District Council of

ROBE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2028



PHOTO BY CAMILLE LEHMANN

FEBRUARY 2026

District Council of ROBE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The District Council of Robe acknowledges the traditional owners of the Land, the Boandik and the Meintangk people where we work and live. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. We celebrate the stories, culture and traditions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders of all communities who also work and live on this Land.



PHOTO BY GO FISH SOCIAL

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District Council of ROBE

ABOUT THIS PLAN

The process of developing this Strategic Plan provided an opportunity to reflect on our strengths and community aspirations, reassess strategic directions, and develop actions and deliverables for the Robe community over the next four years. After an extensive community engagement campaign, this Strategic Plan 2024-2028 was adopted by Council at the 8 May 2024 meeting.

ABOUT ROBE

The District Council of Robe spans over 1,091.7km2 and is home to more than 1500 people (according to the 2021 Census Date). Robe is located within the traditional lands of the Boandik and Meintangk people who have made it their home for tens of thousands of years.

In its early days of European settlement, Robe, which was established in 1846, was the maritime and commercial hub for the Limestone Coast and its rural hinterland. Significant volumes of wool were exported from the port of Robe to Britain, and it also served as a port of entry for large numbers of Chinese immigrants journeying onto the goldfields of Victoria. After the establishment of rival ports and the decline of the pastoral industry, Robe fell into decline and reinvented itself over the 20th century as a coastal holiday destination, commercial fishing (particularly rock lobster) port and surfing town.

Today, Robe is a popular tourist town, with a population that increases significantly during the summer months and holidays. Whilst there was a total of 1,265 dwellings in the town of Robe at the time of the 2021 Census (mid-winter), only 39% were occupied, which is indicative of a high proportion of holiday homes. Robe also has numerous tourist accommodation options and supporting facilities.

The Robe rural hinterland remains significant for sheep and cattle grazing and crop growing with some viticulture, and forestry. These industries, coupled with commercial fishing is the highest employer of Robe residents at 18.5% at the time of the last census.

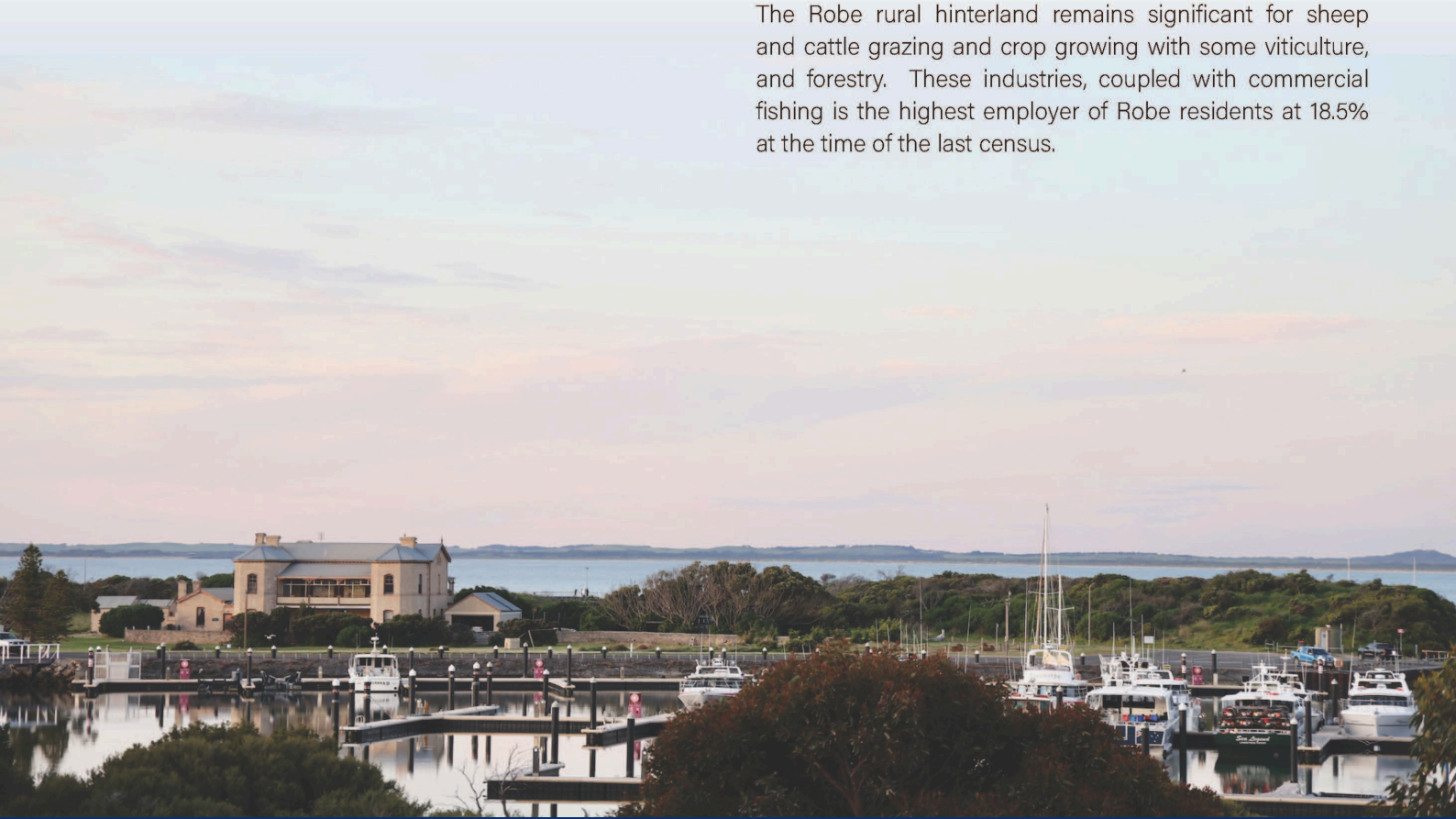


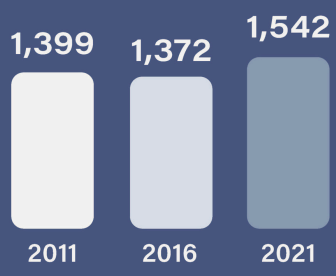
PHOTO BY KRISTAL BAKER

District Council of ROBE

1,091.7km²

1,542
Population 2021

12.1%
Population Increase 2016-2021



Population Change

Heritage Places

30
STATE

50
LOCAL

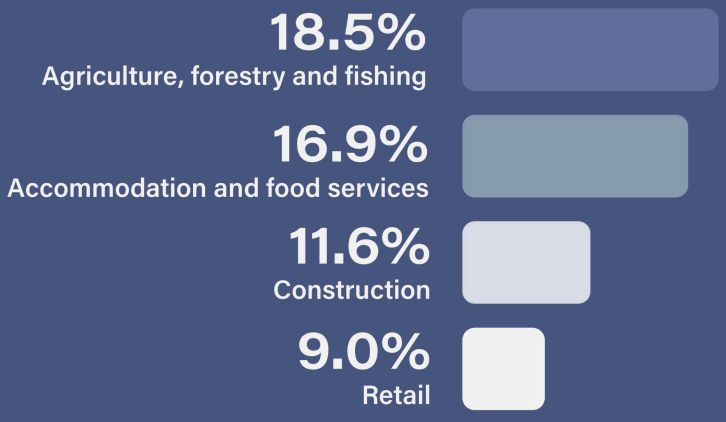
1,571
Total Private Dwellings

923 (58.8%)
Unoccupied Private Dwellings

$1,200
Median Monthly Mortgage Repayment

$1,220
Median Household Weekly Income

767
Residents in the labour force



363
Residential Dwellings Approved in 2022-2023

$30.1M
Value of argricultural production

$11.3M
Direct and Indirect Output from Tourism

13.9%
Aged Under 15 Years

33.3%
Residents Volunteer

52
Median Age

28.6%
Aged 65+ Years

58
People need help due to a disability



OUR COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

A TRANQUIL YET DYNAMIC COASTAL LIFESTYLE

Robe is a safe and peaceful place to live for families raising children and those seeking a quiet retreat, while also offering a range of dynamic activities.

A CONNECTION TO THE PAST

We have a strong connection to our history. We support initiatives, events and innovations that continue to celebrate Robe's heritage, culture, and artistic soul.

A PROTECTED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND COASTLINE

We understand and manage the impacts of natural and human forces on our much-loved natural environment and coastline, protect them from damage, and help restore their natural beauty.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

We enjoy walking and cycling in our town, where we can easily reach our destinations and appreciate the scenic views. We welcome visitors who share our love of nature and active lifestyles and value a community where people of all ages and abilities feel welcome and included.

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

We are an entrepreneurial community that embraces innovation, creativity, and collaboration. We foster a culture of learning, growth, and opportunity for all.

WELL PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE

We have access to the services and facilities that our community needs to thrive, supported by well-planned and maintained infrastructure that enables safe, accessible and connected movement across the town in a financially sustainable way and with the long-term in mind.

PHOTO BY KRISTAL BAKER

OUR ROLES

For Councils, services and other activities can be broadly categorised as:

MANDATORY	NON-MANDATORY
Where there is a specific requirement for them to do something	Where a service or activity is undertaken for community benefit

With mandatory services and activities there can be some discretion about the level to which they are undertaken and the method of delivery. For non-mandated services and activities there is greater scope to determine whether the Council will play a role and, if so, what that role is.

Council carefully considers its role in non-mandated services and activities to ensure the best use of resources and funding. This Strategic Plan also includes our role/s described in the table below, for each Priority Action.

BROAD ROLE	SPECIFIC ROLE	DESCRIPTION
NO ROLE	Nil	The Council chooses not to have a role in relation to a particular service or activity.
ENABLER	Information channel	Information about a service or activity of other bodies is channelled by the Council through, for example, brochures in Council offices and other public spaces; links to the other bodies' websites etc.
	Advocate	The Council may advocate to another government or other organisation for certain things to happen; this could range from a single event (such as writing to a Minister) through to an ongoing campaign.
	Facilitator	A step further from advocacy where the Council may try to bring parties together to work out a solution to an issue affecting the Council area.
	Regulator	The Council has legislated roles in a range of areas which it is required to fund from its own funds (apart from fees for cost recovery, government grants).
PROVIDER	Agent	This would involve the Council delivering a service funded by a government agency, that is, or likely to be regarded as the responsibility of the State or Federal Government.
	Part funder	The Council either provides funding to another body to meet part of the cost of that body providing a function/service activity or receives funding from another body (usually a government agency) to meet part of the cost of the Council delivering it.
	Asset owner	As the owner (or custodian, such as through a Trust Deed) of an asset (road, footpath, building, playground etc.) the Council has responsibility for capital, operating and maintenance costs.
	Service provider	The full cost (apart from fees for cost recovery, government grants etc) of a service or activity is met by the Council.

PLAN FOR LIVEABILITY

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

1

Community Aspirations
A Tranquil Yet Dynamic Coastal Lifestyle | A Connected Community | Well Planned Infrastructure



Robe has an steady population of estimated 1,500 people. It is a safe and peaceful place to live, where residents can enjoy a relaxed and friendly lifestyle. Robe is also a great place to bring up a family or find a quiet place to retire, as it offers a range of services and amenities such as schools, childcare, health care, shops and community groups. Retaining these services is essential to Robe remaining attractive as a place to live.

Robe is also a popular destination for visitors and holidaymakers, especially in summer when the town's population can swell to over 10,000. With a huge variety of activities such as swimming, fishing, surfing, boating, golfing and exploring the historic buildings and natural attractions, Robe offers many holiday homes, caravan parks and hotels. Many visitors to Robe own a holiday house that they plan to move into permanently in the future.

Robe's residential land supply is constrained, and residents face high rents and property prices. There is also a demand for greater diversity in housing types and sizes to meet the needs of families, older residents, and essential workers. Robe also faces challenges around maintaining services and facilities to support its older residents who do not want to live anywhere else.

Robe is a town that values its community, its environment, and its heritage, and strives to maintain its charm and character for generations to come. Our challenge is to protect Robe's enviable lifestyle and support permanent visitors whilst still welcoming holidaymakers.

CONT.

PHOTO BY KRISTAL BAKER

PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028

ACTION		ROLE
1.1	Identify areas for residential growth, including the potential to rezone deferred urban lands for development.	Regulator, Facilitator
1.2	Support the investigation to rezone Lot 52 Nora Creina Robe from Rural to Rural Living.	Regulator, Facilitator
1.3	Identify opportunities to provide a greater diversity of housing, including advocacy for independent living opportunities.	Regulator, Facilitator
1.4	Investigate opportunities for Council to release surplus land in appropriately zoned locations to meet diverse housing needs (e.g. Apex Lane, Hateley Crescent).	Asset owner
1.5	Identify options for the long-term sustainability of Early Childhood Education and Care Services.	Advocator, service provider, and facilitator
1.6	Establish a rural roads maintenance program to ensure safe and accessible roads.	Asset owner
1.7	Commence investigation on growth strategies for appropriately zoned land in Robe.	Regulator, Facilitator
1.8	Ensure all community leases are structured to be fully compliant with current regulations, reflect contemporary needs, and provide fair, sustainable terms that support long-term stability and community engagement.	Regulator, Service Provider
1.9	Embed accessibility and Universal Design principles into Council planning, infrastructure and public space projects, including targeted upgrades to priority public-facing assets, to support inclusive access to services, facilities and community spaces.	Asset owner, Facilitator



PHOTO BY BESPOKE DESIGN CO

GROW ROBE'S ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT & ECONOMY

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

2

Community Aspirations
An Entrepreneurial Spirit | A Connected Community



The community of Robe has an entrepreneurial spirit that is evident by both the number of businesses and their level of innovation and creativity across retail, food and beverage, tourism offerings and high-value manufacturing. Using the vibrant tourism industry as a springboard, the extent of growth has outstripped the available commercial and industrial land in the centre of town, with flow on impacts to the light industrial precinct on the southern edge of town.

As residential and commercial land uses expand, the constraints that limit the growth of the town will make land for commercial and industrial land even more scarce, necessitating the establishment of new industrial lands and requiring us to revisit the best use of the light industrial precinct around Flint Street and White Street. Critical elements to any new industrial land is a location that can be well-serviced and protects the character and amenity of Robe.

Fostering Robe's innovation and creativity and supporting new business start-ups and ideas will ensure jobs for residents, a vibrant economy, and more reasons to visit Robe. We will seek to support our community entrepreneurs into the future.

ACTION	PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028	ROLE
2.1	Investigate the potential to rezone land adjacent the Aircraft Landing Area (ALA) on Sandy Lane to accommodate light industrial needs and storage.	Facilitator, Regulator
2.2	Review long-term land use for the Flint Street/White Street/ Denton Drive light industrial precinct in the context of commercial and residential demand, and best use of the land.	Regulator
2.3	Investigate the appropriateness and options for the location of the Council Works Depot.	Asset owner

PHOTO BY JACQUI BATEMAN PHOTOS

PROMOTE ROBE'S HISTORY & HERITAGE

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

3

Community Aspirations
A Connection to the Past | An Entrepreneurial Spirit | A Connected Community



For tens of thousands of years, Robe has been the country of the Boandik and Meintangk people. It was explored by Captain Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin in 1802 and founded as a seaport in 1846. With a rich maritime history, Robe was one of the most important ports on the south coast of Australia, exporting wool from a large hinterland. In the late 1850s, Robe was the arrival port for more than 15,000 Chinese on the start of their historic trek to the goldfields of Victoria.

Today, Robe has one of the highest densities of listed properties in South Australia, with over 70 heritage-listed buildings including the recently renovated Customs House on Royal Circus, overlooking the Lake Butler Marina and Guichen Bay.

There are significant opportunities to promote the history and heritage of Robe in historical interpretation signage and trails in collaboration with Robe's historical groups.

PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028

ACTION		ROLE
3.1	Work with the Heritage Advisory Committee and local history groups to investigate opportunities to promote the history and heritage of Robe, including its Traditional Owners, historic role as an important seaport and Chinese and goldfield connections.	Information channel, Facilitator
3.2	Facilitate the establishment and promotion of local community events and festivals, including those that bring the community together to celebrate Robe's history and heritage.	Information Channel, Advocate and Facilitate
3.3	Through the Heritage Advisory Committee, endeavour to actively involve representatives from Boandik and Meintangk people in collaborative efforts aimed at incorporating Aboriginal heritage and culture.	Information channel
3.4	Actively support the Robe Obelisk Working Party in progressing their initiatives which ensures the preservation and/or enhancement of the Robe Obelisk, its history and its stories.	Facilitator, Asset Owner
3.5	Incorporate and implement the Public Art Strategy 2025–2030 to guide Council's approach to public art, embedding it within capital projects and community spaces.	Asset Owner, part funder and Facilitator
3.6	Undertake a strategic review and consolidation of cemetery planning frameworks to guide the long-term management, conservation and interpretation of Robe's cemetery.	Asset owner

PHOTO BY GO FISH SOCIAL

PROTECT OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & COASTLINE

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4

4

Community Aspirations
A Protected Natural Environment and Coastline | Well Planned Infrastructure



Robe is surrounded by diverse natural landscapes, pristine beaches, sand dunes, rocky limestone coastal cliffs, conservation parks, wetlands, woodlands and lagoons, all of which support a diversity of wildlife. Robe's coastal cliffs and beaches are subject to ongoing erosion, and this presents a significant challenge in relation to coastal assets, trails and sand movement.

Our priorities are to better understand what the challenges and priorities are and act to protect Robe's environment.

ACTION	PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028	ROLE
4.1	Actively seek funding support to progress, as a priority, adaptation pathways for the high-risk coastal hazards resulting from erosion and inundation as identified in the Adaptation Strategy for the District Council of Robe.	Asset Owner
4.2	Investigate potential for rationalisation of beach access in areas where community access is not adversely affected and in consultation with the community.	Asset Owner
4.3	Develop and implement a Tree Planting Strategy for Robe.	Service Provider

PHOTO BY JORDAN KELLY STUDIO

ENHANCE APPEARANCE & FUNCTION

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5

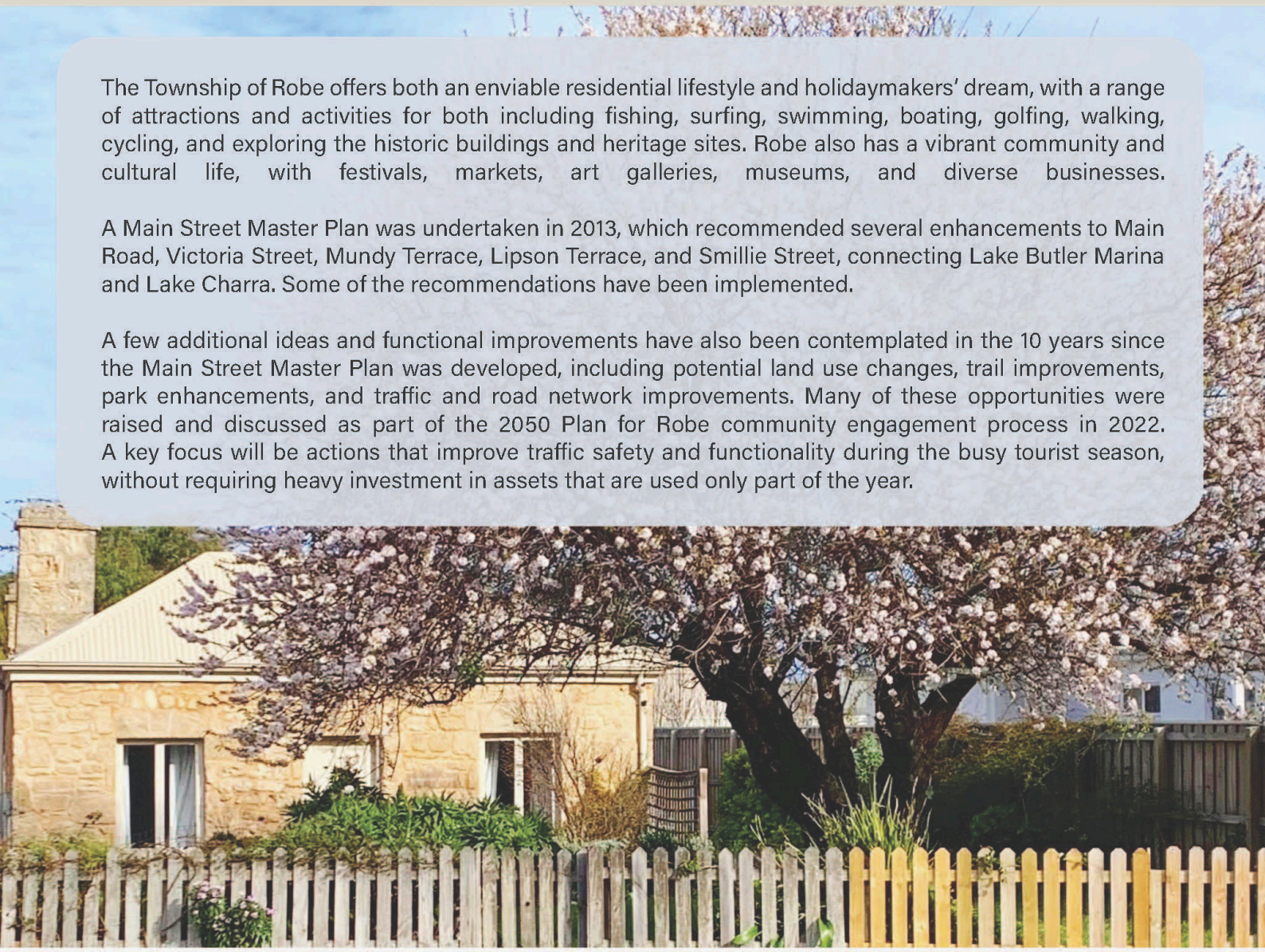
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Community Aspirations
A Tranquil Yet Dynamic Coastal Lifestyle | A Connected Community | Well Planned Infrastructure

The Township of Robe offers both an enviable residential lifestyle and holidaymakers' dream, with a range of attractions and activities for both including fishing, surfing, swimming, boating, golfing, walking, cycling, and exploring the historic buildings and heritage sites. Robe also has a vibrant community and cultural life, with festivals, markets, art galleries, museums, and diverse businesses.

A Main Street Master Plan was undertaken in 2013, which recommended several enhancements to Main Road, Victoria Street, Mundy Terrace, Lipson Terrace, and Smillie Street, connecting Lake Butler Marina and Lake Charra. Some of the recommendations have been implemented.

A few additional ideas and functional improvements have also been contemplated in the 10 years since the Main Street Master Plan was developed, including potential land use changes, trail improvements, park enhancements, and traffic and road network improvements. Many of these opportunities were raised and discussed as part of the 2050 Plan for Robe community engagement process in 2022. A key focus will be actions that improve traffic safety and functionality during the busy tourist season, without requiring heavy investment in assets that are used only part of the year.



ACTION	PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028	ROLE
5.1	Revisit the Robe Main Street Master Plan prepared in 2013 to catalogue achievements, review for currency, identify gaps and focus on implementing short-term priorities for: • Main Street landscaping • Footpath improvements, including accessibility upgrades such as kerb ramps, tactile indicators and improved surface continuity • Traffic, parking, and intersection improvements • Pedestrian safety enhancements	Asset owner

CONT.

PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028

ACTION		ROLE
5.2	Building on previous plans and investigations, prepare a Master Plan for the township of Robe to focus on: • A second exit/entry for Robe • A township bypass (Sandy Lane) • Priorities for road upgrades • A dog off-leash precinct • Potential location of a Surf Life Saving Club facility • Davenport Street link • Open space needs (including for future growth areas) • Increased tree canopy • New industrial area on Sandy Lane • Improvements to the Sports and Recreation Facility • Revisiting the role and purpose of the light industrial area • Coastal trail extension to West Beach, possibly to link up with trails external to Robe • Coastal trail relocation around the Blowhole for safety • Footpath development and connection strategy • Robe Street Precinct • Wright's Bay to Nora Creina Walking Trail • Foreshore Precinct Upgrade	Regulator, Asset Owner
5.3	Investigate the sale of marina leases, with the view to increasing income for renewal and full cost recovery of the Lake Butler Marina.	Service Provider, Asset Owner
5.4	Investigate ongoing development and improvement of infrastructure in smaller settlement areas such as Boatswain Point.	Service Provider, Asset Owner

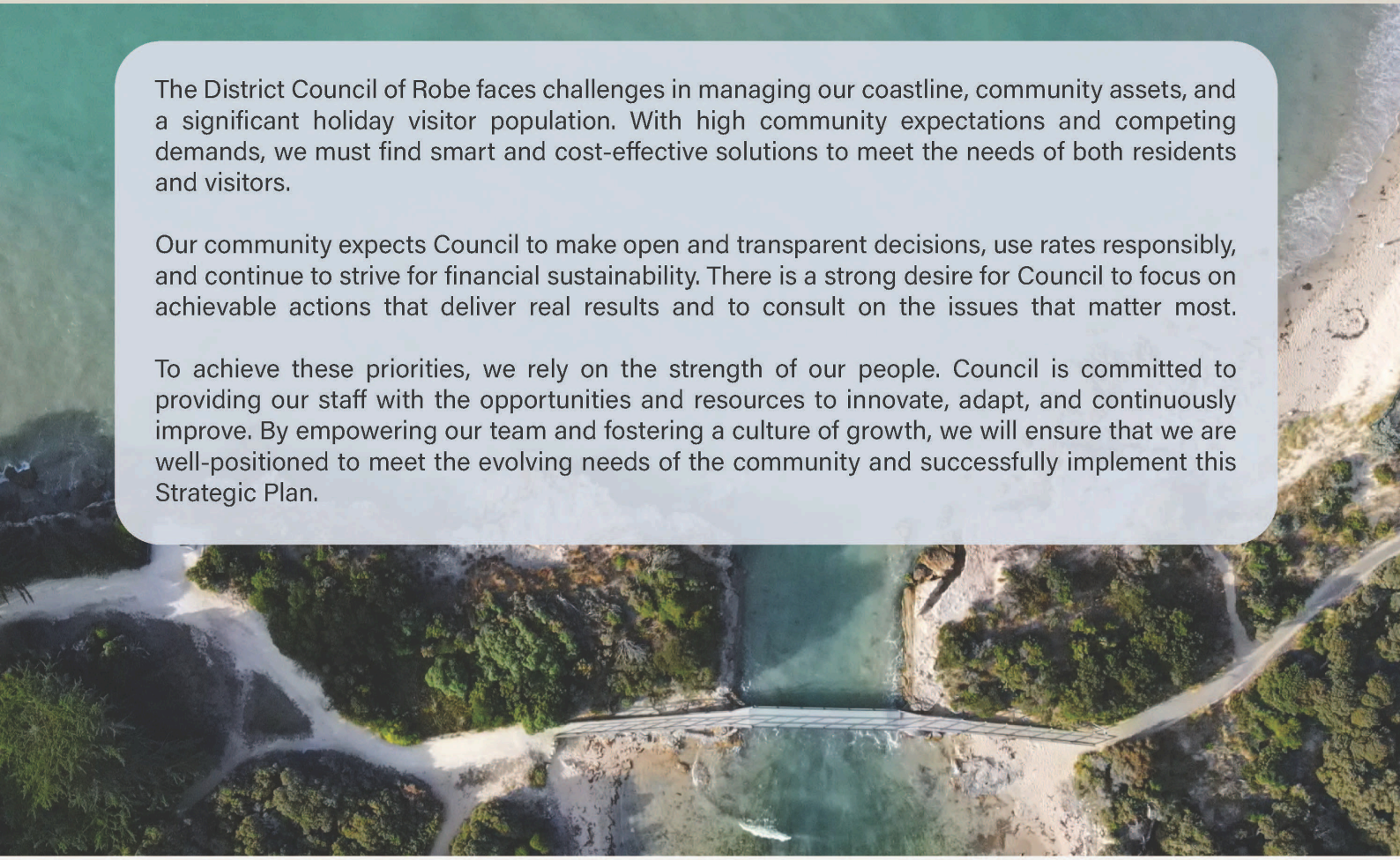


COUNCIL'S ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSE

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 6

6

Community Aspirations
Well Planned Infrastructure



The District Council of Robe faces challenges in managing our coastline, community assets, and a significant holiday visitor population. With high community expectations and competing demands, we must find smart and cost-effective solutions to meet the needs of both residents and visitors.

Our community expects Council to make open and transparent decisions, use rates responsibly, and continue to strive for financial sustainability. There is a strong desire for Council to focus on achievable actions that deliver real results and to consult on the issues that matter most.

To achieve these priorities, we rely on the strength of our people. Council is committed to providing our staff with the opportunities and resources to innovate, adapt, and continuously improve. By empowering our team and fostering a culture of growth, we will ensure that we are well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of the community and successfully implement this Strategic Plan.

ACTION	PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028	ROLE
6.1	Develop and execute a community engagement framework outlining our approach to engaging with all stakeholders. This framework will detail the topics we will seek input on, the methods of consultation we will employ, and our commitment to transparency, collaboration, openness, and representation throughout the process.	Service Provider, Asset Owner, Facilitator
6.2	Design and implement governance arrangements to ensure the delivery of major plans and projects, including public reporting against milestones and budget.	Service Provider, Asset Owner
6.3	Prepare and adopt asset management plans for community assets to better understand Council's financial position, with a priority on roads, the Lake Butler Marina, parks and open spaces, and the trails network.	Asset Owner

CONT.

PRIORITY ACTIONS 2024-2028

ACTION		ROLE
6.4	Develop and implement a prioritisation methodology for capital works that responds to asset management plans, relative priorities between asset classes, precinct level upgrades, and scheduling considerations.	Asset Owner
6.5	Prepare and adopt a long-term financial plan focused on financial sustainability, completing already-committed projects, and cost-effective/high benefit actions.	Service Provider, Asset Owner
6.6	Investigate the potential to use surplus land and/or assets to leverage the strategic priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan.	Asset Owner
6.7	Review policy settings regarding contributions by developers in relation to flow-on impacts from their developments associated with the upgrade of Council infrastructure.	Regulator
6.8	Provide meaningful opportunities for staff to innovate, shape the future of local services, and contribute to a thriving, adaptable workplace. Encourage a culture of continuous improvement and professional development to meet the evolving needs of our community.	Service Provider
6.9	Ensure the Council adopts and implements strategies that prioritise the generation of operating surpluses, with a focus on achieving costs, service level reviews, optimising financial performance, and exploring innovative funding models	Service Provider



STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Plan 2024-2028 forms part of the four critical components of the integrated strategic management framework that includes Council's Management Plans, Long Term Financial Plan, Annual Business Plans and Budgets and a mechanism for reporting and review.

Through this framework Council can demonstrate accountability back to the community and other key stakeholders.

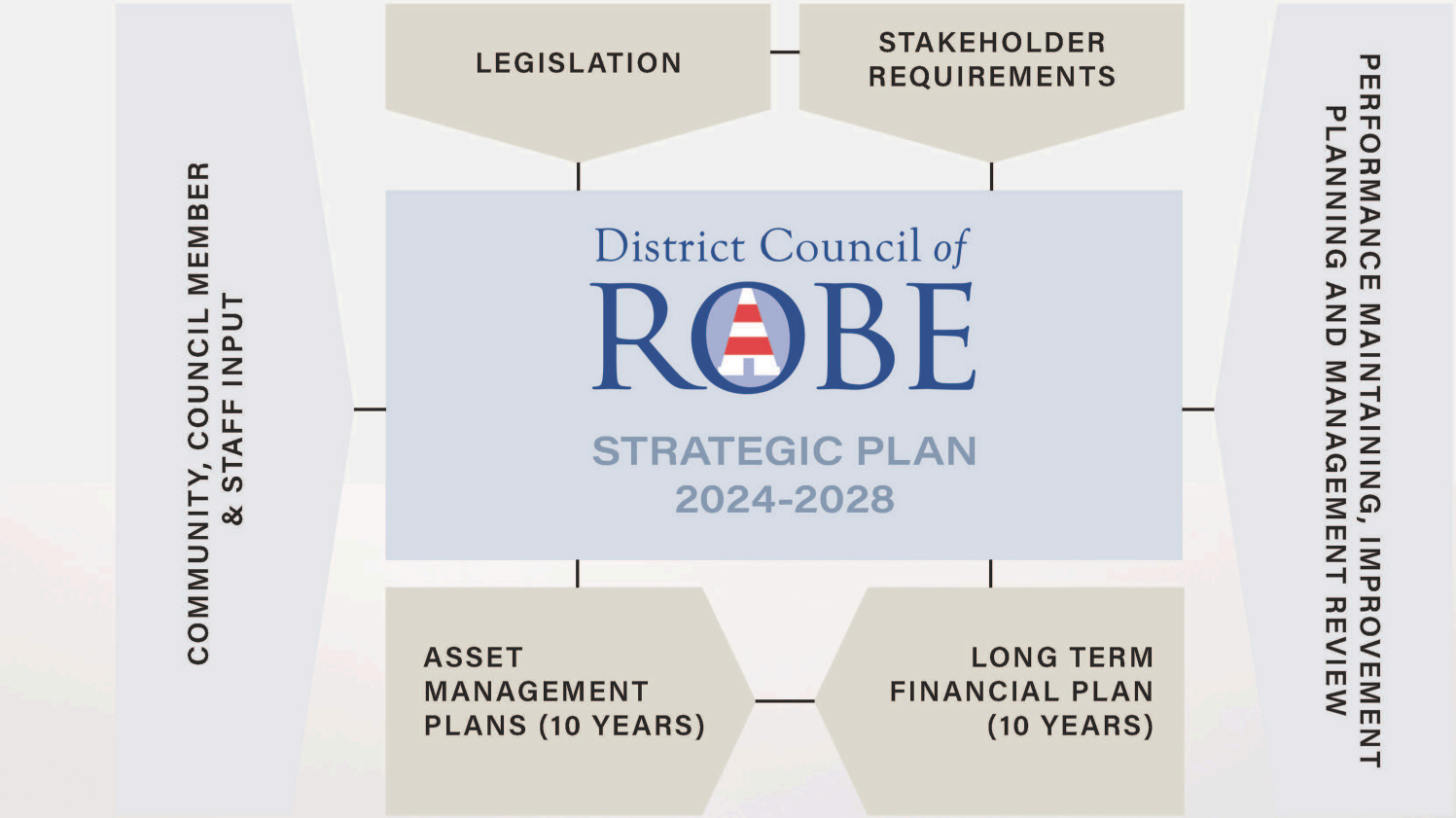




PHOTO BY GO FISH SOCIAL

STAKEHOLDERS

WHO	WHAT THEY DO
STATE GOVERNMENT	
Member for MacKillop	The South Australian Government sets the overall direction for the state of South Australia. The legislative framework enacted by the State Government governs how the state (including local government) will be governed.
Department for Infrastructure and Transport	
Department for Environment and Water	
Landscape South Australia - Limestone Coast	
Zone Emergency Management Committee	
South Australian Tourist Commission	
Native Vegetation Council	
Coast Protection Board	
Environment Protection Authority	
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	
Regional Development Australia - Limestone Coast	Provide services and funding to strengthen regional communities
Member for Barker	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	
Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA)	The Local Government Association is the peak body representing local government at a state level. The Association advocates for and represents local government at the state and federal level.
LOCAL	
Community Groups	Council works with numerous groups to provide facilities and services to the district's community.
REGIONAL	
Local Government - Mount Gambier, Grant, Naracoorte Lucindale, Wattle Range, Tatiara and Kingston	Other Councils within the Limestone Coast region work together on projects where appropriate to strengthen local government within the region.
Limestone Coast Local Government Association	LCLGA is a regional authority formed by the Limestone Coast Councils to represent their interests at a regional level.

REPORTING & REVIEWING THIS PLAN

Reporting against the Strategic Plan is an important accountability measure that keeps us on track.

WE WILL REPORT BY:

- Routine reporting through Council agenda papers
- When developing the Annual Report
- Half yearly report to Council
- The CEO's KPI's

Throughout the life of this Plan, Council will have review points along the way to ensure the Plan remains relevant to Council and the community:

- Annual observations during preparation of Annual Business Plans and Budgets
- Mid-term review of the Plan in 2025-26
- Major review of the Plan in 2026-27 following 2026 Local Government Elections



PHOTO BY GO FISH SOCIAL

District Council of ROBE

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ROBE

3 Royal Circus, Robe
South Australia 5276

POSTAL ADDRESS
PO Box 1, Robe
South Australia 5276

CONTACT US

Phone	(08) 8768 2003
Email	council@robe.sa.gov.au
Website	www.robe.sa.gov.au

ROBE
South Australia

ROBE LIBRARY & VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

1 Mundy Terrace, Robe
South Australia 5276

CONTACT US

Phone	(08) 8768 2465
Email	visitrobe@robe.sa.gov.au
Website	www.robe.sa.gov.au

WEBSITE

FACEBOOK



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