

District Council of ROBE

ADVOCACY FOCUS 2026





Message from the Mayor

Robe remains one of South Australia's most historic and iconic coastal communities, a place defined by its heritage, its people, its architecture and its deep connection to the natural environment. As our community grows, our challenges become more complex; it is clear that Robe's future success depends on strong partnerships between all three levels of government — Local, State and Federal — working together with a shared purpose and vision.

Our Council Members have identified three critical areas of need that will shape our town's resilience, liveability and prosperity for the current and future generations:

1 A new Early Learning & Childcare Hub in Robe will provide a secure, fit-for-purpose facility to replace the current goodwill-based arrangements that rely on shared kindergarten and community spaces. As kindergartens move toward full-time preschool delivery, the Hub is essential to preserving and expanding childcare capacity in Robe, reducing waitlists, supporting families' access to early learning and strengthening local workforce participation.

2 Adaptation to High-Risk Coastal Hazards as sea levels continue to rise and adverse weather events increase in intensity; repairing and protecting Robe's coastline, infrastructure and tourism economy from the accelerating impacts of climate change has become essential.

3 Town Centre Precinct Regeneration of the historic Victoria Street and Robe Street, ensuring the heart of our community remains safe, accessible and vibrant for residents, visitors and local business.

These three initiatives are not isolated — they are interconnected investments in Robe's people, its place and its future.

They will strengthen our regional economy, support family wellbeing and safeguard one of South Australia's most recognisable coastal environments for generations to come.

Council is calling on all tiers of government to join us in delivering these initiatives. Through shared investment and collaboration, we can ensure Robe continues to thrive, through a model of sustainable regional development, where economic growth and environmental stewardship go hand in hand.

An investment in Robe, is an investment in South Australia.

Mayor Lisa Ruffell

District Council of Robe
November 2025



Early Childhood Education and Care Services



Robe does not have a purpose-built early learning facility. Instead, childcare is delivered through CCOWS (Child Care on Wheels Service), which has operated for more than 20 years using shared and temporary spaces.

CCOWS currently operates part of the week from the Robe Soldiers Memorial Kindergarten, relying entirely on goodwill for access to rooms, bathrooms, storage and outdoor play areas. For the remainder of the week, CCOWS operates from the Robe RSL hall. While the RSL has been extremely supportive, the hall is not purpose-built, cannot support permanent set-ups and long-term access is not guaranteed.

The rollout of universal three-year-old preschool in 2027 is anticipated to shift the Robe kindergarten to full-time delivery. If this occurs, the unintentional outcome will be the loss of 2.5 days access at the kindergarten. With the RSL hall as the only remaining site, childcare capacity in Robe will reduce significantly, increasing already lengthy waitlists and placing further pressure on families and the local workforce.

To address this early years' service gap, Council has commenced discussions with the Robe Primary School. These discussions indicate strong willingness to support a co-located Early Learning & Childcare Hub on or adjacent to school grounds, providing

dedicated childcare and family support services that sit alongside, and do not replace, the existing preschool program.

Advocacy Asks:

- Capital funding for planning, construction and fit-out of a purpose-built Early Learning & Childcare Hub in Robe.
- Support for a transition pathway enabling CCOWS to move from an out-of-scope model to a regulated early learning service once appropriate facilities are built.
- Department for Education endorsement for a co-located site on school or Crown land, consistent with the willingness already shown by Robe Primary School leadership.
- Recognition of the importance of childcare access to workforce participation and community wellbeing in Robe.

Desired Outcome: A State-supported Early Learning & Childcare Hub in Robe that provides a secure, fit-for-purpose facility; preserves and expands childcare capacity; reduces significant waitlists; supports universal preschool delivery; and maintains equitable early learning access for families in Robe and is supported by a partnership approach with the Robe Primary School.

Adaptation to High-Risk Coastal Hazards from adverse Climate-Change Events

Robe's coastline, marina and dune systems face increasing threats from sea-level rise and storm surges. State and Commonwealth support is required to protect local infrastructure, tourism and community assets and community safety.

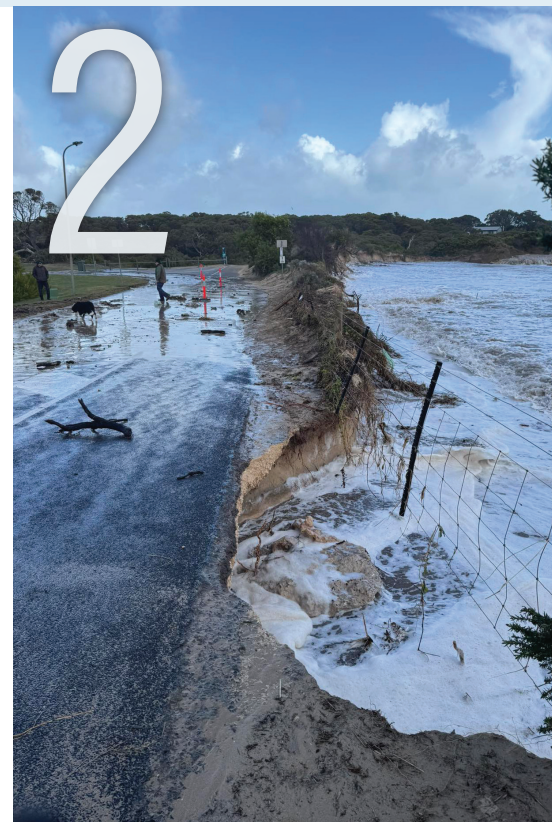
Advocacy Asks:

- Inclusion of Robe in the next round of South Australia's Climate Ready Coasts Program (2026–2030).
- Access to Commonwealth Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) for engineered

and nature-based coastal adaptation (joint State and Federal initiative) administered by NEMA.

- Co-funding for a Robe Coastal Hazard Adaptation and Implementation Plan (2026–2028).
- Streamlined Coast Protection Board approval processes for small councils.

Desired Outcome: A co-funded coastal adaptation plan by 2027 with staged implementation of dune and foreshore protection works.



Main Street Regeneration and Town Centre Renewal

Robe's two key commercial precincts, Robe Street and Main Road/Victoria Street/Mundy Terrace, form the heart of the town's identity, visitor economy and everyday community life. These precincts are under growing pressure from seasonal population surges, traffic congestion, parking constraints and ageing infrastructure. Without coordinated investment, safety, heritage character, business sustainability and visitor experience, these areas will continue to be compromised.

The priority for Council is to deliver the Imagine Robe: Township Precinct Master Plan and Design, a precinct-wide framework that will connect Robe's two main street areas into a cohesive, walkable and safer town centre. This will guide staged upgrades that protect heritage, address congestion, improve pedestrian and cycling access and support economic activation.

Advocacy Asks:

- Support for Robe's applications to the Commonwealth's Growing Regions or Regional Precincts and Partnerships Programs, including Planning SA partnership through the Planning and Development Fund to ensure precinct alignment and deliverability.
- Investment in street landscaping, lighting, stormwater upgrades, telecommunications, pathways and heritage restoration.



- Partnership with the SA Tourism Commission to align the project with the State's Tourism 2030 Strategy.
- Recognition of Robe's town centre precinct renewal within Limestone Coast regional development planning.

Desired Outcome: Delivery of the Imagine Robe Township Precinct Master Plan and priority precinct designs (2026–2029), enabling staged capital works that connect Robe's two main street precincts, improve safety, reduce congestion, enhance and protect heritage character and strengthen the visitor and community experience.



Key message

"Robe is a small council with a big contribution to South Australia's tourism, environment and regional economy. With targeted State investment in early education, coastal protection and main street renewal, Robe can lead the Limestone Coast in sustainable growth, resilience and community wellbeing."