for new startups and small businesses with high growth potential to form, access support and then transition out of the Hub as ongoing successful operations

3 Visitor Economy

3.1 Marketing

3.1.1	Promote Gawler's significant heritage and unique architecture
a.	Implement digital marketing strategies that showcase Gawler
3.1.2	Promote Gawler's position as a hub to explore the surrounding districts
a.	Develop and implement a marketing campaign that positions Gawler as an attractive location to explore and access multiple tourism regions/experiences
3.1.3	Promote new products/development 'thoughts'
a.	Identify and promote new tourism products and experiences
b.	Connect businesses or entrepreneurs that have tourism product or experience concepts with the South Australian Tourism Commission's destination/industry development team

3.2 Visitor Servicing

3.2.1	Articulate the value proposition for the Gawler Visitor Information Centre
a.	Undertake a visitor needs analysis to define the optimal value proposition for the Gawler Visitor Information Centre in both a physical service delivery role as well as in digital on-line presence
3.2.2	Engage consistently with visitors at all stages of travel
a.	Undertake a customer journey mapping exercise for each visitor persona
b.	Use results from the needs analysis and customer journey mapping exercises to implement an effective omni-channel approach (seamless integration of online and offline) that provides consistent, appropriate and relevant information to all visitors at all stages of travel
c.	Implement volunteer training (both on and off site) to ensure product knowledge/awareness is of a high calibre

3.3 Events

3.3.1	Attract and secure a diverse calendar of events
a.	Continue to support community events in Gawler by implementing the Gawler Activation Strategy
b.	Develop a comprehensive Venue and Event Space Prospectus to proactively attract and secure a diverse calendar of events
c.	Actively investigate, promote and support open heritage buildings and/or garden events and related activities that showcase Gawler's history, buildings and landscapes to visitors alike

3.3.2 Integrate event supporting infrastructure

a.	Advocate that public space design in all new developments treat event infrastructure as an essential utility
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3.4 Experience Development

3.4.1	Enhance the visitor experience
a.	Grow the quality and quantity of products, including commissionable products, that enhance the visitor experience
3.4.2	Encourage visitors to linger longer
a.	Develop precinct-based experiences/branding to encourage visitors to visit and linger longer
b.	Provide improved connections and experiences with accessibility to more than one precinct or experience for visitors to explore
3.4.3	Attract and support First Nations tourism experiences
a.	Leverage the Kurna Cultural Heritage Survey Report to identify tourism experiences
b.	Work with First Nations representatives to establish storytelling opportunities

4 Thriving Business

4.1 Business Support

4.1.1	Ensure Council is local business friendly	
	a.	Encourage local business to participate in Council's procurement process
	b.	Participate in the Small Business Friendly Council Initiative, implement red tape reduction initiatives, and ensure that Council's procurement process is local business friendly
	c.	Deliver and promote business forums to share information but also to actively listen to issues facing local business
	d.	Deliver business awards to promote and acknowledge innovative local businesses

4.1.2 Facilitate local business support opportunities

	a.	Collaborate with GBEDC and Regional Development Australia Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains to provide local business support opportunities
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4.1.3 Facilitate business networking opportunities

	a.	Collaborate with GBEDC and Regional Development Australia Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains to provide local business networking opportunities
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4.2 Business Growth

4.2.1 Advocate for investment in local businesses

	a.	Leverage the Town Centre Structure Plan and Development Delivery Framework to catalyse private investment in a diverse mix of commercial/mixed-use spaces suitable for local businesses
	b.	Collaborate with Regional Development Australia Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains in advocating for investment and grant funding for local business

4.2.2 Facilitate business development opportunities

	a.	Connect businesses to the B2B Program and promote upskilling opportunities
	b.	Link businesses and entrepreneurs with the tools, knowledge, and networks needed to scale effectively

4.3 Business Resilience

4.3.1 Champion the benefits of environmentally sustainable practices

	a.	Leverage the Climate Emergency Action Plan to produce and distribute case studies showcasing businesses that are successfully implementing sustainable and circular economy practices
	b.	Partner with NAWMA to deliver education on best practice waste management
	c.	Partner with the Department for Energy & Mining (or similar) to provide energy/utilities education for local businesses

4.3.2 Champion business continuity planning

	a.	Collaborate with GBEDC and Regional Development Australia Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains to improve awareness of the importance of business continuity planning that mitigates impacts from natural disasters, emergencies, cybersecurity and other threats
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4.4 Innovation and Entrepreneurship

4.4.1 Encourage co-working spaces, incubators or accelerators to support startups and small businesses

	a.	Advocate for new developments to consider the inclusion of co-working spaces, incubators or accelerators where appropriate
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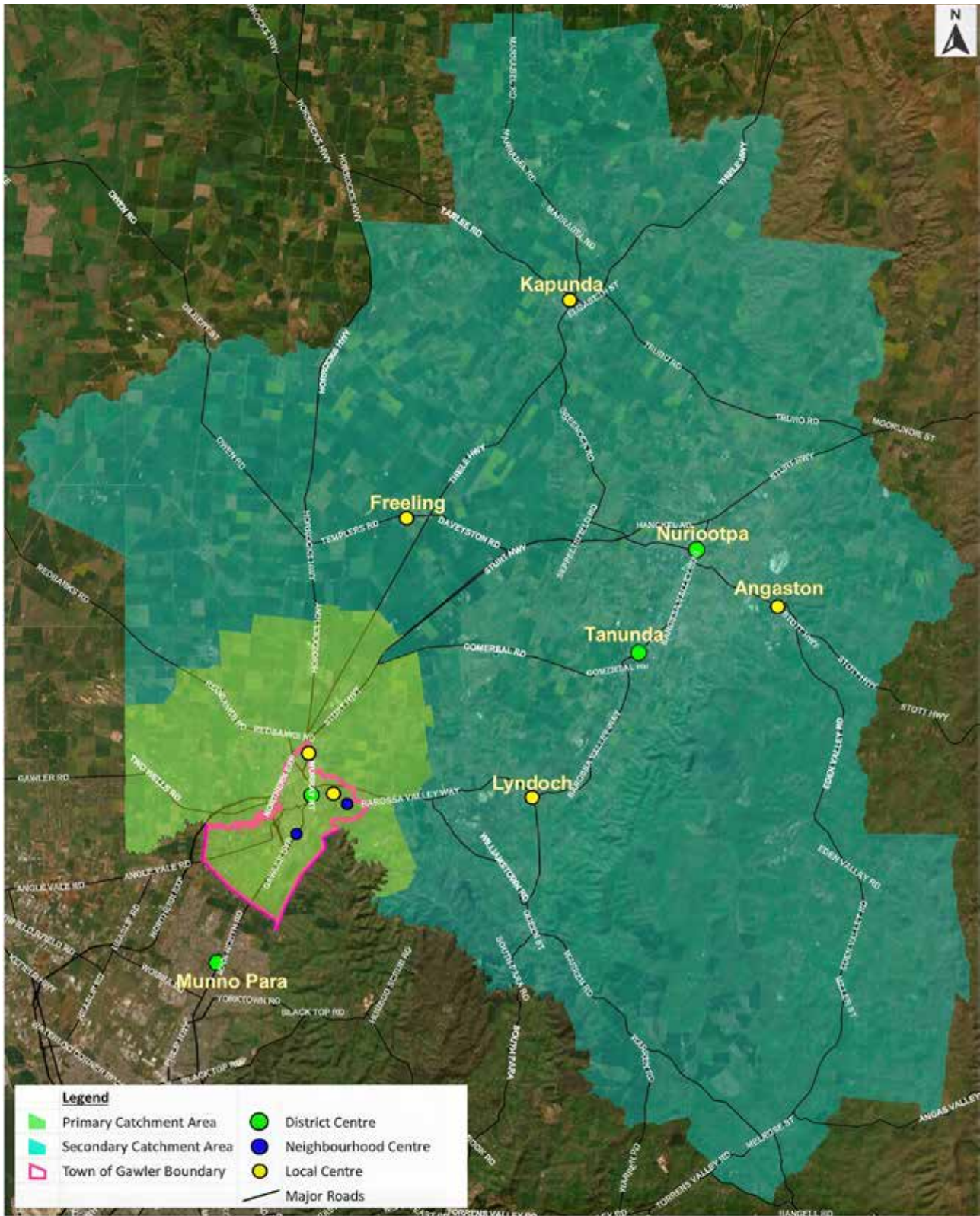
4.4.2 Foster connections between tertiary students, educational institutions and local businesses that drive innovation and entrepreneurship

	a.	Continue to leverage the Regional and Suburban University Study Hub networks to support students
	b.	Encourage businesses to offer local student placement opportunities
	c.	Invite Regional and Suburban University Study Hub members to attend career expos

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Appendix A: Primary and Secondary Trade Areas



(source: Alinea, 2023A)

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Gawler