

Limestone Coast Policy Priorities 2026



Our Region

The Limestone Coast describes a rich and diverse geographical region that covers over 21,000 square kilometres, currently home to almost 70,000 people and with a Gross Regional Product of \$5.1 billion.

The Limestone Coast punches well above its weight as the region is home to 3.6 per cent of South Australia's population while contributing over 30 per cent of the state's Agricultural exports from just 2 per cent of the State's land mass.

The region benefits from fertile soils, a mediterranean climate, extensive confined and unconfined aquifers as well as the cold, clean waters of the southern ocean. These diverse natural assets have enabled globally significant food, wine and fibre production.

The modern Limestone Coast economy has been built from the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors which continue to provide the region's largest economic output and employment. Growing industries such as modern manufacturing linked to our primary produce, an increasing visitor economy and significant employment in the health and care sectors indicate increasingly diverse economic opportunities under the right policy settings.

As the closest level of government to the people, local government plays a critical role in understanding the needs of local communities and advocating for the support required to deliver infrastructure and services to enable sustainable population growth, projected to reach over 85,000 by 2051. Councils within the Limestone Coast recognise the potential for economic growth to enable a highly productive and prosperous community that will continue to contribute significantly to the South Australian economy.



\$4.8 Billion
Exports



\$5.1 Billion
Gross Regional Product



69,336
Population

Industry Size by Output



\$3.35B (36.7%)
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing



\$1.56B (17.1%)
Manufacturing



\$879M (9.6%)
Construction



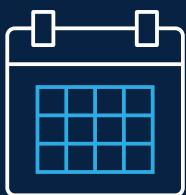
21,329km²

Limestone Coast land size



8,907km

Roads managed by
local government



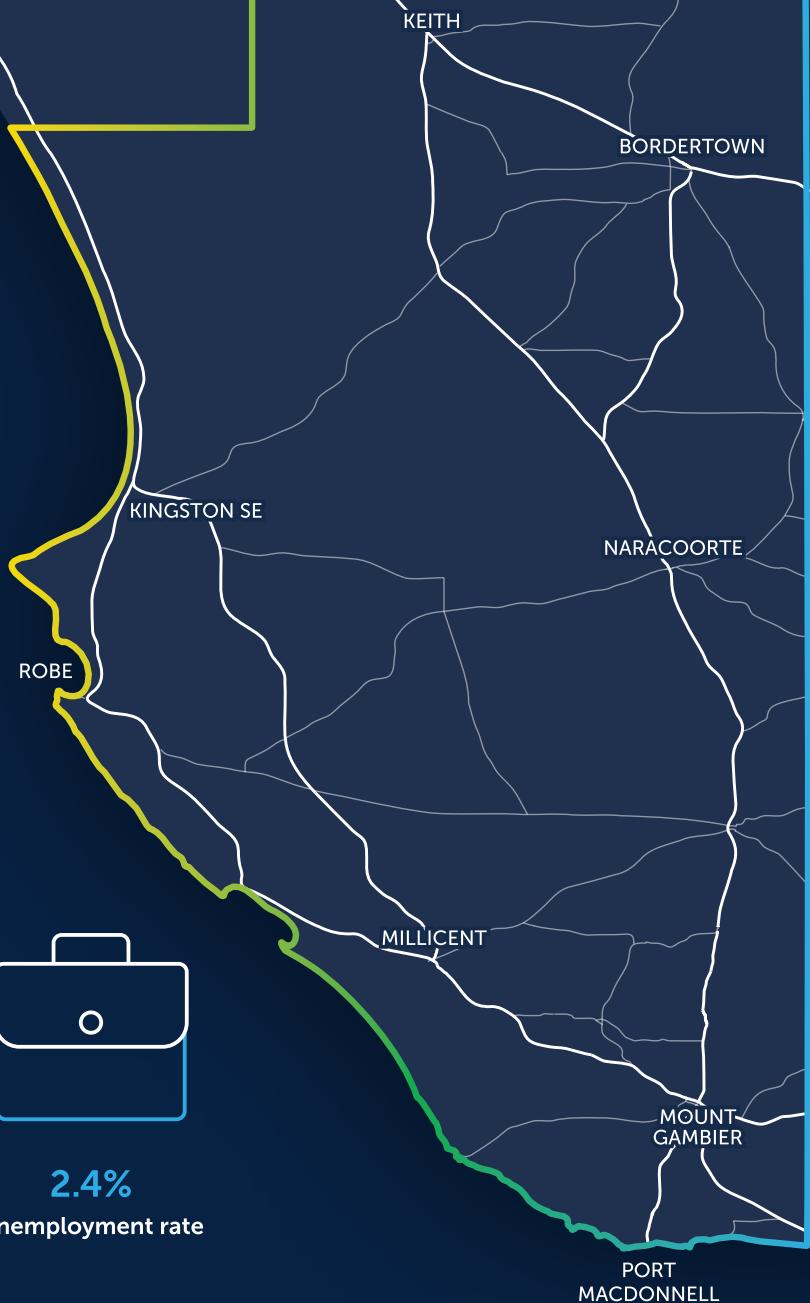
43

Average age of
Limestone Coast residents



2.4%

Unemployment rate



Industry Size by Employment



6,268 people (18.4%)
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing



4,819 people (14.1%)
Manufacturing



4,460 people (13.1%)
Health Care & Social Assistance

About Us

Local Government in Limestone Coast has been working together for over 140 years.

As the peak body representing Local Government in the Limestone Coast, the LCLGA takes a lead to advocate on behalf of the region across a wide range of issues with the goal of continuing the 140 year history of collectively building strong, sustainable communities.

Our Vision for the Limestone Coast

- › Regional growth that is considered and sustainable.
- › Communities that are supported with the services and infrastructure needed to thrive now and generations into the future.
- › To maintain our competitive advantage and global reputation for the clean, green environment and the food and fibre that is produced from our resources
- › A diverse economy that is resilient and balanced
- › A highly attractive region to live, work, visit and invest.

To achieve our long term vision, the collaborative efforts of local government are focused around four key themes;

Infrastructure and services

Ensuring that regional infrastructure and services are fit for purpose and have the capacity to meet the region's current and future needs to enable productivity for industry and highly desirable liveability.

Sustainable economy

Supporting and promoting a thriving and diverse economy for prosperity and sustainable employment throughout the region.

Environmental awareness

Acknowledging and respecting the responsibility to manage and protect our natural environment and resources, recognising that these unique and diverse natural assets underpin our economic and social prosperity.

Community and social well-being

Advocating and collaborating with regional partners to enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing understanding that a strong sense of community and enhanced social wellbeing enables an attractive region for young and working-aged people and families.

Our Priorities

By working together, all levels of government and industry can overcome the challenges inhibiting sustainable growth and ensure the Limestone Coast reaches its potential, contributing even more significantly to South Australia's economy.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association has identified a number of key policy priorities to address challenges and unlock potential over the next 5 years.



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Unlocking Housing Supply

Meeting the demand for housing is crucial for the region's prosperity, liveability and is a key priority for local and state governments. An additional 8,805 dwellings will be required across the Limestone Coast region by 2051 to meet demand and while there is a sufficient supply of appropriately zoned land to accommodate growth, enabling infrastructure and market failure are the two key issues constraining supply.

The LCLGA wants to see population growth within the Limestone Coast that is considered, sustainable and proportional, with towns such as Bordertown, Keith, Naracoorte and Kingston SE growing relative to that of the greater Mount Gambier area.

To meet the demand for housing and accommodate the workforce required to address current shortages in healthcare, childcare and other critical sectors, barriers to residential housing development in established population centres must be removed.

Enabling Infrastructure

Town Water Supply

Bordertown's water supply is at capacity, limiting the ability of any new industrial and residential developments to meet demand.

Significant scoping and investigation works need to be prioritised before identifying options for an alternative water source to meet projected growth.

Wastewater Treatment Capacity

SA Water's Finger Point Wastewater Treatment Plant located on the south coast near Port MacDonnell services the current residential area of Mount Gambier as well as receiving transported waste from the Port MacDonnell Community CWMS.

With over 70 per cent of additional housing stock projected for the greater Mount Gambier area, major upgrades to increase capacity at Finger Point Wastewater Treatment Plant will be required unless a second treatment facility is considered feasible.

In sub-regional population centres in the Limestone Coast such as Kingston SE, community wastewater management systems will require expansion to unlock development.

SA Power Network Upgrades

Consistent and affordable power supply is integral to achieving residential housing supply and supporting our growing manufacturing industry. Without it, growth in areas such as Bordertown will be severely limited. Identification of energy infrastructure upgrades required to meet demands for housing, business and industry growth in the Tatiara must be prioritised to ensure the north of our region can reach its enormous potential in value-add industries.



Unlocking Housing Supply

Land Development

The limited commercial viability for private developers in certain areas of the Limestone Coast presents a significant barrier to increasing housing stock. Despite strong demand in numerous townships within the region, insufficient or negative returns on investment restrict the commercial development of available land.

Local government or community housing providers could address this market failure by using low or no cost finance from State or Federal Governments to develop land in suitable areas where it is uneconomic for private investment.

Ask

- › Major upgrades to increase capacity at Finger Point Wastewater Treatment plant
- › Additional access points to the Finger Point pipeline
- › Significant increase to the CWMS program funding
- › SA Power Networks upgrades - Keith to Bordertown
- › Bordertown water supply planning study
- › Local Government access to low or no cost finance to develop vacant land

Connecting the Limestone Coast

Strong, prosperous communities are safe and connected communities.

Connecting regional service hubs to surrounding population centres and our State Capital is essential for considered and sustainable growth.

Regional Air Travel

41 percent of domestic passengers travel through regional airports in Australia. These regional air services play an important role in our regional communities and our nation's economic prosperity, yet regional aviation carries a disproportionate burden of fees and charges levied per ticket, ultimately threatening the sustainability of services.

The Limestone Coast has one regional airport with scheduled passenger services. The Mount Gambier Regional Airport is owned and operated by the District Council of Grant, providing the infrastructure and management that allows two commercial airlines to fly around 80,000 passengers in and out of the terminal each year. The Limestone Coast Local Government Association seeks State and Federal Government support to secure the future viability and sustainability of passenger air services that connect the Limestone Coast.

Public Transport

Much of the Limestone Coast is not serviced by public transport and has very limited access to taxis.

Existing public transport is inadequate and inequitable. As a cross-border community, our regional capital of Mount Gambier is better connected to regional Victoria and Melbourne than it is to Adelaide and the regional centres along the way.

A bus trip from Mount Gambier to Adelaide (one commercial service daily) is eight times more expensive than to Melbourne (multiple public services daily).

Inadequate public transport is a key limitation on the liveability of our region and impacts on our ability to attract workers and students.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association seeks increased public transport services and subsidised fares both in and between major regional towns to support local economies and improve health and education outcomes.

Community Transport

Lack of public transport and very limited access to commercial services exacerbates barriers to social connection and essential services for vulnerable residents. Transport disadvantage has significant and detrimental impact on the ability to participate in community leading to isolation and poorer health outcomes.

Community Transport services are an essential component to addressing transport disadvantage for those in our community with no other option.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association seeks nationally consistent, fair and equitable funding for Community Transport providers that considers each trips needs including distance travelled and the level of support required. Current funding models disadvantage regional communities, placing unfair pressure on the sustainability of services.



Connecting the Limestone Coast

Safe & Productive Roads

Without an extensive rail network, road freight carries much of the primary produce and manufactured goods produced in the Limestone Coast, worth over \$2.6 billion in total exports.

Limestone Coast roads carry the products – livestock, grain, diary, forest products, grapes and potatoes – that generate a third of South Australia's agricultural exports from only 2 percent of the States land mass.

In addition to the growing demand for food and fibre produced in the Limestone Coast, opportunities exist to expand local processing and packaging activities as well as support emerging Agri-tourism and an increasing demand for food and wine tourism.

The Limestone Coast road network must allow for the safe, efficient and productive movement of people and goods to meet our potential.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association has identified regionally significant road projects to support our economic development and community safety.

Ask

- › Roads and Transport study to identify future demand on our state road network
- › Planning to commence for the duplication of Dukes Highway concurrently with Swanport Bridge Upgrade
- › Riddoch Highway overtaking lanes
- › Princes Highway upgrades
- › Second Exit/Entry to Robe
- › Planning to commence for a Greater Mount Gambier Freight bypass
- › Support to ensure the sustainability of passenger air services at Mount Gambier Airport
- › Additional public transport services both in and between major towns and cities of the Limestone Coast
- › Support for nationally consistent, fair and equitable funding for Community Transport providers

Growing our Tourism offering

Situated between Adelaide and Melbourne, the Limestone Coast is one of South Australia's most distinctive and diverse tourism regions.

In the five years to December 2024, the Limestone Coast experienced the highest growth percentage recorded across all regional tourism destinations in South Australia, growing 57 per cent.

In the 12 months to 31 December 2024, visitors to the Limestone Coast contributed \$662m in expenditure surging past the 2025 target of \$479m, and the long-term 2030 target of \$609m.

International visitors account for less than 4 per cent of visitation, making this a key target market for growth.

While our sea, land and water are the foundation for thriving primary industries that account for over 36 per cent of the region's economic output, these precious natural advantages are also key to unlocking the immense potential to further grow a sustainable tourism sector adding to a consistent and significant economic contribution to the State.

Over the past decade the Limestone Coast has proven to be a key asset to South Australia's tourism industry. Investment to support the industry will not only increase diversity of the local economy but assist in reaching the ambitious goal to grow the State's visitor economy to \$12.8 billion.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association seeks State Government support for two key, complimentary projects to ensure our region can continue to contribute significantly to regional tourism in South Australia.

Naracoorte Caves National Park

Developing distinct, place-based visitor experiences and sharing authentic stories of people and place presents a significant opportunity for Limestone Coast Tourism.

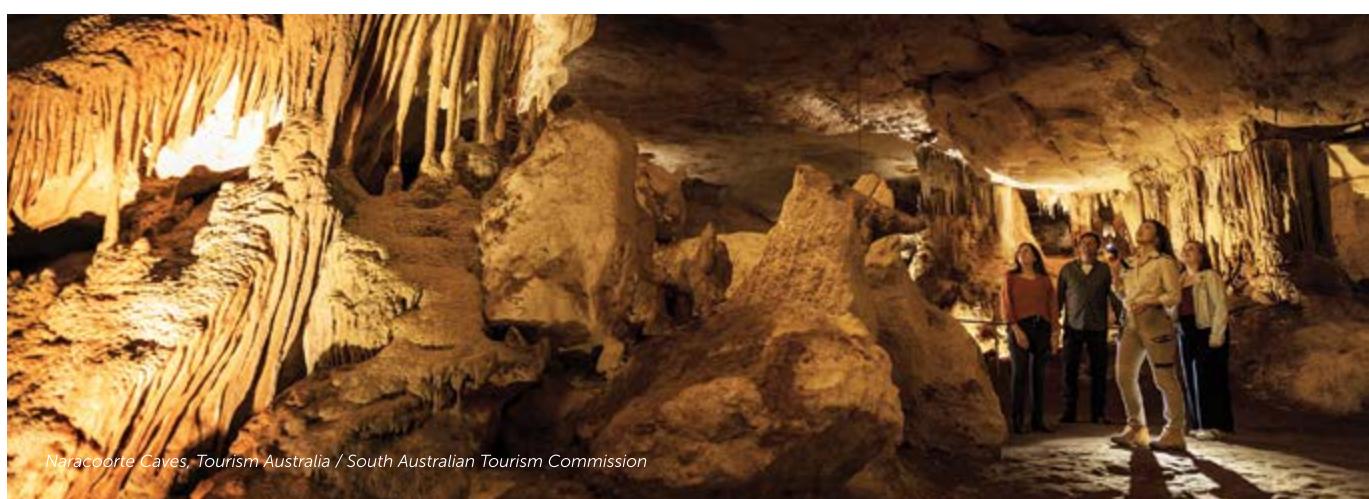
As South Australia's only UNESCO World Heritage site, the Naracoorte Caves is a globally significant natural and cultural asset with the power to elevate the State's profile internationally.

Naracoorte Caves offers a diverse storytelling platform, of ancient megafauna, geological wonders, First Nations connection to Country, European settlement history and continuing scientific discovery.

Naracoorte Caves serves as a premier destination, well positioned to support objectives for increasing international tourism – a key target market poised for growth.

Located centrally within the Limestone Coast region, the site offers significant potential to drive year-round visitation, particularly during off-peak periods assisting small businesses with seasonal fluctuations.

Infrastructure upgrades, new and commissionable product development, joint marketing opportunities, and collaboration with Limestone Coast businesses for events could unlock the opportunity for increased visitation of target markets, strategically aligned to grow the visitor economy across the Limestone Coast.



Growing our Tourism offering

Melbourne to Adelaide Touring Route collaboration

The Melbourne to Adelaide Touring Route is one of Australia's great drives, linking two capital cities through spectacular coastlines, pristine beaches, rural towns, cultural and natural phenomena including two UNESCO World Heritage Sites Budj Bim Cultural Landscape and Naracoorte Caves, as well as the Grampians and the Crater Lakes and Volcanic Precinct.

The region's highly productive, clean and green reputation for first class food and wine also offers increased opportunities for Australia's growing Agri-Tourism market, while motorsport enthusiasts are captured in Bordertown and Tailem Bend.

By encouraging visitors to stay longer and see more of what is to offer between our two Capital Cities, twisting and turning along the journey, the region becomes a destination rather than a rest stop.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association seeks a State initiated cross-border collaboration for curated itineraries, wayfinding signage, and co-operative marketing opportunities with the potential to increase overnight stays and depth of visitor engagement across the region.

Ask

- › State Government investment in Naracoorte Caves National Park to protect and advance the interests of South Australia's only UNESCO World Heritage site and sustainably grow international visitation for the Limestone Coast region.
- › Cross-border Melbourne to Adelaide collaborative project



Healthy Community

The absence of health services impacts the liveability of the region particularly, when compared to regions of similar population in other States.

Considered and sustainable population growth requires health services to match. Many areas within the Limestone Coast lack access to basic healthcare and residents are forced to travel vast distances.

Our population distribution and the projected growth patterns require innovative solutions to meet immediate needs of communities while considered planning must be accelerated to ensure services correspond to population growth.

The Limestone Coast is severely lacking the health workforce required to service our population, particularly General Practice. While State and Federal Government's must do more to address this issue facing many regional communities, the LCLGA has identified regionally specific priorities for immediate action.

Radiation Treatment

South Australia is currently the only State in Australia without regional radiation oncology services. Limestone Coast residents advised to receive this lifesaving treatment are forced to travel either interstate or to Adelaide and spend considerable time away from community in order to receive treatment.

The continued absence of this service costs our economy, and our community wellbeing.

While the public health system is limited in its capacity to deliver new and expanded oncology services in the region due to workforce challenges, the private sector has indicated capability and interest in delivering a viable service in the Limestone Coast as is done in many regional communities across the nation.

The refusal to partner with a private service provider to deliver radiation treatment services is putting our community at a significant disadvantage, impacting on the liveability and ability to attract the workforce needed to fill skills shortages.

SA Health Clinical Services and Workforce Planning

The recently released Limestone Coast Local Health Network Clinical Services Plan 2025-2035 outlines a 10-year roadmap for the delivery of hospital and community services across the Limestone Coast region. While strategies to make better use of existing health facilities across the region to enable care closer to home and to relieve the pressure on Mount Gambier Hospital is generally welcomed, concerns regarding the appropriate resourcing are yet to be addressed.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association seeks a commitment that increased clinical health services will be adequately resourced if delivered within the public health system across the Limestone Coast. Adequate resourcing is essential to ensure the sustainability of the service and instill community confidence in SA Health.

Ask

- › Private Public Partnership for Regional Radiation treatment services
- › Workforce planning and adequate resourcing for decentralisation of services
- › Expand urgent and emergency care services to meet seasonal demand at Kingston SE

Urgent and Emergency Care at Kingston SE

Kingston Soldiers' Memorial Hospital delivers flexible inpatient, emergency, community and residential aged care services.

As a sub-regional health hub, Kingston Hospital services the local ageing population as well as the fluctuating population of Robe. Urgent and emergency care services must be expanded to address ongoing and seasonal requirements.

Active and Connected Community through Sport

The Limestone Coast Regional Sporting Academy is a highly successful initiative of the Limestone Coast Local Government Association (LCLGA) with the support of the South Australian Government via the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing.

Since 2017, the Academy has supported hundreds of local athletes offering critical support and development opportunities in their chosen sport. Over this time it has evolved into a cornerstone of athlete development. Through strong partnerships with State Sporting Organisations, local associations, and community clubs, the Academy supports athletes in reaching their full potential while remaining locally based.

Recently re-branded as the Limestone Coast Regional Academy of Sport (LCRAS), the Academy is now under the management of Regional Academies of Sport Ltd. This transition represents a natural and strategic evolution of the Academy, increasing pathways for emerging Limestone Coast sporting talent in the lead up to Brisbane 2032.

This well-established sporting academy presents an exciting opportunity for partnership, assisting the State Government to lead and support a proud, active and connected community and accelerating the progress of the Office of Recreation, Sport and Racing's strategic objectives.

The LCLGA is seeking support from the State Government to ensure the Limestone Coast Regional Academy of Sport continues to deliver pathways for identifying and developing sporting talent locally, removing barriers that would otherwise face emerging regional athletes.

Ask

- › On-going funding commitment to support the Limestone Coast Regional Academy of Sport



Sustainable Food and Fibre Production

The region's economic strength is founded in agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors which continue to provide the region's largest economic output and employment.

The region has maintained its clean, green, natural environments, ensuring its natural assets and productive landscapes have been regeneratively managed and remain key drivers of regional prosperity. Greenbelts and wildlife corridors between centres and towns have been preserved and remain protected; as have the region's national and marine parks, UNESCO World Heritage site and RAMSAR sites.

Protection of the Limestone Coast's valuable primary production land has resulted in the region becoming an agricultural powerhouse for the state.

The Limestone Coast generates a third of South Australia's agricultural exports from only 2 percent of the States land mass.

Opportunities exist to grow modern manufacturing and value add to our primary produce, while an increasing visitor economy is underpinned by our natural assets and well-established reputation for high quality food and wine.

Sustainable wild-catch fishing, irrigated and dryland crops, livestock, dairy, viticulture, forestry and our growing tourism sector is reliant on our fertile soils, water resources, pristine coastline and the global reputation that has been built on these natural assets.

While there is considerable opportunity for economic growth through food processing, timber production and tourism, mining and energy developments threaten this natural evolution of industry expansion.



Warrawindi Escapes, South Australian Tourism Commission

Soil health, underground water aquifers and our pristine coastal waters, must be protected from any detrimental impacts arising from renewable energy generation and transmission, unconventional gas extraction, rare earth mining and the subsequent reputational damage.

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association seeks stronger safeguards to protect the natural assets that underpin our current and potential economic and social success.

Ask

- › Extend the legislated moratorium on Hydraulic fracturing in the Limestone Coast beyond 2028
- › Investigate the appointment of an independent South Australian Agriculture Commissioner to provide increased protection for South Australia's high quality farmland, ensure food and fibre security and a more sustainable and productive agriculture, forestry and fisheries industry.

Support for Coastal Communities

Volunteer Marine Rescue

Currently there is a significant capability gap in marine rescue coverage along the lower Limestone Coast.

Due to the large geographical area of the coastline, it is vital to have capable and timely marine rescue available to respond to emergencies. While a Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) vessel is located at Kingston SE, additional resources to be based at Port MacDonnell would strengthen the capability of marine rescue operations and enhance the emergency response capacity for the region.

The absence of a dedicated marine rescue vessel in the lower Limestone Coast presents a critical risk to public safety and emergency response effectiveness. Continued reliance on professional fishermen and recreational mariners to respond to marine emergencies is unsustainable and places undue pressure, and safety risk on local community members and small businesses.

A VMR vessel based at Port MacDonnell would significantly enhance regional emergency response capacity, improve public safety outcomes, and support interagency coordination during maritime incidents.

Protecting Our Coast

Severe storms have highlighted the vulnerability of our coastal communities and the additional cost pressures on local government to manage issues caused by coastal erosion and damage to coastal infrastructure assets.

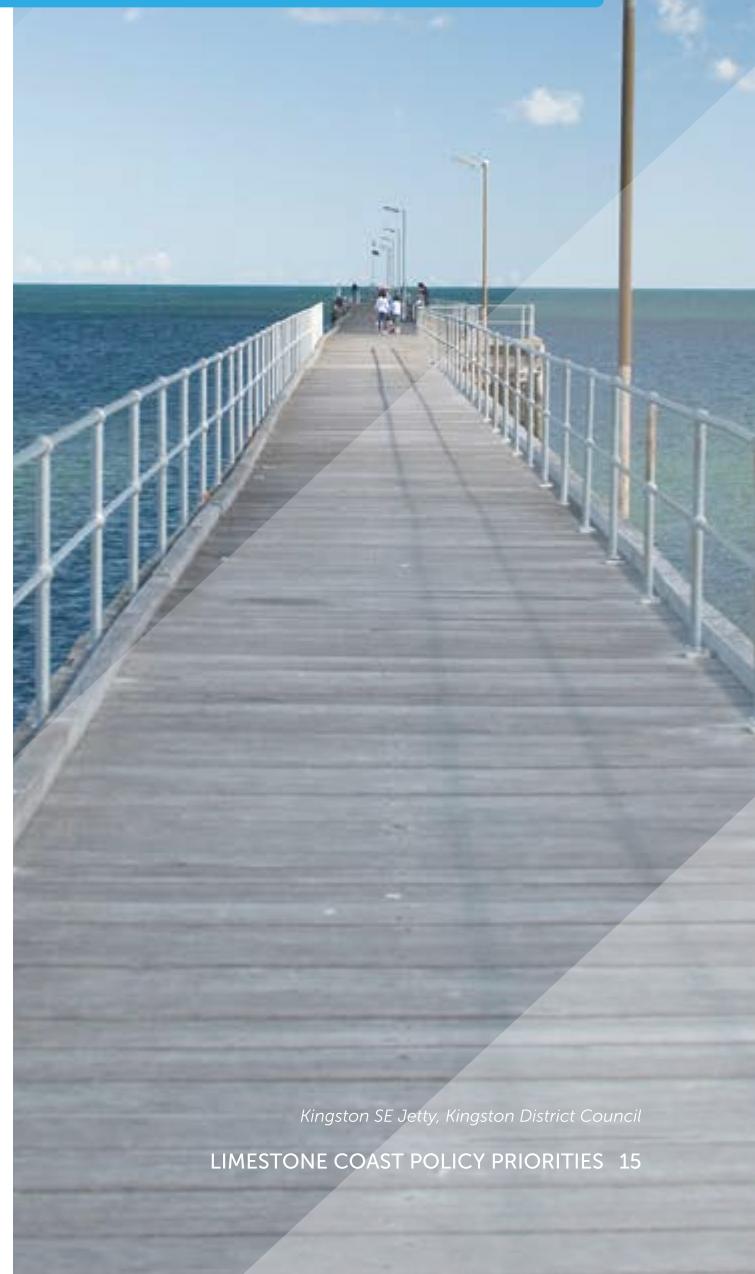
The LCLGA calls for a Regional Coastal Adaptation Coordinator to play a central role in supporting and advising in the coordination of coastal adaptation planning in the Limestone Coast.

The current funding delivered through the Coast Protection Grants is insufficient to address the funding pressures on coastal councils to adequately manage and protect South Australia's valuable coastal assets. LCLGA supports calls to double the annual funding allocation.

The management and maintenance of ageing and deteriorating jetties is a significant financial burden for communities. LCLGA calls on the State Government to work with Councils to develop a strategy for maintaining these important assets.

Ask

- › Dedicated Limestone Coast Coastal Adaptation Coordinator
- › Double the funding available through Coast Protection Grants
- › A Volunteer Marine Rescue vessel based at Port MacDonnell
- › Work with Councils to develop a sustainable ongoing strategy for jetty maintenance and management



Kingston SE Jetty, Kingston District Council



Better Together Since 1885

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