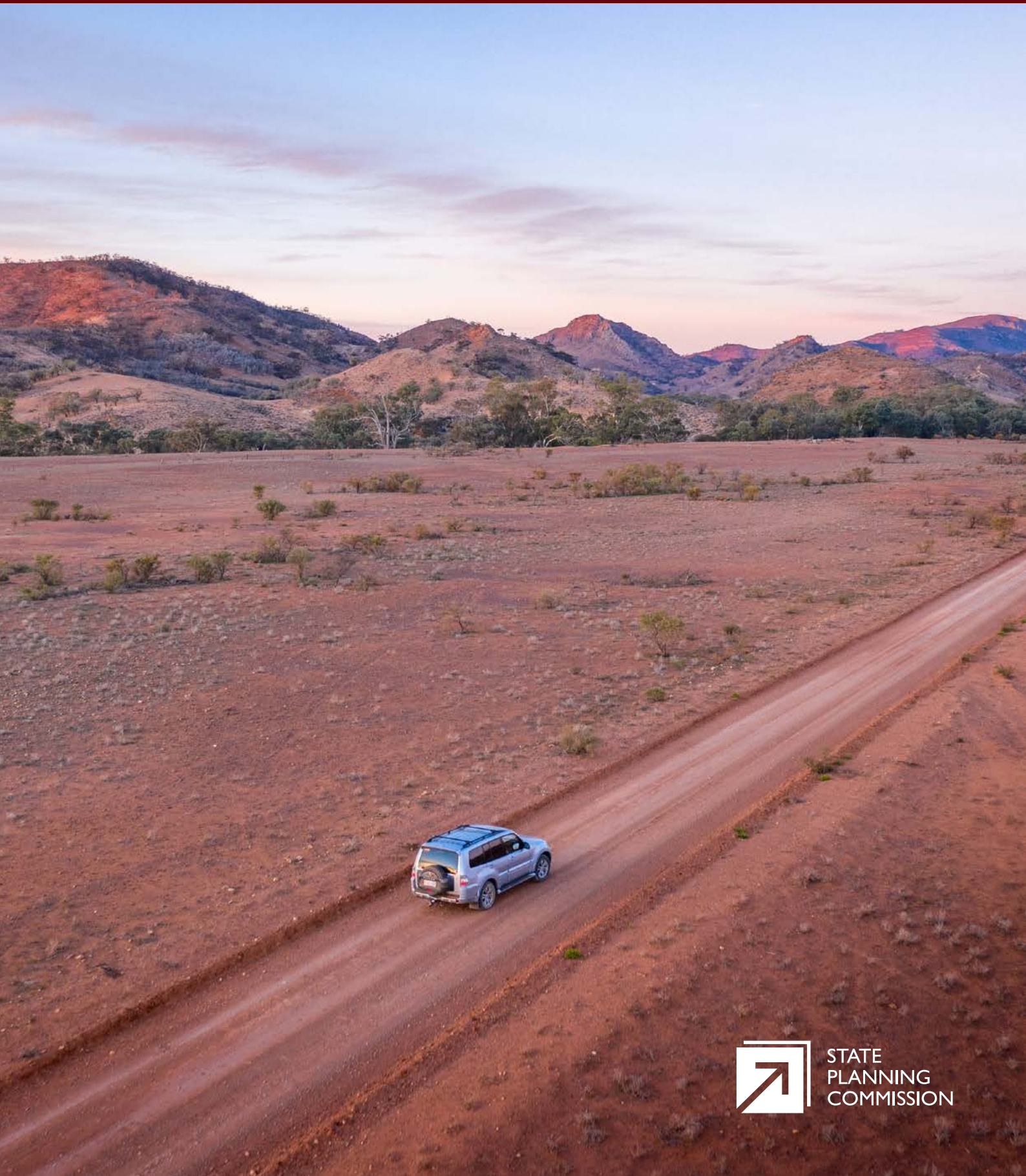




FAR NORTH REGIONAL PLAN

Summary
February 2025



STATE
PLANNING
COMMISSION



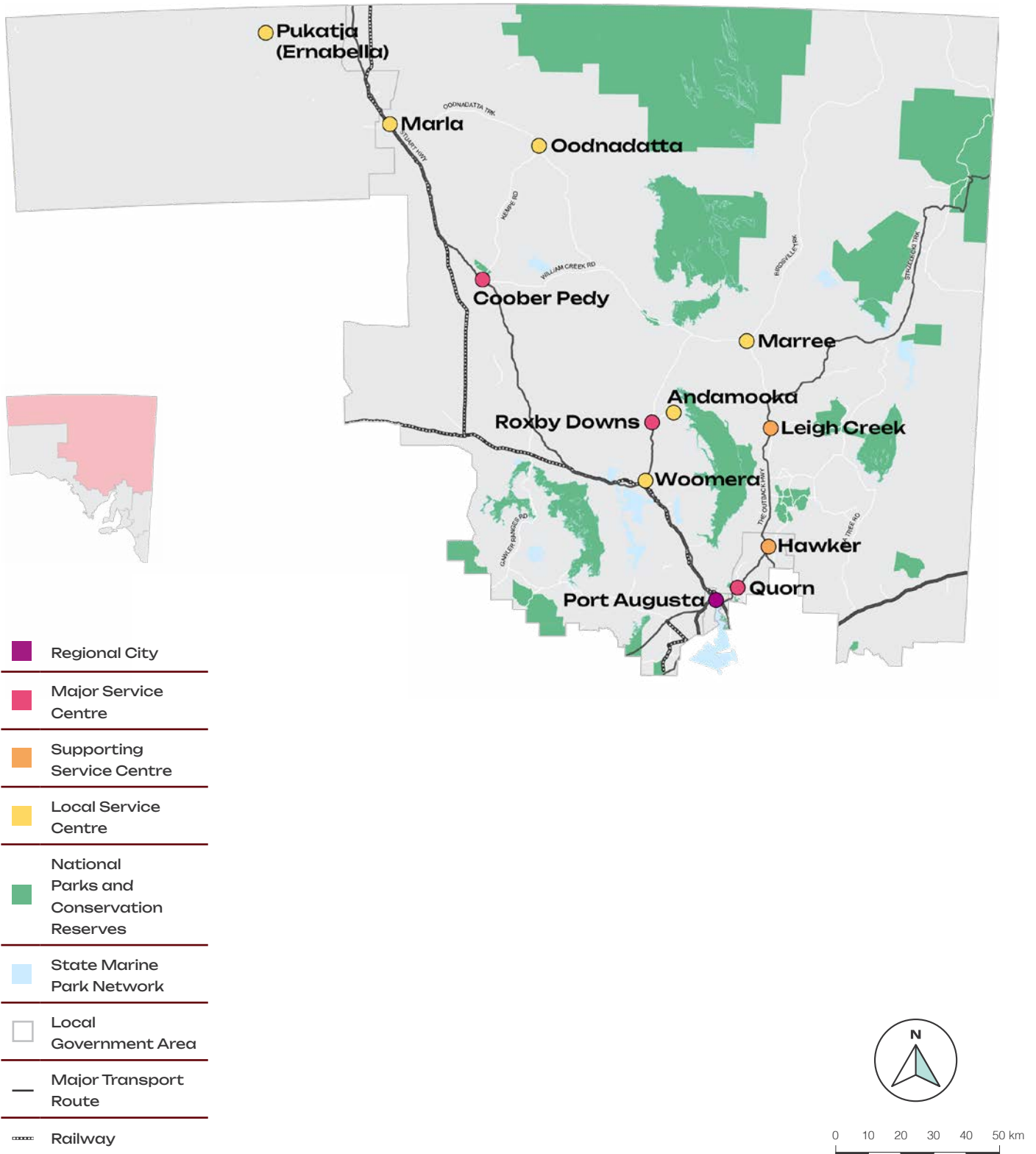
Acknowledgment of Country

The State Planning Commission acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians of South Australian land and waters and we extend our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We value and recognise the ongoing cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship First Nations peoples have with these lands and waters and the continuing importance of this today.

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Far North planning region



Introduction

The Far North is South Australia's largest geographical region, covering more than 80% of the state's land mass. Its sparsely settled landscape spans from the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, to the awe-inspiring, ancient Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Featuring most of the state's valuable mineral resources, the region is also at the forefront of renewable energy projects, generating over a quarter of the state's daily energy needs.

The Far North Regional Plan (Plan) maps the government's long-term planning vision for the region to 2051 and beyond. It provides governments, businesses, industry and not-for-profit organisations with the data and direction to better plan for and respond to growth and change in our community and towns, while achieving our conservation goals. This will be hosted on the Regional Planning Portal, a digital platform designed to be customised to meet the user's needs.



Key themes

People, housing and liveability

- Enhancing housing diversity to support an ageing population, smaller households and seasonal workers.

Productive economy

- Futureproofing the economy by aligning land-use planning with infrastructure, housing needs and workforce attraction.
- Capitalise on mining in areas such as Olympic Dam, renewables, and ecotourism in Ikara-Flinders Ranges.
- Expanding housing options to support an ageing population and attract younger workers in healthcare and tourism sectors.
- Safeguarding agricultural land and supporting climate-resilient projects like the Northern Water Project to diversify the economy and
- create jobs.

Environment, natural resources and landscapes

- Preserving biodiversity, protecting vulnerable species, and managing ecologically significant areas such as Lake Eyre Basin.
- Supporting Aboriginal cultural heritage through careful management of culturally significant sites.
- Implementing actions for coastal protection, water security, and climate resilience to support environmental health and regional liveability.

Transport and infrastructure

- Strengthening connectivity for remote townships, such as William Creek and Tarcoola, to improve access to services and social infrastructure.
- Investing in infrastructure to support economic growth and employment opportunities.
- Expanding public and active transport networks within key population centres to reduce isolation and promote sustainable travel options.

Implementation and delivery

- Utilising climate data to inform planning that addresses increased temperatures, reduced rainfall, and associated risks such as heatwaves, bushfires and floods.
 - Identifying long-term land supply areas to accommodate permanent and short-term housing needs.
 - Ensuring sustainable land supply to support population growth, with zoning for residential expansion aligned with employment areas, health and community services.
 - Ongoing collaboration between local, regional and state authorities to ensure infrastructure is in place to support population growth.
-

What is the Far North Regional Plan?

Regional plans explore how areas are projected to grow, identify land and infrastructure for housing and jobs, while making recommendations about zoning and land development to support sustainable growth over the next 15 to 30 years.

The State Planning Commission (Commission) developed the Plan using insights gathered from the community and stakeholders in the previous engagement phase, ensuring that local perspectives are reflected in the planning process.

The Plan addresses population growth by ensuring land supply, managing appropriate expansion of the region's towns and smaller settlements and providing a range of available housing options near existing employment lands, health and community services.

The Plan incorporates data-driven strategies to manage risks associated with increased temperatures, extreme weather events and reduced rainfall, ensuring the resilience of communities and natural ecosystems.

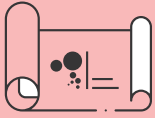
The Plan is aligned with and supported by various regional, state and federal policies. This includes the South Australian Government Climate Change Action Plan, the 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy, the Transport Strategy and the South Australian Economic Statement.

Implementing the Plan will provide clarity to the community, local councils and the development sector regarding the region's long-term growth.



It is crucial that the region's community, industry and stakeholders provide feedback on the draft Plan during the engagement period. This feedback will ensure that the final Plan can be best tailored to meet the needs and complexities of the region.

The Plan will be finalised in late 2025.



A snapshot of the Plan

The Far North region is a unique landscape spanning over 80% of South Australia, from the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands to the stunning Ikara-Flinders Ranges.

The Plan places a strong focus on preserving the region's cultural heritage and natural resources, with a focus on protecting biodiversity, vulnerable species, and Aboriginal heritage sites.

Nearly a quarter of the region is comprised of national parks and protected areas, from the Lake Eyre Basin to the Upper Spencer Gulf. The Plan prioritises biodiversity and habitat conservation, including for 46 vulnerable native species.

There are 25,560 residents in this region, with 52% of the population located in Port Augusta. Other key centres include Roxby Downs, Coober Pedy, and Quorn.

The Plan supports diverse housing options to meet the needs of an ageing population, attract skilled workers, and provide for single-person households, seasonal workers, and tourists, moving beyond the current 89% of detached homes.

Strengthen transport connections throughout the regions to provide improved and equitable access to services and community infrastructure.

The region plays a crucial role in renewable energy production, generating over a quarter of South Australia's daily energy needs through wind and solar production.

Mining is the region's largest employment sector, supporting over 6,000 jobs. With further growth anticipated in renewable energy and mineral exploration, the Plan aims to support job creation from Port Augusta up to Moomba.

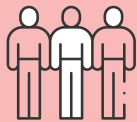
The tourism industry is expected to continue to grow in key areas, particularly ecotourism around the Ikara-Flinders Ranges, with additional accommodation and increased visitation numbers expected if the area gains UNESCO World Heritage status.



The Northern Water Project will ensure a climate-resilient water supply, boosting growth in energy, mining, and agriculture, and supporting new job opportunities.

Agriculture is projected to grow, especially as global demand for meat protein rises, with strategic planning to protect prime farmland and address climate change impacts.

The Port Augusta Activity Centre Master Plan will provide a vision for sustainable growth, reinforcing the important role that Port Augusta has in supporting a safe and vibrant regional city that drives economic development in the region.



26k

population today



28k

2051 population projection



52%

region's population live in Port Augusta



Upper Spencer Gulf

A large portion of the Upper Spencer Gulf sits within the Far North region. The Upper Spencer Gulf is now at the forefront of South Australia's ambitious national and global green energy initiatives. Boasting world-class wind and solar resources, along with abundant deposits of copper, magnetite, and other critical minerals vital for industrial decarbonisation, the region is a key focus for investment in Australia's sustainable future. Supported by significant projects from the South Australian and Australian Governments, the Upper Spencer Gulf is poised to drive the nation's clean energy transition and advance climate change adaptation. Major initiatives, such as the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, Port Bonython Hydrogen Hub, Northern Water, and the transition to green steel, underline its central role.



Key initiatives and projects

1. BHP Olympic Dam smelter and refining expansion

Olympic Dam expansion of smelter and refining activities, with copper output to 500,000 tonnes of refined copper cathode by the early 2030s, with the potential to further expand to 650,000 tonnes by the mid-2030s.

2. BHP Oak Dam prospect

Set to be one of the largest mineral exploration programs ever undertaken in South Australia, the Oak Dam prospect will unlock further copper deposits in the highly prospective Gawler Craton, to create a single copper basin amongst the world's largest.

3. Santos Moomba Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) project

A \$220 million project to convert natural gas to make blue hydrogen, with the Moomba CCS one of the largest and lowest cost CCS projects in the world. Potential capacity to annually store up to 20 million tonnes of CO₂.

4. NeuRizer Leigh Creek Urea Production Plant

\$2.6 billion urea production plant that uses synthesis gas (syngas) produced from nearby in-situ gasification wellfield as to generate electricity for on-site use. The plant would have an initial production capacity of up to 1 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of urea, with a potential to increase to 2Mtpa, and support up to 1,200 jobs for the region.

5. Northern Water project

Two-stage, 260 megalitre (ML) desalination plant and 600 kilometre pipeline network, providing a sustainable and climate independent water supply for the Far North, Upper Spencer Gulf and eastern Eyre Peninsula regions. Final project decision expected mid-2026.

6. Flinders Ranges World Heritage Bid

The nomination of the Flinders Ranges for the World Heritage List recognises the geographic landscape as the only place on Earth where 350 million years of near-continuous geological sequence can be seen, demonstrating the rise of a habitable planet and the dawn of animal life.

Benefits of the listing include enhanced protection of the natural environment and cultural sites, greater regional economic development, and increased tourism opportunities and visitation.

7. Strzelecki Track upgrade and sealing project

A \$215 million upgrade and sealing of the 472 kilometre Strzelecki Track, linking the towns of Lyndhurst to Innamincka. A vital supply link for the nationally significant oil and gas extraction facilities located near Moomba, and an essential transport corridor for outback communities, tourism, and pastoralists.

8. Port Playford export facility

A \$100 million conversion of the former Port Augusta power station site into a bulk commodity export terminal. The port has new facilities specifically designed to handle and transport up to 5 million tonnes per annum of iron ore bound for export.

9. Hallett Group green cement facility

\$125 million 6 megawatt (MW) hydrogen electrolyser and plant facility to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 300,000 tonnes annually and process industrial waste by-products into low carbon green cement.

10. Vast renewables concentrated solar thermal power plant

Vast Renewables VS1 project, located 20km north of Port Augusta, involves the development, construction and operation of a 30MW/288 megawatt-hour (MWH) concentrated solar-thermal power plant.

11. Port Augusta Technical College

The State Government is building a new college to train students for careers in key industries for the region, including mining and mineral processing, renewable energy, manufacturing, and construction. The college is on track to open in 2025.



Get involved: have your say

Consultation on the regional plan is open for 12 weeks until 5pm on Wednesday 7 May 2025.

Have your say

- Visit yoursay.sa.gov.au/far-north-regional-plan to provide your feedback
- Fill out our [Easy Read survey](#)
- Complete the [online submission form](#)
- Email plansasubmissions@sa.gov.au (Subject: Submission – Far North Regional Plan)
- Post your submission to:
Planning and Land Use Services
Attention: Growth Management Team
Department for Housing and Urban Development
GPO BOX 1815
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Need help?

Join one of our online briefing sessions to hear directly from our planners. Register at plansaevents.eventbrite.com

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PlanSA Service Desk
on 1800 752 664.



Next steps

Once consultation has concluded, feedback will be collated, summarised and the Plan will be updated.

The updated Plan will be provided to the State Planning Commission for endorsement with the final version expected to be released late 2025.

The Plan will be fully digital and accessible via the Regional Planning Portal.



