

Mount Barker District Environment and Sustainability Strategy

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MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of country

Council acknowledges the traditional owners and Custodians of the lands of the Mount Barker District. We respect the First Nations people and their spiritual relationship with their country and their cultural and heritage beliefs.

Revision	Issue Date	Distribution	Notes
1	07/04/25	Elected Members	Draft for endorsement to engage
2	04/08/25	Elected Members	Final for endorsement
3	27/07/26	Public	Waste data included in the endorsed Strategy and Waste to Resources Plan was incorrect and has been updated in this verison. The 20% waste reduction target will be measured against the waste data in this document.

Our 2044 vision To be the most liveable region in South Australia.

Which means...

“A liveable place is somewhere that is: safe, attractive, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable; with affordable and diverse types of housing, public open space, local shops, health and community services, leisure and cultural opportunities; with opportunities for employment and education all accessible by convenient public transport, walking and cycling.”

— Australian Urban Observatory, 2024

Our five pillars to achieve this are...



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Vision

Connected habitat corridors, thriving biodiversity and beautiful green spaces that are highly valued - supporting a resilient future and Mount Barker as South Australia’s most liveable region.



Executive Summary

The Mount Barker District Environment and Sustainability Strategy sets the direction for environmental action over the next decade to 2035. Building on the achievements of the past, this strategy reflects the evolving needs of our community, the urgency of global environmental issues, and our shared local commitment to becoming the most liveable region in South Australia.

Executive summary continued

This strategy is structured around five interlinked themes—climate change, nature and wildlife, township greening, integrated water management, and waste to resources—each supported by its own four-year action plan. These nested plans provide a coordinated approach to achieving long-term sustainability goals, ensuring actions are focused, measurable, and adaptable to emerging challenges and opportunities.

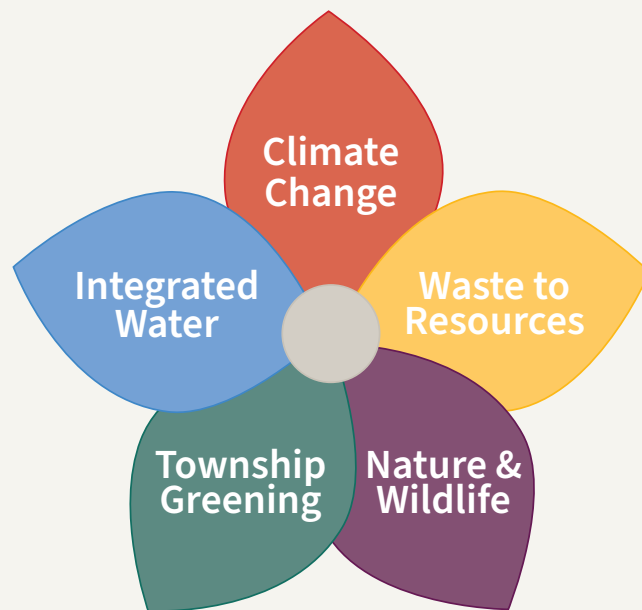


Figure 1 strategy framework

Principles

- A better future together
- Celebrate, empower and inspire
- Protect and prioritise nature
- Take urgent climate action
- Be bold yet practical

Objectives

- Adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change
- Minimise waste and use resources efficiently
- Accelerate urban greening
- Conserve and restore nature and wildlife
- Ensure clean and plentiful water resources

Key focus areas and priorities

These are our top priorities to focus on improvements across the five action plan themes.

1. Climate Change

- Strengthen climate risk management
- Demonstrate sustainable purchasing
- Reduce emissions
- Support community climate action

2. Waste to Resources

- Recover more, waste less
- Promote waste minimisation
- Reduce contamination
- Foster the circular economy
- Strengthen development and construction waste management

3. Township Greening

- Grow the Mount Barker Parklands together
- Protect and connect
- Accelerate the council tree planting and management program
- Support private land greening

4. Nature and Wildlife

- Protect, manage and maintain biodiversity assets
- Expand and connect existing habitats for native wildlife
- Strengthen Council capacity to manage biodiversity assets
- Partner for biodiversity on private land
- Support volunteering for nature conservation

5. Integrated Water Management

- Strengthen stormwater and flood management
- Support greater uptake of water-sensitive urban design (WSUD)
- Maximise water efficiency in public spaces
- Optimise Council's treated water use

About the Strategy

Introduction

Mount Barker is a rapidly growing peri-urban district, supplying a significant amount of Adelaide's outer suburban housing growth whilst being rich in environmental, agricultural and cultural assets. At the same time the district is facing a climate and biodiversity crisis, with particular challenges in habitat protection and restoration, bushfire risk and water management. This context offers real risks and genuine opportunities for Council to help create a sustainable, regenerating environment that supports prosperous townships, connected and active communities, flourishing wildlife, and high quality of life.

The Mount Barker Environment and Sustainability Strategy is one of several lead strategies to guide and inform the implementation of the Mount Barker 2044 District Community Plan. With a strong understanding of the state of our environment and support from the community, the strategy provides a framework for Council and the community to protect and enhance the environment through action and collaboration.

The purpose is to:

- Align local environment and sustainability objectives with the broader strategic goals of the Mount Barker District Community Plan.
- Identify clear priorities to focus environmental and sustainability protection, resilience and improvements.
- Provide a framework that is evidence based and informed by science, local knowledge and sets targets to measure progress.

Strategic context

Mount Barker District Council's Community Plan 2044 sets a vision to be the most liveable region in South Australia. This vision is guided by five key pillars: environment, people, place, economy and leadership. The Environment and Sustainability Strategy sets a direct roadmap to support the Community Plan's delivery of the objectives of the environment pillar to:

- Adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change
- Minimise waste and use resources efficiently
- Increase urban greening
- Conserve and restore nature and wildlife
- Ensure clean and plentiful water resources

Environmental challenges intersect with nearly every area of Council operations and community life. To address these complexities, each of the five objectives is supported by a four-year action plan: Climate Change, Waste to Resources, Township Greening, Nature & Wildlife, and Integrated Water Management. Developing these plans together ensures a coordinated approach that recognises the interconnected nature of environmental issues and maximises opportunities for synergy.

Together, these action plans guide Council's investment and efforts, ensuring consistency and alignment with broader strategic policies. The Environment and Sustainability Strategy serves as the overarching framework, maintaining connectivity across focus areas and reinforcing the Council's commitment to sustainability. Figure 2 illustrates how this strategy integrates with other Council documents.



Figure 2 strategic context

While the Environment and Sustainability Strategy directly aligns to the five action plan focus areas, its scope extends across all pillars of the Community Plan. Goals such as promoting integrated transport, supporting community health, clean air from wood smoke, and embedding sustainability in development planning align with objectives under People, Place, Economy, and Leadership. These shared priorities reflect Council’s holistic approach to sustainability. By supporting objectives with environmental significance across Council’s work, the strategy contributes to a more sustainable future for the district, aligning environmental priorities with broader community aspirations. It underscores the importance of collaboration across all areas of Council and invites partnerships with others to work together to tackle the significant challenges before us.

Global, National, State and regional policy

This strategy is aligned with global, national, state, and regional policies and frameworks, ensuring that Council's priorities meet regulatory requirements and broader strategic goals. For more detail, refer to the accompanying State of the Environment report.

Global

The Paris Agreement (2015) commits nations, including Australia, to limit global warming to well below 2°C, while the Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) calls for accelerated climate action. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set a shared vision for global sustainability by 2030, with this strategy aligning closely with Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 15 (Life on Land), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). Other key frameworks include the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, the Global Biodiversity Framework (2022), and the IPCC Reports, which provide scientific guidance on addressing climate risks and building resilience.

National

Australia's commitment to the Paris Agreement (2015) includes a 43% emissions reduction target by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050, supported by the Climate Change Act 2022. The National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2021–2025) outlines actions to manage climate risks, while the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 remains central to protecting Australia's unique ecosystems. Strategies like the Threatened Species Strategy (2021–2031) and National Waste Policy Action Plan (2019) aim to conserve biodiversity and reduce waste. The State of the Environment Report (2021) and Nature Positive Plan (2022) offer insights into environmental challenges and opportunities for restoration.

State

South Australia is a national leader in renewable energy, climate resilience, and sustainable waste management, with strong legislative and strategic frameworks guiding action. The State's targets include net zero emissions by 2050 and a 60% reduction by 2030, supported by the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007, which mandates climate planning and risk assessment. The SA Climate Change Action Plan 2021–2025 promotes clean energy,

resilient communities, and sustainable transport, while the Environment Protection Act 1993 and Green Industries SA Act 2004 drive environmental management and innovation in resource recovery. The SA Waste Strategy 2020–2025 outlines a path toward a circular economy with ambitious landfill diversion goals, further reinforced by the SA Solid Waste Levy. The Biodiversity Act SA 2025 sets the framework for conserving and restoring nature across the state. Local governments operate under the Local Government Act 1999, which integrates sustainability into council responsibilities. Together, these policies enable councils to address climate change, protect biodiversity, and promote sustainable growth.

Regional

Resilient Hills & Coasts: This regional adaptation framework supports resilience to climate impacts for communities, businesses, and ecosystems.

Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board: The Landscape Plan (2021–2026) addresses key regional issues, including biodiversity, water, and climate change, while fostering environmental stewardship.

Adelaide Hills Waste Management Authority (AHRWMA): AHRWMA promotes waste reduction and recycling, assisting member councils, including Mount Barker, in achieving waste management goals.

Mount Barker in numbers



>50,000 street and
reserve trees



17.5 volunteer run
'Bush for life' sites and
4 Friends of groups



836ha of community land



364 road marker
scheme sites



150kms of unmaded
road reserve



2,721 registered cats



234,000tons CO₂e total
municipal emissions (22/23).
Only 5,643 tonnes
from Council



54% of households have
solar panels (10,203 homes)



175kilolitres/year average
household use mains water



8,568 tonnes of waste to
landfill collected (24/25)



16.4% average canopy cover
in Mount Barker



Current and Emerging Trends

Mount Barker is undergoing rapid change, facing a blend of challenges and opportunities towards 2035 and beyond. For more detail, refer to the accompanying State of the Environment report.

Climate Change

Mount Barker is already experiencing rising temperatures, bushfires, flood risks and altered rainfall patterns, while the region benefits from solar energy uptake and progress toward 100% renewable energy. The need for climate resilience and adaptation action is growing, with more frequent extreme weather events expected. The shift to renewable energy presents opportunities for Mount Barker to reduce its carbon footprint. Embracing energy-efficient practices, building resilience into food systems, electrifying transport, and integrating low-carbon technologies into new developments will be essential to mitigating climate impacts.

Urban Growth

Rapid urban expansion is reshaping Mount Barker, placing pressure on natural habitats, water quality, and local ecosystems. This growth is increasing energy consumption, waste production, and transport demands, highlighting the need for sustainable urban planning. There are significant opportunities to align development with environmental goals, but council is limited to following the state planning regulations. Smart urban design, incorporating green spaces, energy-efficient buildings, and water-sensitive planning, can help reduce the negative impacts of urbanization.

Water Management

Water quality in the district's creeks and streams is under stress due to agricultural runoff and urban stormwater, though groundwater levels remain stable. The demand for water is growing, making it crucial to improve water management and conservation. Innovative approaches, such as water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) and stormwater harvesting, will be key to improving water quality and enhancing water security. As the district expands, integrating more efficient water reuse and conservation practices are critical for sustainable water management.

Declining Native Vegetation and Habitat Loss

The region is facing significant pressures on native vegetation, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity due to urban expansion, invasive species, and climate change. Efforts to protect and restore native vegetation, such as protecting significant trees, restoring degraded landscapes, and enhancing private land conservation are vital. Urban planning must also prioritise habitat connectivity and integrate nature-based solutions to preserve and extend biodiversity.

Community Engagement and Behaviour Change

Strong community interest in sustainability, coupled with growing public awareness of environmental issues, offers a foundation for positive change. Engaging residents and businesses through education, participatory initiatives, and local partnerships can drive shifts toward sustainable practices.

Emerging Technology and Policy Shifts

Technological innovations, including artificial intelligence, energy optimisation and new low carbon materials present new opportunities to enhance sustainability efforts. Simultaneously, policy shifts at the state and federal levels—such as stricter emissions targets, circular economy and biodiversity conservation requirements—will create both challenges and opportunities.





Shared responsibility

Achieving the vision of connected habitat corridors, thriving biodiversity and beautiful green spaces that are highly valued is a shared responsibility.

Residents, businesses, community groups, and all levels of government have vital roles to play in environmental stewardship of the Mount Barker District. We know that working together, leveraging collective knowledge, resources, and networks can achieve better outcomes for our community and environment.

Council fulfils multiple roles in this collective effort, including:

- Service provider – delivers programs, services, funding and manages assets.
- Regulator– administers and enforces regulations to guide sustainable practices.
- Initiator – tests new ideas and initiatives to drive improvements
- Educator – provides public information to inspire community awareness and actions.
- Collaborator – works with community, businesses, government agencies and other organisations to align efforts with shared goals.

The strategy distinguishes between priorities for Council operations and land—activities directly within Council's control where it can lead by example—and priorities for the broader district—areas where Council's role is to influence, support, regulate, or advocate for change. By investing in internal commitment and capability, Council strengthens its ability to deliver long-term environmental outcomes across all roles. This dual focus ensures that Council both fulfils its own responsibilities and contributes to broader environmental goals. By embedding sustainability in its operations, Council demonstrates leadership and commitment, while fostering community-wide action amplifies impact at a district level.

Partnerships are integral to the success of this strategy. Council actively seeks to maintain and build new relationships with organisations that share our vision, whether through co-funding initiatives, delivering joint programs, or providing in-kind support. Examples of recent partnerships include working with Second Nature Conservancy and Hills Biodiversity on the Community Nursery and Fire Wise programs, collaborating with UniSA on Living Lightly Locally, the Hills and Fleurieu Local Food Future project and accessing state and federal government grants to support environmental and sustainability outcomes.

By strengthening connections between people, organisations, and resources, the strategy aims to empower everyone to contribute to a thriving and sustainable future for the Mount Barker District.

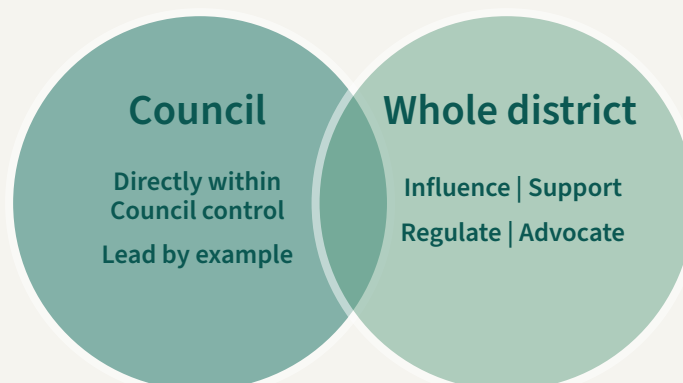


Figure 3 council roles

A well-informed strategy

Development of the Environment and Sustainability Strategy was collaborative, and evidence based. Council used a blend of science, staff and community insights to inform its creation. Key pieces of work are listed below.

- State of the Environment Report 2024

A detailed evidence base including the strategic and policy context, community values, benefits, emerging trends, current status and review of progress since 2018.

- Community Forum 2024

Key stakeholders and advisory groups were invited to a workshop in November 2024, to hear guest speaker presentations including from Youth voice and provide early input to inform the Strategy before anything was drafted.

- Staff Workshop 2024

Broad range staff involved to workshop in December 2024 to ensure internal operational insights to key priorities.

- Community Workshops 2025

Key stakeholders and advisory groups were invited to workshop sessions in February 2025, to refine a 70% draft strategy.

- Public Consultation 2025

Public consultation on the draft strategy was held in May/June 2025.

If you would like to read more, reports on the above are available at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au.





Vision for environment and sustainability

Connected habitat corridors, thriving biodiversity and beautiful green spaces that are highly valued - supporting a resilient future and Mount Barker as South Australia's most liveable region.



Principles

Our District's environment supports a liveable, resilient, thriving and creative community. That's why we value it so highly. These principles establish the foundation for Council's approach, actions and decision-making.

A better future together

Council will work proactively with First Nations, community groups, developers, landholders, the Landscape Board and other partners – and embed action across Council – to amplify shared efforts and outcomes.

Celebrate, empower and inspire

We seek to inspire a love of nature and sustainable living by telling stories, celebrating our assets and achievements, connecting people and nature, sharing knowledge, and empowering people to act.

Protect and prioritise nature

We will protect and connect wildlife habitats and grow protected areas, prioritising planting indigenous species where practical, because healthy ecosystems are vital to a thriving community.

Take urgent climate action

Council will take immediate and ambitious action on the climate emergency, working with the community to reduce our impact and adapt to increased storms, heat, bushfires, flood and drought.

Be bold yet practical

Council will take bold action on immediate priorities, learning and improving along the way. Our efforts will be practical, evidence-based and achievable, with clear pathways to success. Council will lead by example, pursue best practice, and advocate for positive change.



Key focus areas

The following chapters outline the five key focus areas that will guide Mount Barker's environment and sustainability efforts, directly aligning with the objectives and priorities of the 2044 Community Plan.

Key focus areas

- Climate Change
- Waste to Resources
- Township Greening
- Nature and Wildlife
- Integrated Water Management

Each focus area has key priorities to work towards the 2044 objective and 10-year measurable targets that will help us achieve long-term sustainability goals. The delivery and implementation of these priorities will be supported through linked four-year action plans, ensuring that progress is continually monitored and refined.

These focus areas provide a comprehensive roadmap for the next decade, helping to build a more sustainable, resilient, and environmentally conscious community. Through coordinated action, we will ensure that Mount Barker remains a thriving place for future generations.

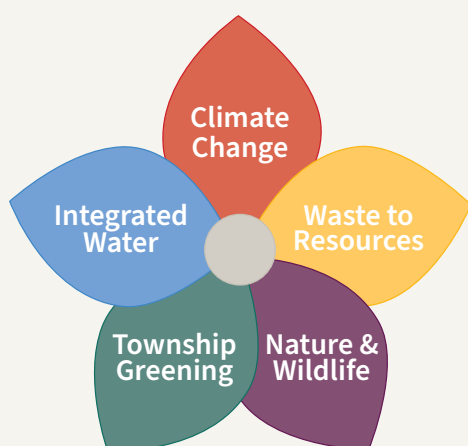
Everything is connected

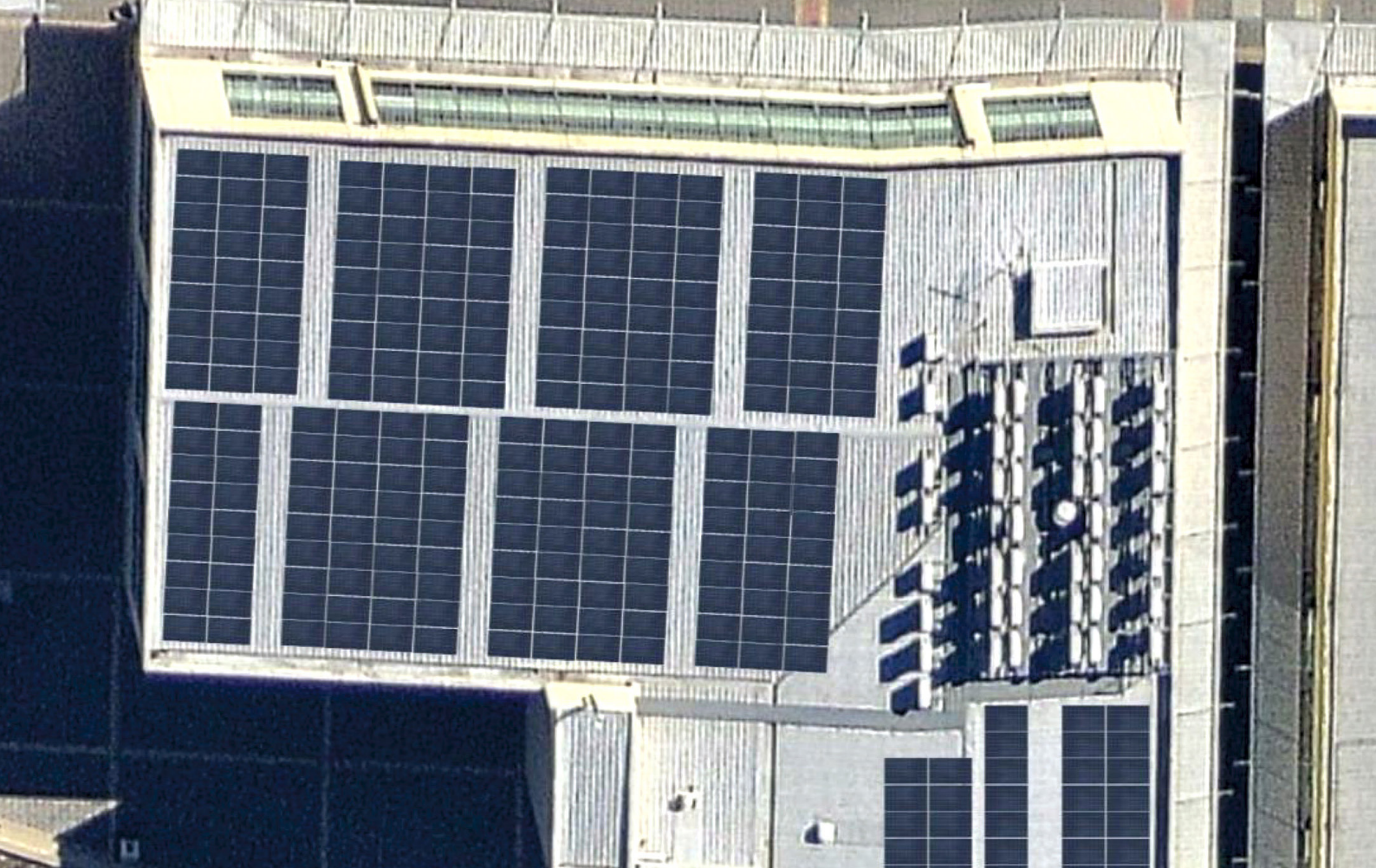
While each focus area has distinct priorities, they are deeply interconnected, working together to achieve a more sustainable and resilient Mount Barker District.

For example, water management is essential for township greening and supporting biodiversity. A circular economy in waste to resources helps reduce emissions, contributing to climate change actions.

Additionally, broader Council strategies, like integrated transport, community health and emergency management, play key roles in achieving aligned objectives.

Key focus areas help break up the tasks into more manageable groups, but we understand that everything is interconnected, and many actions strengthen the whole.





Climate change

Climate change is impacting community resilience, health, the economy and nature. There is an urgent need to adapt to climate risks while reducing emissions to mitigate its impacts. Strengthening climate risk management, sustainable procurement, and community-led initiatives will help safeguard our environment, infrastructure, and liveability. Proactively addressing climate change builds resilience to extreme weather, supports long-term sustainability, and aligns with state and federal targets—unlocking opportunities for innovation and economic growth.

Objective

Adapt and build resilience to the impacts of climate change and work towards reducing emissions in line with state and federal targets.

Key priorities

Strengthen climate risk management	Identify and assess climate risks across Council operations and assets.
Demonstrate sustainable purchasing	Embed sustainability considerations and requirements into procurement practices.
Reduce emissions	Measure Council emissions, report progress towards net zero.
Support community climate action	Encourage and support residents and business to take climate action through education, information, promotion and incentives.

Related priorities

Climate change priorities intersect with other sustainability areas, highlighting the interconnected nature of Council's approach. Increase sustainable transport: Addressed through the Council's Integrated Transport Strategy, which promotes electric vehicles, active, and public transport options. Stronger, more resilient food systems: also addressed through the public health plan and water and waste areas of this strategy. Flood hazard management and Circular Economy/Resource Recovery: refer to Water and Waste focus areas of this strategy respectively.

- 2035 Targets
- 1

Reduce Council emissions by at least 60% from 2023 levels by 2035 in order to achieve net zero by 2050. ¹
- 2

Support South Australia's community emissions target by reducing local emissions to under 164,000 tonnes CO2e per year by 2035 on a pathway to net zero by 2050. ²
- 3

Treat all priority climate risks to Council operations and services to acceptable levels. ³

¹ Council emissions in 2023 were 5,643 tonnes CO2e. Organisational emissions inventory to be repeated annually.

² Mount Barker District Council community emissions in 2022/23 were 234,000 tonnes CO2e (Source is updated annually at snapshotclimate.com.au)

³ Conduct first pass climate risk assessment to identify, assess and prioritise risks by 2026, then develop and review action plans to guide risk mitigation actions at least every 2 years. "Acceptable levels" refers to risk levels that align with Council's defined tolerance thresholds, which may differ by risk type or service area.



Waste to Resources

Waste impacts the environment, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, and places pressure on natural resources. By treating waste as a resource, we can reduce emissions, conserve materials, create economic opportunities and support a circular economy. Council oversees a wide range of services, including kerbside collection for general waste, recycling, and organics. It also manages operational waste, hard waste, and tricky items like e-waste while addressing construction and demolition waste generated by rapid development. As the population grows, efficient waste management is crucial. Council is committed to high-quality services, sustainable resource use, and community awareness about reducing waste and recycling right.

Objective

Use resources carefully & efficiently, minimise waste and support the growth of the circular economy.

Key priorities

Recover more, waste less	Quality service provision that encourages less to landfill and more resource recovery including food organics and garden organics (FOGO) through education and data collection.
Promote waste minimisation	Support waste reduction by encouraging responsible consumption, advocating for extended producer responsibility, and fostering a culture of sustainability through education and engagement.
Reduce contamination	Improve recycling quality through education, feedback programs, increased compliance efforts and regular bin audits to ensure higher quality resource recovery.
Foster the circular economy	Advance local circular economy initiatives and better integrate sustainability into Council purchasing decisions to maximise environmental and economic benefits for the community.
Strengthen development and construction waste management	Encourage better waste management practices within the building industry, increase compliance effort with waste disposal requirements.

2035 Targets

4	A reduction of waste to landfill by 20% per capita by 2035 ⁴
5	Community satisfaction on waste service is above industry average by 2035 ⁵

⁴ In 2022/23, 192.1kg of waste disposed to landfill per person. This can be tracked annually by dividing the landfill tonnage with latest population figures.

⁵ In 2024, the annual telephone community survey weighted performance for waste management score was 54 and industry average was 60 (Source: Markyt Community Scorecard, Catalyse, 2024)



Township Greening

Greening in townships, including parks, gardens, commercial and residential areas, is essential but complex. Trees and vegetation cool townships, improve air quality, support biodiversity, and enhance community wellbeing. However, managing green spaces requires balancing recreation, infrastructure and biodiversity needs. A well-connected and diverse green network strengthens community identity and provides beauty in private and public spaces that we value. As Mount Barker grows, expanding and maintaining green infrastructure will ensure our townships remain vibrant and sustainable. By integrating greening into our planning and fostering collaboration with residents, businesses, and landowners, we can create a region where people and nature thrive together.

Objective

Establish high levels of canopy cover and biodiverse areas as part of our open space network and road reserves.

Key priorities

Grow the Mount Barker Parklands together	Work with the community and partnerships to plan and establish an expansive, connected green network that enhances cooling, biodiversity, recreation opportunities, and beauty in our region’s natural landscapes.
Protect and connect	Improve preservation of our big trees and other vegetation to keep our townships cool, green and wildlife friendly, particularly at masterplan stage of greenfield developments.
Accelerate council planting and tree management program	Accelerate street tree planting, improve ongoing maintenance and managing trees as assets.
Support private land greening	Support business and residents involvement in greening their own land, including productive trees and gardens.

2035 Targets

6	Increase tree canopy in all townships to support the State Government's target of 30% cover by 2055 ⁶ A tailored 2035 interim target will be developed once baseline canopy data for the district is captured.
7	Retain 95% mature trees in masterplan developments ⁷

⁶ Currently there is only canopy data for Mount Barker Townships (16.4%) and a need to collect baseline for all townships. Therefore exact interim target for 2035 to be set once baseline is known and then tracked every 5 years. For example some townships may already be greater than 30% canopy and can strive for more.

⁷ New indicator to be measured from 2025 onwards



Nature and Wildlife

Biodiversity is vital for a healthy environment, supporting clean air, water, and resilient plants, animals and ecosystems. Across Mount Barker district's townships and rural areas, nature and wildlife are under pressure from urban growth, climate change, land use changes, and invasive species. This focus area takes an integrated approach to protecting remnant vegetation, restoring habitats, and creating new spaces for native species to thrive. By managing biodiversity assets well, sharing knowledge, and fostering collaboration, we can ensure the district remains a place where nature and people coexist sustainably.

Objective

Protect, restore, connect and extend habitat for native species.

Key priorities

Protect, manage and maintain biodiversity assets	Develop and implement funded, evidence-based management plans to safeguard and maintain Council's biodiversity assets, especially remnant vegetation and habitat areas, while using sound metrics to track outcomes.
Expand and connect existing habitats for native wildlife	Undertake restorative plantings of endemic, indigenous and threatened species to create functional habitats that support local wildlife such as woodland birds. This will also contribute to the Mount Barker Parklands.
Strengthen Council capacity to manage biodiversity assets	Build resourcing and capacity for biodiversity management to enhance in-house expertise and operational effectiveness.
Partnering for biodiversity on private land	Work with the landscape board, NGOs and private landowners to encourage protection and expansion of native vegetation and biodiversity-friendly practices on their properties.
Support volunteering for nature conservation	Encourage, support and connect community volunteers in biodiversity initiatives, including habitat restoration, citizen science programs, and bushcare activities, to foster local stewardship and enhance ecological outcomes.

Related priorities

Protection of big trees, creation of biodiverse and climate resilient corridors and planting predominately native species is addressed through the Township Greening focus area of this strategy.

2035 Targets

- 8 Increase investment in managing biodiversity areas, measured through staff, contractor and volunteer time, to establish a baseline and track improvement.⁸
- 9 All remnant vegetation sites over 0.5 ha under Council care have fully resourced management plans in place by 2035, with Category 1 sites completed by 2030.⁹

⁸ We can track time/effort managing biodiverse areas as a surrogate for tracking quality improvement until we complete condition audit. There is a need to start comprehensively tracking effort to set a baseline and establish a more defined target, then report annually. Quality and condition monitoring to be explored in Nature and Wildlife action plan.

⁹ In 2025 there is 836ha Council land and 150kms unmade road reserves containing biodiversity assets, some being actively managed and others not.



Integrated Water Management

Managing water effectively is essential to address the challenges of population growth, climate change, and increasing demand on finite water supplies. The district relies on the Murray River, where demand is projected to outstrip supply in the future. By adopting integrated water management approaches, we can conserve water, enhance liveability, and support water dependent ecosystems. Council plays a key role in flood mitigation, stormwater management, water-sensitive urban design (WSUD), and the treatment and sustainable use of wastewater. Expanding these efforts will help protect life and property, create greener, more liveable spaces, and support local industries by reusing treated water productively.

Objective

Conserve water and use it wisely. Implement water sensitive urban design practices to support the ecology, greening and liveability of urban areas.

Key priorities

Strengthen stormwater and flood management	Protect life, property, infrastructure and ecosystems through effective stormwater and flood mitigation, linked to Council’s asset management plans.
Support greater uptake of water-sensitive urban design (WSUD)	Enable, support and implement mature and targeted WSUD in Council and private developments to enhance liveability, biodiversity, and urban greening outcomes.
Maximise water efficiency in public spaces	Improve water use efficiency in Council-managed reserves and open spaces to conserve resources while maintaining amenity, urban cooling and ecological value.
Optimise Council’s treated water use	Promote the use of Council recycled water as a valuable resource, supporting local agriculture and food production industries to drive economic growth, create employment opportunities, eliminate environmental disposal of treated water and improve outcomes for nature.

2035 Targets

10	An increase in the use of recycled water to support water dependent ecosystems, irrigation of public open space, street trees and for agricultural activities within the district. ¹⁰
11	Where water is a consideration, integrate water-sensitive urban design principles into at least 95% of Councils new capital and renewal projects by 2035. ¹¹

¹⁰ In 2023, 10% of Council waste water generation was reused. This can be tracked annually via water meters. Exact target % increase to be established within action plan and once the new Mount Baker Region Wastewater Utility Subsidiary is operational.

¹¹ Review capital projects, annually. There is a need to start actively tracking this to set baseline and monitor progress.



Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Monitoring progress, evaluating implementation and reporting on outcomes are necessary for a strategy to know if it is being effective or if adjustments are required.

Monitoring progress

The Council will regularly track the implementation of actions across the five key focus areas. This includes collecting and reviewing relevant data, keeping accurate records, and observing how well initiatives are progressing. Key indicators will be used to measure the effectiveness of actions, ensuring alignment with the broader measures of success outlined in the 2044 Community Plan.

Reporting

The Council is committed to providing annual progress updates on the implementation of the Environment and Sustainability Strategy and its linked action plans. These reports will be shared with key stakeholders, including staff, elected members, and the community, ensuring transparency and accountability. A comprehensive review of the Strategy will take place at the five-year mark, allowing for a more in-depth evaluation of progress and an opportunity to adjust the Strategy based on emerging trends, new technologies, or community needs. This review will inform the direction of the Strategy for the next five years, ensuring continuous improvement and responsiveness to both local and global environmental changes.

Continuous improvement

The Environment and Sustainability Strategy embraces a philosophy of adaptive management. This means that as new data becomes available or circumstances change, the Council will refine its approach to ensure the most effective solutions are pursued. Targets are set to be ambitious yet achievable, and as actions are carried out, the results will be used to refine and adapt strategies, ensuring that the community's environmental goals are met both now and in the future.

Summary of Targets

Key focus area	Targets
Climate Change	1. Reduce Council emissions by at least 60% from 2023 levels by 2035 in order to achieve net zero by 2050. 2. Support South Australia's community emissions target by reducing local emissions to under 164,000 tonnes CO₂e per year by 2035 on a pathway to net zero by 2050. 3. Treat all priority climate risks to Council operations and services to acceptable levels.
Waste to Resources	4. A reduction of waste to landfill by 20% per capita by 2035. 5. Community satisfaction on waste service is above industry average by 2035.
Township Greening	6. Increase tree canopy in all townships to support the State Government's target of 30% cover by 2055. A tailored 2035 interim target will be developed once baseline canopy data for the district is captured. 7. Retain 95% mature trees in masterplan developments.
Wildlife and Nature	8. Increase investment in managing biodiversity areas, measured through staff, contractor and volunteer time, to establish a baseline and track improvement. 9. All remnant vegetation sites over 0.5 ha under Council care have fully resourced management plans in place by 2035, with Category 1 sites completed by 2030.
Water Management	10. An increase in the use of recycled water to support water dependent ecosystems, irrigation of public open space, street trees and for agricultural activities within the district. 11. Where water is a consideration, integrate water-sensitive urban design principles into at least 95% of Councils new capital and renewal projects by 2035.

Biodiversity/biodiverse	The variety of all plants, animals and microorganisms, their genes, and the ecosystems they live in. For plain language purposes, often referred to as "nature and wildlife".
Canopy	The upper level of a tree or trees. In cities this is typically measured for trees tall enough to provide functional shade for people (3m+).
Circular Economy	A closed-loop approach to designing products and systems that minimises waste and makes the most of resources by reusing, recycling, and repurposing materials.
Construction waste	Materials left over from building or demolition projects, such as timber, asphalt, concrete, bricks and tiles.
Ecosystem	A community of living organisms interacting with each other in their habitat.
Emissions	The release of gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere from activities like burning fossil fuels.
FOGO	Food Organics and Garden Organics – food scraps and garden waste which can be collected and composted for reuse.
Habitat	Food, water, shelter and space that supports plant or animal life.
Impervious surface	A hard surface (such as a road or building) that prevents infiltration of water into the ground, causing water to run off the surface.
Integrated water management	Collaborative planning and management of stormwater, wastewater and fresh water to deliver water security, public and environmental health, and urban amenity.
Infrastructure	Human-engineered structures like roads, buildings, footpaths and carparks.
Regenerative	Our current economic system is degenerative and extractive: it steals the future. A regeneratively designed system progressively restores the environment so that people and other species can thrive into the future. Sustainability is no longer enough – we need to repair the damage we have done. Regeneration puts life at the centre of every decision we make.
Remnant Vegetation	Patches of native trees, shrubs and grasses still left which have not been cleared since European settlement.
Resilient	Able to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks are experienced.
Resource recovery	The process of obtaining materials or energy from discarded materials.
Sustainable	Responsibly managing our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This includes social, financial and environmental resources.
Township/Urban greening	All trees and plants on public and private land.
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Planning that manages the water cycle sustainably, promoting rainwater reuse, reducing runoff and incorporating green infrastructure.



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL