

A long wooden pier with white railings extends from the foreground into the ocean. The pier is made of dark wooden planks and has a white railing with vertical posts. The water is a deep blue with small waves. In the background, there is a rocky shoreline with some greenery and a paved path. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

South Australian Regional Tourism Infrastructure Top 10 Priorities

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL VISITOR STRATEGY

The 2020 South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy (RVS) was a standout achievement, a sustainable plan for regions by regions. By December 2019, regional tourism had generated 44 cents in every tourism dollar for the State and collectively achieved the 2020 target with a result of \$3.6 billion in regional visitor expenditure one year early in December 2019.

The next iteration of the RVS was developed in 2020 under a different set of challenges and uncertainty. Despite the severe disruption of drought, bushfires and COVID-19, regional tourism in South Australia is proving its resilience. Through extensive collaboration, communication, and local engagement, the 2025 South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy was launched in March 2021.

REGIONAL TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

The 2025 South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy (RVS) is a roadmap for the industry to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

The RVS is a collaborative effort across the State's 11 regions. It has been built from the ground up via extensive consultation with local councils, state government, regional tourism associations, peak bodies and most importantly, the tourism operator who interacts with visitors every day. The common aim is to align all available resources more effectively. The consumer is at its absolute core. Recommendations are based on visitor research, consumer insights and the collective experience of regional tourism organisations.

The opportunity in regional tourism is critical to the State's visitor economy. It generates 17,200 direct and 7,000 indirect tourism jobs and \$3.6 billion in visitor expenditure. By 2025 this has the potential to grow to \$4 billion. Although only 23% of South Australians live in regional areas, these areas account for over 40% of the State's total visitor spend.

To reach this 2025 potential, regions have collectively agreed on the following regional priority action areas:

- Marketing
- Experience and supply development
 - Including; experience, accommodation and visitor infrastructure
- Collaboration
- Industry Capabilities
- Leisure and business events
- Promote the value of tourism

The 2025 RVS identifies a number of infrastructure priorities. The priorities were refined in a series of interactions between the Steering Committee and regions over an extended period.

CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

Well-maintained visitor infrastructure provides a safe and enjoyable visitor experience and helps operators to grow their businesses. Priorities include improvements to regional nature trails (an area of high visitor demand), key regional roads, and the supply of reliable telecommunications across all areas. South Australian regions have also identified coastal and marine infrastructure, signage, and aviation infrastructure as priorities.

Adequate and well-maintained infrastructure is critical for the sustainable growth of regions and a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. Improving and maintaining infrastructure can open up new possibilities and remove barriers to growth.

KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

Roads

Roads play a hugely important role in enabling the dispersal of visitors safely to all corners of the State. Improving the self-drive visitor experience is required via:

- Road-related infrastructure including new or enhanced parking bays and pull-out areas.
- Sealing specific routes (e.g. Strzelecki track) and upgrading some unsealed roads. This will allow regions to attract new visitor markets and enable hire car traffic.
- Road widening, shoulder sealing, passing lanes and fixing bottlenecks on popular regional routes (including Port Wakefield interchange).
- Ensuring road stops include appropriate amenities such as toilet blocks, rubbish bins and waste collection facilities.

Trails

COVID-19 has seen an increasing desire from visitors to spend more time experiencing nature-based tourism assets. The upgrade, maintenance, and development of new hiking and cycling paths throughout the regions, including in National Parks, are required to support ongoing growth in popular nature-based tourism experiences.

Telecommunication black spots

Extensive and effective mobile coverage in regional South Australia is critical to visitor safety not only in terms of travel incidents but also in terms of climatic events such as flood and bushfires and during a pandemic. For destinations, Wi-Fi attracts visitors to stop in their town and spend time and additional dollars. It also allows visitors to enhance their trip experience via online mapping, recommendations, and immediate social media advocacy. Addressing Wi-Fi and telephony black spots is critical as they impact both visitors and tourism operations.

Coastal, river and marine infrastructure

Most South Australian regions rely on water as not only a critical asset but a visitor attraction. Water-related infrastructures such as jetties, wharves, boat ramps and navigation aids are crucial to activating tourism experiences. Regions strongly support ongoing maintenance of this critical maritime infrastructure.

Signage

Updating, repairing, and extending visitor-related signage is a priority across all regions, particularly on major touring routes. Specifically:

- Directional signage
- Interpretive and information signage for regional points of interest.
- Signage welcoming visitors to a region or town.

Air access

Regular passenger aviation

Visitors are often time poor, so growing affordable regional aviation options will aid visitor dispersal rates and volumes. The priority is to continue discussions between airports and airlines to increase flights into regional areas when demand can be justified.

Touring aviation

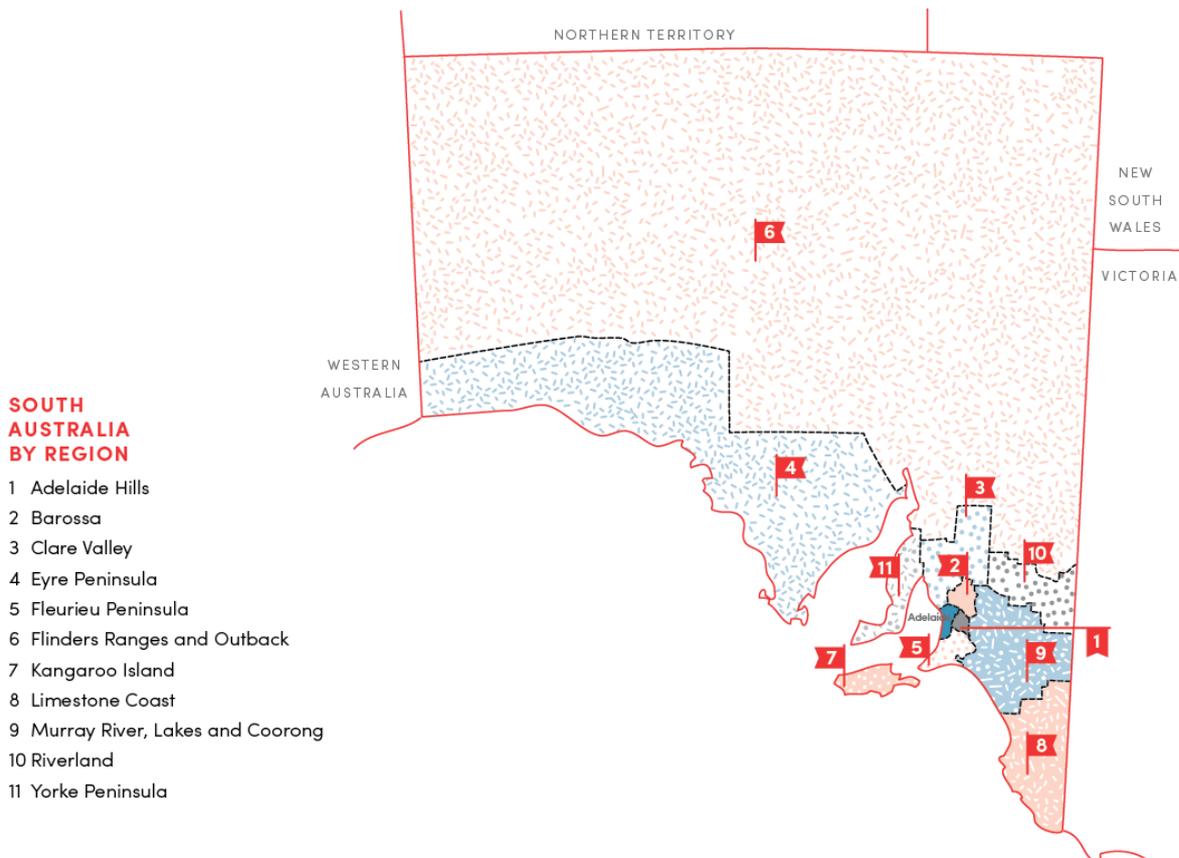
Touring aviation includes activities such as sightseeing experiences, charter flights, touring products, and self-fly access to regions. Some of these activities operate on privately owned unsealed airstrips. Infrastructure requirements include improving regional runways, landing strips, fuel availability, lighting, and fencing.

Regional tourism is a critical part of the South Australian visitor economy delivering:

- \$3.6 billion in visitor expenditure
- 44% of all State visitor expenditure
- 17,000 tourism jobs in regions
- 43% of all State direct tourism-related jobs
- 44% of all State visitor expenditure by 2030 (\$5.1 billion)

Raising the awareness of South Australia’s regional tourism value and its contribution to the State's visitor economy is vital. Local government, local industry associations, national peak bodies (such as the Australian Hotels Association and Restaurant and Catering Association), local communities and individual businesses all have an advocacy role to play.

The State's regional tourism organisations play a key role in coordinating regional efforts and leveraging the activities of the South Australian Tourism Commission.



Source: South Australian Tourism Plan 2020, Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts 2015/2016, Tourism Research Australia - National Visitor Survey and International Visitor Survey December 2017

2025 TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

1. Improve trails

Improve and extend key walking, hiking, and cycling trails. The upgrade, maintenance, and development of new trails and cycling paths through out the regions will support the growing demand of nature-based tourism experiences.

Regions: All 11 regions

Priorities:

- Develop cycling trails linking the four premier wine regions (Clare Valley, Barossa, Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale).
- Develop key sections of a Limestone Coast cycling trail and a River Murray walking/cycling trail.
- Enhance the Heysen Trail (Cape Jervis to Deep Creek).

Benefits:

- Link high-yield activity-seeking tourists with the State's premium wine experiences.
- Create new markets for the State's river and coastal regions.
- Establish cycling experiences linked to the Epicurean Way, Mighty Murray Way and Southern Coastal Drive touring routes.

Outcome: The upgrade, maintenance and development of trails will support the growing in nature-based tourism experiences.



2. Identify telecommunication blackspots

This is the most common infrastructure concern identified by regions.

There are approximately 1100 registered mobile black spots in SA.

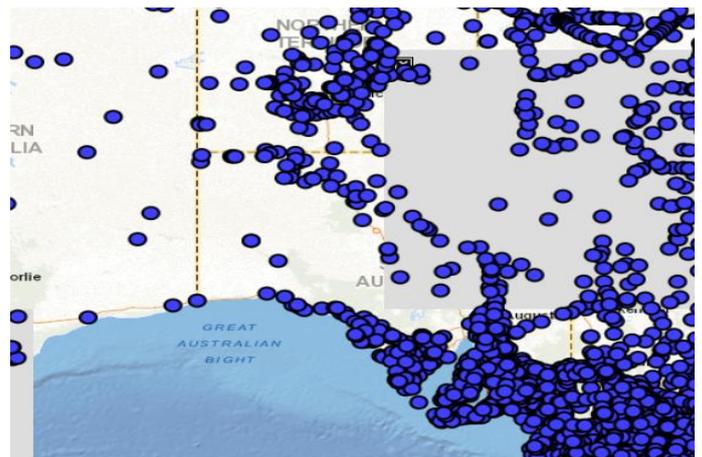
Regions: All 11 regions

Priorities:

- Improve mobile telephony services in remote and hilly regions
- Extend coverage on key touring routes
- Improve coverage in key national parks

Benefits: Improved business efficiency, tourism experience and traveller safety.

Outcome: By addressing just 50 key black spots, nominated by regions, will generate major tourism outcomes. Several large and remote regions (Flinders Ranges and Outback SA, Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island) have proposed more substantial investments to ensure traveller safety.



3. Seal key tracks in the Outback

Continue to seal the Strzelecki Track from Lyndhurst to the Queensland border.

Advocate for the sealing of Birdsville Track and Oodnadatta Track.

Region: Flinders Ranges & Outback

Priorities:

- Roads that are heavily used and link with interstate

Benefits:

- New route options for drive tourists, especially 2WD and car-hire tourists
- Increased visitor flows and spend in the Flinders Ranges, Outback, Eyre Peninsula, Clare Valley and other regions
- \$17m pa increased visitor spend in SA alone
- \$142m pa improved oil and gas sector productivity
- \$3m pa beef industry uplift



Outcome: A sealed route across inland Australia to and from SE Queensland linking Queensland's Adventure Way with SA's road network

4. Improve tourism amenities on key drive routes

Upgrade amenities on the State's six designated touring routes:

Regions: All 11 regions

Priorities:

- Camping areas, rest areas, viewing bays, toilets, signage and other amenities
- Plan for new needs e.g. the electric highway / vehicle charging stations
- The level of need is greater in remote regions, but improvements are required along all six designated touring routes.

Benefits:

- Increased spend by Australian drive tourists.
- Greater access to less-obvious places and experiences.
- Improved experience for demanding international travellers.

Outcome: Will provide a better experience for the growing self-drive market. Allow for easy itineraries for travel to regional SA.



5. Upgrade key coastal infrastructure

Advocate to upgrade key wharves, jetties and boat ramps.

Regions: Limestone Coast, Coorong, Fleurieu Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula

Priorities: Examples: Jetties and boat ramps on Yorke, Eyre and Fleurieu Peninsulas and the Limestone Coast

Benefits:

- Maximise the demonstrated value of key amenities along South Australia's long and spectacular coastline.
- Minimise the risk of lost revenue when this highly vulnerable infrastructure is damaged.

Outcome: Allow better activation of marine tourism experiences along the coast.



6. Upgrade River Murray boating infrastructure

Improve boat ramps, jetties, navigation aids, signage, toilets, lighting and viewing bays.

Regions: Riverland, Murray River, Lakes & Coorong, Fleurieu Peninsula

Priorities: Swan Reach, Mannum, Murray Bridge, Meningie, Renmark, Berri, Loxton, Waikerie and Morgan

Benefits:

- Improve the on-river experience which drives the visitor economies of the River regions.
- Inadequate facilities are a barrier to growth for the houseboat and recreational boating and water sport sectors.

Outcome: Support the importance of the River Murray and encourage a cross-state approach to promote it as a key tourism asset in Australia.



7. Upgrade regional accommodation

Identified the need to improve and increase quality, experiential accommodation of scale.

Regions: All 11 regions

Priorities:

- Building new rooms – target of 500 rooms by 2025.
- Upgrading existing rooms – target of 800 rooms by 2025.

Benefits:

- Improve consumer opportunity to regions
- Lift regional room rates, occupancy levels and total visitor spend.

Outcome: Quality accommodation drives guest satisfaction and repeat visitation.



8. Establish new and enhanced experiences

Develop a range of experiences that reflect each region's uniqueness.

Regions: All 11 regions

Priorities:

- Immersive food and beverage experiences
- Nature –based, soft adventure and Aboriginal experiences

Benefits:

- Enable regional councils and stakeholders to establish or enhance key interpretive and other attractions
- Enable small operators to start new ventures or diversify their offerings.

Outcome: New experiences will attract visitors to the region and encourage to stay longer to do more, thus increasing tourism expenditure.



9. Upgrade small regional airstrips

Strengthen the State's network of airstrips

Regions: Flinders Ranges & Outback, Eyre Peninsula, Riverland, Clare Valley

Priorities:

- Airstrips where related services –transport and hospitality – can be delivered.
- Some sites are public e.g. Dalhousie Springs, Innamincka and William Creek

Benefits:

- Attract an increased share of the lucrative small-plane tourism market
- Many others are on pastoral properties whose owners have diversified into tourism.

Outcome: Grows tourism through better access to remote areas. High yield customers.



10. Upgrade tourism amenities along road stops

Improve service in regions that attract self-drive markets.

Regions: All 11 regions

Priorities:

- Suitable toilet blocks, dump points, rubbish bins and waste collection facilities in remote areas
- Campers need appropriate access to services
- Local councils, state government needs to maintain and service areas of high volume

Benefits:

- Protects environment, ensure suitable services for visitors.

Outcome: Better amenities for self-drive market.



LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO REBUILD A THRIVING RESILIENT REGIONAL TOURISM INDUSTRY.

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