Growth, Investment and Visitor Economy Framework

2025 - 2030



District Council of Grant

Acknowledgement of Country

It is a privilege to be standing on Boandik country.

We acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the development of all peoples in the country we live in and share together - Australia.

Executive Summary

The District Council of Grant's Growth, Investment and Visitor Economy Framework is a document created to guide Council's delivery of its economy goal:

A growing and vibrant economy, optimising our diverse primary industries and unique natural assets.

It establishes responsible and proactive services and partnerships that Council will pursue to promote and facilitate balanced growth in the District while attracting compatible investment.

In addition to specific projects and initiatives, the Framework incorporates the broader principles of inclusive economic development to encourage a diverse range of stakeholders to invest in, or benefit from, the wealth of our region.

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Introduction

Overview

In 2024, the District Council of Grant recorded an Estimated Resident Population of 9,140. The District is predominantly rural, with small and growing townships. Forestry and associated industries in the District are major employers and exporters for South Australia. Natural assets and an emerging arts and culture sector underpin a vibrant visitor economy. Flagship events like the annual Generations In Jazz festival, are distinctive cultural assets that enhance liveability within the District and across the Limestone Coast region.

Covering 1,898 km² of South Australia's most highly productive agricultural land, the District supports diverse agricultural enterprises including dairying, livestock, wool, grain and horticulture. In the south, Port MacDonnell is recognised as Australia's "Southern Rock Lobster Capital". While commercial fishing activity in the District largely occurs from Port MacDonnell and Carpenter Rocks, the District's extensive southern coastline offers future potential for blue economy innovation.

Strategically located between Adelaide and Melbourne and surrounding Mount Gambier, the District leverages key transport routes, a regional airport and strong lifestyle appeal, positioning it for future growth.

Working Together to Prepare this Framework

The most significant input to shape this plan has been the key perspectives drawn through collaboration with our business community stakeholders and our Elected Members.

Targeted engagement was undertaken with these key stakeholders using input drawn from survey results to inform opportunities and challenges faced by not only existing businesses, but also those who seek to invest in the region.

The workshop participants identified key opportunities and challenges for the District Council of Grant in addressing the needs of small business and visitor economy, and those involved in industry, farming, investing and renewable energy.

In October 2025, Mayor Kylie Boston welcomed a group of key stakeholders to a presentation of "what we heard" from the survey and workshops, and the Framework's actions.

The District Council of Grant would like to thank the Cross Border Commissioner, Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast and industry stakeholders who took the time to complete the survey and attend the workshops that informed the actions in this Framework.

Purpose of the Growth, Investment and Visitor Economy Framework

Economic development is the structured process through which a community achieves sustainable growth and improved prosperity. It relies on understanding the economic environment, its people, the assets and resources that support existing businesses while attracting new investment.

Attracting new and emerging industries must not compromise the needs of established and often intergenerational businesses. Achieving this balance requires targeted workforce strategies to address critical skill shortages. Furthermore, stakeholder engagement highlighted that workforce attraction is constrained by unmet housing needs, not only affordability but also the availability of diverse housing options.

The Growth, Investment and Visitor Economy Framework (the Framework) establishes a clear approach for Council to meet its responsibilities to visitors and industry, as outlined in the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act). It is part of a suite of strategic documents produced by Council to guide sustained economic and population growth for the region. The Framework and accompanying suite of documents, aim to guide sustainable, compatible growth across the District.

The suite includes the documents described in the table below:

Strategic Document	Overview
Strategic Land Use Priorities Project	Identifies where the District's growing population of up to 15,000 will be housed, without changing the character of existing townships, or compromising valuable farming land. This document sought to strike a balance between increasing the availability of housing for a growing population while preserving the best agricultural land for its highest and best purpose. It was a strong advocacy tool for Council to advocate for land use policy in the Regional Plan.
Inner Townships Master Plan	Identifies public realm improvements to meet the needs of growing townships as they reach population milestones.
River and Coastal Townships Master Plan	A Master Plan to guide future development of public spaces within the River and Coastal townships to enhance liveability and tourism appeal.
Port MacDonnell Urban Design Framework & Precinct Master Plans	The urban design framework and master plan guide future development of public spaces within the township of Port MacDonnell and to enhance public spaces and provide the greatest benefit for the community.
Mount Gambier Regional Airport Master Plan	Proudly owned and operated by District Council of Grant, the Airport is ready for growth, and this plan outlines key projects and initiatives.

Strategic Document	Overview
Mount Gambier & Districts Saleyards Master Plan	Proudly owned and operated by District Council of Grant, the Saleyards have been in operation since the mid-1970s and generate considerable economic flow-on for the local economy- this Plan identifies planned upgrades and maintenance.
Community Development Plan *(to be created)*	The final plan in the suite that delivers population prosperity, the Community Plan will recognise the role that civic engagement and volunteering have in maintaining wellbeing, and resilient communities.

The above plans are underpinned by Council's Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plans, Strategic Management Plan, and Annual Business Plan and Budget.

The Framework is also strategically aligned in the context of Regional Plans as listed below:

Strategic Document	Overview
Limestone Coast Regional Trails Plan and Feasibility Strategy	The plan highlights opportunities for various trails that span the Limestone Coast Region. It is possible for District Council of Grant to implement local portions of the identified trails, as part of a wider network.
Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy	The Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy is a long-term plan developed by Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast and the Limestone Coast Local Government Association to guide the region's sustainable growth over the next 15 to 30 years. It identifies priorities such as accommodating an expected population increase, providing diverse housing options, protecting key industries like agriculture and forestry, boosting tourism through improved transport, and building resilience to climate change.
Limestone Coast Regional Plan	The Limestone Coast Regional Plan delivers a planning vision for the region through to 2051.The Plan identifies land and long-term infrastructure needs to support sustainable growth within the region. It reflects the unique and changing profile of the region's population, environment and economy across its rural areas and varied townships.

Economic Development Roles of Council

The Strategic Plan 2024-2034 identified the five goals below that represent the collective vision of the Community, Elected Members and Council Staff.

	**Community:** A connected, inclusive, resilient and engaged community
	**Economy:** A growing and vibrant economy, optimising our diverse primary industries and unique natural assets
	**Environment:** A sustainable district that values the natural qualities and heritage that underpin our health, liveability and economy
	**Infrastructure:** Reliable and contemporary infrastructure that meets the needs of our community, industry and visitors
	**Council:** A strategic and financially sustainable Council that values its people and delivers quality services

Council fulfills many roles in attracting, supporting, providing information to and regulating growth, investment and the visitor economy in the District. Council's core roles can be described as Advocate, Facilitator, Partner, Information/Services, Assets and Regulator.

The Growth, Investment and Visitor Economy Framework has been developed to show how each action aligns with the Strategic Plan goals and the identified roles of Council.

A Council must act to uphold and promote observance of a number of principles in the performance of its roles and functions. The Act highlights the principles to be observed by a Council and outlines requirements for collaboration.

Council acknowledges there are many partners in the region with goals that align to the economic growth of the region. Where possible, to optimise return on investment, Council will avoid duplication of efforts by partnering with organisations with aligned goals. This includes partnering with and referring industry and business to Regional Development Australia and/or relevant state government departments for high level industry advice where relevant, concentrating on the levers that Council is in the best position to pull in order to incentivise, support or facilitate investment and development.

Profile

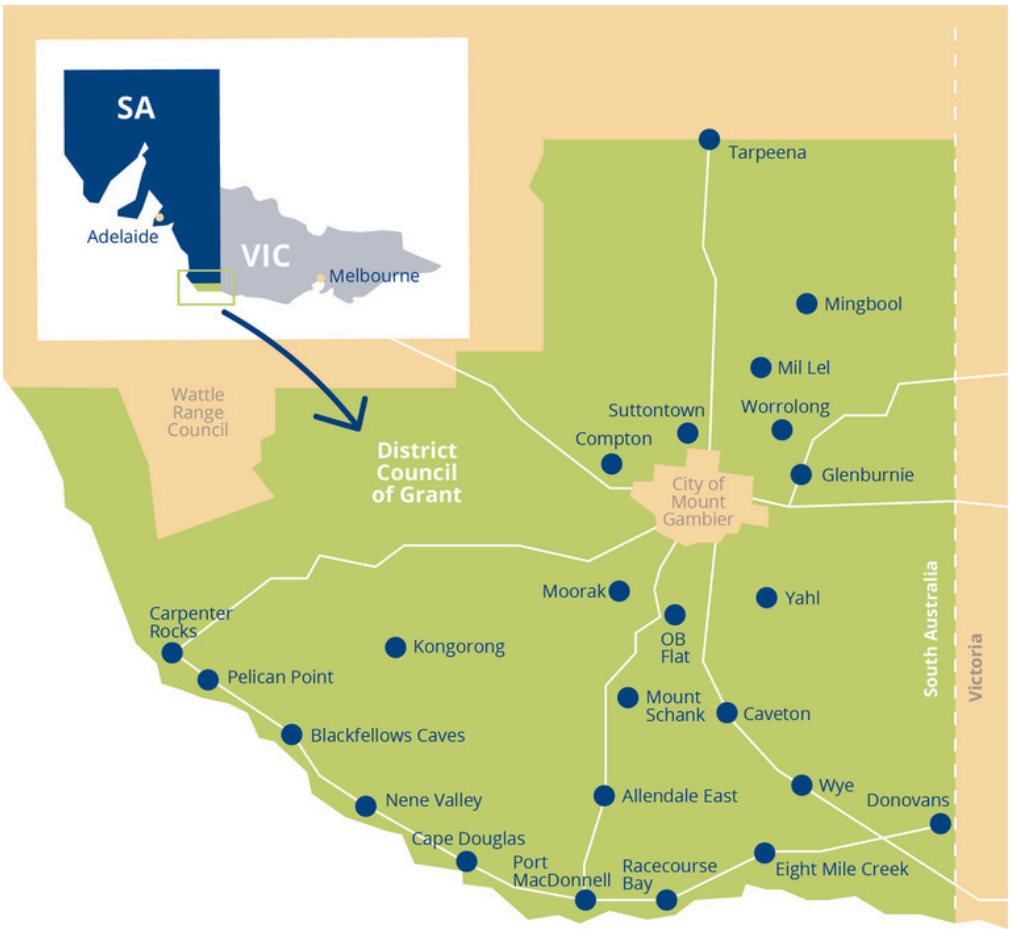
Regional Context

The District Council of Grant is the southernmost Council of South Australia's Limestone Coast region and extends as far east as the state border which is shared with Victoria. It provides a gateway to the air space above via the Mount Gambier Regional Airport that it proudly owns and operates, and access to the seas of the southern ocean via boat ramps and jetties.

Forestry is a major economic influence and employer in the broader locality, and in that regard the District is well placed as part of the Green Triangle Forestry region. The Mount Gambier Regional Airport plays a significant role in protecting southern Australia's multi-billion-dollar agriculture and forestry industry, which is of national significance, via waterbombing aircraft and water tanks on standby throughout the bushfire season.

The District encompasses several exceptional natural environmental features such as the Little Blue Lake and the Ramsar sites at Ewens Ponds and Piccaninnie Ponds; State Heritage listed Mount Schank; and several unique caves and sinkholes. It includes authentic coastal tourist towns such as Port MacDonnell and Carpenter Rocks, and is traversed by the Aussie Camino walking trail. Furthermore, it is adjacent the regional city services of Mount Gambier with popular Limestone Coast attractions such as the world renown Coonawarra Wine Region and Naracoorte Caves a daytrip away.

Further afield over the Victorian border, international attractions such as Budj Bim, the Grampians and the Great Ocean Road are other key attractors. Budj Bim is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage-listed cultural landscape in southwest Victoria, Australia, that is a 30,000-year-old dormant volcano and the source of a vast aquaculture system developed by the Gunditjmara people.

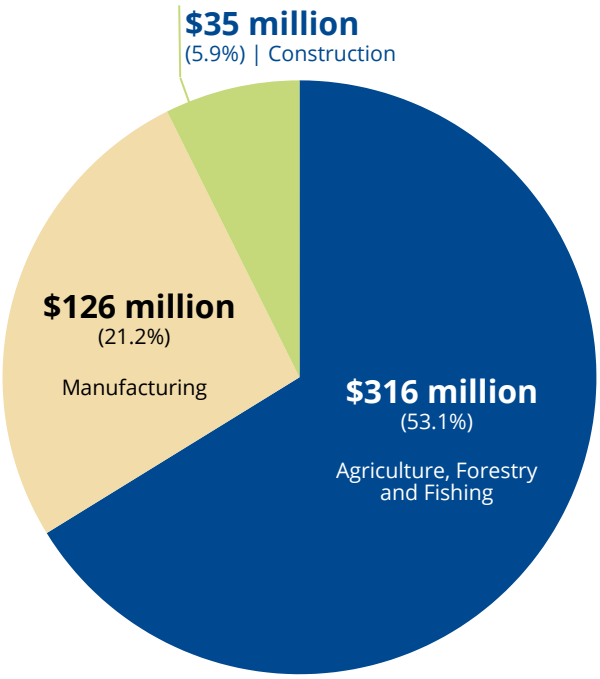


Economic Profile

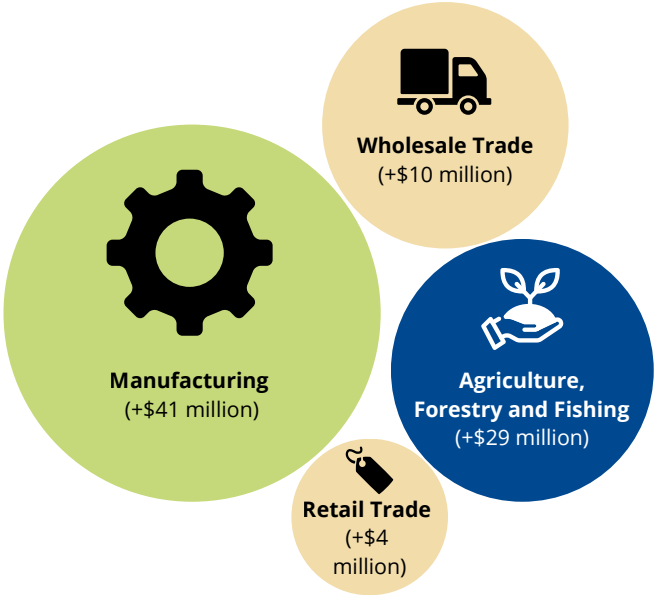
In the year ending June 2024, the District Council of Grant's Gross Regional Product reached $0.69 billion, reflecting a robust 11.2% growth from the previous year.

Industry Composition and Value Added

The region's economy is heavily concentrated in three key sectors:



Together, these sectors contributed $477 million, accounting for 80.2% of total industry value added in 2023/2024. Over the five-year period from 2018/2019 to 2023/2024, total value added increased by $96 million, with the most significant growth in:



Employment and Industry Specialisation

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is both the most productive and largest employer, generating $316 million in value and supporting 1,279 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs in 2023/2024. Manufacturing (853 jobs) and Construction (245 jobs) follow, with these three sectors employing 72.8% of the local workforce.

The Financial and Insurance Services sector had the highest productivity per worker at $299,442, followed by Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing at $246,183 per worker.

Regional and State Contributions

The District Council of Grant plays a significant role in South Australia's resource-based industries:

- Forestry and Logging: 21.5% of South Australia's employment and 21.1% of value added
- Fishing, Hunting and Trapping: 11.1% of South Australia's employment and 13.5% of value added
- Wood Product Manufacturing: 17.3% of South Australia's employment and 19.9% of value added

Combined with the City of Mount Gambier, the two Councils represent over 50% of South Australia's employment and value added in Forestry and Logging, and over 55% in Wood Product Manufacturing.

Business Profile

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing also dominates the business landscape, comprising 47.2% of all registered businesses in the region, well above the state average of 9.9%. While most businesses have a turnover below $2 million, up to 8 businesses exceed $10 million in annual turnover.

Competitive Advantage

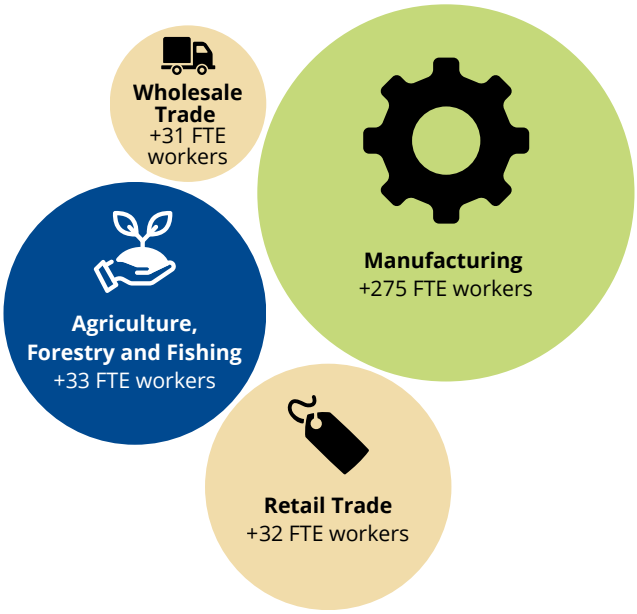
A shift-share analysis highlights Manufacturing as the sector with the strongest regional competitive effect between 2018/2019 and 2023/2024, reinforcing its strategic importance for future growth initiatives. In the Wood Product Manufacturing sector in particular, District Council of Grant contributed 17.3% of South Australia's employment and 19.9% of its value added, indicating a high location quotient.

Occupations, Employment and Qualifications

Between 2018/2019 and 2023/2024, the FTE workforce grew by 456 workers within the District Council of Grant, reflecting a positive trajectory in local employment.

Key Industry Employment Growth

The most significant increases in FTE jobs were observed in:



This growth highlights the strategic importance of Manufacturing as a driver of local employment and economic resilience.

Workforce Composition and Skills

- Managers represent 24.9% of the local workforce, exceeding the South Australian average of 21.4%, indicating a strong leadership and decision-making presence in the region.
- Tertiary qualifications are held by 21.9% of resident workers, supporting the region's capacity for innovation and skilled labour.
- Over 50% of resident workers are aged 45 years and above, suggesting a mature and experienced workforce.

Employment Sustainability

- The jobs-to-residents ratio in 2023/2024 was 0.78, indicating fewer local jobs than resident workers. However, Manufacturing stood out with a ratio of 1.91, demonstrating its capacity to attract and retain labour locally.
- The unemployment rate in 2021 was 2.8%, significantly lower than the South Australian average of 5.4%, reflecting strong labour market conditions and economic stability.

Household Expenditure and Relative Advantage

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas is a measure of Socio-Economic Status. The Australian Bureau of Statistics produces Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas data for Local Government Areas. The mean score for Australian Local Government Areas is 1000, with any score less than that representing relative disadvantage, while scores higher than that represent the opposite. The Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy 2023 - 2029 identifies that the District Council of Grant Local Government Area is considered "advantaged" as it scored above 1000.

In 2023/2024, household expenditure on utilities was $5,054 in the District Council of Grant, higher compared to South Australia.

Tourism in Focus

Tourism continues to play a vital role in the District Council of Grant's economy, contributing significantly to local business activity and employment.

Economic Contribution

According to the National Economics microsimulation model based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics Tourism Satellite Account, in 2023/2024, the total tourism sales in the District Council of Grant reached $39.9 million and value added from tourism was $20.5 million. This highlights tourism as a key economic driver with strong potential for further growth.

Workforce Profile

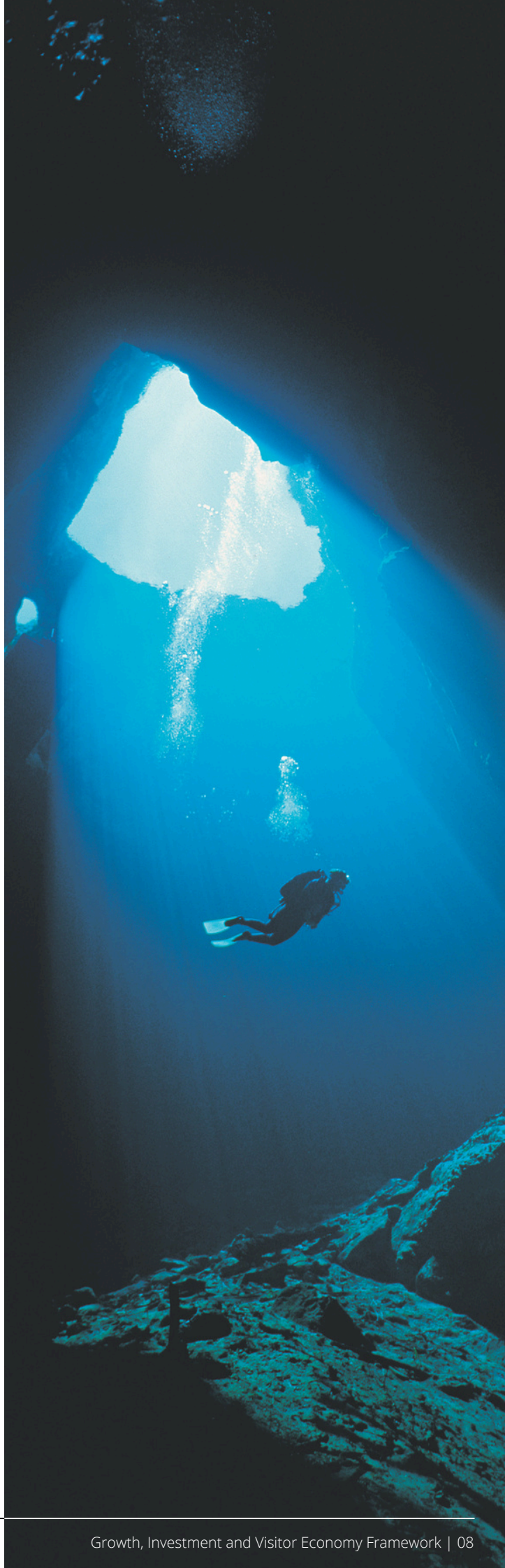
In 2021, the tourism workforce in the District Council of Grant comprised 127 people, with 19.7% employed full-time and 79.5% employed part-time or temporarily away from work.

This reflects the sector's flexible employment structure and its role in supporting diverse workforce participation.

Regional and National Context

The Limestone Coast region, which includes the District Council of Grant, was ranked among the top 20 most visited destinations in Australia, underscoring its national significance and appeal. Data from Tourism Research Australia indicates that approximately 40% of international visitors to Australia travel to visit friends and relatives with another 40% being holiday makers.

This presents a significant latent opportunity to expand both segments through targeted marketing, infrastructure investment and experience development.





Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

The following items were identified by stakeholders who completed the survey designed to inform this Framework and further validated through the industry workshops.

The workshop groupings identified that some issues and opportunities are shared by small business and tourism, while other concerns and opportunities require a coordinated approach that balances the needs of Industry, Farming, Investment and Renewable Energy sector stakeholders.

Industry, Farming, Investment and Renewables

Strengths

- Strong fishing and agriculture sectors.
- Valuing primary production.
- Strategic location midway between Adelaide and Melbourne.
- Balanced regional economy.
- Strong community spirit and connected local people.
- Safe and stable environment including rainfall.
- Importance of Council's Strategic Land Use Priorities Project setting clear expectations for property investors.
- Desirable lifestyle - Coastal living, sea/tree-change appeal, and boutique country-living residential areas with proximity to regional centre services.

Opportunities

- Infrastructure for industry: Freight hubs, industrial precincts, and support for agri-processing and non-agri industries.
- Engage youth and promote education pathways.
- Encourage more local processing including milk powder, furniture and jams.
- Value-adding boutique products including cheese, yoghurt and other on-farm produce.
- Regenerative agriculture.
- Sheep and cattle - Mount Gambier & District Saleyards improvement.
- Feeding a growing population.
- Quick and seamless planning approvals.
- Business migration from cities - opportunity to incentivise relocation due to land taxes and over-regulation, especially from Victoria.
- New and emerging opportunities related to the state's net zero goals.
- Local business involvement in renewable energy construction, accommodation and services and raise awareness of sustainable energy transition.
- Energy transition - build community awareness and encourage development to focus on preferred locations that are compatible with existing land uses.

Challenges

- Ageing workforce (50% over 45 years).
- Water resource tensions with forestry and challenges with water legislation and self-supply.
- Lack of available and affordable housing putting a handbrake on the economy.
- Demand for non-traditional housing, accessible housing, and worker accommodation to support business growth.
- Significant increase in population will require investment in roads, infrastructure, amenities.
- Housing will be a key growth area in the next 10 years.
- Skills shortages and difficulty attracting lifestyle migrants without adequate medical services.
- Loss of good labour to fly-in fly-out and employment at prison complex in region.
- The unknowns of energy transition.
- Cost of transport.

Threats

- Environmental pressures and climate variability.
- Economic dependence on one or two key sectors.
- Labour shortages and reliance on backpackers.
- Lack of long-term planning and investment in infrastructure.
- Expansion of housing into horticultural land.
- Distance from Adelaide and reliance on road transport.

Visitor Economy, Small Business and Volunteer Involving Organisations

Strengths

- Limestone Coast is a top 20 national tourism destination.
- Unique natural assets including coastline, sinkholes and marine algae.
- Safe and stable environment.
- Authentic offerings aligned to the South Australian Tourism Commission's *Simple Pleasures* campaign.
- Port MacDonnell is a Top 10 recreational fishing location in South Australia.
- Ability to drive on beaches.
- Area includes the Southernmost point of South Australia
- Potential for high visibility of stars on clear nights.

Opportunities

- Expand international visitor markets.
- Scale successful local enterprises.
- Promote unique natural and historical assets and experiences.
- Invest in tourism and community infrastructure.
- Engage youth and promote education pathways.
- Leverage airline partnerships through the Mount Gambier Regional Airport.
- Improve signage and tourism infrastructure, such as RV-friendly infrastructure.
- Need for better integration with Mount Gambier Including maps and transport.
- Volunteer mentoring - Opportunity to support youth through community-led programs.
- Seasonality is improving but more promotion of off-peak products and experiences is needed.
- Potential to revive community events (eg. Bay Festival) with external facilitation.
- Council support for event administration and coordinated marketing campaigns such as "Lobster Season" promotion.
- De-risk tourism start-ups with community loans and seed funding.
- Repeat successful models like the Campervan and Motor Club of Australia Rally bus tours.
- Increase listings of bookable experiences and use of platforms like the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

Challenges

- Seasonality.
- Limited full-time tourism employment.
- High turnover due to the transient nature of tourism staff.
- Time-intensive onboarding and managing employee expectations.
- Lack of housing availability for lower / less secure income earners, with some caravan parks balancing a tourism role, with providing shelter as long-term affordable accommodation.
- Demand for non-traditional housing and worker accommodation to support business growth.
- Need for seasonal / tourism worker accommodation.
- Rising operational costs - Wages, electricity, bank fees, insurance and compliance.
- No public transport access within the district.

Threats

- Limited regional visibility compared to competitors.
- A lack of emergency services volunteers in the younger age brackets.
- Ageing cohort in volunteer-based tourism organisations and lack of new volunteers.



Growth, Investment and Visitor Economy Action Plan

The actions in this plan have been developed in response to the feedback received through the stakeholder engagement designed to inform this framework.

The actions have been created to balance aspiration with realism and be achievable in the context of long-term financial planning and staff resourcing, leaning heavily on partnerships and facilitating private industry action and identifying avenues of advocacy influence.

The actions are grouped under six headings which relate to the way Council intends to respond to each of the key themes that arose through the stakeholder engagement sessions.

1. Making it Easier to Do Business
2. Partnering
3. Facilitating
4. Providing Services
5. Managing Assets
6. Region-Wide Advocacy



Making it Easier to Do Business

What we heard

We heard that stakeholders would like easier access to information, less forms and improved connection to referral partners.

Stakeholders identified opportunity to improve information available to support business and provide clearer communication pathways, and a desire for less paperwork.

Suggestions included reinstating or advocating for Field Industry Development Officers (from State Government), providing a directory of state government services and contacts, and helping businesses navigate state-level regulations and support programs.

Feedback from visitor economy stakeholders suggested that documentary-style promotional content could help to raise the area's tourism profile.

Short Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Review and improve information available on council website.	
Promote economic development 'concierge service' for unsolicited proposals, and commercial and tourism development applications in the District.	
Review and simplify brochures about undertaking development and activities that require permits and approvals in the District.	
Promote local and small business providers (services, accommodation and hospitality) as part of Council's procurement processes and for patronage by big business who are developing in the region.	
Annual Governance and Grants information session for not-for-profit groups in the region.	
Host regular industry, or sector-specific, networking events. Each event will focus on a topical theme of interest to the sector (such as Climate Resilience) and may be in partnership with other stakeholder groups such as Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast, Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce and City of Mount Gambier.	

Long Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Promote the District for its desirable lifestyle and growing population to attract skills and workforce to the area.	
Create information sheets on key industry sectors and create an easy reference regarding referral to regional organisations and/or state departments.	

Key Stakeholders and Partnerships

Avoid unnecessary duplication and leverage existing information and expertise available in regional organisations, and state and federal government departments such as:

- AusIndustry
- Department of Trade and Investment
- Department of State Development
- Limestone Coast Local Government Association
- Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce
- Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast
- South Australian Tourism Commission



Partnering

What we heard

Availability of housing, and affordable, diverse housing options, was highlighted as an issue constraining economic development. Growth in areas like Compton was seen as both a challenge and an opportunity. Leading to suggestions to continue to advocate for effective land use planning to protect prime agriculture land.

Visitor Economy stakeholder feedback reminded council that visitors do not see state or Council boundaries and encouraged partnerships that span Council boundaries and borders to promote regional identity and strengths through campaigns and storytelling.

The natural environment was highlighted as a strength to be protected and celebrated. Visitor Economy stakeholders highlighted the need for more "experience" products and suggested Council promote a coordinated "visitor economy – lobster experience" with a professionally designed promotional campaign.

Short Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Partner with the City of Mount Gambier and Department for Housing and Urban Development - Planning and Land Use Services to advocate for the protection of valuable agriculture land in the preparation of a Greater Mount Gambier Master Plan and consistent with Council's Strategic Land Use Priorities Plan.	
Proactively liaise with relevant State departments to advocate Council's Land Use priorities as per the Strategic Land Use Priorities Plan, promoting compatible development on Airport land, and preventing incompatible development of land surrounding the Mount Gambier Regional Airport.	
Participate in a regional initiative with the Department for Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), Landscape Board and Department for Environment and Water to encourage visitor stewardship, raise awareness of, and manage the impact of visitation and primary industries on natural destinations	

Long Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Liaise with Council's First Nations Advisory Group to identify suitable economic development partnership opportunities.	
Pursue cross border collaboration for tourism outcomes.	
Pursue effective strategic tourism partnerships and linking projects, both within the Limestone Coast and across the state border to deliver tourism outcomes.	

Key Stakeholders and Partnerships

Avoid unnecessary duplication and leverage existing information and expertise available in regional organisations, and state and federal government departments such as:

- District Council of Grant's Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel
- District Council of Grant's First Nations Advisory Group
- City of Mount Gambier
- Department of Energy and Mining
- Department for Environment and Water, and Landscape Board
- Department for Housing and Urban Development - Planning and Land Use Services
- Department of State Development and Invest South Australia
- South Australian Tourism Commission



Facilitating

What we heard

Stakeholders recognised a role for Council in facilitating new investment in the right location and in bringing stakeholders from different sectors together to amplify their voices or learn from each other.

Visitor Economy stakeholders and volunteer involving organisations sought Council's assistance to provide support to event volunteers and overcome challenges such as volunteer shortages.

They also highlighted a desire to build on the success of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Rally "experience" bus tours.

Short Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Liaise with Department of Energy and Mining to identify appropriate locations for suitable renewable energy projects that are compatible with existing industry in our district and attract investment accordingly.	
Liaise with the Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel to identify economic participation opportunities and opportunities to leverage funding available in the sector for local projects and activities that facilitate accessibility and inclusion.	
Work with Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce and City of Mount Gambier to deliver "experience tours" for dispersal of visitor spend from local events such as Generation in Jazz, and major events at Borderline Speedway.	
Promote a coordinated "visitor economy – lobster experience" campaign which includes a cash-preferred theme to promote the Lobster Season.	
Provide grants assistance and/or seed funding to support the arts and cultural sector at a local and regional scale.	

Long Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Consider actions from the Regional Housing Toolkit commissioned by the Local Government Association's South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils committee, which found regional South Australians face major barriers to increasing the supply of regional housing.	

Key Stakeholders and Partnerships

Avoid unnecessary duplication and leverage existing information and expertise available in regional organisations, and state and federal government departments such as:

- District Council of Grant's Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel
- District Council of Grant's First Nations Advisory Group
- City of Mount Gambier
- Department of Energy and Mining
- Department for Environment and Water, and Landscape Board
- Department for Housing and Urban Development - Planning and Land Use Services
- Department of State Development and Invest South Australia
- Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce
- South Australian Tourism Commission



Services

What we heard

Council staff were consistently described as professional, transparent and constructive in project discussions and helpful within their scope of influence. However, while some businesses praised Council's support, others preferred minimal involvement or were unaware of how Council can assist.

This indicates opportunity for improved communication, outreach and visibility of council services, funding programs, and industry resources. Small businesses indicated cash flow and general cost of doing business as a challenge, organisations suggested Council consider measures to de-risk investment models to support new start-ups and innovative events.

Short Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Advocate for the protection and optimisation of primary production land uses in land use planning projects.	
Provide information to industries to build awarenesses of pathways to adapt to operating in a net zero economy while leading as an example through the Local Government Association Net Zero Accelerate Program.	
Pursue Development Code Amendments to facilitate rezoning to allow for increased housing in suitable areas, as per the State Planning Commission's draft Limestone Coast Regional Plan.	
Pursue opportunities and methodology for community benefit (rates equivalent) from Battery Energy Storage System projects and other renewable energy projects in the region.	
Consider becoming a Small Business Friendly Council and adhering to the Charter's three pillars: 1. Payment Terms for Small Business 2. Resolution of Disputes 3. Red Tape Reduction	
Investigate providing rate relief or business grants to incentivise preferred private investment (eg. to incentivise diversity in housing development) and/or de-risk start-up businesses.	

Long Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Review Infrastructure (Airfield) Zone in Wandilo and investigate opportunities to amend zoning to allow for land uses that support aviation activities and provide for broader employment land use, as per the State Planning Commission's draft Limestone Coast Regional Plan.	

Key Stakeholders and Partnerships

Avoid unnecessary duplication and leverage existing information and expertise available in regional organisations, and state and federal government departments such as:

- Local Government Association of South Australia
- Mount Gambier Regional Airport
- Planning and Land Use Services
- Small Business Commission of South Australia



Asset Management

What we heard

Feedback indicated the importance of safe and efficient road standards for business efficiency. Survey responses included support for Council's proposed investment in the Mount Gambier & District Saleyards upgrade. Stakeholders identified the opportunity to better leverage the Mount Gambier Regional Airport and public realm improvements.

Multiple respondents suggested Council should make tourism a core economic driver and invest in modern infrastructure: nature hubs, artistic playgrounds, walking trails and the like.

Stakeholders also suggested improved public facilities, especially at the Little Blue Lake and Port MacDonnell Foreshore, and highlighted opportunities to facilitate improved tourism outcomes with infrastructure to support untapped tourism niches like the Aussie Camino walking trail.

Short Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Pursue the Saleyards Transformation Project to assist the livestock sector and retain and grow economic flow-on benefits.	
Deliver placemaking and signage strategy, including designing spaces for accessibility and appropriate parking for people with disability and vehicles towing boats and caravans.	
Pursue suitable development outcomes for the prime catalyst development site at 55 Sea Parade, Port MacDonnell (the Old Boatyard).	

Long Term Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Deliver public realm upgrades as per Council's Inner Township Master Plan's implementation alongside population growth.	
Implement the Mount Gambier Airport Master Plan.	
Develop a district-wide Walking and Cycling Plan to implement local components of the Regional Trails Strategy and seek funding to construct priority regional tourist trail linkages to key visitor destinations.	

Advocacy Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Advocate for the development of a new industrial hub (zone) at Glenburnie to support and amplify primary industry, agri-processing and future growth in renewables and circular economy.	
Advocate to the state government for improved state managed roads to support freight logistics.	
Build a business case to advocate for a Mount Gambier bypass that improves efficiency of freight and industrial transport.	

Key Stakeholders and Partnerships

Avoid unnecessary duplication and leverage existing information and expertise available in regional organisations, and state and federal government departments such as:

- Department for Housing and Urban Development- Planning and Land Use Services
- Federal Government
- Limestone Coast Local Government Association
- Neighbouring Councils (City of Mount Gambier, Glenelg Shire, Wattle Range Council)
- Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast
- State Government



Region-Wide Advocacy

Actions	Strategic Plan Goal
Investigate options for improved regional transport to support education and healthcare accessibility, and community connectivity.	
Identify council and/or private sector led housing projects or pilots across the region to be delivered in partnership with the Office for Regional Housing.	
Land use planning that meets the needs of the Limestone Coast community as part of the State Government Regional Planning Process, and consistent with Council's Strategic Land Use Priorities Plan.	
Planning, incentives and investment in appropriate housing and enabling infrastructure.	
Regional and Mount Gambier public transport.	
Investment in community infrastructure.	

Key Stakeholders and Partnerships

Avoid unnecessary duplication and leverage existing information and expertise available in regional organisations, and state and federal government departments such as:

- Limestone Coast Local Government Association
- Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce
- City of Mount Gambier
- Neighbouring Councils (City of Mount Gambier, Glenelg Shire, Wattle Range Council)
- Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast

Strategic Alignment

Federal Documents and Plans

- Accessible Tourism 2024
- Ag2050
- The Future of Global Tourism Demand by Fiftyfive5, for Tourism Australia
- The WELCOME Framework
- Thrive 2030 Strategy

Regional Documents and Plans

- Limestone Coast Destination Management Plan
- Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy
- Limestone Coast Regional Trails Master Plan & Implementation Feasibility Study
- Mount Gambier and Districts Business Plan 2022 - 2024
- Mount Gambier Regional Airport Master Plan 2025 - 2035

State Documents and Plans

- Agritourism Strategy 2025
- Limestone Coast Regional Plan
- Recreational Fishing Tourism Strategy 2030
- South Australia Cruise Brochure 2025
- South Australian Economic Statement: The South Australian Government's strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.
- South Australian International Tourism Strategy 2025
- South Australia's Net Zero Strategy 2024 – 2030
- South Australia Partnering for Growth
- South Australia's Small Business Strategy 2023 – 2030

Helpful Organisations and Departments

- Consumer and Business Services
- Department of State Development - Invest SA
- Department for Industry, Innovation and Science
- Office of the Industry Advocate
- South Australian Tourism Commission
- Small Business Commission SA
- Tourism Industry Council South Australia

Appendix One

Council Infrastructure and Facilities Information Sheets



Mount Gambier Regional Airport

The Mount Gambier Regional Airport is proudly owned and operated by the District Council of Grant offering direct flights to Adelaide and Melbourne, and is effectively the Limestone Coast's gateway to the world. Runway facilities are also available for private jet flights.

Hospitality and Accessibility

The departure lounge includes:

- Aero Espresso café, when flights are operating, which also provides catering options
- Accessible changing places compliant bathroom facility
- The Hangar Art Gallery

Available to rent or lease:

- Private jet hangars
- Terminal space for promotions (eg. new vehicle displays)
- A natural light-filled bookable meeting space (with views of the runway) and includes a big screen monitor for presentations on request

Also available onsite is an aircraft refueling facility, waterbombing tanks for aerial firefighting, taxi services and car hires.

Approximately 80,000 people fly in and out of the Mount Gambier Regional Airport each year and is a major gateway to the Limestone Coast and Western Victoria. The facility is located in Wandilo, approximately a 10-minute drive from the centre of Mount Gambier, South Australia's largest regional city.

The Airport is well serviced by Regional Express Airlines and Qantas which provide regular return passenger services between Mount Gambier and both Melbourne and Adelaide. Qantas offers passengers on connecting overseas flights the opportunity to check their bags through to their final destination, which could be on the other side of the world.

Users include:

- Local residents across the Limestone Coast region and south-west Victoria
- Business tourists commuting to Adelaide or Melbourne
- Students and families traveling for education or personal reasons
- Fly-in fly-out workers, although this is less prominent than in mining-heavy regions
- Family and friends visiting the Limestone Coast region

The Airport acts as an inward gateway to the Limestone Coast region, and helps facilitate short-stay and event-based tourism, along with other key visitor economy attractions, including:

- Nature-based tourism
- Wine and food tourism (locally and with travel to world-renown Coonawarra wine region)
- Cultural heritage and Indigenous tourism experiences

Mount Gambier Regional Airport Master Plan 2025–2035

The Mount Gambier Regional Airport Master Plan 2025–2035 outlines several key future initiatives:

Short-Term Projects

- Playground installation for families
- Carpark extension to accommodate more visitors
- Renewable energy systems to improve sustainability

Long-Term Projects

- Runway upgrades to support larger aircraft (which accommodate more passengers)
- Onsite commercial precinct for retail and food services
- Flying school and aviation history displays to attract aviation enthusiasts

Economic Development Activation Opportunities

The Mount Gambier Regional Airport has a meeting room available for hire, and also now includes The Hangar Gallery which is available for art exhibitions. There is space in the main airport lounge check-in area which can be rented for commercial displays (such as new vehicle displays).

Greater use of the terminal building and Airport facilities outside of regular public transport flight times is encouraged. Activation of the terminal for trade shows, product samplings, souvenirs, promotion of tourist destinations and experiences across the Limestone Coast is envisaged.

Advocacy

The District Council of Grant, as owner and operator of the Mount Gambier Regional Airport, has committed to working with the Limestone Coast Local Government Association, South Australian Tourism Commission, City of Mount Gambier and airlines to develop package tours that facilitate economic uplift to local tourism accommodation and experience providers and bring international tourists to the region.

The District Council of Grant is also engaging City of Mount Gambier as a partner to:

- Advocate for fairer airline pricing and reliable flight schedules
- Support Federal investment in regional aviation infrastructure
- Promote tourism through regional partnerships

This collaboration seeks to secure the airport as a strategic asset for the region's tourism, business and health travel, and as a facility with export potential, particularly, for high value-short shelf life products.



Mount Gambier & District Saleyards

The Mount Gambier & District Saleyards is proudly owned and operated by the District Council of Grant. The Saleyards are located at Glenburnie, on the Princes Highway, approximately 10km east of Mount Gambier and close the South Australian and Victorian state border.

Stock Sales are held on Wednesday each week starting 8:00am in the Summer months and 9:00am in the Winter months.

The Saleyards are considered essential infrastructure for sustaining the region's agricultural economy and community identity, with significant flow-on effects to the local retail and visitor economy. The facility supports local farmers and livestock agents, transport and logistics providers, and hospitality and service industries.

Hospitality and Accessibility

The Mount Gambier & District Saleyards provides a canteen with hearty meals available on Sale Days.

A small board room to seat around 12 people with the canteen area also available seating up to 80 people in association with purposes aligned to Primary Production or the needs of Saleyards patrons.

Droving and feeding (of stock) is also available for a fee.

Memberships and Accreditation

The Saleyards are a member of the:

- National Saleyards Quality Assurance Accredited Saleyard
- Australian Livestock Markets Association
- Australian Livestock Saleyards Association Inc
- Meat and Livestock Australia

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is in place at the Mount Gambier & District Saleyards, and all stock must have their NLIS tag attached. The Mount Gambier & District Saleyards are also European Union (EU) Prime eligible. This means that EU eligible cattle be sold at the weekly sale.

There are many benefits of selling livestock at the Saleyards which include:

- Monthly store cattle market
- Very strong buyer competition due to large stock numbers
- Rubber matting in selling pens which reduces stress and sore feet
- NLIS Scanning
- Computerised weighbridge
- Market reports from the National Livestock Reporting Service
- Many holding paddocks, 196 Cattle selling pens and 334 Sheep selling pens
- Avdata truck wash facility which operates on a cash basis
- New receival / delivery covered pens and soft floor

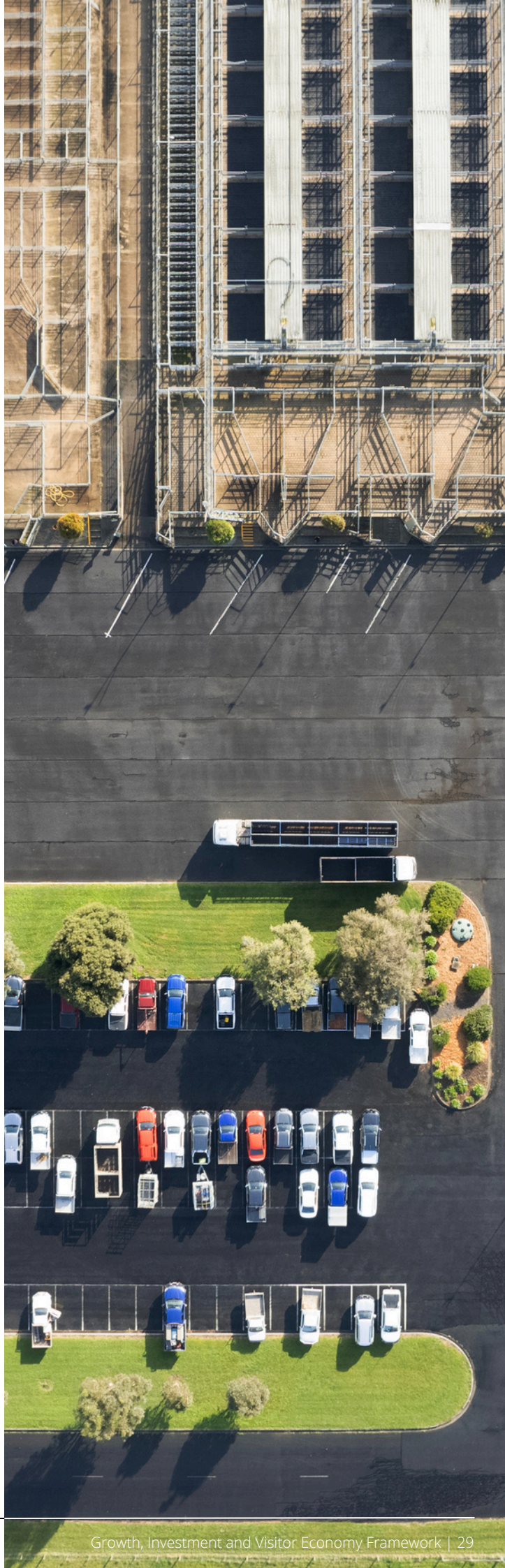
Economic Development Activation Opportunities

The Saleyards are a major economic driver for the Limestone Coast region, contributing significantly to agriculture, employment, and regional development.

In the 2020/2021 financial year, the Saleyards transacted:

- 86,000 head of sheep and 65,000 head of cattle
- Generating $157 million in gross sales (in the 5 years of 2018-2022)

Council is preparing to deliver an upgrade to the Saleyards. The Transformation Project, currently subject to funding, is expected to deliver a $29.7 million economic boost to the region. The project aligns with regional development priorities and is recognised by Regional Development Australia as one of South Australia's highest priority infrastructure projects.





Port MacDonnell Community Complex

The Port MacDonnell Community Complex delivers substantial economic and social value to the region, acting as a multi-purpose hub for residents, tourists and local businesses.

The Community Complex serves as a Visitor Information Outlet assisting tourists and visitors explore Port MacDonnell and the broader Limestone Coast region, fishing and boating activities, and local history and culture through the Maritime Museum.

Council staff at the Community Complex boost local visitor spending dispersal by connecting visitors with nearby attractions, shops, and services. Nearby accommodation providers and tourism experience operators are invited to display brochures on the visitor information wall in the Community Complex, meanwhile local artists sell their art and craft pieces on commission in the souvenir shop.

The Community Complex is a model of regional service integration, combining government, tourism and community functions in one location. It enhances liveability and civic engagement, contributing to the broader economic resilience of Port MacDonnell and the District Council of Grant.

The Port MacDonnell Community Complex provides:

- Council services and a Justice of the Peace
- Youth engagement spaces
- Volunteer and community meeting facilities
- StoryTime: Held on Tuesday mornings for toddlers and babies helping to introduce literacy and a love of learning for young residents
- Art Gallery
- Port MacDonnell & District Maritime Museum
- Author events: Authors who are travelling to or through the region are encouraged to make contact in advanced to arrange an Author Event to connect with an engaged community of local readers

Hospitality and Accessibility

The Community Complex has a hearing loop facility available, and accessible beach chair for hire. The library is often noted for its low-stimulus environment which may particularly suit customers with disabilities who may otherwise become overwhelmed by busier library facilities.

The accessibility of the Community Complex means that it is popular for those with mobility and accessibility requirements. Accessible parking and pram ramps provide access, and an accessible toilet facility is available.

The Community Complex includes a kitchen which may be hired for events such as community training or gallery openings. Meeting spaces for groups are also available.

Appendix Two

Emergency Management

Emergency Management

Facilities at the Mount Gambier Regional Airport, owned and managed by the District Council of Grant, protect the green triangle region from the threat of fire via a 144KL water tank and associated pumps that support lifesaving aerial waterbombing. The aerial waterbombing aircraft that are stationed at the Airport throughout the bushfire season protect close to 6000km^2 of south-eastern Australia which includes prime agricultural land, vital timber plantations, National Park Land, and sites of heritage and Indigenous cultural significance.

Facilities at the Mount Gambier & District Saleyards, owned and managed by provide the District Council of Grant, are available in case of biosecurity incidents and protect the long-standing stock industry in the region.

Council's coastal inundation modelling project prepares Council for mitigation efforts required to protect the coastline from erosion as a result of rising sea-levels, storm damage and overland flooding.

All emergency management measures will become increasingly vital to protect industry as weather patterns become more volatile.



Appendix Three

Edits Following Consultation Phase

Consultation on the draft Growth, Investment and Visitor Economy Framework was undertaken from 20 October to 21 November 2025.

Feedback was received from a range of stakeholders, highlighting additional economic development opportunities, perceived gaps, potential enhancements, and a small number of content edits.

Council appreciates the time and consideration that stakeholders dedicated to providing this constructive feedback.

At its meeting on 15 December 2025, Council considered all feedback received through the consultation process.

Council again acknowledges and values the contributions of stakeholders and approved the following changes in response to the submissions received.

Feedback Received / Edit Required	Changes Made	Page / Section Reference
Edit: Duplication of 'that'	Minor Edit: Environment: A sustainable district that values the natural qualities and heritage that that underpin our health, liveability and economy.	Page 4 – Environment Box
Accessible design issue: 'Tourism in Focus' should be in larger font as it is not a subtitle.	Design edit: 'Tourism in Focus' page heading changed to larger font	Page 8 – Page Heading
Issue: Last 2 lines of the paragraph- can't see how FRE fits.	Expression fixed: The workshop groupings identified that some issues and opportunities are shared by small business and tourism, while other concerns and opportunities require a coordinated approach that balances the needs of Industry, Farming, Investment and Renewable Energy sector stakeholders.	Page 9 – Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats
Edit: Remove the word 'of' in Challenges list item	Expression fixed: Lack of available and affordable of housing putting handbrake on the economy.	Page 10
Summary of Issue: Overlooks climate impacts	Content added: Host regular industry, or sector-specific, networking events. Each event will focus on a topical theme of interest to the sector (such as Climate Resilience) and may be in partnership with other stakeholder groups such as Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast, Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce and City of Mount Gambier.	Page 13 – Making it Easier to Do Business (Actions)

Feedback Received / Edit Required	Changes Made	Page / Section Reference
Summary of Issue: Missed Opportunities and gap; lack of recognition of climate impacts of local primary industries.	Content added: Participate in a regional initiative with PIRSA, Landscape Board and Department for Environment and Water to encourage visitor stewardship,raise awareness of, and manage the impact of visitation and primary industries on natural destinations.	Page 15 – Partner (Actions)
Summary of Issue: Lacks modern, targeted strategies to attract visitors	Content added: In recognition of Council's commitment to activating existing Tourism partnerships in the region and it's role as a partner delivering on the Limestone Coast Destination Management Plan edited the following action: Pursue cross border collaboration for tourism outcomes. To be: Pursue effective strategic tourism partnerships and linking projects, both within the Limestone Coast and across the state border to deliver tourism outcomes.	Page 16- Partner (Actions)
Summary of Issue: Framework would benefit from being bold and forward-looking; include a more detailed and strategic approach to tourism	Content added: Work with Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce and City of Mount Gambier to deliver "experience tours" for dispersal of visitor spend from local events such as Generation in Jazz, and major events at Borderline Speedway.	Page 17-18 – Facilitator Section (Actions)
Edit: Remove 'a' and add 'for', as the current sentence does not make sense.	Minor Edit: The accessibility of the Community Complex means that it is popular for those with mobility and accessibility requirements.	Page 30

Note: Additional minor expression and design edits, which did not alter Council's commitments within the framework, were also made to improve the document's presentation, readability, and accessibility.



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