



# Background Paper

## *A new Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for the Barossa, Light and Lower Northern Region*

The Councils of Adelaide Plains, Barossa, Gawler, and Light are working collaboratively to prepare their second plan to improve the health and wellbeing of people in the region.

This background paper provides a summary of population and public health statistics for the region and the role of Councils in improving public health.

This paper also presents key challenges for public health planning that the new regional plan will need to consider. These challenges will be used to inform conversations with community and stakeholders to identify what the councils can do to improve public health and wellbeing in the region.

### Preparing the next regional plan



## Councils and public health

Councils can play various roles in the delivery of public health and wellbeing outcomes. The types of roles local governments can play include:

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- **Lead-by action and example**, making decisions about the future of the community
  - **Advocate** – promote and support the community and its aspirations to others
  - **Provide** - services, facilities and support directly to the community
  - **Partner/Facilitate** – to achieve outcomes for the community by working with others to realise common and specific goals.
  - **Regulate** – provide regulated services as prescribed in legislation
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The delivery of public health by Councils is the responsibility of many different functional areas of a Council. From the areas that create and maintain open space, walking/cycling networks, buildings and facilities that can be accessed by people of all abilities and that encourage healthy activity, to the people who program such spaces to ensure that people are encouraged to use them.

From the people that run community programs that are accessible and celebrate community diversity, to the people who are in customer service who create a welcoming and supportive environment for all.

From the people who share information about healthy eating to those who check that dining venues and facilities are safe for use.

From those who plan for development of our cities and towns to provide housing and employment opportunities, to those who link people with housing and employment services.





From those who run programs and provide safe places in community centres and libraries to those who connect people with services to support them at home.

Councils in the region are of varying sizes and have differing capacities to deliver public health activities. By collaborating in regional health planning there is a great opportunity to share information and resources and programs to improve regional outcomes.

## Our regions' population and public health

Sources: PHIDU 2019 Population Health Profile and ABS Census 2006 and 2016.

Comparisons to the Greater Adelaide region where relevant.

<p><b>Population</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>70,123 people</b></li> <li>• Forecast to increase by 25% (23,359 people) by 2036</li> <li>• Larger proportions of people aged 5 to 19 years and 45 to 74 years</li> <li>• Smaller proportions of people aged 85 years and over and 20 to 45 years</li> </ul>
<p><b>Age</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Region's population is ageing</li> <li>• Most growth in retirees, seniors and elderly</li> <li>• Slowest growth in infants and children</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower % of people self-assess their health as fair or poor</li> <li>• <b>Lower % of adults (&lt; half) meet daily fruit consumption guidelines</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher % of adults experiencing psychological distress</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher % of males</b>, and lower % of females <b>report mental health problems</b></li> <li>• <b>Markedly higher % of clients of community mental health service</b></li> <li>• <b>Slightly higher % of type 2 diabetes prevalent</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher % of smokers</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher % of obese adults – highest in women</b></li> <li>• <b>Twice the death rate in people aged 15-24 years</b></li> <li>• Lower % of people having trouble accessing healthcare</li> <li>• <b>Higher % of suicides</b></li> <li>• Lower % of Home and Community Care clients living alone or speaking a language other than English at home</li> <li>• Marginally higher % of people feel they get support in times of crisis</li> <li>• Higher % feel safe walking alone after dark</li> <li>• <b>Higher % of people being physically inactive (but below the Regional SA rate)</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>Disability and long-term illness</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A similar % of people needing assistance with core activities</li> <li>• A similar % of people providing unpaid care</li> <li>• <b>A larger % of people under 65 years needing assistance with core activities</b></li> <li>• A smaller % of people over 65 years needing assistance with core activities</li> <li>• Slightly lower % of people receiving a Disability Support Pension</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early life and childhood</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower % of children living in low income welfare dependent households</li> <li>• <b>Higher % of women smoking during pregnancy</b></li> <li>• Higher % of children consuming an adequate fruit intake</li> <li>• Lower % of children who are clients of the Adolescent Mental Health Service</li> <li>• Lower % of children are obese</li> <li>• A higher proportion of 5 year olds are fully immunised</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lower supply of residential aged care places</b></li> <li>• <b>Lower supply of social housing</b></li> <li>• Similar % of low income households under mortgage stress</li> <li>• Similar % of low income households under rental stress</li> <li>• Lower % of households receiving rent relief</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultural diversity and language proficiency</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower % of people born in predominantly non-English speaking countries</li> <li>• Significantly lower % of people not speaking English well or at all</li> <li>• Slightly lower % of people who recognise themselves as of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</li> <li>• <b>Higher % of people are not accepting of other cultures</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Employment, income and education</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A similar level of socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>• Significantly lower % of people receiving unemployment benefits</li> <li>• <b>Markedly high % of 16 year olds not in full time secondary education</b></li> <li>• <b>Lower % of school leavers enrolled in a University</b></li> <li>• <b>Slightly lower % of young people earning or learning</b></li> <li>• <b>Slightly higher % receive an Age Pension or held a Pensioner Concession Card</b></li> <li>• Lower % of people holding Health Care Cards</li> <li>• <b>Lower % of households with access to a motor vehicle</b></li> </ul>

## Key challenges for regional public health planning

Consideration of the demographic and public health trends for the region has identified the following key challenges that should be considered by the next regional plan.

### 1. Encouraging healthy lifestyles

Adult obesity, unhealthy diets, lack of exercise and smoking are an issue across the region. Obesity is more prevalent in women and smoking during pregnancy is as high as 20%. Obesity in children in Gawler and Adelaide Plains was more prevalent than in Greater Adelaide.

*How can councils support the adults and children to eat well and exercise more, and support people to quit smoking?*

### 2. Improving mental health and psychological stress

People in the community need support to manage their high levels of psychological stress and mental health. A high rate of people are clients of community mental health service and the rate of suicide is higher than Greater Adelaide. Adult men in particular are reporting mental health problems. Although stress and mental health is a greater issue for adults regionally, Gawler has a high rate of clients to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

*How can councils add value to the health outcomes of the high number of adults and children already accessing mental health services or prevent people reaching that point?*

### 3. Youth engagement and wellbeing

Fewer young people (>16 years) in the region are earning or learning. Compared to Greater Adelaide a markedly higher rate of 16 year olds are not in full time secondary education and a lower % of school leavers enrol in a University. Sadly, death in young people is more common -two times the rate of Greater Adelaide- and the majority of deaths were from preventable causes (eg. suicide, road accidents, poisoning and assault).

*How can councils support young people to be more engaged and what is the role of local government in reducing avoidable deaths?*

### 4. Supporting an ageing population

The proportion of people over the age of 65 in the region is increasing and there is a low supply of residential aged care places.

*What can councils do to ensure its neighbourhoods, facilities and services are accessible and inclusive to older people and provide opportunities for them to be engaged in community life?  
How can these be kept affordable for those on a pension?*

## 5. Adapting to Climate change

Climate change can impact a community's physical and mental health, lifestyle and budgets. It is also a Priority Area of the State Public Health Plan.

*How can the region best manage impacts and maintain vitality and prosperity?*

## 6. Responding to COVID 19

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned our lives upside down. The response of Local Governments has played a critical part in ensuring the early success of the response to virus in South Australia, however with the ongoing risk of outbreaks there will be challenges to maintain vigilance and avoid complacency across the community, particularly in the likely scenario of a protracted pandemic.

*What can the region learn from the experience to ensure that its facilities and services are well equipped to protect the community and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks?*

## 7. Supporting housing affordability and availability

In addition to having a low supply of residential aged care places, the region has a lower rate of supply social housing. Although the region is relatively more advantaged than Greater Adelaide, it has a similar proportion of low income households suffering mortgage or rent stress.

*With a growing population, should councils be influencing the supply of affordable and social housing options in the region?*

## 8. Access and inclusion

The region has a higher proportion of young people living with disability and additionally an ageing population. Also more people do not have access to a motor vehicle.

*How can councils ensure the accessibility of its services and neighbourhoods?*



### More information

View the full background paper and learn more about how to get involved or the results of engagement (once completed)

[www.gawler.sa.gov.au/your-voice/regionalplan](http://www.gawler.sa.gov.au/your-voice/regionalplan).