



# 2026 STATE ELECTION PRIORITIES



IMAGE CREDIT: CITY OF ADELAIDE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

**Ngadlu tampinhi, Kurna Miyurna yaitya  
yarta-mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku.  
Ngadlu tampinhi purkarna pukinangu,  
yalaka, tarrkaritya.**

**Parnaku yailtya, parnaku tapapurruna,  
parnaku yarta ngadlu tampinhi.**

**Yalaka Kurna Miyurna parnaku yailtya,  
tapa purruna, yarta kuma puru martinhi,  
puru warriapinhi, puru tangka martulayinhi.**

The Committee for Adelaide acknowledges  
that the Kurna people are the traditional custodians  
of the Adelaide Plains, and pay respects to  
Elders past, present and future.

The Committee for Adelaide recognises and  
respects their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship  
with the land and acknowledges that they are of continuing  
importance to the Kurna people living today.



# INTRODUCTION

**The 2026 State Election brings us to a critical juncture for Adelaide, South Australia.**

We are now 25 years into the new century. And have 25 years left to hit net zero.

As a State, we have several big legacy projects in front of us including the formation of Adelaide University, the AUKUS submarine agreement, the new Women's & Children's Hospital project, the final stage of the North-South Corridor and the State Prosperity Projects, including the Northern Water Project and the Whyalla Steelworks Industrial Transformation. We are building a competitive edge in traditional and technology-driven sectors including defence, education, health, major events, creative arts, AI, advanced manufacturing, space and renewable energy.

This is happening against a backdrop of growing geopolitical instability, supply chain and trade tensions, rising cost-of-living pressures, climate change and the acceleration of AI and the digital transformation of global economies.

While Adelaide is enjoying some broad economic momentum, with welcomed population growth, increasing investor interest and a growing reputation as a great place to live, work and visit, we must not be complacent. The opportunities before us are not guaranteed and not everyone is benefiting.

As a state, we face a set of urgent and complex challenges. We continue to grapple with stagnant productivity, ongoing housing pressures, rising living costs, a stretched healthcare system, gaps in active and public transport infrastructure, a changing climate, an ageing population, youth disengagement and growing inequality.

If we want South Australia to thrive, it's clear we must act now, with ambition, collaboration, urgency and long-term decision-making. And we must do it while protecting what makes Adelaide special: our lifestyle, inclusivity, accessibility, affordability and natural beauty.



**As a state, we must put politics aside and start planning for the long-term, not just the next election cycle.**

It means forging smart partnerships that provide social, cultural *and* economic returns. And it means putting the right infrastructure, policies and actions in place now so that our city and state continues to thrive, not just over the next four years but for generations to come.

The Committee for Adelaide has undertaken extensive research and engagement over the last 12-months to inform our 2026 State Election Priorities. Our **2025 Benchmarking Adelaide Report** provides a global perspective of how Adelaide is tracking against a peer group of 20 similar cities around the world. Our **2025 Listening Forum Report** provides a summary of the priorities, ideas and recommendations of over 250 members and key stakeholders, collected across a series of forums and surveys.

Regardless of who wins government at the next election, the issues facing our state cannot be solved by the government alone.

Leadership and collaboration is also required from other levels of government, industry, academia, the not-for-profit sector and the community to embrace and address the social, environmental and economic challenges and opportunities before us.

# KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE OF ADELAIDE, SA

**The Committee for Adelaide has long advocated for South Australia to be an extraordinary, big thinking, welcoming and vibrant place, with a growing economy and population.**

**To realise this vision, our key 2026 Election Priorities are centred around the following focus areas:**

1. **Housing:** Prioritise urban infill over urban sprawl and do density well.
2. **Infrastructure:** Ensure Adelaide is a well-connected, accessible and vibrant city.
3. **Economy:** Boost productivity and support innovation to drive sustainable growth.
4. **Climate Change:** Accelerate action and adaptation on the pathway to Net Zero.
5. **Health & Wellbeing:** Support and enhance community health and wellbeing.

Addressing these five areas, through swift and united action from across government, industry and the community, will set the appropriate foundations for South Australia to thrive for the next 20 years and beyond.

As the state strives to increase much-needed housing supply, we believe in prioritising well-designed, community-centred urban infill, over urban sprawl. We must build smarter, not just faster. We must maintain quality, not just quantity. And we must make the most of our remaining urban land. Increasing housing stock and diversity in the city and metropolitan area can be done well and must be tied to improvements in amenity, infrastructure, open space and the public realm.

We also continue to advocate for improved connectivity through strategic investments in public and active transport infrastructure. And we must continue to support, attract and enhance Adelaide's cultural assets, events, festivals and spaces, including continuing to respect and celebrate all forms of First Nations art and culture.

The rising cost of basic essentials such as food, housing and utilities is being felt across the community. Productivity growth is one of the main drivers of long-term improvements in living standards and wages. If we can lift productivity and boost innovation across the economy, this will help to ease cost-of-living and housing pressures in the long-term and ultimately lead to improved health, wellbeing and vibrancy for all to enjoy.

Initiatives like the Northern Water Project and a South Australian Natural Resource Processing Strategy will secure strategic industrial capability, boost innovation and help to unlock the state's economic complexity. Speeding up decision making, cutting red tape and setting clear delivery targets and KPIs across government departments and for spend on innovation and R&D will have immediate impacts and provide investor confidence and certainty.

Accelerating decarbonisation actions and mitigating the affects of climate change requires urgent and ongoing attention, with particular support needed for SMEs to prepare, plan and adapt. If Adelaide is successful in winning the bid to host COP31, we need to ensure long term legacy, not just a short-term economic injection.

Last but by no means least, the health and wellbeing of our community remains paramount. People of all ages have told us they are concerned about cost of living pressures, access to public health and mental health services and increasing rates of loneliness and isolation. There is an ongoing need to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the health and aged care system including mental health, allied health and preventative health support and services.

Young people have also made it absolutely clear that they want to be at the decision-table. We support calls for a permanent youth voice to parliament and we encourage the public and private sector to ensure active and ongoing engagement with people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to ensure they are being heard and included in decision-making.

**Now is the time for bold, long-term decision-making to address the challenges, embrace opportunities and set South Australia up for generations to come.**



**ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR ADELAIDE:**

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

## VISION

For Adelaide and South Australia to be the most extraordinary, big thinking, welcoming and vibrant global city, with a growing economy and population.

## MISSION

To provide independent thought leadership, advocate for collective action and influence policy for the benefit of our state, both now and into the future.

## MEMBERS

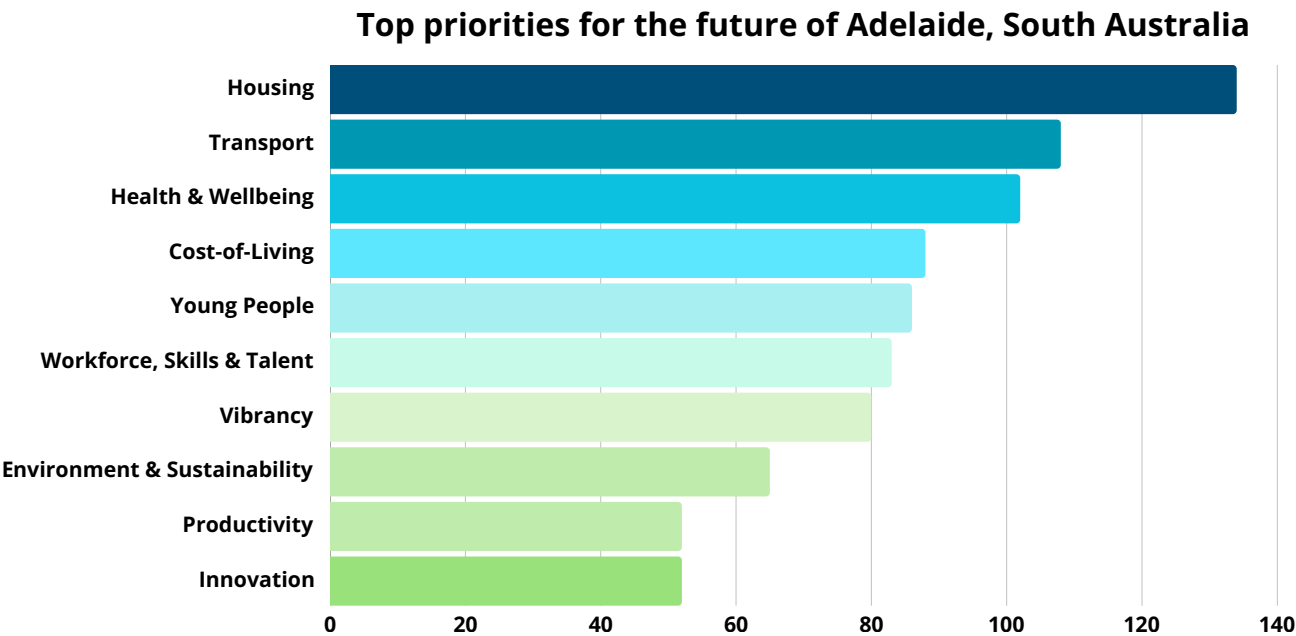
Our membership is diverse and influential, representing the full spectrum of the local economy. Our members our progressive and proud South Australian businesses and organisations that make a significant contribution to the state's economy and society. Collectively, we have a shared commitment to shaping the future of Adelaide, South Australia now and in the future.



MEMBER FEEDBACK:


TOP PRIORITIES

In June and July 2025, we asked 250+ members and key stakeholders to rate their Top 5 priorities for the future of Adelaide, South Australia:




Housing is the top priority for Adelaideans when thinking about the future, followed by transport, health and wellbeing, cost-of-living and young people. Workforce, skills and talent, vibrancy, environment and sustainability, productivity and innovation were also rated highly, rounding out the top ten 10 most pressing issues. Many of these priorities are interrelated and connected.


TOP 5 MEMBER PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE OF ADELAIDE, SA FROM THE LISTENING FORUMS:




**1. HOUSING:**  
Improve access, diversity, density and affordability of housing to sustain current and future population growth and demographics.




**2. TRANSPORT:**  
Deliver an improved, efficient, innovative and sustainable public transport network, with long-term funding beyond election cycles to ensure infrastructure keeps up with demand and supports greater connectivity.



**3. HEALTH & WELLBEING:**  
Continue to address the growing demand for public health services and increase the capacity and effectiveness of the public health system, including mental health, allied healthcare and preventative health support and services.



**4. COST OF LIVING:**  
Continue to provide cost of living relief for those who need it most, including concession payments, school vouchers and subsidies, and explore the introduction of a low-cost 'Buy SA' food and produce program.



**5. YOUNG PEOPLE:**  
Nurture the next generation including ensure young people's views are heard and considered in decision-making, ensure young people are aware of and supported to access local job opportunities and start-up

# 1. HOUSING

**Prioritise urban infill over urban sprawl and do density well.**

## THE 2025 BENCHMARKING ADELAIDE REPORT TOLD US:

Adelaide is now in the bottom 8<sup>th</sup> percentile of English-speaking cities for homeownership costs relative to wages, among the most expensive of 86 housing markets worldwide.

Despite this increase, housing costs are still slightly more manageable than most Australian capital cities. However, they are catching up to more expensive international peers. The share of income consumed by rent is now 3<sup>rd</sup> highest after San Diego and Auckland.

Detached housing remains the default in Adelaide. Single family homes make up 75% of Greater Adelaide's housing mix. Apart from in the Adelaide CBD, nowhere else do detached homes account for less than 60% of dwellings.

As Adelaide looks ahead to 40% population growth over the next 25 years, maintaining the affordability of housing will require more supply and more housing diversity.

With only 26,000 people living in the city centre, the share of city population is barely a third of the peer average, presenting an opportunity to boost supply and in-turn, boost the city residential base.



## OUR MEMBERS & KEY STAKEHOLDERS TOLD US:

Core issues raised by members include affordability challenges, stagnant wages, rising construction and materials costs, ageing workforce and skill shortages, increasing demand for social housing and investor-focused tax settings. Supply is further constrained by regulatory delays, outdated housing preferences including a desire for large blocks, lack of diversity and innovation in housing types and resistance to infill and density.

Many members are concerned that the default to urban sprawl and continuing to build housing further out beyond the existing urban footprint will compound existing infrastructure, connectivity and productivity issues. Coordination between planning, infrastructure and service delivery could be improved and there is an ongoing need to tackle community resistance to change and promote the benefits of growth.

## 2026 ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR: HOUSING

- **Prioritise infill over urban sprawl** through high-quality, mixed-used development in the CBD and inner-metropolitan area, including social, affordable and age-friendly housing, that makes the most of existing transport corridors, protects and maintains open space and supports improved amenity and social, environmental and liveability outcomes for local communities.
- **Catalyse residential growth in the CBD**, including setting more ambitious growth targets beyond the existing aim of 50,000 residents by 2036 and work with the City of Adelaide and the private sector to unlock, de-risk and accelerate residential housing developments and adaptive reuse projects to support growth.
- **Implement a state-wide registration database for short stay accommodation** to provide a useful tool for evidence-based regulation of the sector and manage any adverse impacts short-term rentals have on long-term housing and rental supply and affordability.
- **Invest in and support local innovative, climate-smart construction methods** including modular, prefabricated and innovative adaptive reuse techniques, to provide faster and more productive building solutions to address Adelaide's housing shortages.
- **Accelerate the use of AI across the ePlanning system** to enable immediate, automated development approvals for applications where prescriptive criteria is met.

## 2. INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ensure Adelaide is a well-connected, accessible and vibrant city.**

### THE 2025 BENCHMARKING ADELAIDE REPORT TOLD US:

Adelaide commuter times are rising faster than most cities in Australia and beyond. Adelaide residents spend more time driving than most drivers globally, with about 4 in 5 journeys made by car. Traffic congestion is now widespread across Greater Adelaide, with a lower variation between CBD and whole-city congestion than 90% of cities globally.

Adelaide's public transport capacity in central areas stands at 7th among its cohort, yet currently only 12% of city centre residents use public transport. Only some suburbs are relatively well connected by bus and rail by international standards, with Adelaide falling from 75th to 50th percentile among peers for the share people living within a 10-min walk of public transport.

Adelaide's active transport usage and investments do not yet reach the scale of some peer cities, such as Austin, which is spending A\$190m on bikeways & urban trails as part of a A\$1.8b, 2,000 km cycling network under development by 2039.

Adelaide's EV sales share of 6.5% is well behind leaders like Portland (18.7%) but catching up to the peer average of 7.4%. Adelaide currently provides less access to EV chargers and charging infrastructure is also less evenly spread. Adelaide suburbs are typically poorly served, at 45% the rate of the city centre, compared to an average of 95%.



### OUR MEMBERS & KEY STAKEHOLDERS TOLD US:

Members support greater investment and provision of essential infrastructure including safe and well-maintained roads, public transport, active transport and boosting EV uptake and infrastructure across the state.

There's a strong emphasis from members on integrating density with public realm investment and improved transport connectivity.

There's an increasingly urgent need for a more accessible, integrated and efficient public and active transport system across Greater Adelaide to support current and future growth and maintain Adelaide's accessibility and liveability advantages. This includes an ongoing need to encourage the community to change travel behaviours and patterns where possible.

## 2026 ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR: INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Implement the State Transport Strategy**, with funding beyond election cycles, to deliver a more integrated, efficient and sustainable multimodal transport system, in line with RAA's recommendations, including cheaper and more flexible public transport fares, improved reliability and frequency of the bus network, accelerating the transition to electric buses with smart charging infrastructure at depots, investing in Park'n'Ride facilities near public transport routes and expanding the capacity of the Adelaide Railway Station and passenger rail network.
- **Improve active transport safety and connectivity across Greater Adelaide**, including committing to a State Active Transport Strategy backed with a \$10 million ongoing annual investment in active transport infrastructure and education campaign to encourage uptake.
- **Position Adelaide to be Australia's leader in EVs** by increasing investment and deployment of EV infrastructure and charging stations across South Australia and incentivising electric and hybrid vehicle take-up. This should include funding kerbside charging trials in infill development areas, an EV charging infrastructure grants program for SMEs and local governments in key areas, supporting bi-directional charging technologies such as Vehicle-to-Grid and Vehicle-to-Home integration, streamlining regulations and adopting necessary Building Code changes.
- **Ensure greater support for arts infrastructure** including establishing a 'Cultural Infrastructure Plan,' backed by a public and private philanthropic investment fund, to improve, maintain, attract and enhance Adelaide's cultural assets, events, festivals and institutions.



### 3. ECONOMY

**Boost productivity and support innovation to drive sustainable economic growth.**

#### THE 2025 BENCHMARKING ADELAIDE REPORT TOLD US:

Adelaide's economic output per head is 30% behind Australia's average and our productivity gap is currently sitting at 20%, larger than most other comparable cities.

3.5% more people in Adelaide are not in education, employment or training compared to Australia as a whole. However, Adelaide's share of jobs in typically higher-paying sectors, such as finance, legal services, IT and energy is rising. Adelaide is also witnessing a stronger uptick in overseas investment. With foreign capital investment into new corporate assets and facilities doubling in most recent year on year figures, with Adelaide now among the top 100 fastest growing markets for FDI globally. This partly reflects South Australia consistently being rated among the better places to do business in Australia.

Adelaide continues to host less R&D spend across both public and private sectors. This constrains its patent rate and perceived adequacy of innovation infrastructure, in the bottom 15% and 30% of global cities respectively.



#### OUR MEMBERS & KEY STAKEHOLDERS TOLD US:

Improved education and skills pathways, greater government leadership and investment in R&D and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship were all ideas put forward by members as ways to boost productivity and strengthen Adelaide's innovation ecosystem.

There's also a strong push for retaining and attracting talent, supporting scaleups and repositioning and promoting Adelaide, South Australia as a hub for innovation and commercialisation.

### 2026 ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR: ECONOMIC GROWTH

- **Appoint a 'Minister for Productivity and Regulatory Reform' within Cabinet and establish a Productivity Taskforce** that is led by the Minister and links government, business and academia to co-design local productivity boosting actions across the economy, drawing on advice from the South Australian Productivity Commission, with clear annual and 3-year measurable outcomes.
- **Set a clear agenda for regulatory reform across the public sector**, including putting in place clear delivery targets and KPIs for all government departments, aligned to the State Economic Statement and individual department strategic plans, with an emphasis on simplifying regulation, improving decision making and raising accountability and service standards.
- **Utilise the talent that is already on our doorstep** including continuing to attract and prioritise international graduates under the General Skills Migration program, accelerate skill recognition and provide career pathway support for young people and international talent.
- **Develop an overarching R&D Strategy** that outlines solutions to increasing R&D, sets an appropriate target for boosting R&D spend to be closer to the OCED average, aligns R&D spend to sectors where SA can lead and leverages established CRCs, the existing R&I Fund and investments by local universities to bolster research outcomes to benefit local industry and community.
- **Establish a Growth Accelerator Program**, aligned to the work of the AIML, including specialised grants, to support researchers, SMEs, start-ups and entrepreneurs to trial, adopt and embed digital and AI technologies and applications across industry to speed-up benefit realisation.
- **Continue to advocate for and deliver the multi-user Northern Water Project** to unlock the investment potential of South Australia and support existing & emerging high-growth industries.
- **Continue to implement and invest in South Australia's Green Iron and Steel Strategy.**
- **Develop a South Australian Natural Resource Processing Strategy** to secure the State's strategic industrial capability, provide supply chain resilience and ensure existing smelters are fit for the future and equipped to support growth in mineral processing and green iron production.

## 4. CLIMATE CHANGE

**Accelerate action and adaptation on the pathway to Net Zero.**

### THE 2025 BENCHMARKING ADELAIDE REPORT TOLD US:

Adelaide's geo-physical context and inherited advantages make it currently a global top 5% city for its low propensity for climate or natural disasters.

Adelaide's high levels of green space, comprising 11% of the total area of Greater Adelaide, contribute to its recognition as one of the most sustainable destinations in the world. For over a decade, South Australia has been at the forefront of the energy transition, rising from 30% to 70% renewable energy share since 2011, with a target of 100% net renewable energy by 2027.

Adelaide's carbon emissions have declined over the last 20 years and fallen more quickly than many cities globally. However, among its liveable peer group, the pace of emissions reduction since 2015 has only been just under half the rate. Adelaide still emits more total greenhouse gases per person than most peer cities.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt in Adelaide including rising temperatures, increased frequency of hot days, heightened fire danger conditions, changing rainfall patterns and rising sea levels. Projections indicate that these changes will persist in the coming decades, necessitating effective planning, preparedness and adaptation.



### OUR MEMBERS & KEY STAKEHOLDERS TOLD US:

There is deep concern over climate change, biodiversity loss, the current algae bloom outbreak and environmental degradation driven by unsustainable development, lack of long-term planning, inadequate regulation and a throwaway consumer culture.

There is a strong call from members for better urban design, improved infrastructure, integrated sustainability in housing and a cultural shift toward valuing nature, resilience and the wellbeing of future generations.

There's strong support for bold action on energy, transport and housing efficiency, alongside investment in renewables, biodiversity protection and circular economy models. To succeed, these shifts must be accompanied by inclusive engagement, clear communication and practical support that addresses both environmental and cost pressures.

## 2026 ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR: CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Invest in climate mitigation and adaptation strategies for South Australia's highest climate risks** to reduce future recovery costs and disruption.
- **Continue to advocate and work closely with the Federal Government for more proactive intervention and resilience in the National Electricity Market** regarding renewable generation to ensure energy affordability, reliability and security.
- **Establish integrated state planning and oversight of electrical network infrastructure** to enable large-scale electrification of transport, housing, business, and industry.
- **Establish a Net Zero & Climate Change Adaptation Fund** that incentivises and supports SMEs via grants to reduce emissions and implement climate change adaptation measures within businesses, with a preference for local procurement wherever possible.
- **Fund SA ZERO to deliver a multi-year 'SA ZERO SME Accelerator Academy'** to support SMEs to plan, act and accelerate zero carbon and zero waste pathways.
- **Support private investment in the circular economy** by increasing remanufacturing and repurposing opportunities in the State.
- **In the event Adelaide wins the bid to host COP31**, commit to a major legacy action that ensures Adelaide is well positioned to accelerate decarbonisation targets and positions South Australia as a global case study in the renewable transition.
- **Commit to increasing tree canopy, greening and biodiversity targets by 30% by 2030** and ensure open space is retained and protected while increasing housing density.

## 5. HEALTH & WELLBEING

**Support and enhance community health and wellbeing.**

### THE 2025 BENCHMARKING ADELAIDE REPORT TOLD US:

Adelaide is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of 20 peer cities for liveability, affordability and wellbeing.

Adelaide's life expectancy is 1st among peers, and South Australians are living longer and more physically active than the Australian average. The number of South Australians aged over 75 is set to increase by around 50% by 2040.

Where quality of life measures weight strongly for cost of living, access to culture, and equality of incomes, Adelaide is still usually top 20% globally but not as exceptional overall

South Australia's recognition of its higher rates of social isolation – 27.7% of people experience persistent loneliness – compares unfavourably with other states, speaking to the importance of new investments in social infrastructure.



### OUR MEMBERS & KEY STAKEHOLDERS TOLD US:

There's a strong call from members and key stakeholders for inclusive, multidisciplinary and community-led approaches to health and wellbeing, with a focus on prevention, early intervention and support across all life stages.

There is an emphasis on community connection and inclusion, through diverse, intergenerational and well-supported local networks, third spaces and accessible services. Additionally, environmental sustainability and infrastructure, such as green spaces, improved transport and digital access, are seen as vital to supporting thriving, healthy communities, alongside stronger support for families, schools and non-government services.

## 2026 ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR: HEALTH & WELLBEING

- **Advocate and work closely with the Federal Government to pilot a new innovative approach to healthcare and aged-care funding** that better aligns funding cycles to community health needs and enables strategic and agile investment to be allocated by the State, as and when needed, to address key pressure areas.
- **Commit to providing a capital investment into technology, data systems and innovation across the public health system** to streamline tasks, provide timely and flexible access to health care information and services and enhance patient care.
- **Continue to prioritise preventative care and early intervention**, including screenings, vaccinations, mental health support, physical exercise programs and education in across the community to help reduce the risk of chronic diseases and improve overall health and wellbeing.
- **Implement a permanent 'Youth Voice to Parliament'** to ensure young people's views are heard and considered in decision-making and that the unique health and wellbeing needs of young people are considered and addressed.
- **Continue to provide cost of living relief for those who need it most**, including concession payments, school vouchers and subsidies, and explore the introduction of a low-cost 'Buy SA' food and produce program.
- **Provide safe, welcoming and inclusive 'third spaces' within the community** including in schools, community centres, retail and hospitality precincts and other public areas to encourage face-to-face social connection and tackle loneliness and isolation.





# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ADELAIDE, SA

The Committee for Adelaide looks forward to working with our members, industry partners and all levels and sides of Government to shape the future of Adelaide, South Australia for generations to come.

