

Community Development

Lead Strategy 2021-2026



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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A photograph of a woman with dark hair and a brown fur-trimmed coat, holding a long wooden didgeridoo. She is standing outdoors, leaning against a large rock, with a vast landscape of hills and a setting sun in the background. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light.

We acknowledge that the district is part of the traditional ancestral land of the Peramangk people. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Peramangk people to this land and their ongoing custodianship.

Introduction

The Community Development Lead Strategy is a 5-year plan identifying key actions to assist the future development of our community.

Communities thrive and grow stronger when people are enabled to bring about change – to have a say in their own future, to develop strong connections to others and to ‘place’, to feel safe and to be supported to make good choices about their own health and wellbeing. Decades of research and practice have shown that such communities promote mental, physical and social wellbeing more than any other factors known to the social and medical sciences.

Our community is one of our greatest assets. We are well-connected with above average volunteering rates, a large number of community-based organisations, a relatively healthy population and positive perceptions of community safety. At the same time, current economic, social and environmental conditions continue to challenge how a strong community is formed.

The purpose of this strategy is to better understand the pressures and opportunities for our communities and to provide a sense of focus for Council, community and our partners to work together. This strategy has been designed and developed specifically to:

- Create an environment for our identified populations^[1] to flourish.
- Help to integrate new and existing communities.
- Encourage and retain the best of local culture, connection, heritage and identity.
- Support our community’s resilience and capacity to respond positively to crises.

With a commitment to the core value of supporting a healthy community we believe that Council has the right framework to help develop our communities and provide long term opportunities for healthy, happy and meaningful lives.

Community development is a practice which supports the community to develop its own resources and capacity to address their needs. This includes identifying and understanding community desires, fostering community leadership and working with communities to broker partnerships that meet those needs.

^[1] Identified populations are groups of people who may be defined by demographic factors such as age, gender,

race/ethnicity, income level, education attainment, disability or geographical location of residence.

Community Development and the role of Council

Community development plays an important role within Council which has been identified as a strategic priority in its Community Plan 2035 and is described as the principal role of Council in the Local Government Act 1999.

The Community Development Lead Strategy sits below Council's Community Plan 2020-2035 and provides a foundation for other detailed plans like the Reconciliation Action Plan. It also has connection with key strategic documents such as the Open Space Strategy and Townships Strategy.

Council will work in partnership with others to deliver community outcomes that are efficient with limited resources and reduce competition and duplication. Our work will be directed by the principles of Social Justice: equity, access, participation and rights.

Local Government Act 1999, Chapter 2: 6 – Principal Role of Council

“(a) to act as a representative, informed and responsible decision-maker in the interests of its community; and
(b) to provide and co-ordinate various public services and facilities and to develop its community and resources in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner; and
(c) to encourage and develop initiatives within its community for improving the quality of life of the community; and
(d) to represent the interests of its community to the wider community...”

Hierarchy of Plans



Levels of involvement

Council's role in achieving community development outcomes range from 'monitor' to 'deliver' and may vary within priority areas of the strategy. The table below describes these levels of involvement.

 Monitor	Periodically review indicators for community wellbeing in the district.
 Inform	Act as the first point of contact and referral for local residents for information about community programs, activities and support.
 Advocate	Through effective advocacy, to attract additional resources and services to the district in-line with community needs and identified social initiatives.
 Enable	Encourage community partnerships, government agencies, services and support to address identified opportunities and gaps.
 Deliver	Partner, facilitate or initiate involvement with community, Government agencies, non-government organisations and the private sector to deliver projects, plans, programs, funding and opportunities that enable community led outcomes and reflect community need. Enable people to participate in making decisions about matters that affect their lives.
	Guided by public participation, deliver targeted community programs and support in response to identified needs such as libraries, home and community care, open spaces, community buildings, footpaths and parks and gardens.

For the purpose of this strategy, it is worth noting that Council does not play a role in delivering formal health services, schools and tertiary education. Additionally, laws such as the *Disability and Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Public Health Act 2011* are made at the Federal or State Government level.

In consideration of the role of Council, this Strategy sets out the priority areas that will inform the direction for Council's community development key initiatives over the next five years.

Who are we planning for



Total population 2020

37,481 and growing at 2.5% pa.

55,000 people by 2035

39 median age

The traditional growth cohort (i.e. young workforce, parents and home builders aged 25-49) represents the bulk of the population, however there was a marked increase (2.9%) in the older cohort (empty nesters and seniors) with in the growth areas of Mount Barker.

Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage

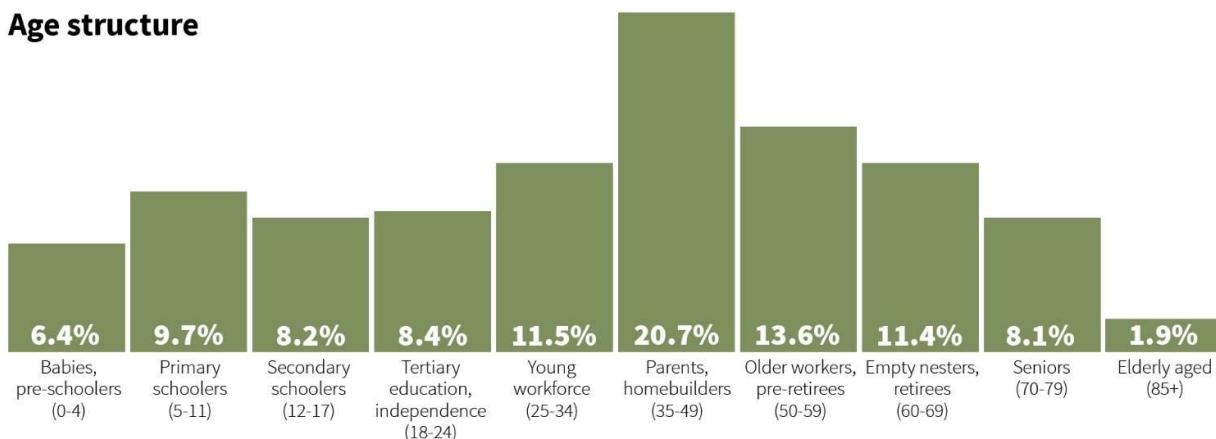
The Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) score indicates that the population in the district as a whole is slightly more socioeconomically advantaged than in Metropolitan Adelaide overall, as well as above the score for Australia.

1012 Mount Barker district

1000 Australia

969 greater Adelaide

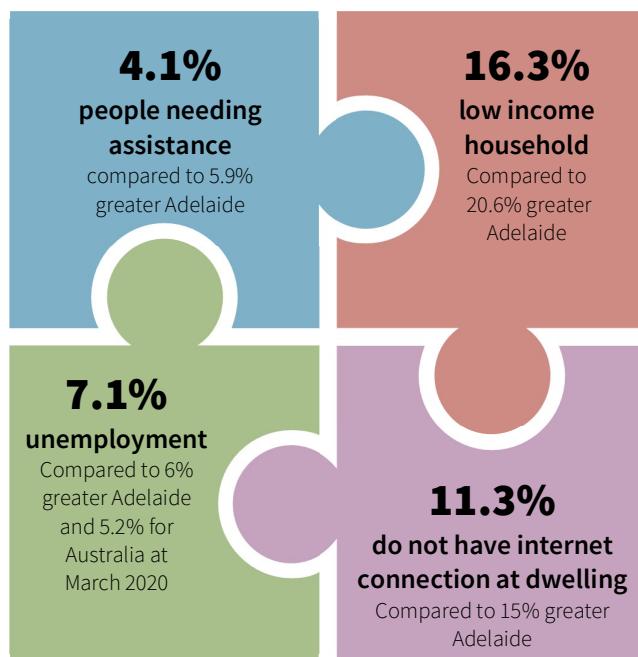
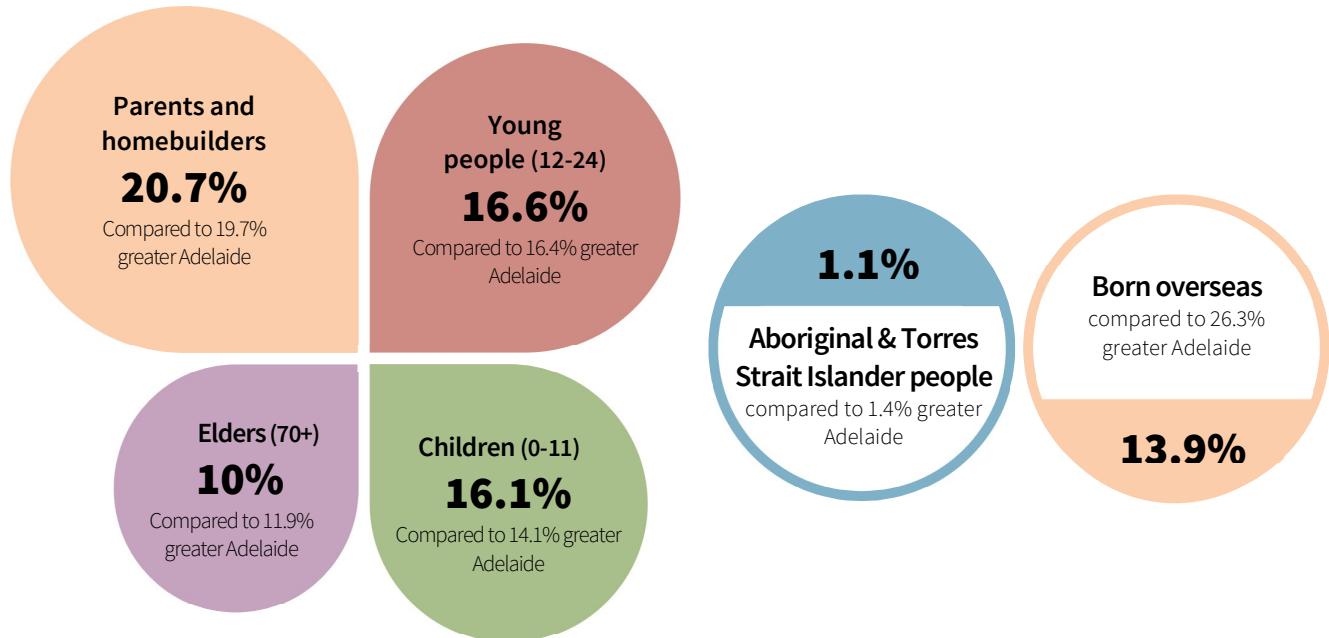
Age structure



Source. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence Data). Complied and presented in file.id by .id the population experts

Who are we planning for

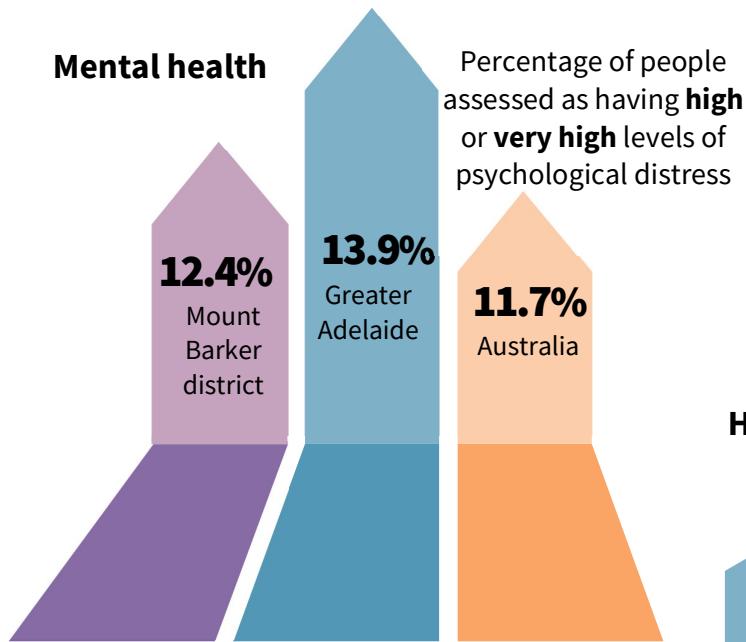
Identified Populations



Source: Economy ID: Economic Indicators, Unemployment, <http://economy.id.com.au/rda-ahfki/unemployment>
Source: ABS Census 2016

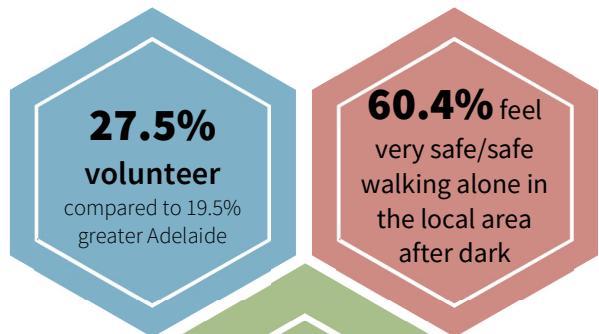
Who are we planning for

Mental health

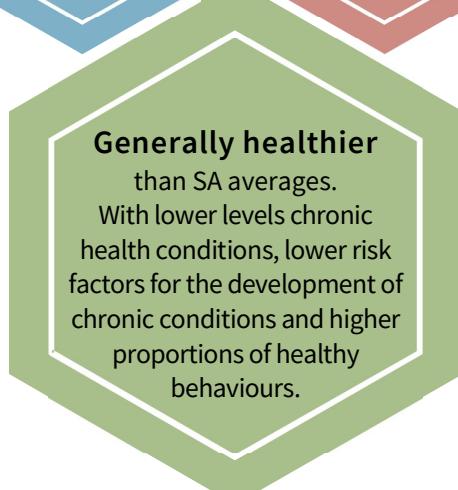
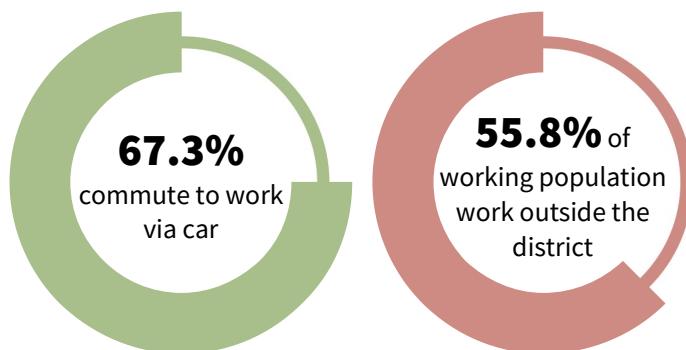


Source: Population Health Profile, Southern & Hills LGA, September 2019.

Health, safety and volunteering



Commuting Rates



Source: ID Community: residents commuting outside of their community for work, <https://profile.id.com.au/mount-barker/residents>

Key themes

The Community Development Lead Strategy is centered on four key themes:



People

A healthy, vibrant and safe community



Participation

An engaged and caring community



Place

Supporting and creating identity, culture and connection



Prosperity

Living, working and doing business in the region

To address these key themes, we will:

- Build on our strengths - recognise the value of our community's gifts, skills and abilities, our unique townships, growth areas, natural environments, the importance of sustainable economic development and the contributions of the community services that support our identified populations.
- Track our progress against our goals.
- Review and report on our progress every year to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant and continues to reflect community priorities.

A photograph of three women of different ages and styles smiling at the camera. The woman on the left wears glasses and a colorful, patterned scarf. The woman in the center has long grey hair and a dark zip-up jacket. The woman on the right has short blonde hair and a dark, textured vest over a white shirt.

PEOPLE



A healthy, vibrant and safe community



People

A healthy, vibrant and safe community

Council provides opportunities for everyone to live healthy and vibrant lives that are safe, connected and supported within the community.

We know that:

- Residents are generally healthy with lower levels of chronic health conditions, lower risk factors for the development of chronic conditions and higher proportions of healthy behaviours compared to greater Adelaide. However, the number of people assessed as having high or very high levels of psychological distress has increased significantly, higher than Australian averages.
- Many of the people moving into the district are young people who are buying homes, having a family, working outside of the district and are likely to be experiencing housing stress. These people are seeking opportunities to connect with others and to activities that interest them, making the most of the time they have available.
- Forming community connection is not the same process for everyone. Particular population groups including people from different cultures, people experiencing social, economic and environmental disadvantage, people of diverse lifestyles, our elders, and people with disabilities, their families and carers may require focused attention to develop connection.

The role and commitment of Council is to:

Recognise the value of healthy lifestyles, social connections and connection with nature and leisure to the maintenance of physical and mental wellbeing.

Implement a range of strategies to increase community awareness around mental health.

Encourage organisations to come together to develop community-led strategies that help address and prevent issues like family-violence, social isolation, drug-related crime and addiction and homelessness to improve and maintain community safety.

Sponsor and promote a variety of accessible opportunities and events for communities to come together, with special consideration for our identified populations.

Support the establishment of interest groups that celebrate difference within community.

Work with community to seek partners and resourcing and improve outcomes for identified populations, e.g.: children and young people, our elders and people with a disability.

Facilitate opportunities for families with children to connect and establish playgroups and parent support networks across the district.

Encourage the provision of intergenerational programs and activities such as Men's Sheds and Community Garden projects.



People

A healthy, vibrant and safe community

Actions

1. Implement, monitor and review Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024, Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 and Public Health Plan.
2. Develop and implement a Positive Aging Action Plan, specifically to:
 - Advocate for the continued provision of a range of community services, housing, support and programs to live independently, be active and fully participate in their communities.
 - Build connections with our elders to support effective engagement in preventative health, physical activity and social interaction programs.
3. Develop and implement a Child and Youth Action Plan, specifically to:
 - Work with and support community groups and sporting clubs to be youth friendly.
 - Advocate for the needs and interests of young people.
 - Consider the ideas of young people to make community events more appealing and relevant.
 - Create opportunities to provide youth activities, events and programs that are low or no cost across the district.
4. Facilitate a Community Programming Group with strategic partners (e.g.: Mount Barker Community Centre, Belgravia, Library) to deliver and facilitate a variety of community programs and activities across the district.
5. Seek funding and partners to deliver mental health training and education programs for community members to develop knowledge and skills to support community members who are experiencing mental ill health.
6. Develop and implement Library plans that consider:
 - Programs and resources for our elders, families and young people, and
 - Opportunities to provide outreach services in rural townships.

Linked strategic documents

- Public Health Plan
- Smart City Strategy
- Library Strategy

PARTICIPATION



An engaged and caring community



Participation

An engaged and caring community

Council promotes active citizenship that will encourage community-led initiatives, strong and resilient community organisations.

We know that:

- Identified populations such as our elders, young people, people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse people want opportunities to connect with their community and their ideas to be listened to and actioned. Equally, it is important that we engage with a broad cross-section of the community so we understand and plan for community need.
- Community leaders advocate and speak on behalf of the people they represent and influence positive community outcomes. As the population grows, it will be important to nurture a diversity of leaders who are empowered to represent new, emerging and under-represented communities.
- Residents are recognised for their active citizenship and pride in their district which is a foundation of social capital. Social values are constantly changing and these changes may lead to new and innovative ways for people to choose to volunteer and contribute to community.

The role and commitment of Council is to:

Promote public participation as a way to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of affected stakeholders and meet community need.

Ensure identified populations are provided meaningful opportunities to be engaged in making decisions that affect them.

Develop accessible information that assists people to find and use the services and support they need through a variety of media and distribution mechanisms.

Encourage and support a range of inclusive volunteering opportunities.

Support organisations that involve volunteers with relevant advice, training, support, coaching, mentoring, tools and resources.

Facilitate opportunities within community for new residents to connect with existing communities as they move into the district.

Provide opportunities for community leaders to develop their gifts, skills and abilities.



Participation

An engaged and caring community

Actions

7. Develop and implement Communications Action Plan to improve accessibility of Council Communications, and specifically:
8. Develop and implement Community Engagement Action Plan to deliver a range of strategies that support a genuine commitment to community participation and engagement.
9. Develop and implement a Volunteer Development Action Plan to support and improve the volunteering programs run by community groups and Council.
10. Review Council's Community Development Grant Program to ensure resources are available that meet the needs of community groups and are aligned with this Strategy.
11. Implement strategies to recognise and celebrate community contributions and partnerships.
12. Develop and deliver community leadership training.

Linked strategic documents

- Community Consultation Policy
- Volunteering Policy

PLACE



Creating identity, culture and connection



Place

Creating identity, culture and connection to the district

Council supports a strong sense of identity in its rural townships and the emerging identity in its growth areas that is created by community and helps build a deeper sense of belonging.

We know that:

- Having space where community can come together is important for building connections and working together. Council and community own a large number of facilities and open space, but many of these facilities are not fit for purpose or have low rates of use.
- While township identity in growth areas is changing, our smaller and remote townships are working to remain vibrant and celebrate their character.
- To encourage and celebrate community identity and belonging, opportunities that share the culture and history of the district through places, arts and cultural events are highly valuable.
- By empowering traditional owners of land and acknowledging their connection to the natural environment and nature we will help achieve a sustainable and healthy environment.

The role and commitment of Council is to:

Respond to the changing demands and accessibility of our community facilities and the people that use and manage them.

Recognise and encourage identity and connection to place.

Acknowledge places of significance to the local Peramangk culture and respect their cultural importance.

To create opportunities for residents to connect with each other, local history, arts and culture and to the places they live.

Actions

13. Implement strategies to maximise community benefit of existing community facilities, both Council and non-council owned.
14. Support the development of the Dumas St precinct as a community hub.
15. Provide new residents with information to support community connection.
16. Implement Council's Reconciliation Action Plan
17. Develop and implement a district response and plan for the Arts.
18. Provide opportunities for people to learn about the natural history of the district and to directly experience and care for the natural environment.
19. Facilitate a variety of community events, programs, activities and initiatives that foster community connection and bring diverse groups together.
20. Share stories of our local history and support the Local History Centre.

Linked strategic documents

- Housing Strategy
- Main Street Strategy
- Township Plans
- Environment Strategy
- Open Space Strategy
- Transport Strategy
- Trails Master Plan
- Tourism & Events Strategy

PROSPERITY



Living, working and doing business in the region



Prosperity

Living, working and doing business in the region

Prosperity in our district is about living, working and doing business in a positive, inclusive and sustainable way that benefits the entire community.

We know that:

- It is important that Council and the district's community groups continue to develop creative and innovative ways to be financially sustainable. Measuring the social impact of the work they do is essential to secure ongoing funding.
- When people participate in lifelong learning it supports the growth of a community's social, cultural, economic and personal wellbeing.
- The Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas index shows that the district is relatively advantaged and above the national average, however, pockets of disadvantage exist. Council's planning needs to recognise this diversity of need within community.
- Community led tourism and events that are well planned and managed are important way for rural towns to retain their vibrancy, culture and heritage whilst supporting local business and employment.
- Our community values the natural environment and its connection with community wellbeing and economic prosperity.

The role and commitment of Council is to:

Facilitate, support and promote innovative and diverse lifelong learning opportunities and digital literacy programs across the district.

Take an active role in identifying and supporting community groups and organisations to develop social enterprise models that support identified populations to overcome educational or employment disadvantage while achieving a greater level of financial sustainability.

Encourage community groups in townships to develop social enterprise and local tourism ideas such as markets, events, arts trails, etc.

Effectively advocate to attract additional resources, funding and services to the district relevant to community need.

Encourage social and economic activities that support ecological sustainability and the environment.



Prosperity

Living, working and doing business in the region

Actions

21. Develop a plan for increasing the role of the Mount Barker Community Centre as a regional level community learning and cultural hub.
22. Develop a model for measuring the social return on investment to increase understanding of the value and effect of Council's work with the community.
23. Support learning opportunities for community groups to develop and implement social enterprise ideas.
24. Establish a library collection development strategy.
25. Develop and implement a digital literacy program at the Mount Barker Community Library.

Linked strategic documents

- Covid Economic Recovery Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy

Implementation Plan

Priority Area	No.	Level of involvement	Action	Timeframe
1	1	Deliver	Implement, monitor and review Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024, Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 and Public Health Plan.	Ongoing
1	2	Deliver	Develop and implement Positive Aging Action Plan	Medium
1	3	Deliver	Develop and implement Child and Youth Action Plan	Short
1	4	Deliver	Facilitate a Cross-Council Community Programming group to deliver and facilitate a variety of community programs and activities in the district.	Short
1	5	Advocate	Seek funding and partners to deliver mental health training and education programs for community members to develop knowledge and skills to support community members who are experiencing mental ill health.	Short
1	6	Deliver	Develop and implement Library plans that consider the needs of our elders, families and young people.	Ongoing
2	7	Deliver	Develop and implement Communications Framework and Action Plan.	Short
2	8	Deliver	Develop and implement Community Engagement Action Plan	Short
2	9	Deliver	Develop and implement Volunteer Development Action Plan	Short
2	10	Deliver	Review Council's Community Development Grant Program to ensure resources are available that meet the needs of community groups and are aligned with this strategy.	Short
2	11	Enable	Implement strategies to recognise and celebrate community contributions and partnerships.	Medium
2	12	Enable	Design and deliver community leadership training.	Medium
3	13	Enable	Implement strategies to maximise community benefit of existing community facilities, both Council and non-council owned, particularly in rural townships.	Ongoing
3	14	Enable	Support the development of the Dumas St precinct as a community hub.	Short
3	15	Inform	Provide new residents with information to support community connection.	Short
3	16	Deliver	Implement Council's Reconciliation Action Plan	Short
3	17	Deliver	Develop and implement a district response and plan for the Arts.	Short
3	18	Enable	Provide opportunities for people to learn about the natural history of the district and to directly experience and care for the natural environment.	Short
3	19	Enable	Facilitate a variety of community events, programs, activities and initiatives that foster community connection and bring diverse groups together.	Ongoing
3	20	Deliver	Share stories about our local history and continue support for the Local History Centre.	Ongoing
4	21	Enable	Develop a plan for increasing the role of the Mount Barker Community Centre as a regional level community learning and cultural hub.	Short
4	22	Deliver	Develop a model for measuring the social return on investment.	Medium
4	23	Enable	Support learning opportunities for community groups to develop and implement social enterprise ideas.	Medium
4	24	Deliver	Establish a library collection development strategy.	Short
4	25	Deliver	Develop and implement a digital literacy program at the Mount Barker Community Library.	Short

Timeframe: Short 0-3 years, Medium 3+ years, Ongoing: for the life of the plan



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