

Port Augusta Infrastructure for Growth Strategy

July 2025

Liveable. Connected. Growing.



Disclaimer

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“Looking to work, live or invest in regional South Australia? The adventure starts here.”

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Foreword



Scott McKay, Chair



Linley Shine, Mayor



I am pleased to introduce Port Augusta’s Infrastructure for Growth Strategy in partnership with the Port Augusta City Council.

This strategy is founded on a shared vision that delivers enhanced liveability, connectivity, and growth outcomes that benefit residents, businesses and visitors alike.

At the heart of our strategy is a call to prioritise liveability, in turn enhancing our ability to attract and retain new residents, a skilled workforce, business growth and tourism.

Liveability is the key to Port Augusta’s future prosperity. Port Augusta’s strong sense of community and adventurous lifestyle are strong foundations for success. Further investment in housing, recreation opportunities, beautification, leisure and tourist attractions, public spaces and community wellbeing will significantly enhance our ability to attract and retain economic growth.

By focusing on strategic partnerships and leveraging the strengths of our community, we aim to unlock future growth for Port Augusta. We are confident that this strategy will serve as a catalyst for positive change, driving towards a sustainable and prosperous future.

Port Augusta is a diverse regional hub that provides services to the Upper Spencer Gulf, Far North and beyond.

Council’s Strategic Directions 2035 emphasises Port Augusta’s importance as a regional service hub. This Infrastructure for Growth Strategy recognises how critical it is to invest in infrastructure that not only safeguards this role but builds on Port Augusta’s positioning to drive economic growth.

This strategy is a five-year plan for infrastructure investment and a major focus over this period will be to strategically direct our investment in infrastructure to drive the growth of our city and meet the needs of its residents, workers, businesses and visitors.

Port Augusta City Council has already started on its journey towards meeting the vision and priorities identified in this strategy, including upgrades to the wharf, airport, stormwater network and shared use paths.

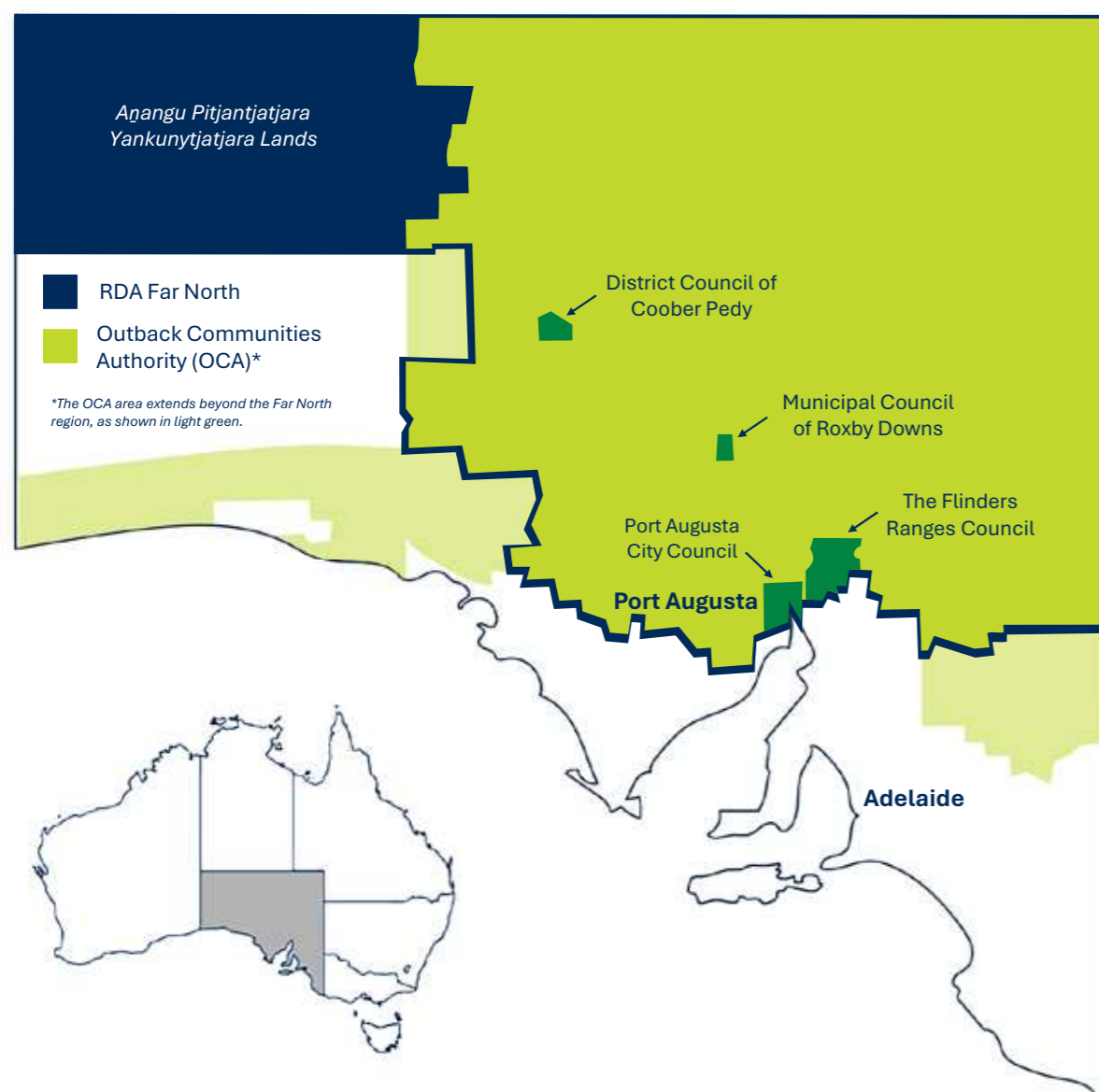
We have partnered with Regional Development Australia Far North to prepare this strategy and I invite others to partner with us to enhance liveability, improve connectivity, and drive growth for the benefit of Port Augusta’s residents, workers, businesses and visitors.

RDA Far North

Supporting South Australia's Far North

Regional Development Australia Far North (RDA Far North) is a partnership between the Australian, State and Local Governments to support the growth and development of South Australia's Far North region. RDA Far North committee members and operational team aim to build partnerships

between governments, regional development organisations, local businesses, community groups and key regional stakeholders to provide strategic and targeted responses to economic, environmental and social issues affecting the region.



Developing the Strategy

This project was made possible by the financial support of the Local Buying Foundation and the Port Augusta Business Centre, as well as the significant in-kind support of the Port Augusta City council and RDA Far North.

Project Steering Group

We would like to acknowledge the members of the Port Augusta Infrastructure for Growth Strategy Project Steering Group.

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Chief Executive Officer, Port Augusta City Council

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Chairperson, Business Port Augusta

Margaret Howard

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John Haese

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Business and community input

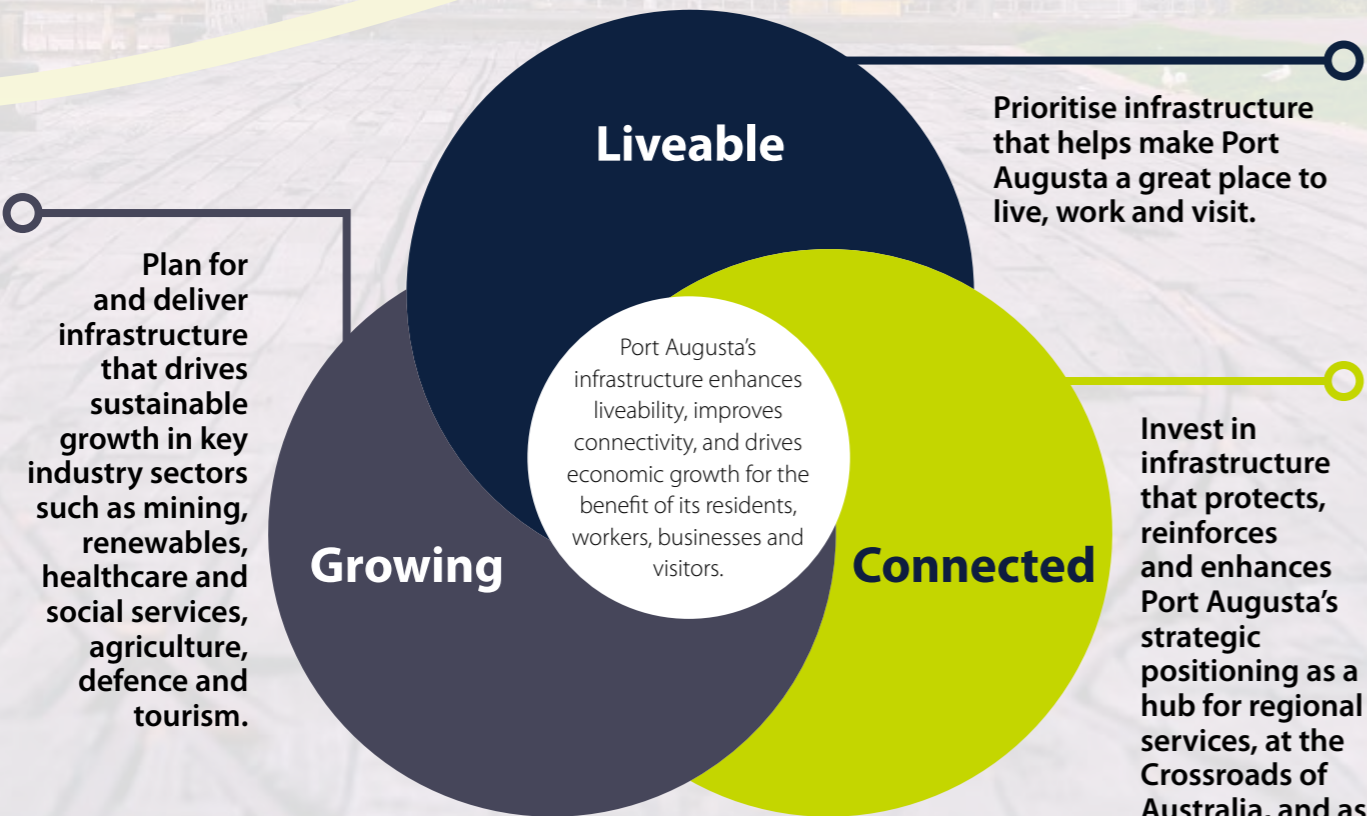
In developing this strategy, the project team engaged with businesses and the community of Port Augusta to help identify key infrastructure challenges and opportunities.

This included:

- A survey of businesses and community members.
- Interviews and meetings with key businesses, infrastructure providers, community leaders and agencies.
- Workshops with key stakeholders, council representatives and community leaders.
- A study tour and site visits to key locations and business operations.

Vision

Port Augusta’s infrastructure enhances liveability, improves connectivity, and drives economic growth for the benefit of its residents, workers, businesses and visitors.



Strategic outcomes and priorities

Economic development principles

With the input of key stakeholders and community leaders, we have developed a set of economic development principles that have been used to guide the development of this strategy. These principles are aimed at ensuring that our infrastructure investments are not only effective in addressing current challenges but also reflect

the long-term vision of the community. Leverage natural strengths and assets.

- Enable a diverse economy for long-term resilience
- Support local business growth and innovation
- Attract and retain residents and workers
- Promote regional connectivity
- Foster higher-skill and higher-wage job opportunities for residents.

Liveable	Connected	Growing
Prioritise infrastructure that helps make Port Augusta a great place to live, work and visit.	Invest in infrastructure that protects, reinforces and enhances Port Augusta's strategic positioning as a hub for regional services, at the Crossroads of Australia, and as a Gateway to the Outback.	Plan for and deliver infrastructure that drives sustainable growth in key industry sectors such as mining, renewables, healthcare and social services, agriculture, defence and tourism.
Increase the availability, quality and diversity of accommodation to meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors	Ensure road connections leading to Port Augusta are safe, well-maintained and have capacity to support national freight	Ensure the ordered and sustainable provision of the city's infrastructure in response to growth
Enhance recreation, tourism and lifestyle opportunities for residents, workers and visitors	Improve access and connectivity across the city for residents, workers, businesses and visitors	Better promote access to high-speed telecommunications networks
Enhance the public realm to improve safety, amenity, community wellbeing, sense of place and connectivity	Enhance the capability of the airport to meet the needs of FIFO workers, tourism operators, healthcare services and passengers	Secure the short- and long-term supply of gas to the city
Improve public transport options, particularly in relation to transport-dependent residents and for regional connections	Re-establish a working seaport with export capacity and intermodal capability	Increase sustainability of water supply and optimise water and wastewater management networks
Coordinate the delivery of community services and address gaps, reinforcing the role of Port Augusta as a hub for regional services	Increase the capacity of the rail line to manage a greater share of freight transport	
	Coordinate intermodal freight transport to improve supply chain efficiencies	

Engagement outcomes

In preparing this strategy, we engaged key stakeholders, business and community leaders, service providers and government agencies via workshops, interviews, site visits, meetings, a survey of businesses and a community survey.

What do people love most about living, working, visiting and doing business in Port Augusta?

The family and friendship connections, country lifestyle, relaxed and friendly atmosphere, and deep roots and long histories with Port Augusta create a strong **sense of belonging** and comfort.

The **natural beauty and adventurous lifestyle** offered by Port Augusta's proximity to the Flinders Ranges and Outback SA, including camping and hiking.

Port Augusta's **location on the coast** and waters of the Gulf and its fishing, boating and water-based lifestyle.

Port Augusta's **Aboriginal community** and its diverse language groups – a unique and valued part of the community.

Access to essential **services, shopping, recreation facilities and major attractions** such as the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens, golf course and Wadlata Outback Centre.

What did we hear about infrastructure priorities?

Housing

Increasing **housing supply and quality** by taking advantage of large supply of residential land and established areas needing renewal, with a focus on housing for retirees, professional and essential workers, and the homeless.

Recreation and tourism

Realise Port Augusta's **tourism potential** by investing in waterfront and Esplanade upgrades, beautification projects, integrated plans for major attractions and support for tours.

Provide new and improved recreational facilities along the **waterfront, Esplanade and wharf** including facilities for boat cleaning, tours, entertainment venues and water sports.

Redevelop the coast and Esplanade, for residents and visitors, including repair and better utilisation of the wharf, walking paths and trails, more public spaces, better boating access, beaches, swimming facilities, fishing locations, and waterfront cafes.

Continue to **improve and promote recreational assets** such as bike and walking tracks, historical sites and parks.

Create more community open **spaces suitable for the local climate**.

Investment in more **diverse and vibrant shopping options** and shopping and dining hubs.

Infrastructure planning and funding

Improving planning and zoning patterns and providing **well planned infrastructure** to industrial and residential lands.

Expand sewer and water systems to enable the development of new residential and employment lands.

Improve **water security** by investing in alternative sources of water, water sensitive design and better stormwater management.

A stronger voice, including via Spencer Gulf Cities to ensure **equitable distribution of funding and assistance** based on need.

Business support and attraction

Support local businesses through targeted incentives, economic development support and economic development strategies.

Attraction of **new and diverse industries and employment opportunities**, especially local builders, tradespeople, and health professionals.

Social support

Address shortages of **childcare, medical and paramedical, mental health and social support services** and skills.

Provide **more activities, programs and resources** for young people, older residents and transient Aboriginal populations.

Better address **public safety** and management of anti-social behaviours.

Connectivity

Better **public transport services** around the city, to neighbouring areas and to Adelaide, and investment in coordinated bus terminal facilities for passenger shelter, comfort and ease of access.

Improved **connectivity around the city** for residents, businesses and visitors, including improved directional signage, road access and traffic flow.

Urban renewal and beautification

Target key areas of the city for **urban renewal**, especially in locations with high proportions of underutilised and derelict buildings.

Invest in general **infrastructure maintenance** such as street cleaning, rubbish collection, graffiti, dust, footpath repairs, and median tidying.

Enhance and beautify key areas of the City including the Main Street and CBD area, Esplanade, foreshore and wharf areas, and historic buildings and features.

Enhance gateways, arrival points and visual appeal of entries such as the pink lakes.

Enhance **streetscapes** throughout the City and invest in greening.

Liveability is key to growth

Overwhelmingly, stakeholders identified liveability, workforce attraction, recreation, tourism, safety, housing and city beautification as the highest priorities for future infrastructure investment.


For many businesses and residents, attracting people to live, work, visit and do business in Port Augusta continues to be a major challenge that is inextricably linked to liveability factors.

The Parliamentary Inquiry into Regional Australia (2022) and research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (2024) provide insights into what makes regional cities attractive:

- Regional communities often share a strong connection to place and a sense of belonging that is appealing to many new residents.
 - Access to employment opportunities is the single most common reason for moving to a regional city.
 - Coastal cities are much more likely to attract and retain new residents.
 - Access to education has a positive impact on migration rates for families with children.
 - Access to tertiary education, arts and recreation services, food and beverage services and home ownership opportunities is especially important for the attraction of young adults.
 - Investing in higher education in regional Australia could help retain a greater proportion of young adults in mid-sized cities.
- Access to healthcare and lifestyle opportunities is particularly important for attracting older residents and those looking to retire.
 - Access to local public transport and ease of travel are important to all demographic groups.
 - Remote working offers new opportunities for mid-sized cities that also offer a better quality of life.
 - Mid-sized cities with higher average incomes, lower unemployment rates, and accessible education, arts, and recreation services tend to attract and retain residents.

Based on this research, Port Augusta has all the foundational ingredients for success – a coastal location and an adventurous lifestyle, a diverse economy and employment opportunities, and established health and education services.

Investment in infrastructure that enhances liveability and quality of life for residents, workers, businesses and visitors is the fundamental key to unlocking future growth in Port Augusta.



Investment in infrastructure that delivers on liveability is the number one priority for this strategy.

Infrastructure investment should also reinforce Port Augusta's strategic connections and drive future growth opportunities.

About Port Augusta

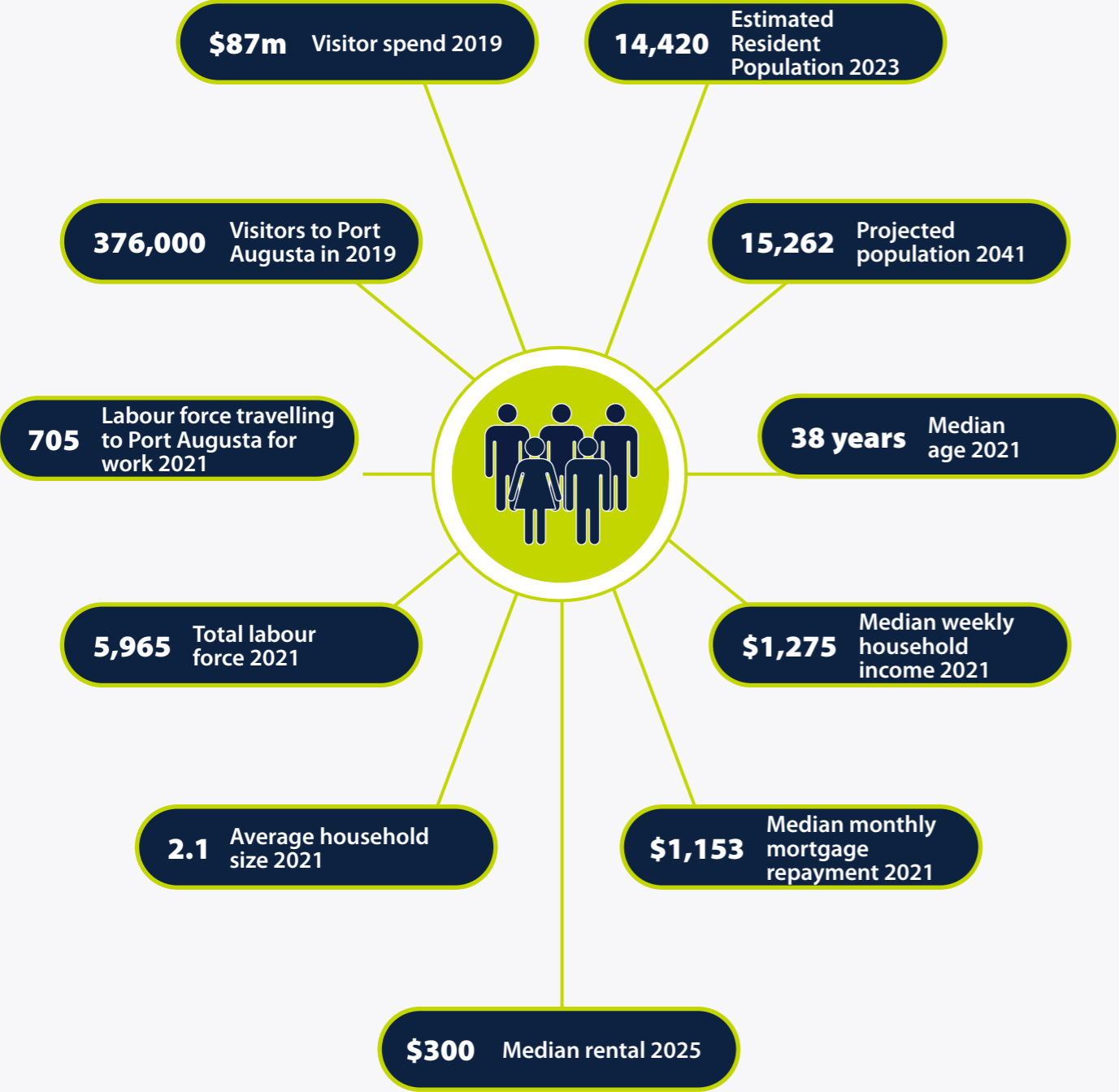
- ✓ Located at the Crossroads of Australia, offering unparalleled access to clients, business partners, major planned projects, logistics and supply chains.
- ✓ A regional hub and gateway to the mining, agriculture, health, renewables, defence and tourism sectors of the Flinders Ranges and Outback SA.
- ✓ Abundant fishing, boating, and water-based lifestyle opportunities in the Spencer Gulf.
- ✓ Extensive and ongoing investment in infrastructure, including fibre-to-the-premises, high-speed connections, highway upgrades, utilities and social services.
- ✓ An adventurous lifestyle where the Outback Meets The Sea.
- ✓ Access to a range of educational opportunities including public and private schools, vocational training and university degrees.
- ✓ A choice of cost effective and ready-to-go development options for new enterprises, with the space and support to grow.
- ✓ Located between the cities of Port Pirie and Whyalla, with the capacity to build partnerships across all three cities.
- ✓ A range of business support services that include training, education, business resources and networking.

As the closest city to South Australia's Outback, and at the Crossroads of Australia, Port Augusta is the nexus of some of Australia's most exciting opportunities in the mining, renewables, health, agriculture, tourism, and transport and logistics sectors.

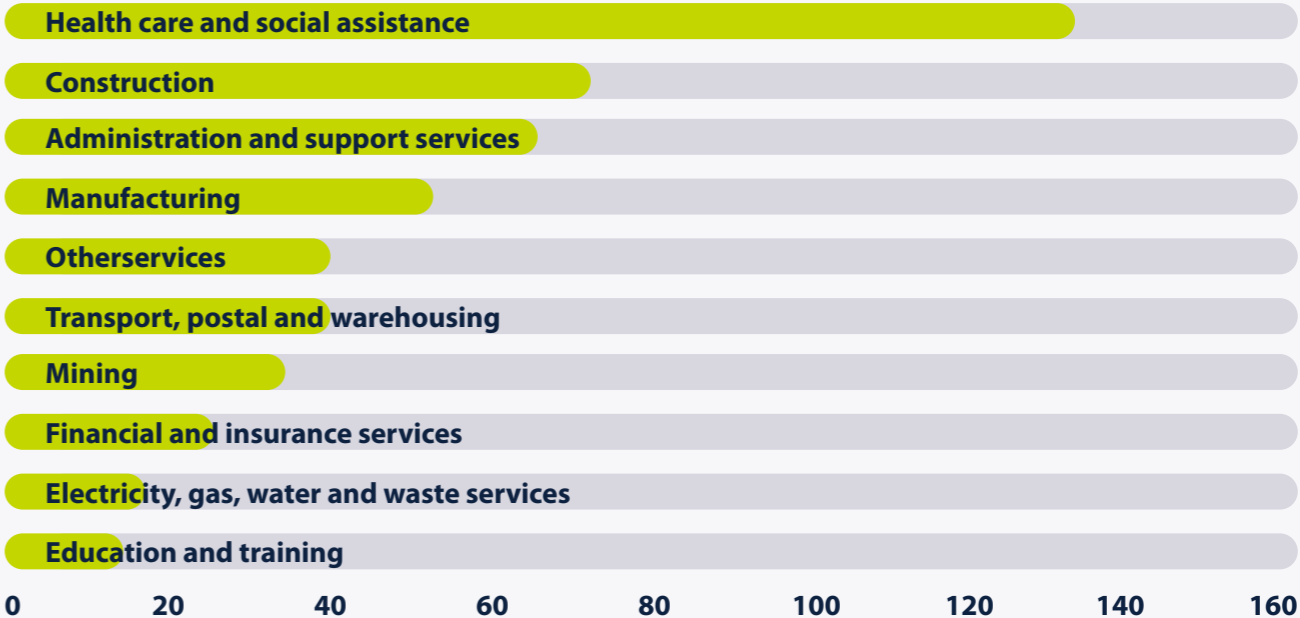
Alongside its natural geographic advantages, Port Augusta benefits from a strong foundation of supporting infrastructure. Significant investment in Port Augusta continues, with multiple public and private funded projects taking shape over the coming years.



Port Augusta at a glance



Top employment growth industries, growth in employees 2016-2021



Data sources: ABS, SACOSS, realestate.com



Infrastructure opportunities and challenges

Infrastructure challenges and opportunities for the key infrastructure areas addressed by this strategy have been informed by research, analysis and discussions with key stakeholders.

Transport

- Roads
- Public transport
- Rail
- Airport
- Seaport

Utilities

- Water and wastewater
- Stormwater
- Waste
- Electricity
- Gas
- Telecommunications

Socio-economic

- Land supply
- Accommodation
- Access and amenity
- Recreation and tourism
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and training

Transport

Port Augusta serves as a crucial hub for major road and rail networks, facilitating the movement of residents, visitors, and freight. Its established airport and seaport offer strategic connections with potential for further enhancement and integration. Port Augusta functions as a key gateway for the region and a central point of national connectivity.

Roads

Road remains the predominant mode of transport for freight in South Australia, accounting for approximately 77% of freight movements in the state.

Augusta Highway links the city's east and west via the upgraded Joy Baluch AM Bridge, which crosses the Spencer Gulf. It's a vital part of the National A1 Highway, ensuring efficient transport of goods and passengers across Australia and access to regional and international markets.

The Stuart Highway is the major route to the Northern Territory, whilst the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks also provide linkages in the north-east of the region. Numerous other roads serve mining operations, pastoralists, the community and tourists.

Outback road conditions

The capacity of the region to physically connect with national and international markets is limited by road conditions, with much of the region's network unsealed. These roads provide essential connections to ports in the Upper Spencer Gulf, Adelaide and South-East Queensland.

The condition of roads and their capacity to provide safe and reliable access to export gateways can directly impact on the State's economy. There is a risk that poorly maintained roads may drive exports away from South Australian ports if road conditions are not favourable. This may also undermine the future expansion of the Upper Spencer Gulf's role in providing direct access to international markets via its seaports.

Yorkeys Crossing

Yorkeys Crossing is unsealed and becomes impassable with 3mm of rain.

The Joy Baluch AM Bridge duplication has increased width and carrying capacity, reducing much of the reliance on Yorkeys Crossing. However, some of the largest freight, including the transportation of wind turbine parts, heavy equipment, and Defence SA armoured vehicles are still required to use Yorkeys Crossing.

Yorkeys Crossing remains an important alternative in the event that the Joy Baluch AM Bridge cannot be used.



Multispecies Livestock Transshipping Hub

A report undertaken by Regional Development Australia Far North in 2018 highlighted that Port Augusta is considered a strategic node in the meat and livestock supply chain due to its proximity to national transportation networks, source areas to the north, and southern markets. A significant number of livestock travels through Port Augusta from the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, Eyre Peninsula and APY lands each year.

At least two-thirds of vehicles carrying livestock are road trains that cannot proceed past Port Augusta and are 'broken down' or cross-loaded into smaller vehicles before travelling further south. There is currently no one location where animals can spell, be fed, watered, weighed and health checked or where trucks can be cross-loaded safely and drivers can rest.

Port Augusta's potential as a multispecies livestock transshipping hub presents significant opportunities for regional economic growth, improved supply chain efficiency, and enhanced animal welfare. Positioned near key highways and rail lines, the city can serve as a central point for consolidating and redistributing livestock, reducing transportation times and costs for producers, particularly those in remote areas, while improving access to domestic and international markets. A multispecies livestock transshipping hub would incorporate saleyards, spelling yards and cross-loading facilities.

The role of the Augusta Highway

The duplication of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge has consolidated the role of the Augusta Highway (and Eyre and Stuart Highways) as the primary freight route connecting the nation. The Augusta Highway is also part of the High Productivity Vehicle Network Project, which has been identified in the Infrastructure Australia Infrastructure Priority List, with the intent of maximising the efficiency of the freight network and supply chain connectivity, further reinforcing its role.

As well as servicing freight, Augusta Highway provides access to multiple business operations and houses, providing connectivity across and through the city for residents, workers, businesses and visitors.

While its position on the National Highway is undoubtedly one of Port Augusta's key strengths, the location of a major freight route through the centre of the city also poses significant challenges to local connectivity, amenity, and business access, all of which can impact on liveability and business attraction.

With a growing volume of high-productivity traffic, the challenge will be to balance the role of the highway as a major freight route with meeting the needs of local business and residential communities, and safeguarding Port Augusta's positioning at the Crossroads of Australia.

Intra city freight access

The strategic location of Port Augusta makes it attractive to industries and businesses. Such industries require heavy vehicle access that may be beyond the capacity of local roads. Desktop research and stakeholder discussions highlight potential issues associated with heavy vehicle access, turning circles and road design or capacity.

New employment lands will also require the timely provision of safe and efficient freight access.

Local road network

Road-related infrastructure challenges identified included: directional signage, CBD car parking, access to properties and business areas, freight risk, speed limits, drainage, maintenance and traffic signals.

Public transport

The Far North Transport Services provide public transport services along three main routes that link key destinations across the City, as well as school transport services. Charter services and mining bus services are also available.

Stateliner Premier Services runs a Whyalla-Port Augusta-Port Pirie-Adelaide bus service that departs Port Augusta for Adelaide daily. Connections are also provided to Port Lincoln.

Greyhound Australia stops Sunday to Friday in Port Augusta on its Adelaide to Alice Springs route. The Upper North Passenger Service operated by the Kent Group also provides a connection from Port Augusta to Peterborough on Fridays.

Port Augusta has two taxi services that operate 24hrs a day and numerous car hire business.

Public transport has been identified as a barrier business growth and community wellbeing for Aboriginal populations, business bus freight and prison operations.

Integrating public transport with tourism initiatives will attract more visitors to the region and connect key visitor attractions, boosting the local economy.

Bus terminal

Stateliner regional bus services stop at the OTR service station in Port Augusta East or at Coles Express on request only. Neither location is close to the city centre. Greyhound services stop at Mackay Street in the centre of the City, at a bus stop that provides a small shelter and park benches.

A one stop dedicated bus terminal in Port Augusta would increase efficiencies for passengers and bus freight, and comfort for public transport users.

Rail

Port Augusta serves as a vital hub for rail infrastructure. Its strategic location makes it a critical link in the East-West rail corridor, connecting major cities and facilitating the movement of freight across the country. The Adelaide-Darwin route also passes through Port Augusta.

Port Augusta's location is particularly advantageous for industries such as renewable energy, mining, and agriculture, which rely heavily on efficient transportation networks to support their growth.

Investments in these sectors drive the demand for robust rail systems, making Port Augusta a focal point for economic development.

Spencer Junction

Port Augusta's Spencer Junction is at the intersection of the Sydney-Brisbane-Adelaide and Melbourne-Perth-Adelaide-Darwin transcontinental rail network. The Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE, 2024) reported that the Crystal Brook-Port Augusta segment remains the busiest segment due to it being a convergence point for interstate intermodal and steel trains to and from Perth and Melbourne; intermodal trains to and from Sydney and Perth, and Adelaide and Darwin; and steel trains from Newcastle, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth to Port Augusta and Whyalla.

Aurizon operates and manages the Port Augusta standard gauge rail yard and runs six weekly return services from Adelaide to Darwin. Pacific National operates a freight and crew depot within Port Augusta. Bowmans Rail has a hard stand intermodal facility capable of handling 3,000 containers per year and up to three rail services per week to Port Adelaide.

The Port Augusta terminal has the capacity to load and unload trains with containers and break bulk freight, pack and unpack containers on site, and transfer containers to and from customer sites using a side loader.

In June 2025, BHP's Copper SA business announced a new partnership with Aurizon to deliver an integrated rail, road and port logistics solution. The solution will shift the transport of copper concentrate, cathode, and other inbound freight from road to rail between Pimba and Port Adelaide, removing more than 11,000 truck movements per year from South Australian roads.

Rail through the City

The location of Spencer Junction immediately adjacent the northern edge of the city, together with the route of the rail line through the centre of the City and through the centre of Stirling North creates significant barrier and complications associated with connectivity and safety.

Discussions with Pacific National staff indicate that trains are limited to 1,800m in length and pass through Port Augusta predominately during the evening hours. Trains are speed-limited through the City.

As the City grows, and as key industrial activity and rail use grows, the challenges posed by having a rail line pass through the centre of the city will also grow. Safety and speed constraints through the city may also limit the capacity and efficiency of rail transport.

Options for addressing this challenge will likely be long term and require significant investment associated with relocation and/or grade separations. Better understanding the costs, opportunities, economic impacts, and feasibility of various options may help identify potential

solutions and their timing. Potential solutions may also deliver significant opportunities to reshape the city for community and local economic benefit.

Port Paterson rail spur

The disused rail spur line connecting to the site of the former power plant at Port Paterson is critical to the success of the proposed Port Playford iron ore offloading facility and future import and export freight that Port Augusta Operations can develop.

A key challenge will be the management of the interface between various rail operators and regulators to achieve the connection into the existing rail network.

Airport

The Council-owned and operated Port Augusta Airport Terminal was opened in February 2015 and provides seating for 68 people in air-conditioned comfort with access to toilet facilities within the building. The facility provides for office space, baggage handling facilities and covered areas around the building and at the entries to protect passengers from the elements.

Along with the construction of the terminal, the carpark was upgraded, as well as an expansion of the apron to accommodate parking of additional planes.

In the 2024-25 financial year, a total of 4,664 aircraft movements were recorded at Port Augusta Airport. Fly-In-Fly-Out services accounted for approximately 38% of all movements, whilst the Royal Flying Doctor Service accounted for 31% and freight accounted for 8%. Other movements accounted for 23%, which

included general aviation, flight training, private charter and other itinerant flights.

RFDS base

The Port Augusta Base is headquarters of the RFDS Primary Health Care Service which serves an area of 840,000 square kilometres, providing primary health care services to residents in the Far West and North West regions of SA.

RFDS Central Operations' state-of-the-art Operations Communications Centre is located at Port Augusta Base, from which Operations Coordinators receive emergency calls, plan and assign all 24-hour emergency retrieval and inter-hospital transfer flights from Adelaide, Alice Springs, Port Augusta and Darwin, whilst also providing after-hours back up for the Broken Hill Base.

The ongoing maintenance and operation of the airport is fundamental to the operations of the RFDS and allied businesses, and the health and wellbeing of residents of the Far North.

FIFO operations

Fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) operations see approximately 16,000 passengers per year via charter flights to mines north of Port Augusta and accounted for approximately 38% of all flights in 2024-25. The Port Augusta Laurie Wallis Aerodrome Master Plan 2016-2036 suggests a small increase in aircraft movements by 2035 of around 3.5% and increase in passengers of approximately 3,000 -10,000 by 2035 depending on mining industry requirements. It should be noted however that the Master Plan was prepared in 2016 prior to COVID-19 and the loss of passenger aircraft services.





Port Augusta Airport has the potential to significantly expand its role as a base for FIFO operations. These operations are essential for mining sectors in northern South Australia, facilitating workforce mobility and strengthening ties with industries that are vital to the regional economy.

Tourism operations

Port Augusta Airport holds significant promise as a regional hub for air-based tourist operations and a staging point for tours and trips to the Outback SA and the Flinders Ranges, also providing the essential link between larger capital city airports and remote South Australia's tourist destinations.

Financial sustainability

As a council-owned airport, the cost of management, maintenance and upgrading falls to the rate-paying community of Port Augusta. With the loss of passenger services, direct benefits to the community are reduced.

There are opportunities to facilitate partnerships between current and emerging operators in the health, FIFO and tourist sectors to build the capacity and financial sustainability of the airport, offsetting the burden to the community and facilitating economic growth.

Passenger services

The lack of passenger services between Adelaide and Port Augusta is a significant challenge for the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of residents, workers, businesses and visitors to Port Augusta and a major barrier to growth. Specific barriers include the attraction and retention of skilled staff, the loss of productivity for businesses required to travel to and from Adelaide, and difficulties attracting essential services and business to the City.

Passenger flights were previously operated by Rex from 2017, with the South Australian government awarding the carrier a route service licence to operate three flights a week between Adelaide and Port Augusta. During the COVID-19 pandemic Rex ceased services and they never returned. Rex airlines fell into voluntary administration on 30 July 2024.

The absence of regular passenger transport flights limits the airport's capacity to function as a broader commercial hub. Introducing regular passenger services would likely enhance connectivity, but would require investment and partnerships with airlines to make it a reality.

Capacity for larger aircraft

Further upgrades to runways and aprons would be required to handle larger aircraft such as Boeing 737s. Runway pavement strength is a limitation if larger aircraft are to regularly use the airfield and a box culvert in the runway would likely need to be strengthened to accommodate.

Airport freight opportunities

Freight movements accounted for approximately 8% of all aircraft movements at Port Augusta airport in 2024-25. There is capacity for the airport to play a greater role in the movement of freight, particularly for urgent and perishable freight, providing support for the future economic development of Port Augusta's business community.

Airport maintenance and modernisation

Maintaining and modernising the airport's facilities is essential to meet future demands and accommodate a diverse range of operations.

There are currently no dedicated facilities for security checking of passenger or baggage at Port Augusta Airport in accordance with security regulations. In the longer term it may not be possible to cater for both increased passenger numbers and increased security requirements. In that case a new terminal in a new location may be required.

While the 2008 surface of Runway 15/33, taxiway and apron remains in good condition, a reseal or other treatment is likely to be required within the next 10-15 years. The normal course of action would be to apply a bituminous reseal approximately every 12 years. The RFDS apron is subject to flooding during intense storms resulting in inundation to the RFDS hangars.

In 2025, the Port Augusta City Council, in partnership with the Regional Airports Program committed \$1.685m funding for targeted runway pavement

strengthening works to strengthen sections of the runway to improve its surface, extend its lifespan, resolve flooding issues and improve safety for the RFDS, passenger, charter, and general aviation.

Seaport

The sea port located at Port Paterson and associated with the former power station ceased operations along with the plant in 2016.


Whilst the station was decommissioned, the basic infrastructure associated with the port remains.

Port Playford redevelopment

Port Augusta Operations – an Australian owned and operated resource and logistics company – proposes to develop the site into a new seaport to be known as Port Playford.

The site would function as a bulk commodity export terminal with an initial focus on iron ore. The proposed \$40 million investment would see the return of commercial shipping to Port Augusta for the first time in 50 years.

Port Playford will include upgraded existing as well as new facilities and infrastructure specifically designed to handle and transport up to 5 million tonnes per annum of iron ore from mines in South Australia bound for the export market. The project would involve loading barges with iron ore, which is then trans shipped to larger vessels in deeper water, a process already used at the Whyalla port.



Revitalising the port will unlock the potential to export ore from mines to the north, expanding Port Augusta's already established role as a regional service city to outback mining operations.

The facility would be further enhanced by linking into the existing rail network using the existing rail spur line, allowing the transport of goods and materials to and from the port via rail. Such a direct connection could also facilitate alternative options for the export of minerals, alleviating existing congestion at other ports in the Spencer Gulf and facilitating growth.

Port Playford offers transformative opportunities for Port Augusta and the broader region and has the potential to become a cornerstone of South Australia's export economy, diversifying export routes to market. Its strategic location near major rail links and highways positions it to connect South Australia's mining operations to international markets.

This connectivity could reduce transport costs, streamline logistics, and significantly boost the local economy by attracting investment, creating jobs, and providing growth opportunities for industries such as mining, shipping, and local businesses.

The project faces several challenges that must be navigated. Construction and operations would need to carefully manage impacts on the sensitive ecosystems of the Spencer Gulf, particularly in the context of shallow waters and marine water quality.

Approvals and compliance requirements will require strong coordination and partnerships, and community acceptance will be critical to its success. It was anticipated Port Playford will be operational by late 2023, however it remains in the process of receiving approvals and funding.

Modal shift and intermodal capacity

The State 20-Year Infrastructure Strategy identifies opportunities to develop additional intermodals – including greater mode shift from road to rail – at strategic points across the state to help drive the State's economic vision and global competitiveness.

The Upper Spencer Gulf is highlighted as a potential location and the strategy recommends the investigation of future needs for intermodals, including a detailed origin and destination analysis.

The geographic location of Port Augusta and its intersection with rail, road and seaport, presents a strategic opportunity for investigation. Port Augusta presents a unique opportunity to enable the mining industry, which currently utilises the road network through Port Augusta, to shift to rail and sea as a feasible alternative.

Increasing the capacity of rail and sea freight has the potential to enhance amenity and safety outcomes by reducing the number of very heavy road freight vehicles on the National highway, which traverses the centre of Port Augusta.

It also has the potential to increase efficiencies, generate new business opportunities, and provide a greater diversity of options to connect to international markets.

Utilities

Port Augusta is generally well serviced by utilities that include potable water accessed via the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline, fast internet speeds with fibre-to-the-premises, wastewater management and power supply provided by utility organisations. Waste services and stormwater infrastructure are provided by council, as well as some wastewater management services. Gas supply is limited to LPG only.

Water and wastewater

Port Augusta's water and wastewater infrastructure plays a critical role in ensuring sustainable urban development and addressing the needs of its growing community.

SA Water manages the water supply to Port Augusta via the Morgan-Whyalla Pipeline. If any proposed development results in an extension or augmentation of the existing infrastructure, developers are required to provide infrastructure in the development area and any dedicated approach mains. Developers also need to contribute to any network augmentation that is required to support development.

Most of Port Augusta is fully sewered by a system operated by SA Water. Growth has required upgrading of existing wastewater treatment services, which is already being implemented by SA Water. For any new development, developers are required to meet the costs of providing wastewater collection

and transport sewers in the development site, including (but not limited to) water and wastewater pumping stations, pumping mains and water tanks.

In addition to the SA Water wastewater network, Community Wastewater Management Systems service a total of 1,564 properties (1,460 residential and 104 non-residential). The CWMS is operated and managed by Port Augusta City Council and collects and treats wastewater from each connected property using a common network. Household liquid wastewater (effluent) passes through a septic tank on the property and into a connection point to the common network.

Council's CWMS infrastructure consists of approximately 32kms of CWMS pipe network collecting waste and conveying to the SA Water Wastewater treatment plants, and seven wastewater pumping stations within the 5 collection areas.

A wastewater harvesting pump station is located within the collection network adjacent to the Augusta Terrace/Carlton Parade roundabout. Council uses this pump station to harvest wastewater for treatment and reuse.

The Central Oval Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is a treated effluent storage lagoon located to the east of the town and incorporates a reuse irrigation system that irrigates several Council parks, ovals and gardens. The Central Oval WWTP receives wastewater from the collection network via a wastewater harvesting pump station. The wastewater harvested from this pump station originates from both the north-eastern area of the town and the Port Augusta Prison.

Alternative sources of water

Port Augusta is located in an arid area and is almost entirely dependent on water supply from the River Murray via the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline. As the City grows, there will be a need to find alternative and/or climate-independent sources of water.

Council has commenced steps to diversify its water resources and reduce environmental impact via an Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), which investigates opportunities to improve efficiency through the use of reticulated water systems, rainwater harvesting, stormwater reuse, wastewater reuse and Aquifer Storage and Recovery. These measures are designed to reduce dependency on River Murray water and decrease the discharge of stormwater and effluent into the Spencer Gulf, protecting the region's marine ecosystem.

Most notably, the construction of the Central Oval Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) allows for the use of treated wastewater for irrigation of parks, ovals and gardens across the City.

The Northern Water Project, which aims to provide climate-independent desalinated water to key mining areas, may present an opportunity for an alternative supply of water for industrial purposes, depending on the project's scope and cost.

Use of recycled wastewater

Treated wastewater is stored at the Central Oval WWTP and used for irrigation of parks and gardens across Port Augusta and represents a significant community investment in sustainable water use.

The plant is currently capable of supplying about 430 megalitres of recycled water each year, presenting an opportunity for expanded use of recycled wastewater, particularly as the City grows into the future.

Business opportunities associated with the purchase of recycled wastewater may also be feasible as the system adapts to growth.

Augmentation of sewer connections to urban areas

The significant amount of appropriately zoned land, and the conversion of rural living zones to low density living has resulted in a sporadic and non-sequential development of land that may have complicated the delivery and increased the costs of infrastructure construction and maintenance.

The lack of sewerage connection in areas such as Port Augusta West and Stirling North is a barrier to orderly development of urban land and places restrictions on the size and configuration of allotments to support housing diversity and demand.

Remote water connections

Due to the geographic arrangement of Port Augusta, locations outside a township or urban zone are dependent on remote water connections.

To ensure enough supply to existing properties, remote water connections can be no larger than 20mm in diameter and are restricted to a flowrate of 5 litres per minute. All pipework from

the meter location to the property is considered private. A storage tank and a pressure pump must be installed on the property to ensure the water supply meets the required demand

Remote water connections are presenting significant issues in relation to pressure and vulnerability to damage in some areas. Water mains extension and direct water service connection may be available but only at a cost to the property owner.

The use of remote water connections is a standard approach to non-urban areas in South Australia. However, these connections are used extensively in Port Augusta in 'rural living' zones that are effectively functioning as 'urban zones' on the edge of the city. In some cases, urban zoning located further out of the city has been supplied with water connections whilst adjacent rural living properties closer to the city have not.

Stormwater

Port Augusta is an arid area with a mean annual rainfall of about 260 mm. While the mean monthly rainfall does not vary significantly over the year, occasional intense rainfall events occur, especially in summer. Flash floods accompanying such events can have negative outcomes. Future housing development has the potential to exacerbate issues if not considered through orderly and controlled development.

Most of the existing stormwater infrastructure in central Port Augusta was built between the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the most recent upgrade in the town centre occurring in 2011.

The primary stormwater network in Port Augusta West was constructed between 1974 and 1980, with additional installations in the late 1980s. In Stirling North, the original stormwater system was established in the 1980s, with further additions in 2004 and 2014. Newer stormwater systems, installed after 2014, are dispersed throughout the study area, mainly within new housing developments.

There are also 2 coastal protection levees constructed to protect the township from storm surges and tidal movements. Both levees are built to 2.8 m AHD. Additionally, there is 5km of levee on both sides of Saltia Creek that realign the creek to the eastern side of Stirling North that protect the city from high flow events.

Stormwater Strategic Management Plan

The provision of stormwater infrastructure has been identified as a challenge for some developers both with the city centre and at its fringe.

Council has made significant efforts through its Stormwater Strategic Management Plan to address its stormwater management network in the context of growth and climatic impacts. Implementation of this plan will be a ongoing focus.



Flood management

The Stormwater Strategic Management Plan Progress report 2023 highlights that there are specific locations within the city that can be subject to minor flooding during storm events including Tassie Street, Carlton Parade, Victoria Parade, Flinders Street and the junction of Caroon Road and Eyre Highway.

Stormwater asset management

The Port Augusta City Council's Asset Management Plan (Stormwater) highlights that the council has the capacity to sustain and replace stormwater assets at the proposed level of service but does not necessarily have the capacity to manage deficiencies that have been foreshadowed by the Stormwater Strategic Management Plan progress report 2023.

The programmed and timely provision of new stormwater infrastructure as the City grows will be essential to ensure that management of the asset remains financially sustainable. In this regard, structure planning and staged development will be important.

Stormwater impacts on the Gulf

Expanding stormwater infrastructure must be balanced with the need to protect sensitive ecosystems, such as mangroves and salt marshes, which play a vital role in maintaining the health of the Spencer Gulf.

Waste management

The Port Augusta Resource Recovery Centre is located on Footner Road and is operated by Cleanaway. The site is open six days a week and the occasional Sunday and accepts non-friable asbestos, most non-hazardous solid waste types, and construction and demolition materials. The facility enables the recovery of materials like metals, plastics, and paper, further reducing landfill contributions and supporting sustainable waste management practices.

The Stirling North Refuse Reserve is now closed, with all waste directed to the Footner Road site, which is relatively new and has capacity to meet growth needs.

The Port Augusta City Council has a three-bin kerbside waste collection program that is offered to most urban and rural living areas of Port Augusta, Stirling North and Miranda. There is no footpath hard rubbish collection service.

Council has implemented a Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) system, which encourages residents to separate organic waste, such as food scraps and garden clippings, into designated green bins. The collected organic material is then processed into compost, reducing the volume of waste sent to landfills and contributing to a circular economy.

Cost of waste management

Waste management has been identified as a challenge to business in relation to cost and difficulty of implementing a circular economy in regional SA and meeting the needs of industry waste.

In many other non-capital city jurisdictions across Australia, waste management has been regionalised to address efficiencies and to reduce costs. There may be opportunities to partner with others in the public and private sector, particularly as the Upper Spencer Gulf grows.

Electricity

In Port Augusta, SA Power Networks' role is pivotal in ensuring the distribution network can handle the increasing integration of renewable energy sources.

SA Power Networks' Upper North region includes the Upper North areas incorporating the major towns of Port Augusta and Port Pirie. Transmission connection points are located at Baroota, Davenport West, Leigh Creek South, Mount Gunson, Neuroodla, and the meshed connection points at Bungama and Port Pirie.

SA Power Networks' northern depot is located in Chapel Street Port Augusta. There is a proposal to relocate to a new works depot to be located on Yorkey Crossing Road. Pending approvals and funding the works would begin in 2028/29.

Electricity is supplied to the various towns and localities throughout the Upper North Region via zone substations. These zone substations are operated at 33,000 Volts stepped down to 11,000 Volts. Port Augusta Zone Substation is supplied by an interconnected/meshed 33kV sub-transmission line from Davenport West Connection Point. This line has a section of underground cable approximately 150m long.

Customers are supplied from the SA Power Networks distribution system via 11,000-volt and 19,000-volt feeders, which are connected to distribution substations. These feeders are extended and upgraded as required to meet customer demand and customer connection requests.

ElectraNet operates South Australia's high-voltage electricity transmission network, which serves as the backbone for transporting electricity from generators to the distribution network managed by SA Power Networks.

In Port Augusta, ElectraNet's infrastructure is critical for connecting renewable energy projects to the broader grid.

The intermittency of solar and wind power requires advanced grid management solutions, such as energy storage systems and demand-response technologies.



Security of electricity supply

Whilst SA Power Networks has advised that there are no specific challenges for development growth in Port Augusta regarding the supply of electricity, the radial section of cable that supplies the Port Augusta Zone Substation from the Davenport West Connection Point raises concerns regarding the security of supply. SA Power Networks has proposed the installation of a second 33kV cable to offer N-1 backup (redundancy) for the existing cable.

In 2025, ElectraNet announced investigations for two new high-capacity transmission lines from the Mid North to Greater Adelaide and from the Mid North to Whyalla. This network expansion is intended to support economic growth, enable large-scale renewable energy projects and strengthen transmission links for industrial expansion.

Gas

There is no reticulated gas network in Port Augusta and gas is supplied via on site bottled gas. The SA Gas Network extends its service to Whyalla and Port Pirie and there is some evidence that the Whyalla lateral pipeline is nearing capacity. Should demand increase, a second lateral pipeline line could be truncated to Port Augusta subject to costs and feasibility.

The 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy acknowledges that the lack of natural gas connection to Port Augusta 'limits commercial and industrial opportunities and fully realising the potential of the Upper Spencer Gulf'. It recommends that a feasibility study be undertaken into increasing the supply of gas to the Upper Spencer Gulf to meet green iron and green steel goals at scale.

Reliability of bottled gas supply chains

Port Augusta is wholly reliant on bottled gas. Whilst a detailed supply chain analysis has not been undertaken, there are some reports that there are slowdowns in supply from time to time.

Vulnerabilities in the reliability of supply chains is an ongoing challenge that may reduce the attractiveness of Port Augusta for some prospective investors and/or impact on business operations should supply chains break down.

Dedicated lateral gas pipeline

Whilst discussions with local industry indicates that there is some demand for gas, it is unlikely that gas use in Port Augusta alone will be at the level to justify a dedicated lateral gas pipeline. Notwithstanding, the lack of gas to Port Augusta remains a barrier to the attraction of some industries and opportunities for a new lateral should be reviewed as part of the Department for Energy and Mining's investigations into the feasibility of increasing gas supply to Whyalla associated with increased steel processing.

Telecommunications

Port Augusta's telecommunications and NBN (National Broadband Network) infrastructure is a key driver for digital connectivity, regional development, and economic inclusivity. As a regional hub, the city benefits from advancements in digital technology, but there are complexities in ensuring equitable access and resilience across the community.

Port Augusta has extensive telecommunication infrastructure including a wide availability of broadband. Port Augusta is the only city located outside of Greater Adelaide that has National Broadband Network (NBN) 'Fibre to the Premises' and fixed wireless. Port Augusta is a business fibre zone with the ability to connect at speeds up to 10gbs.

For any major new development, NBN provides for provision of infrastructure, provided access is to the common service trench by the developer and development occurs in a planned, contiguous manner. Telstra, Optus, and Vodafone mobile networks, and 4G LTE and 5G networks are all available in Port Augusta.

NBN take up rate

Whilst Port Augusta is the only city located outside of Greater Adelaide that has National Broadband Network (NBN) 'Fibre to the Premises' and fixed wireless, the customer take up is reported as being slow, with approximately only 67% of residents connected, potentially due to its cost in comparison with other options.

For residents, the high-speed internet services ensures better access to essential online services, such as telehealth, virtual education platforms, and government services, which are increasingly reliant on stable and fast connectivity.

NBN promotion

Port Augusta businesses are in a unique situation where communication using speeds of up to 10gbs can be a game changer. Business now considers internet speeds as one of the key criteria when looking at expansion and relocation and there is a significant opportunity to promote its communications connectivity to the business sector and use it as a means of attracting new business.

The provision of high-speed internet services has opened up a range of opportunities for business expansion, e-commerce, tele-health, remote government services, virtual education and access to national and international markets.

Remote work opportunities

Improved internet access also facilitates remote work, enabling greater flexibility for employees and potentially attracting talent to the region. Opportunities for shared working environments that optimise high-speed internet have the potential to further promote Port Augusta as a remote working hub.



Socio-economic

Land supply

The draft Far North Regional Plan projects that the permanent population of the region is expected to grow by over 1,100 people over the next 30 years to 2051, with this growth expected to be concentrated within Port Augusta. This is anticipated to require over 600 new dwellings to be constructed over this period, or around 20 dwellings each year. The draft Plan expects that future growth will be concentrated to the east of Port Augusta CBD, Port Augusta West and Stirling North.

Notably, in the 10 years to 2023, the draft Regional Plan confirms that 332 dwellings were constructed in the region, which equates to around 33 new dwellings each year.

The draft Regional Plan estimates that around 3,620ha of zoned residential, and 1,200ha of zoned employment land in Port Augusta remains available for development, with further opportunities for rezoning.

Orderly and economic land supply

There is no shortage of appropriately zoned land located within Port Augusta, presenting an opportunity for its long-term growth. The key challenge however is its orderly and economic development in a manner that allows for efficient, cost effective and timely provision of infrastructure.

Without orderly and economic development, the provision of efficient stormwater, wastewater, potable water, roads and other infrastructure assets can be sporadic, inefficient and often cost-prohibitive as they lack the critical mass to be provided in a coordinated and staged manner. Evidence of this can be seen in parts of Port Augusta that are reliant on rural water supplies notwithstanding their increasingly urbanised nature, and in locations where significant investment in local roads has been made to service very small numbers of properties, incurring additional ongoing asset maintenance costs for Council and its ratepayers.

In many cases, the costs of augmenting infrastructure have become too high for individual developers to bear, particularly where significant headworks or augmentation is required, presenting a significant barrier to development. Where land is developed in a more coordinated and staged manner, the costs of infrastructure provision can be offset through coordinated infrastructure agreements that are shared across multiple developers and agencies.

The 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy (ISA, 2025) supports this approach by advocating that ‘sequencing land releases in urban development helps to ensure that growth occurs in a managed, efficient, and sustainable manner, leveraging existing infrastructure to its full potential while minimising costs and environmental impact’ and this is further endorsed through its recommendation 14.

Accommodation

At the time of the 2021 Census, there was a total of 6,227 private dwellings located in Port Augusta. The mix of dwelling types was very similar to the State-wide mix, with most occupied private dwellings being separate houses.

In 2021 Port Augusta was characterised as having a similar proportion of home ownership when compared with South Australia with 31.4% of occupied private dwellings being owned outright. There was however a smaller proportion of dwellings being purchased with a mortgage and a much higher proportion of dwellings being rented.

The higher proportion of rented households is indicative of Port Augusta’s working population associated with Government Employee Housing under the Public Employees Housing Act 1987, as well as major construction projects and private industries. Government housing accounts for almost a third of all rental housing (around 590 dwellings).

Residential building approvals stabilised at 13 in 2023-24 after the post-COVID-19 boom that saw 52 approvals in 2022-23 and 46 in 2021-22.

Workers’ housing

The demand for workers’ housing in Regional SA is already acknowledged as a significant barrier to economic growth and in response the Office for Regional Housing is working to increase the number of houses available for essential workers through the Regional Key Worker Housing Scheme.

In October 2024 the Office reported that it had delivered four additional houses to police and health workers in Port Augusta. A housing survey undertaken by Spencer Gulf Cities (2022) further underscores the difficulties that workers are facing in securing housing across the Upper Spencer Gulf.

In Port Augusta, the existing deficit in quality housing continues and nearly all key stakeholders interviewed for this project reported that the issue was a significant barrier to the attraction and retention of staff. This is supported by anecdotal reports that the week-day occupancy rate of tourist accommodation in Port Augusta is 85%, dropping at the weekends.

Anecdotal evidence from local real estate agents indicates that houses are being increasingly sold to interstate buyers keen to take advantage of high rental returns for workers’ accommodation. This was seen to be pricing local buyers out of the market, making purchasing more difficult for residents and putting even greater pressure on the rental market.

Difficulties were highlighted in attracting ‘white collar’ professionals in the health, policing, prison security and administration industries, with stakeholders noting that unskilled and semi-skilled workers were more likely to be sourced locally. The key concerns were that the current supply of housing is of poor quality, unsuitable for the needs of workers, unattractive or poorly located.



Aboriginal housing

A draft Port Augusta Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (Department for Human Services, 2024) also identified Aboriginal populations as having overcrowded and poor-quality housing with disruptive and uncertain tenancy arrangements. Support for remote visitors was also identified by the plan as requiring more suitable spaces and accommodation that is culturally safe and appropriate, supported by necessities and a means to return home.

Older residents

The availability of housing for early retirees, older retirees and older residents requiring high-needs care was raised in the preparation of this strategy via stakeholder discussions and interviews. Whilst housing diversity and choice was considered lacking, quality of housing was also seen to be an issue.

Mid-sized cities located on the coast with good access to health care facilities and lifestyle opportunities are often attractive to older residents seeking to retire 'off the land' or from smaller regional towns. Housing availability, diversity and quality were all seen to be major barriers to the attraction and retention of this demographic group.

Housing quality and attractiveness

Observations and feedback from key stakeholders, including real estate agents, businesses and developers indicates that housing in Port Augusta

is generally aging and of poor quality, with better quality housing tightly held and generally not available to the rental market.

A housing survey undertaken by Spencer Gulf Cities in 2022 also highlighted concerns about the declining quality of housing in Port Augusta, particularly in relation to government housing, a view that was reinforced through discussions with key employers in Port Augusta.

Many stakeholders and businesses interviewed for this strategy commented that housing in Port Augusta was not of the quality or configuration to attract workers or encourage people to move to Port Augusta. Housing quality and attractiveness was highlighted as the single most critical barrier to business growth and the attraction and retention of staff.

Construction costs, capacity and financing

The cost of constructing housing was raised consistently during discussions with developers, employees, building companies and real estate agents, some of which had secured land, designs and grant funding to construct housing for workers.

Key barriers to constructing new housing raised included the low number and capacity of local builders, the costs associated with importing skilled labour, and the difficulties obtaining financing from banks and other institutions.

In relation to the financing difficulties, local financial institutions reported that there had been a noticeable drop in the number of house loans

being sought, presumably due to the costs of building being a major impediment to construction and the inability to meet loan repayments.

This observation aligns with the decreasing numbers of new building approvals, although the stabilisation post COVID-19 boom should also be taken into consideration.

Stakeholders interviewed for this project highlighted that financial institutions may be reluctant to invest in housing projects in Port Augusta because the cost of constructing houses exceeds the market value of the property, increasing the risks of lending considerably. Port Augusta's low land value compared with other regional cities exacerbates this further.

Recreation and tourism

Port Augusta has many sporting facilities and events, some of which attract major competitions and large numbers of spectators including the AFLW, Masters Games, regional sporting competitions and racing. The Central Oval Sporting Hub, constructed in 2014, offers high quality sporting facilities including an oval, basketball, tennis and netball courts, and large function spaces.

In addition to its sporting facilities Port Augusta has a network of parks that provide play spaces, picnic areas, toilets and BBQ facilities. A path network focuses on the coastal path and a north-south shared use path connection, that connects the

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens to Stirling North and Sundrop Farms, is being constructed in stages.

Port Augusta's foreshore is a key feature of the City and recreational assets include swimming beaches, , swimming pontoons, grassed areas and boat ramps. The recent completion of the Eastside Swimming Pontoon delivered as part of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge upgrade adds to these facilities.

Port Augusta is home to visitor attractions that include the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, Wadlata Outback Centre, Yarta Purtli Cultural Centre, and RSL Military Museum. The Port Augusta Historic Railway Station is the western terminus of the Pichi Richi Tourist heritage train.

The Ghan and the Indian Pacific Tourist Trains also run weekly outside of the summer months, running through (although not stopping) the centre of Port Augusta.

Port Augusta is a RV Friendly Town, with suitable parking, access to shopping areas, low-cost short term overnight parking, dump point and potable water access.

Heritage wharf upgrade

One notable opportunity is the ongoing upgrade of the historic Port Augusta Wharf, which has attracted significant investment, including \$15 million from both the Australian and South Australian governments. These renovations aim to improve the wharf's accessibility, safety, and structural integrity, thereby enhancing its functionality.



Once completed, the upgraded infrastructure will support pedestrian and light motor vehicle use, provide better access for boats and watercraft, and ultimately boost local tourism and recreational activities.

Foreshore upgrade

Port Augusta has around 122kms of coastline across both sides of the Gulf, including around 10km of coastline immediately adjacent the built up areas of the City. This coastal position provides significant opportunities for coastal activities that include boating, fishing, swimming and other water sports.

There has been some recent investment in foreshore infrastructure such as the Eastside swimming pontoon and the Eastside foreshore.

One of the key findings of this strategy is that Port Augusta's location on the coast is key to its liveability, with research demonstrating that coastal cities are more attractive to residents and visitors than regional cities inland.

There are significant opportunities to better exploit Port Augusta's location on the coast, developing a major attraction for tourists and improved liveability for residents. The funded Heritage Wharf upgrade forms a part of this opportunity. Key challenges include connectivity between the CBD and the coast, the provision of infrastructure to support water-based activities such as fishing and boating and kayaking, and the development of food and beverage opportunities overlooking the coast.

Short-stay tourist facilities

A more detailed review of the Strategic Tourism Development Plan 2018-2023 is currently being undertaken separately to this strategy. However, engagement of key stakeholders and a review of recreation infrastructure indicates strong demand for the development of short-stay tourist facilities that would attract and retain visitors for longer.

Such a facility would focus on families and long-distance travellers and include a large play space, toilets, RV dump point and potable water access. Ideally a location on the coast would also deliver on foreshore upgrade outcomes.

Tourist accommodation

Tourist accommodation in Port Augusta is predominately in the form of motor inns, motels and caravan parks. It should be noted however that a significant proportion of tourist accommodation is used by short-term workers and this is reinforced by anecdotal reports that the week-day occupancy rate for tourist accommodation in Port Augusta is 85%, dropping at the weekends.

The use of tourist accommodation for worker accommodation provides operators with greater certainty of business that can offset the highly seasonal demand for tourist accommodation. However, the focus of tourist accommodation on meeting the needs of workers can significantly impact on the capacity of Port Augusta to attract tourists to stay longer rather than just pass through.

Access and amenity

The Port Augusta City Council's public realm is guided by the Port Augusta Style Guide (2012), which provides design guidelines, planting palettes, signage guidelines, and design direction to reinforce the character of the City.

The Guide identifies several projects including:

- Gateway signage and theming on the Stuart Highway, Eyre Highway, airport, Spencer Gulf, railway station, causeway, and National Highway One gateway
- CBD improvements including connectivity, streetscaping, wayfinding and open spaces
- Commercial Road enhancements
- Gladstone Square enhancements, and
- Foreshore upgrades, including the wharf, jetty and boat ramp.

Planning and Land Use Services, in partnership with the Port Augusta City Council, is currently undertaking a Master Planning project for the CBD area of the City. Public engagement occurred on the Master Plan in late 2024 and the project focuses on revitalisation of the public realm in and around Commercial Road.

More recently, the Australian and South Australian governments announced \$15M of funding to upgrade the heritage-listed Port Augusta Wharf.

City amenity and functionality

In discussions and workshops with key stakeholders, the amenity of the City was seen to be a significant factor in the current staff attraction and retention barriers being faced by businesses and employers in Port Augusta.

For many businesses city amenity was reported to be the number one barrier to growth and was raised by nearly all stakeholders interviewed.

Together with housing and safety, City appearance and amenity, including the use of public spaces, revitalisation of under-utilised buildings and pleasant places to enjoy and recreate in, was viewed as a key component of liveability.

The wharf and CBD improvements were two key priorities identified and significant advances have been made in 2025 in relation to planning and funding for both. A challenge will be to ensure ongoing funding to ensure funding for the CBD upgrade is secured.

City-wide streetscaping

In addition to the wharf and CBD improvements, city-wide streetscaping and greening improvements were also identified as opportunities to improve amenity across the whole City, address perceptions of a 'dusty city', provide greater climate resilience for residents and visitors, and address negative perceptions.



Irrigation remains a significant barrier to greening due to Port Augusta's arid lands location and low rainfall. However, opportunities to build upon the success of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden could deliver wider marketing and promotional opportunities.

Other opportunities for irrigation include more extensive use of the City's wastewater reuse scheme as the City grows.

Gateways and wayfinding

The City's Style Guide provides guidance for the development of city gateways and entrance features across the city. Whilst these recommendations have yet to be funded, there is significant opportunities to revisit in relation to highway entrances and rail-based visitor entrances for the Pichi Richi Heritage Railway, Ghan and Indian Pacific. Scenic vistas and views should also be preserved and enhanced as part of this work.

Wayfinding and signage was consistently raised during the development of this strategy, particularly for visitors to the city who may find it difficult to negotiate their way off the main highways and to the CBD, attractions, and foreshore areas.

Health and wellbeing

Existing health infrastructure in Port Augusta includes the Port Augusta Hospital and Regional Health Service, Port Augusta Medical Centre, Ghan Medical Centre, Pika Wiya Health Service, Carlton Medical Centre, Flinders Terrace Specialist

Centre, Westside Surgery and Community Health Centre. The RFDS is currently constructing the Port Augusta Integrated Primary Health Centre, which is expected to significantly enhance the city's ability to continue to provide a hub for primary health care for the surrounding hinterland and the wider Far North. The centre will provide primary care training and support for rural generalists as well as facilities for primary care and allied health services.

Port Augusta also provides a central location for community services that extend to remote and regional areas in the Outback SA including the Outback Communities Authority, Traditional Owner groups, the RFDS and the School of the Air.

Community services are provided by not-for-profit sectors and local and state government and include community centres, support services and programs, places of worship and support organisations. Such services not only meet the specific needs of the local community but can also provide important meeting spaces and social interaction that help ensure mental wellbeing. In Port Augusta, community centres include the Salvation Army Community Centre, LG Riches Centre and Port Augusta Youth Centre.

In partnership with the Port Augusta City Council, the Department of Human Services also runs the Port Augusta Community Outreach program, which aims to improve safety and wellbeing, codesigned with Aboriginal leaders and local community organisations. As well as supporting local and remote visitors at risk of harm, the program also provides support to SA Housing Authority and support for remote visitors to return to country.

A draft Port Augusta Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan was released by the Department for Human Services in 2024 that included priority actions to facilitate 'a stronger community and service response to support the safety and wellbeing of residents and those who visit'. Potential actions identified by the plan included new or expanded support services and programs as well as two key areas of infrastructure investment, namely the potential establishment of a community service hub and improved public transport.

Safety

Safety, and perceptions of safety, were highlighted by nearly all stakeholders interviewed as part of this strategy. Businesses and employers have consistently raised the issue of safety, and perceptions of safety, as reasons for either not being able to attract or retain staff.

Perceptions of safety can be complex, and can include cultural misunderstanding, individual experiences, the presence of security and surveillance, the appearance and maintenance of the city, design and layout of public spaces, and media representations that can amplify anxiety.

Perceptions of safety evolve over time and are influenced by changes in the environment, policy, and community engagement. This has been recognised through the Port Augusta Safety and Wellbeing Partnership and Plan and a key challenge will be to ensure ongoing investment in infrastructure that supports the Partnership over the long term.

Community wellbeing hub

Port Augusta has a long history of providing diverse and comprehensive community services to remote and very remote parts of the State. It also services a more immediate area, including towns across the Flinders Ranges, Upper Spencer Gulf, upper Mid North and Eyre Peninsula. This role as a regional service hub has grown considerably over the years.

The diversity of services provided, together with the diversity of public, private and not-for-profit service providers presents challenges associated with coordination and customer ease of access.

As Port Augusta's function as a regional services hub expands, the coordination of services and customer service entry points will become increasingly important. In the primary healthcare space, the RFDS is already playing a role in bringing diverse services together by way of its integrated healthcare centre currently under construction.

The draft Port Augusta Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan highlights the need for a community service hub or community centre to provide integrated and coordinated support for key community services. The Preventative Health SA Wellbeing Hubs and regional partnerships presents an opportunity for investigation.

Education and training

Port Augusta has a number of government and non-government school options offering reception to year 12 education services over multiple campuses.

Port Augusta also has a Special School on McSporran Crescent, and early learning centres and childcares are also provided within the city.

From an infrastructure perspective, Port Augusta's schools provide both the capacity and the options for primary and secondary schooling, including access to remote learning options provided through the Port Augusta School of the Air Open Access Campus.

The Port Augusta Technical College is planned to open in 2025 and will include programs for years 10-12 designed to provide access to technical training programs in four key areas: civil, resources and infrastructure, health and social support, hospitality and tourism and trades. The college will be co-located and run in conjunction with the Port Augusta Secondary School and will also provide student accommodation for up to 44 students from across the Upper Spencer Gulf, Eyre Peninsula, Mid North, Far North and APY Lands.

Port Augusta offers two main childcare centres: the Port Augusta Childcare Centre (owned and operated by the Port Augusta City Council) and the Edge Early Learning Childcare. Additionally, the

community hosts several pre-school programs, some occasional care, and multiple playgroups. Importantly, in line with its role as a regional hub for services, Port Augusta also provides childcare support for residents of adjoining regions.

The Remote and Isolated Children's Exercise Service (RICE), based in Port Augusta, provides various services for geographically isolated families, including a pre-school program and an outback childcare service when families visit.

In relation to tertiary education, Uni Hub is a not-for-profit community owned tertiary education organisation that provides opportunities for higher education for residents of Port Augusta (and across the Upper Spencer Gulf) without needing to relocate to a capital city. Uni Hub focuses on providing courses to address skill shortages in the region and works with universities to deliver courses via the hub and with students to support them. Degrees offered focus on health services, education, engineering, project management, construction, planning, surveying and business.

The University of Adelaide Rural Clinical School provides placement opportunities and block rotations.

Port Augusta is home to the TAFE SA Port Augusta Campus, which currently offers courses that are focused on local industry needs including mechanics, carpentry, electrotechnology, fabrication and civil construction.

The Skills SA Investment Blueprint 2024-25 identifies \$2.9M for the TAFE SA Regional Skills Development fund to support increased regional

skills delivery and highlights eight national priorities. Of particular relevance to Port Augusta are the priorities of closing the gap, supporting the net zero transformation, sustaining essential care services and delivering housing supply. The State government has also provided a grant to a Port Augusta Skills Centre run by Relationships Australia South Australia focusing on the community and care industry and providing outreach to Ceduna and APY Lands.

In addition to Uni Hub, TAFE and University of Adelaide Rural Clinical School, registered training providers also provide essential skills training and support in Port Augusta. Whilst the majority of providers are based in Adelaide, some providers, such as Access Training Centre do have a strong local presence.

Childcare

The Childcare Services Development Report (RDA Far North, 2024) highlighted that Port Augusta had a current deficit of around 250 long day care places with the current two childcare centres currently providing 134 places.

The under supply of long day care places in Port Augusta to meet the current population has been highlighted as a significant barrier to the attraction and retention of staff as part of the Childcare Services Development Report as well as during the stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of this project. This would be further exacerbated by population growth.

Access to higher education

Much of the focus of higher education offered in Port Augusta is based on existing local skills deficiencies. Whilst continuing to increase the capacity and diversity of training to fill current gaps and meet existing business needs is essential to business growth and sustainability, there are opportunities to test the current mix of higher education opportunities to further diversify opportunities for the future with the aim of increasing local options, as well as unlocking a greater diversity of occupations in future growth industries.

Transition to local employment

The soon-to-be opened technical college is a significant opportunity for Port Augusta in the context of providing a hub for technical schooling across the Upper Spencer Gulf, Eyre Peninsula, Mid North, Far North and APY Lands. This will consolidate Port Augusta's role as a hub in relation to secondary school and technical education.

The key challenge will be to ensure that the attraction or retention of students to Port Augusta translates to enhancement of the local skills profile, which will only be able to be facilitated through the availability of long-term job opportunities.

Training

Whilst only a few businesses raised education or training as a challenge during the development of this strategy, those who did raised the issue of there not being enough locally provided training services, highlighting that it can be very difficult to recruit qualified educators and trainers.

Action Plan

To achieve our vision we have identified actions across three strategic outcomes.

We will work in collaboration with key stakeholders and authorities to review priorities, responsibilities and commitment to each of these actions.

Vision

Port Augusta’s infrastructure enhances liveability, improves connectivity, and drives economic growth for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

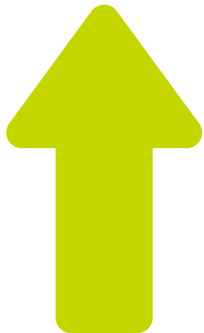
Strategic outcomes

Liveable
Prioritise infrastructure that helps make Port Augusta a great place to live, work and visit by building capacity, strength, and resilience, and supporting communities and businesses to thrive.

Connected
Invest in infrastructure that protects, reinforces and enhances Port Augusta’s strategic positioning as a hub for regional services, at the Crossroads of Australia, and as a Gateway to the Outback.

Growing
Plan and deliver infrastructure that enables and drives sustainable growth in key industry sectors areas such as mining, renewables, healthcare and social services, agriculture, defence and tourism.

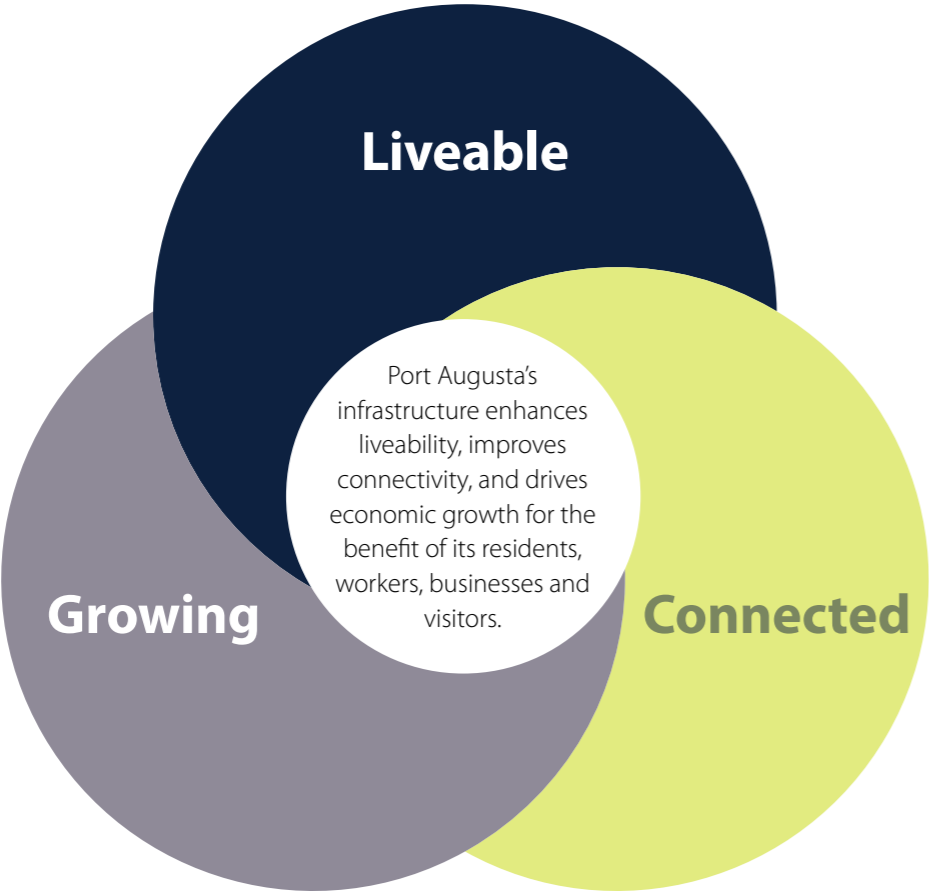
Measuring success



A range of measures will be used to measure success against our vision including:

	Liveable	Connected	Growing
Total population			✓
New residents moving to Port Augusta	✓		✓
Proportion of Port Augusta’s workforce living within the City	✓		
Active travel (public transport, walking, cycling) participation	✓	✓	
Number of new business start ups			✓
Total number of businesses			✓
Workforce participation rates			✓
Employment rates			✓
Number of visitors	✓		✓
Number of visitor overnight stays	✓		✓
Number and diversity of housing options	✓		
Satisfaction and wellbeing of residents	✓	✓	
Gross Regional Product			✓
Median income	✓		
Tertiary and vocational training take up rates	✓		
Number of seaport freight movements		✓	
Rail freight movements		✓	
Number of non-emergency aircraft movements		✓	✓
Proportion of young people staying in Port Augusta	✓		

Liveable



Strategic outcomes and actions

Liveability is the key to unlocking the future growth and prosperity of Port Augusta. Extensive investigatory work has already been undertaken by the RDA Far North, Port Augusta City Council and other agencies in the areas of childcare, CBD master planning, community safety, tourism, education and training. Implementation of these will be a priority in the short term.

In the longer term, a focus on recreation, open space, public transport and beautification actions will be critical to achieving liveability outcomes, with funding for some critical upgrades already achieved for the wharf and shared use paths.

Accommodation

Increase the availability, quality and diversity of accommodation to meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors

The availability, quality and diversity of housing options for Port Augusta's resident and working population is a significant challenge that is linked to the cost of construction, availability of building trades and availability of finance.

Areas of high demand include accommodation for professional and essential workers, older residents, and the homeless.

Although the cost of land in Port Augusta is relatively low, the cost of construction and the availability of trades and finance options remain significant challenges, particularly for diverse housing options.

Tourist accommodation is often fully utilised for worker accommodation, leaving low capacity to meet visitor demand.

Action

1.1 – Increase housing diversity and availability

Work with the Department for Housing and Urban Development to facilitate a greater diversity of housing options, particularly for workers, older residents, students, Aboriginal communities and the homeless.

Timing

Years 1-5

1.2 – Convert temporary worker accommodation to legacy housing

Work with industry and major projects to convert temporary worker accommodation into permanent housing opportunities.

Timing

Years 1-5

Recreation, tourism and lifestyle

Enhance recreation, tourism and lifestyle opportunities for residents, workers and visitors

Lifestyle opportunities are a significant component of liveability and important factors for the attraction and retention of workers, residents and visitors.

Visitor facilities, foreshore amenities, City upgrades and recreation and open space facilities have been identified as priorities.

Action

1.3 – Develop short-stay visitor facilities on the foreshore

Investigate the provision of short-stay visitor facilities within the City potentially including RV stop, amenities and adventure play facilities as part of the foreshore redevelopment to encourage longer visitor stays.

Timing

Years 2-3

1.4 – Develop and implement a foreshore redevelopment plan

Prepare and implement a foreshore redevelopment plan encompassing the entirety of the 122kms of coastline within the city with the purpose of identifying opportunities for environmental protection, fishing and boating facilities, beautification, land use, tourist facilities and redevelopment opportunities.

Timing

Years 2-3

1.5 – Complete planned CBD, wharf, and shared use path upgrades

Implement the outcomes of the CBD Master Plan, wharf upgrade, and shared use path plans.

Timing

Years 1-4

1.6 – Prepare and implement a recreation and open space plan

Prepare a recreation and open space plan focused on enhancing liveability in relation to the demand and supply of recreational facilities, open spaces, play spaces, shared use paths, trails and cycling facilities for current and future residents, workers and visitors.

Timing

Years 1-3

Public realm

Enhance the public realm to improve safety, amenity, community wellbeing, sense of place, accessibility and connectivity

Enhancements to the public realm were identified by key stakeholders as fundamental to liveability outcomes, and community safety, beautification and entrance statements are identified as priorities.

Action

1.7 – Green public spaces and streetscapes

Green public spaces and streetscapes to provide greater climate resilience, increase canopy coverage, reduce heat island effects and enhance amenity.

Timing

Years 1-5

1.8 – Improve accessibility and active transport options

Develop and implement improvements to the shared use path network, footpaths, pedestrian and cycling facilities, disability access in the public realm, and walking trails.

Timing

Years 1-2

1.9 – Improve community safety

Prioritise implementation of the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan.

Timing

Years 1-3

1.10 – Develop gateways and wayfinding strategy

Upgrade key entrance statements and signage to enhance visitor experience and city branding and improve city wayfinding.

Timing

Years 1-3

Public and community transport

Improve public transport options, particularly in relation to transport-dependent residents and for regional connections

Public transport services were consistently identified as an opportunity for improvement, especially in relation to affordability, accessibility and reliability.

Key priorities include general improvement to services, Aboriginal community transport options and the centralisation of bus services at a single, easy to access terminal.

Action

1.11 – Improve public transport services

Work with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport to align public transport options with the needs of Port Augusta's residents as part of the regional public transport services review.

Timing

Years 1-3

1.12 – Enhance Aboriginal community transport options

Work with Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owners to investigate opportunities to improve the accessibility, affordability and reliability of community transport options across Port Augusta, and to key remote and regional areas.

Timing

Years 2-3

1.13 – Develop a central bus terminal

Work with transport providers to develop a central bus terminal with passenger facilities for residents and visitors, with bus freight capabilities.

Timing

Years 3-5



Community services

Coordinate the delivery of community services and address gaps, reinforcing the role of Port Augusta as a hub for regional services

Port Augusta is already a significant hub for the provision of healthcare and social support services. The key challenge for the future will be the coordination of service delivery across multiple providers or the benefit of Port Augusta and regional residents.

Action

1.14 – Further diversify tertiary education offerings

Work with service providers to further diversify tertiary education offerings, local transition to work opportunities, support and training services to retain young residents.

Timing

Years 1-5

1.15 – Implement childcare recommendations

Implement the recommendations of the RDA Far North childcare report 2024, including increasing capacity and providing additional training opportunities.

Timing

Years 1-2

1.16 – Develop a community wellbeing hub

Work with Preventative Health SA to investigate options for a Wellbeing Hub that would support physical, mental and social wellbeing, and coordinated support for community services across multiple providers.

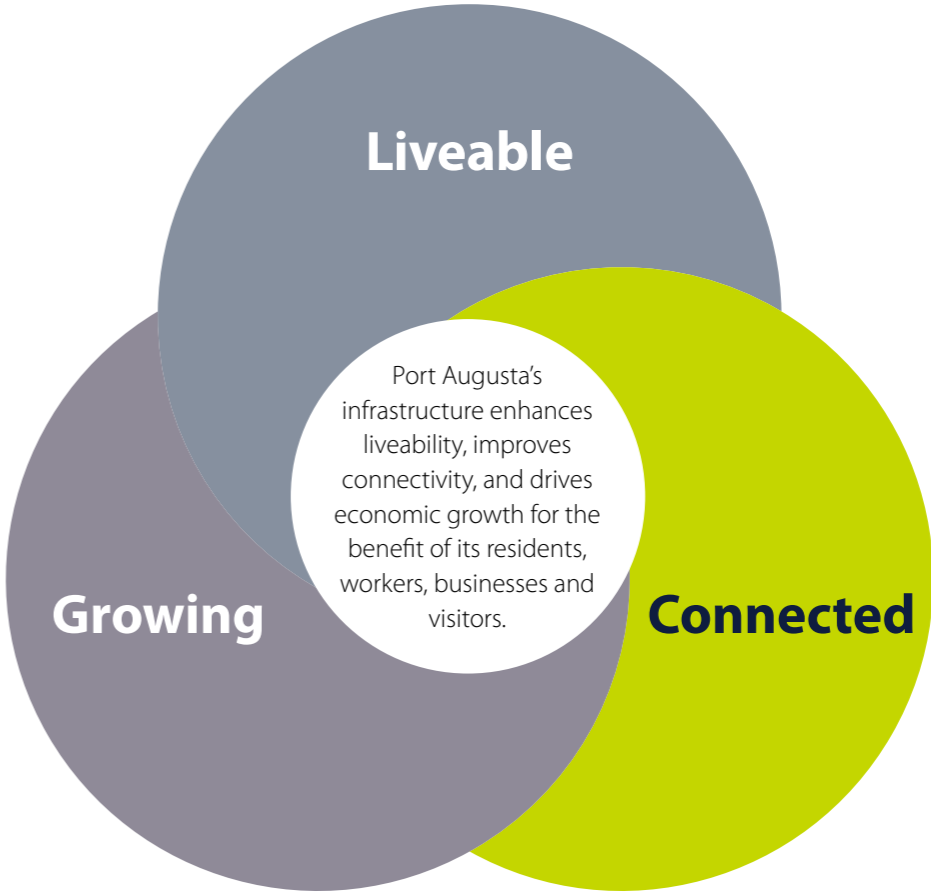
Timing

Years 2-3





Connected



Strategic outcomes and actions

Short term priorities for safeguarding and optimising Port Augusta's strategic positioning and connections include the maintenance of outback roads and access into Port Augusta, safeguarding its role as a gateway and export pathway. Intra-city access and connectivity is also critical for economic development and liveability, particularly in the context of future growth in population and freight volumes and the road and rail routes that transect the City.

In the longer term, the diversification of alternative transport routes to market is a priority for economic development, including reestablishment of the Port Paterson/Port Playford seaport, increased use of the airport, and use of the rail network for the movement of minerals and other goods. As freight transport modes become more diverse, intermodal capability will become more and more critical to the efficient coordination and export of goods and Port Augusta is poised to optimise this shift due to its strategic location.

Road network

Ensure road connections leading to Port Augusta are safe, well-maintained and have capacity to support national freight

The success of Port Augusta as a service hub and export gateway/pathway greatly depends on the reliability and standard of outback roads, particularly between Port Augusta and mining, pastoral and tourist areas. Ensuring these roads are maintained to a standard that does not undermine this role is an ongoing priority.

Action

2.1 – Improve Outback SA roads

Work with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to address road conditions in Outback SA to protect the role of Port Augusta as a service hub and export gateway/pathway.

Timing

Year 1

2.3 – Establish a Multispecies Livestock Transshipping Hub

Establish a multispecies livestock transshipping hub in a staged approach.

2.2 – Maintain Yorkeys Crossing

Work with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to maintain Yorkeys Crossing as an alternative road connection, including for oversized freight.

Timing

Years 2-3

Timing

Years 2-5

City connectivity

Improve access and connectivity across the city for residents, workers, businesses and visitors

Port Augusta’s position on the national highway and rail network is a significant geographic advantage but can also make intra-city access challenging. These challenges will increase as the city grows and as road and rail freight increases.

It will be important to ensure that accessibility and connectivity is maintained for liveability and business access.

Action

2.4 – Prepare and implement a Road Network Plan

Prepare a Port Augusta Road Network Plan in conjunction with Action 3.1 that addresses road functions, roles, hierarchy and service levels, including improvements to connectivity (access, signage, safety), capacity, intersection with the rail line, freight access, and the long-term role of the Augusta Highway and adjoining land uses.

Timing

Years 2-3

Air services

Enhance the capability of the airport to meet the needs of FIFO workers, tourism operators, healthcare services and passengers

Port Augusta airport serves as a base for the central operations of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and supports FIFO flights to mining operations.

Reestablishment of passenger services lost post COVID-19 is a desired outcome for Port Augusta’s community.

Owned by Council, Port Augusta airport requires ongoing community investment. Long-term business sustainability is a high priority to offset the financial burden that currently falls to rate-paying residents.

The airport has the capacity to significantly enhance its role in servicing regional operations, particularly in relation to tourism operations and mining support. Collaboration with these and other sectors will be key to optimising future growth potential.

Timing
Years 1-3

Action

2.5 – Develop an Airport Strategy

Review the 2016 Master Plan for the airport and develop a long-term strategy and updated master plan, with a view to achieving financial sustainability, increased capability to service the tourism sector mining operations, freight, and passenger services. Sustainable funding, strategic partnerships, governance and business outcomes should be a focus of the strategy. The strategy should be developed in collaboration with key agencies and operators via a ‘round table’ or committee to facilitate synergies and resources.

Seaport

Re-establish a working seaport with export and intermodal capability

Whilst currently unused, Port Augusta’s seaport is subject to a reactivation proposal as part of the Port Playford project.

Reactivation of the seaport would significantly enhance Port Augusta’s capability to manage minerals and other goods, providing alternative pathways to export and import markets, increasing diversity of freight transport options and increasing efficiency.

Action

2.6 – Advocate for and help facilitate the re-establishment of a working seaport

Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to advocate for and facilitate the re-establishment of a working seaport with export and intermodal capabilities.

Timing
Years 1-5

Rail freight

Increase the capacity of the rail line to manage a greater share of freight transport

Increasing the capability of the rail line to manage a greater share of freight transport has been identified as a significant opportunity to optimise Port Augusta's role as the Crossroads of Australia, facilitating new industries and new capabilities in relation to export gateways and pathways.

Reactivating the rail spur connection to Port Paterson and creating new rail freight connections to key mining locations are two key priorities.

Action

2.7 – Advocate for and help facilitate the reactivation of the disused rail spur to Port Paterson

Facilitate reopening of the rail spur to Port Paterson as part of the Port Playford development

Timing

Years 3-5

2.8 – Investigate and facilitate enhanced rail freight connection(s) to mining areas

Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to explore long term options to use of rail to transport freight and goods to and from mining operations.

Timing

Years 2-4

The current location of the rail line through Port Augusta poses challenges to liveability and freight efficiency. In the long term, there are opportunities to consider alternative options around the edges of Port Augusta that eliminate freight restrictions, increase rail freight efficiency and address liveability issues, facilitating redevelopment opportunities for old rail land on the coast.

Care will need to be taken to ensure that any relocation of the line does not compromise Port Augusta's strategic positioning at the Crossroads of Australia.

2.9 – Advocate for investigation into potential long-term repositioning of the rail line to deliver growth and liveability outcomes

Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to explore long term options for potential repositioning of the rail line outside the city in conjunction with Action 3.1. Options should safeguard Port Augusta's strategic positioning at the Crossroads of Australia, enhance liveability, protect heritage railways and open up redevelopment and industry opportunities.

Timing

Years 3-5

Coordinate intermodal freight transport to improve supply chain efficiencies

There are significant long-term opportunities associated with more efficient coordination of multi-modal transport of freight and goods, particularly with the reinvigoration of the Port Paterson seaport and increased use of the rail line.

Intermodal capability for rail-road-sea-air transport will become more critical as shifts to more diverse modes of freight transport are realised.

Action

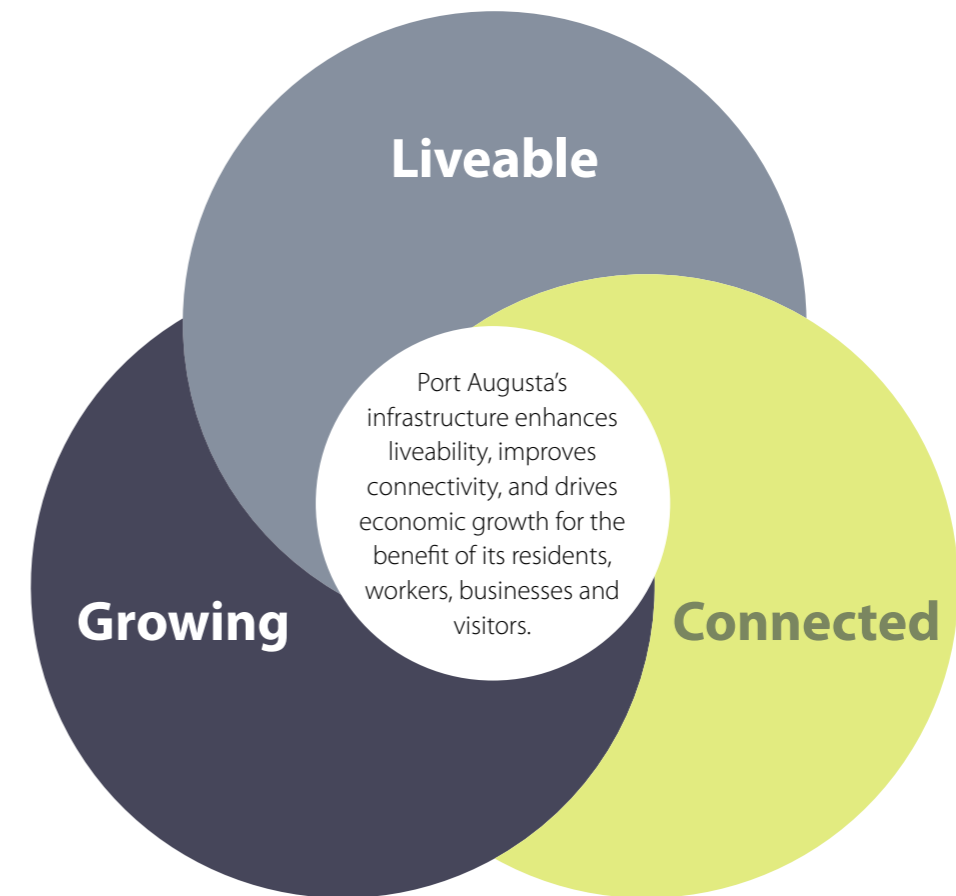
2.10 – Investigate and facilitate potential options to enhance intermodal capability

Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to explore long term options for enhancing multi-modal freight capacity associated with the seaport, rail, road and air freight.

Timing

Years 2-4

Growing



Strategic outcomes and actions

Short term priorities for growth management include the development of a City Structure Plan to provide clarity and guidance to the orderly and economic development of the City, identifying strategies for the timely and efficient provision of infrastructure to growth areas, including the integration of work already undertaken or commenced by Port Augusta City Council such as the Stormwater Management Plan.

In the longer term, there are opportunities for larger investments in the city's infrastructure to drive

significant growth over the longer term, ensuring that it does not become a bottleneck but rather a catalyst for new and significant development. Port Augusta already has a strong foundation of well established and high-quality infrastructure. However, catalyst infrastructure opportunities have been identified including the delivery of piped gas into the City, the further optimisation of wastewater management and reuse opportunities, and securing long term access to more sustainable and secure sources of water.

Orderly development

Ensure the ordered and sustainable provision of the city's infrastructure in response to growth

There is no lack of appropriately zoned land in Port Augusta. However, the readily available supplies of residential and industrial land have led to non-sequential development and inefficient provision of infrastructure resulting in maintenance legacies and inequitable access to essential utilities.

There is a need to provide greater guidance to the sequencing and servicing of development as the City grows.

Action

3.1 – Prepare and implement a City Structure Plan

Prepare a Port Augusta Structure Plan in conjunction that details how the city will grow, including the staging of development, the orderly and economic provision of infrastructure, timing of infrastructure demand, sustainable funding and strategies for improving and upgrading infrastructure to new and growing areas.

Timing

Years 1-3

3.2 – Advocate for mains water supply to identified growth areas

Advocate to SA Water for the conversion of remote water supply to mains water in identified residential growth areas.

Timing

Years 2

3.3 – Identify key sewer augmentation gaps in identified growth areas

Work with SA Water to identify and address gaps in the sewer network, including waste water treatment capacities and connections to existing and growth areas.

Timing

Years 3

3.4 – Review waste transfer and recovery services

Work with adjoining jurisdictions to review waste transfer and recovery service options to meet current and future growth needs.

Timing

Years 4-5

Telecommunications

Better promote access to high-speed telecommunications networks

One of Port Augusta's strategic advantages lies in its high-speed internet access, including fibre-to-the-premises NBN services, distinguishing the city from other regional areas and providing businesses with a competitive edge through efficient operations and connectivity.

There are opportunities to capitalise on Port Augusta's strategic advantages in this regard through programs that promote and facilitate access and higher take-up rates, helping Port Augusta to be at the forefront of technology, adapt to market changes, and more readily attract investment.

Action

3.5 – Increase NBN take up rates

Work with NBN and telcos to implement a promotions strategy to increase the take-up rate of NBN across Port Augusta businesses

Timing

Years 1-2

3.6 – Promote NBN fibre-to-the-premises services as a strategic advantage to prospective businesses

Promote the availability of fibre-to-the-premises NBN services as a strategic advantage to prospective businesses looking to establish in Port Augusta.

Timing

Year 1



3.7 – Establish Port Augusta as a hub for remote working

Port Augusta's access to high-speed internet and its role as a service hub for a large geographical area present an opportunity to establish Port Augusta as a remote working hub through the provision of high-quality business co-working facilities, including business start-up support, mentorship and culturally safe working spaces.

Timing

Years 2-3

Gas supplies

Secure the short- and long-term supply of gas to the city

Port Augusta is fully reliant on bottled LPG gas to service residential and industrial needs. At times the city has been vulnerable to supply chain issues and reliability of supply.

In the long term, the supply of piped gas to Port Augusta would address current issues and improve reliability.

Action

3.8 – Increase the reliability of LPG gas supply chains

Partner with industry to identify gaps in supply chains for bottled gas and opportunities to coordinate storage, availability and distribution networks to improve reliability and capacity of supply.

Timing

Years 2-3

3.9 – Advocate for feasibility investigations into piped gas options

Advocate to the Department for Energy and Mining include Port Augusta in the State Infrastructure Strategy's proposed feasibility study into increasing the supply of gas to the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Timing

Year 1

Water and wastewater

Increase sustainability of water supply and optimise water and wastewater management networks

SA Water manages the water supply to Port Augusta via the Morgan-Whyalla Pipeline. Opportunities to increase sustainability of water supply are particularly important given the city's arid land location.

Port Augusta's wastewater network incorporates a reuse irrigation system that irrigates several park, ovals and gardens and there are opportunities to further optimise reuse in the context of growth.

Action

3.10 – Investigate options for increased wastewater reuse and business opportunities

Investigate options to optimise Port Augusta's wastewater management network, including capacity to service future growth and capitalising on potential reuse opportunities.

Timing

Years 4-5

3.11 – Advocate for more sustainable and climate-independent water sources for Port Augusta

Continue to work with the Office of Northern Water and others to identify alternative opportunities for sustainable water supply for long term growth and sustainability.

Timing

Years 1-5

Action Plan

Liveable

Action	Timing
Increase the availability, quality and diversity of accommodation to meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors	
<p>The availability, quality and diversity of housing options for Port Augusta’s resident and working population is a significant challenge that is linked to the cost of construction, availability of building trades and availability of finance. Areas of high demand include accommodation for professional and essential workers, older residents, and the homeless.</p> <p>Although the cost of land in Port Augusta is relatively low, the cost of construction and the availability of trades and finance options remain significant challenges, particularly for diverse housing options.</p> <p>Tourist accommodation is often fully utilised for worker accommodation, leaving low capacity to meet visitor demand.</p>	
1.1 – Increase housing diversity and availability	Years 1-5
<p>Work with the Department for Housing and Urban Development to facilitate a greater diversity of housing options, particularly for workers, older residents, students, Aboriginal communities and the homeless.</p>	
1.2 – Convert temporary worker accommodation to legacy housing	Years 1-5
<p>Work with industry and major projects to convert temporary worker accommodation into permanent housing opportunities.</p>	
Enhance recreation, tourism and lifestyle opportunities for residents, workers and visitors	
<p>Lifestyle opportunities are a significant component of liveability and important factors for the attraction and retention of workers, residents and visitors.</p> <p>Visitor facilities, foreshore amenities, City upgrades and recreation and open space facilities have been identified as priorities.</p>	
1.3 – Develop short-stay visitor facilities on the foreshore	Years 2-3
<p>Investigate the provision of short-stay visitor facilities within the City potentially including RV stop, amenities and adventure play facilities as part of the foreshore redevelopment to encourage longer visitor stays.</p>	
1.4 – Develop and implement a foreshore redevelopment plan	Years 2-3
<p>Prepare and implement a foreshore redevelopment plan encompassing the entirety of the 122kms of coastline within the city with the purpose of identifying opportunities for environmental protection, fishing and boating facilities, beautification, land use, tourist facilities and redevelopment opportunities.</p>	

Action	Timing
1.5 – Complete planned CBD, wharf, and shared use path upgrades	Years 1-4
<p>Implement the outcomes of the CBD Master Plan, wharf upgrade, and shared use path plans.</p>	
1.6 – Prepare and implement a recreation and open space plan	Years 1-3
<p>Prepare a recreation and open space plan focused on enhancing liveability in relation to the demand and supply of recreational facilities, open spaces, play spaces, shared use paths, trails and cycling facilities for current and future residents, workers and visitors.</p>	
Enhance the public realm to improve safety, amenity, community wellbeing, sense of place, accessibility and connectivity	
<p>Enhancements to the public realm were identified by key stakeholders as fundamental to liveability outcomes, and community safety, beautification and entrance statements are identified as priorities.</p>	
1.7 – Green public spaces and streetscapes	Years 1-5
<p>Green public spaces and streetscapes to provide greater climate resilience, increase canopy coverage, reduce heat island effects and enhance amenity.</p>	
1.8 – Improve accessibility and active transport options	Years 1-2
<p>Develop and implement improvements to the shared use path network, footpaths, pedestrian and cycling facilities, disability access in the public realm, and walking trails.</p>	
1.9 – Improve community safety	Years 1-3
<p>Prioritise implementation of the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan.</p>	
1.10 – Develop gateways and wayfinding strategy	Years 1-3
<p>Upgrade key entrance statements and signage to enhance visitor experience and city branding and improve city wayfinding.</p>	
Improve public transport options, particularly in relation to transport-dependent residents and for regional connections	
<p>Public transport services were consistently identified as being poor, especially in comparison with Metropolitan services.</p> <p>Key priorities include general improvement to services, Aboriginal community transport options and the centralisation of bus services at a single, easy to access terminal.</p>	
1.11 – Improve public transport services	Years 1-3
<p>Work with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport to improve public transport options for residents of Port Augusta as part of the regional public transport services review.</p>	

Action	Timing
1.12 – Enhance Aboriginal community transport options Work with Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owners to investigate opportunities to improve the accessibility, affordability and reliability of community transport options across Port Augusta, and to key remote and regional areas.	Years 2-3
1.13 – Develop a central bus terminal Work with transport providers to develop a central bus terminal with passenger facilities for residents and visitors, with bus freight capabilities.	Years 3-5
Coordinate the delivery of community services and address gaps, reinforcing the role of Port Augusta as a hub for regional services Port Augusta is already a significant hub for the provision of healthcare and social support services. The key challenge for the future will be the coordination of service delivery across multiple providers or the benefit of Port Augusta and regional residents.	
1.14 – Further diversify tertiary education offerings Work with service providers to further diversify tertiary education offerings, local transition to work opportunities, support and training services to retain young residents.	Years 1-5
1.15 – Implement childcare recommendations Implement the recommendations of the RDA Far North childcare report 2024, including increasing capacity and providing additional training opportunities.	Years 1-2
1.16 – Develop a community wellbeing hub Work with Preventative Health SA to investigate options for a Wellbeing Hub that would support physical, mental and social wellbeing, and coordinated support for community services across multiple providers.	Years 2-3

Connected

Action	Timing
Ensure road connections leading to Port Augusta are safe, well-maintained and have capacity to support national freight The success of Port Augusta as a service hub and export gateway/pathway greatly depends on the reliability and standard of outback roads, particularly between Port Augusta and mining, pastoral and tourist areas. Ensuring these roads are maintained to a standard that does not undermine this role is an ongoing priority.	
2.1 – Improve Outback SA roads Work with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to address road conditions in Outback SA to protect the role of Port Augusta as a service hub and export gateway/pathway.	Year 1
2.2 – Maintain Yorkeys Crossing Work with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to maintain Yorkeys Crossing as an alternative road connection, including for oversized freight.	Years 2-3
2.3 – Establish a Multispecies Livestock Transshipping Hub Establish a multispecies livestock transshipping hub in a staged approach.	Years 2-5
Improve access and connectivity across the city for residents, workers, businesses and visitors Port Augusta’s position on the national highway and rail network is a significant geographic advantage but can also make intra-city access challenging. These challenges will increase as the city grows and as road and rail freight increases. It will be important to ensure that accessibility and connectivity is maintained for liveability and business access.	
2.4 – Prepare and implement a Road Network Plan Prepare a Port Augusta Road Network Plan in conjunction with Action 3.1 that addresses road functions, roles, hierarchy and service levels, including improvements to connectivity (access, signage, safety), capacity, intersection with the rail line, freight access, and the long-term role of the Augusta Highway and adjoining land uses.	Years 2-3
Enhance the capability of the airport to meet the needs of FIFO workers, tourism operators, healthcare services and passengers Port Augusta airport serves as a base for the central operations of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and supports FIFO flights to mining operations. Reestablishment of passenger services lost post COVID-19 is a desired outcome for Port Augusta’s community. Owned by Council, Port Augusta airport requires ongoing community investment. Long-term business sustainability is a high priority to offset the financial burden that currently falls to rate-paying residents. The airport has the capacity to significantly enhance its role in servicing regional operations, particularly in relation to tourism operations and mining support. Collaboration with these and other sectors will be key to optimising future growth potential.	

Action	Timing
<p>2.5 – Develop an Airport Strategy</p> <p>Review the 2016 Master Plan for the airport and develop a long-term strategy and updated master plan, with a view to achieving financial sustainability, increased capability to service the tourism sector and mining freight operations, and passenger services. Sustainable funding, strategic partnerships, governance and business outcomes should be a focus of the strategy. The strategy should be developed in collaboration with key agencies and operators via a ‘round table’ or committee to facilitate synergies and resources.</p> <p>Re-establish a working seaport with export and intermodal capability</p> <p>Whilst currently unused, Port Augusta’s seaport is subject to a reactivation proposal as part of the Port Playford project.</p> <p>Reactivation of the seaport would significantly enhance Port Augusta’s capability to manage minerals and other goods, providing alternative pathways to export and import markets, increasing diversity of freight transport options and increasing efficiency.</p>	Years 1-2
<p>2.6 – Advocate for and help facilitate the re-establishment of a working seaport</p> <p>Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to advocate for and facilitate the re-establishment of a working seaport with export and intermodal capabilities.</p> <p>Increase the capacity of the rail line to manage a greater share of freight transport</p> <p>Increasing the capability of the rail line to manage a greater share of freight transport has been identified as a significant opportunity to optimise Port Augusta’s role as the Crossroads of Australia, facilitating new industries and new capabilities in relation to export gateways and pathways.</p> <p>Reactivating the rail spur connection to Port Paterson and creating new rail freight connections to key mining locations are two key priorities.</p> <p>The current location of the rail line through Port Augusta poses challenges to liveability and freight efficiency. In the long term, there are opportunities to consider alternative options around the edges of Port Augusta that eliminate freight restrictions, increase rail freight efficiency and address liveability issues, facilitating redevelopment opportunities for old rail land on the coast.</p> <p>Care will need to be taken to ensure that any relocation of the line does not compromise Port Augusta’s strategic positioning at the Crossroads of Australia.</p>	Years 1-5
<p>2.7 – Advocate for and help facilitate the reactivation of the disused rail spur to Port Paterson</p> <p>Facilitate reopening of the rail spur to Port Paterson as part of the Port Playford development</p>	Years 3-5
<p>2.8 – Investigate and facilitate enhanced rail freight connection(s) to mining areas</p> <p>Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to explore long term options to use of rail to transport freight and goods to and from mining operations.</p>	Years 2-4

Action	Timing
<p>2.9 – Advocate for investigation into potential long-term repositioning of the rail line to deliver growth and liveability outcomes</p> <p>Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to explore long term options for potential repositioning of the rail line outside the city in conjunction with Action 3.1. Options should safeguard Port Augusta’s strategic positioning at the Crossroads of Australia, enhance liveability, protect heritage railways and open up redevelopment and industry opportunities.</p> <p>Coordinate intermodal freight transport to improve supply chain efficiencies</p> <p>There are significant long-term opportunities associated with more efficient coordination of multi-modal transport of freight and goods, particularly with the reinvigoration of the Port Paterson seaport and increased use of the rail line.</p> <p>Intermodal capability for rail-road-sea-air transport will become more critical as shifts to more diverse modes of freight transport are realised.</p>	Years 3-5
<p>2.10 – Investigate and facilitate potential options to enhance intermodal capability</p> <p>Work with industry and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to explore long term options for enhancing multi-modal freight capacity associated with the seaport, rail, road and air freight.</p>	Years 2-4



Growing

Action	Timing
Ensure the ordered and sustainable provision of the city's infrastructure in response to growth	
There is no lack of appropriately zoned land in Port Augusta. However, the readily available supplies of residential and industrial land have led to non-sequential development and inefficient provision of infrastructure resulting in maintenance legacies and inequitable access to essential utilities.	
There is a need to provide greater guidance to the sequencing and servicing of development as the City grows.	
3.1 – Prepare and implement a City Structure Plan	Years 1-3
Prepare a Port Augusta Structure Plan in conjunction that details how the city will grow, including the staging of development, the orderly and economic provision of infrastructure, timing of infrastructure demand, sustainable funding and strategies for improving and upgrading infrastructure to new and growing areas.	
3.2 – Advocate for mains water supply to identified growth areas	Years 2
Advocate to SA Water for the conversion of remote water supply to mains water in identified residential growth areas.	
3.3 – Identify key sewer augmentation gaps in identified growth areas	Years 3
Work with SA Water to identify and address gaps in the sewer network, including waste water treatment capacities and connections to existing and growth areas.	
3.4 – Review waste transfer and recovery services	Years 4-5
Work with adjoining jurisdictions to review waste transfer and recovery service options to meet current and future growth needs.	
Better promote access to high-speed telecommunications networks	
One of Port Augusta's strategic advantages lies in its high-speed internet access, including fibre-to-the-premises NBN services, distinguishing the city from other regional areas and providing businesses with a competitive edge through efficient operations and connectivity.	
There are opportunities to capitalise on Port Augusta's strategic advantages in this regard through programs that promote and facilitate access and higher take-up rates, helping Port Augusta to be at the forefront of technology, adapt to market changes, and more readily attract investment.	
3.5 – Increase NBN take up rates	Years 1-2
Work with NBN and telcos to implement a promotions strategy to increase the take-up rate of NBN across Port Augusta businesses	
3.6 – Promote NBN fibre-to-the-premises services as a strategic advantage to prospective businesses	Year 1
Promote the availability of fibre-to-the-premises NBN services as a strategic advantage to prospective businesses looking to establish in Port Augusta.	

Action	Timing
3.7 – Establish Port Augusta as a hub for remote working	Years 2-3
Port Augusta's access to high-speed internet and its role as a service hub for a large geographical area present an opportunity to establish Port Augusta as a remote working hub through the provision of high-quality business co-working facilities, including business start-up support, mentorship and culturally safe working spaces.	
Secure the short- and long-term supply of gas to the city	
Port Augusta is fully reliant on bottled LPG gas to service residential and industrial needs. At times the city has been vulnerable to supply chain issues and reliability of supply.	
In the long term, the supply of piped gas to Port Augusta would address current issues and improve reliability.	
3.8 – Increase the reliability of LPG gas supply chains	Years 2-3
Partner with industry to identify gaps in supply chains for bottled gas and opportunities to coordinate storage, availability and distribution networks to improve reliability and capacity of supply.	
3.9 – Advocate for feasibility investigations into piped gas options	Year 1
Advocate to the Department for Energy and Mining to include Port Augusta in the State Infrastructure Strategy's proposed feasibility study into increasing the supply of gas to the Upper Spencer Gulf.	
Increase sustainability of water supply and optimise water and wastewater management networks	
SA Water manages the water supply to Port Augusta via the Morgan-Whyalla Pipeline. Opportunities to increase sustainability of water supply are particularly important given the city's arid land location.	
Port Augusta's wastewater network incorporates a reuse irrigation system that irrigates several park, ovals and gardens and there are opportunities to further optimise reuse in the context of growth.	
3.10 – Investigate options for increased wastewater reuse and business opportunities	Years 4-5
Investigate options to optimise Port Augusta's wastewater management network, including capacity to service future growth and capitalising on potential reuse opportunities.	
3.11 – Advocate for more sustainable and climate-independent water sources for Port Augusta	Years 1-5
Continue to work with the Office of Northern Water and others to identify alternative opportunities for sustainable water supply for long term growth and sustainability.	

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect the Barngala and Nukunu people as the Traditional Custodians of the ancestral lands. We pay respect to all Aboriginal cultural groups and individuals. As it has been in the past, Port Augusta continues to be a meeting place, with members of many different language groups living here.

Published July 2025

