

Annual Business Plan

2025-2026

Being a unified local government sector working in the best interest of the region and our communities.

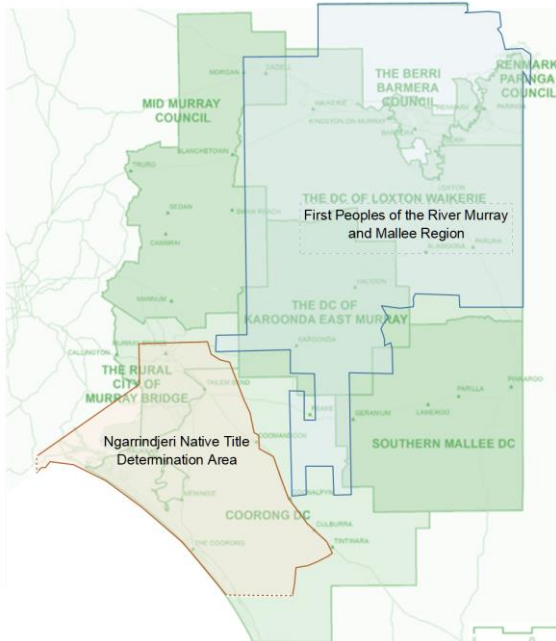
Murraylands & Riverland Local Government Association



MURRAYLANDS & RIVERLAND LGA : VISION, MISSION AND CHARTER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

"We would like to acknowledge the traditional land and waters of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee Region. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge that their cultural and heritage beliefs are important to the Ngarrindjeri, Ngaiawang (Nigh-uh-won), Ngawait (Nar-wait), Nganguruku (Nun-guh-rah-ku), Erawirung (Era-wirung), Ngintait (Nin-tait), Ngaralte (Nar-alte), and Ngarkat (Nar-kat) people. We also pay respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship to country."



VISION

Attractive, Liveable Region, Prosperous Communities.

MISSION

Being a unified local government sector working in the best interest of the region and our communities.

LINKS WITH OUR CHARTER

- Speaking with one voice
- Building partnerships
- Working with the LGA
- Planning for and with the region
- Coordinating resources and representation
- Enhancing efficiencies

VALUES & BEHAVIOURS

Integrity, Leadership, Collaboration, Credibility, Unity

ROLE

Working to the MRLGA Charter, the Association motivates, advocates and represents its eight constituent Councils to advance cooperation, strategic partnerships and governance arrangements that oversee programs and projects in the region.

Through its coordination of effort, the Association leads and assists its councils with evidence-based approaches to high level planning, communication and representation.

The MRLGA works closely with its major regional partners including Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland (RDA MR), the Murraylands & Riverland Landscape Board, the Local Government Association SA and Australian and State Governments.

The MRLGA selects the most efficient role on key issues that is; Support (**S**) other lead agencies, Partner (**P**) or take the Lead (**L**) – to deliver the region the greatest return with limited resources.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2020 – 2025)

Connected Region

- Improve transport movement, efficiency and safety (L & P)
- Increase uptake of digital collaboration platforms and information sharing across councils (L)
- Attract funding for 'fit for purpose' transport infrastructure (P)
- Support big data analytics that increase efficiencies (S)
- Improve internet, mobile coverage (S)

Resilient Communities

- Improve social connectedness, especially across priority groups (P)
- Further improve service delivery (S)
- Support 'Ageing well' practices/planning (P)
- Apply evidence-based research to improve housing options (S)
- Improve access to skills development programs (P)

Attractive, Liveable Region and Prosperous Communities

Health Environment

- Create sustainable region waste management (L)
- Improve climate change adaptation (P)
- Plan for changing water security and stewardship (S)
- Sustainable management of natural environments & systems (S)

Economic Opportunity

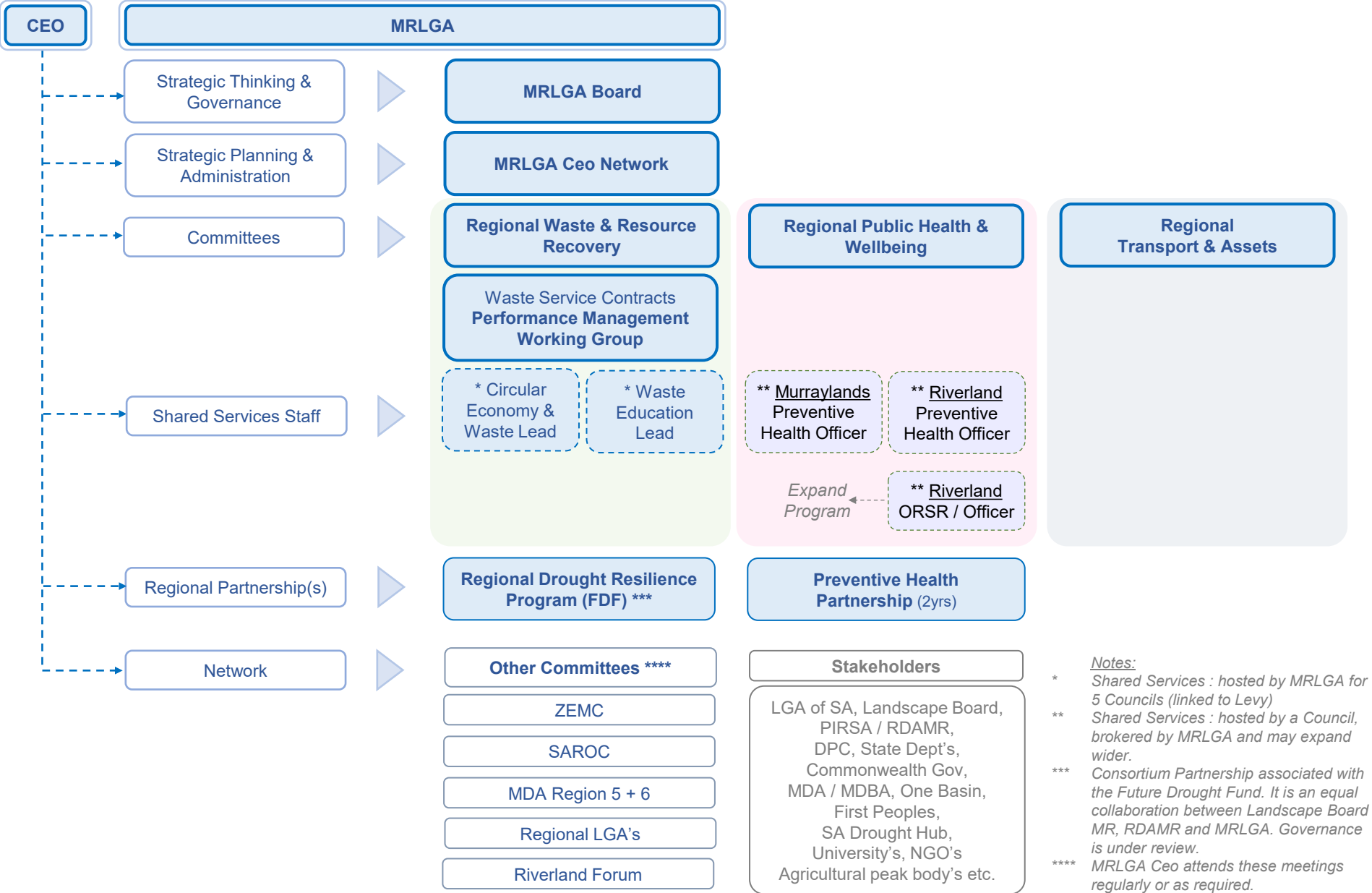
- Initiate place-based economic development (RDA lead) (P)
- Coordinate effort to improve MRLGA councils' shared services (initially concentrating on 1 or 2 areas) (L)
- Attract investment for enabling infrastructure (P)
- Attract and develop skills to grow the region (S)

L) Lead

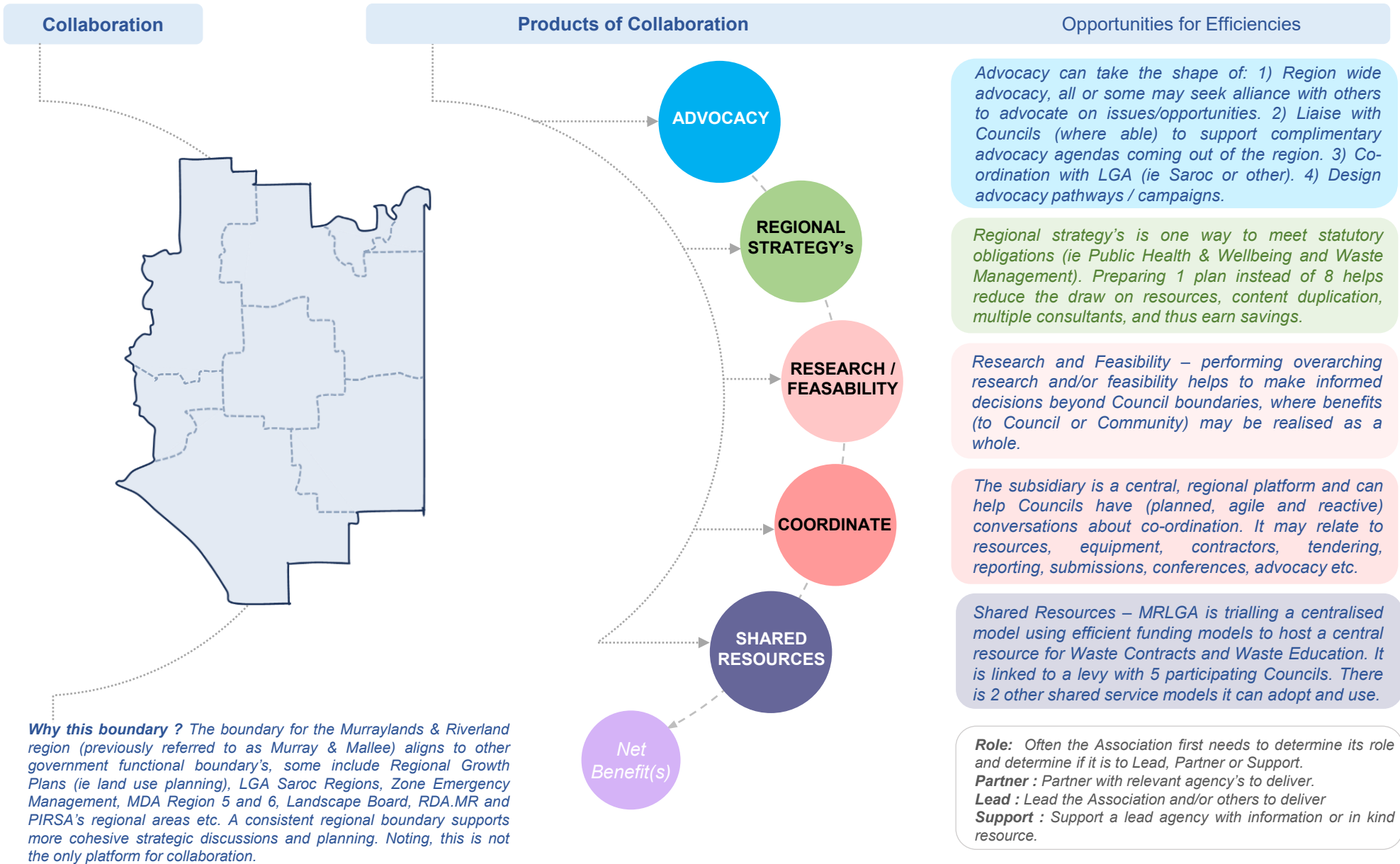
P) Partner

S) Support

ORGANISATIONAL & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

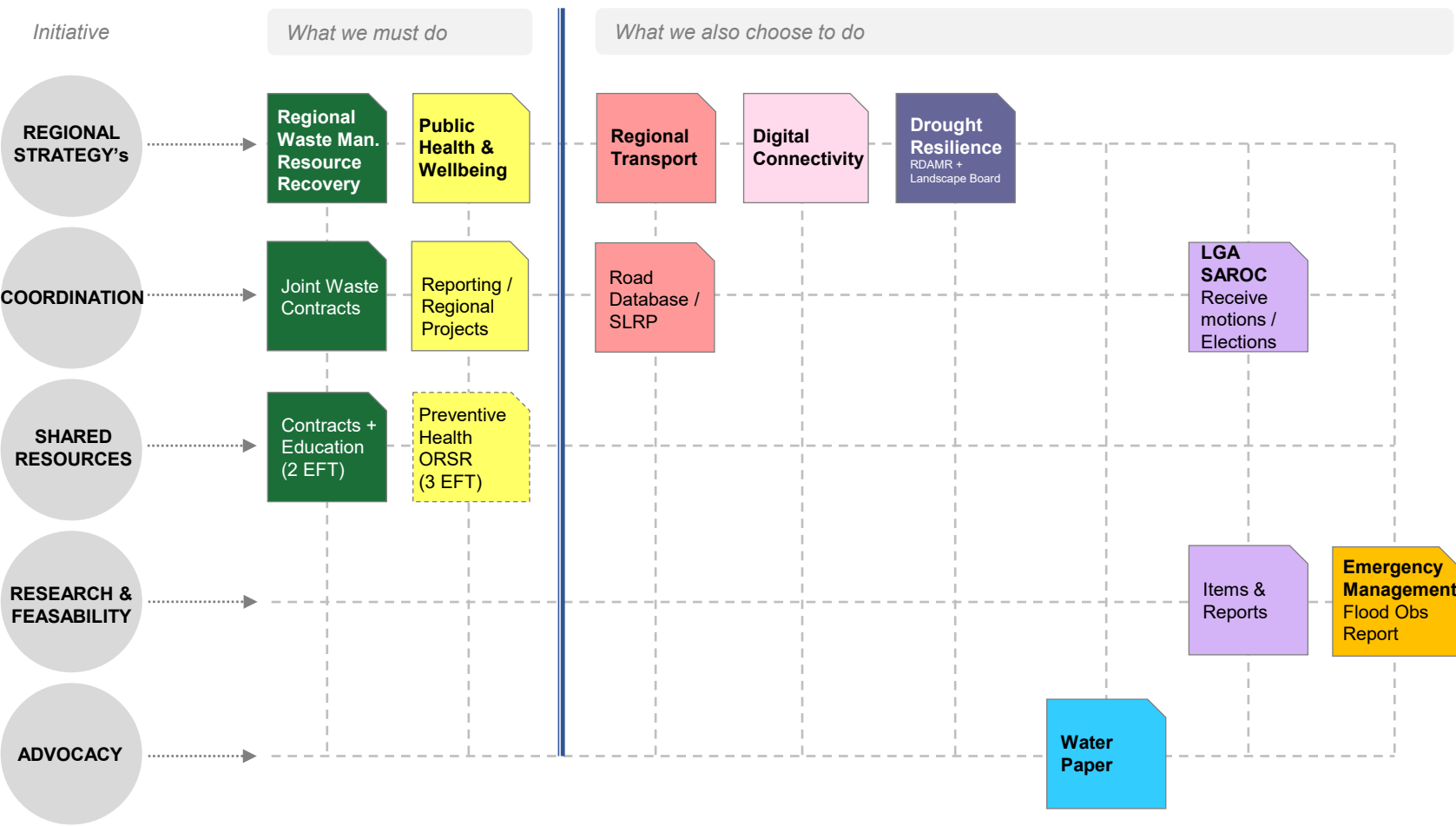


KEY VALUE AT THE SUBSIDIARY: STRUCTURED COLLABORATION

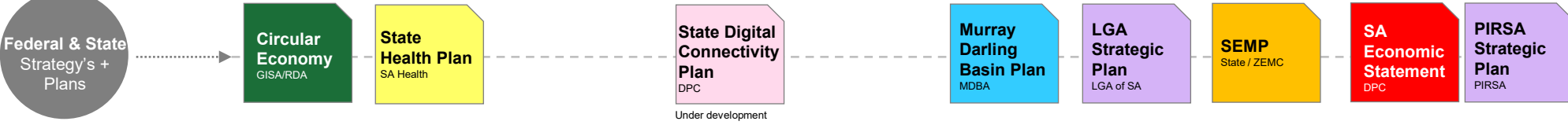


STRATEGIC INITIATIVES : STATUTORY & SELECTED

Products of Collaboration



There are numerous Federal and State Strategy's and Plans. The Association refers to some of the listed plans as it pursues its work.



Improve transport movement, efficiency and safety (L & P)
Increase uptake of digital collaboration platforms and information sharing across councils (L)

	Task		Description	Budget
Advocacy	River and Lakes Infrastructure		Develop an advocacy statement, evidence and pathway relating to increased funding for River Murray and Lakes infrastructure (and submit it to the Ceo Network & Board for consideration).	-
	Regional Delivery Partner for State Gov		Develop an advocacy statement, evidence and pathway relating to regional Councils being a delivery partner for DIT (and submit it to the Ceo Network & Board for consideration).	-
	Mining Royalty's & Regional Roads		Develop an advocacy statement, evidence and pathway linking mining royalties and regional roads for the Ceo Network & Board's consideration.	-
Regional Transport and Assets Committee	Regional Transport Plan		Carry Forward from 24/25. The timing of this work was deferred while the State released its Transport Strategy. The project will secure specialist traffic engineering consultants to carry out a 10 Yr review of the strategy and prepare updates with the Committee, Ceo Network and Board. The review will be funded by the SLRP surcharge (not subscriptions).	\$40,000
	Road Construction Training		Plan and deliver a 2 day training course for (8) Councils on (sealed/unsealed) Road Construction. (Delivered twice in the EPLGA and received great feedback as part of capacity building).	\$8,000
	Surcharge Review		In consultation with the Committee, review the current surcharge model and prepare a report to the Ceo Network and Board on the continued recommended approach.	-
Ceo	SAROC		Support SAROC Representatives where appropriate and requested.	-
			Prepare and submit (6) reports to LGA about regional news for Saroc Committee awareness.	-
	LGA of SA	Special Local Roads Program	<i>Annual Service</i> Update the 4 Yr Database and Action Plans with Councils Infrastructure teams. Secure specialist traffic engineering for independent assessments, scoring and/or grant preparedness.	\$10,000
			Assist Councils and priority road redi-ness for 26/27 SLRP road applications to LGTAP.	
			<i>Annual Service</i> Continue GIS Mapping (QGIS) and layers developed in RRH to identify deficiencies in the network and quantify the ongoing asset management tasks and the economic benefits generated.	\$5,000
			Identify process improvements for a more streamlined / automated process and discuss with LGA, Ceo Network and Committee.	
	R&D Grant Program		Participate in any LGA events regarding the Research & Development (R&D) Program review that support information too, views from or interests of its constituent councils.	-
				-
	Emerging Opportunities		Liaise and observe output at LGA for emerging opportunity's the region may seek to coordinate on or leverage from.	-
	Regional Digital Connectivity Plan		Continue and finalise a Regional Digital Connectivity Plan that assists funding and outcomes for improved regional digital connectivity, literacy and smart technology. (Outcomes were delayed in 24/25 due to the State delaying the release of its plan).	-
	Research / Network		Attend relevant transport and public asset events for emerging opportunities, risks and funding that assists the RT&AC.	\$600

Improve social connectedness, especially across priority groups (P)
 Support 'Ageing well' practices/planning (P)
 Improve access to skills development programs (P)

	Task	Description	Budget
Advocacy	22/23 River Murray Flood Response and Recovery	<i>Build Back Better</i> Liaise with DPC, SafeCom and Ceo Network to discuss the build back better provisions and identify improvements.	-
		<i>Recognition</i> Liaise with LGA on the recognition process to acknowledge efforts made by many during the 22/23 River Murray Flood.	-
Regional Public Health & Wellbeing Committee	Statutory Biannual Reporting	South Australian Public Health Act 2011. Not required in 25/26 and deferred to 26/27. Assemble, co-ordinate and submit the biannual Section 52 statutory reporting from eight councils to the Chief Public Health Officer.	-
	Regional Public Health & Wellbeing Plan (2022 - 2026)	In consultation with the Committee, develop a plan and budget to update the regional strategy for '26 to '31. MRLGA liaise with the Board if all regional strategies and the Strategic Plan is updated simultaneously (ie Transport, Waste, Health and Strategic Plan).	\$30,000 (funded through a grant)
		To assist the delivery of the strategy, a partnership with Preventive Health SA has been established. The partnership is structured as 1 in the Murraylands (with 3 participating Councils & MRLGA) and 1 in the Riverland (with 3 participating Councils & MRLGA). It will sit on both working groups and initially support a social mapping project and 25/26 work. The value of the partnership is over \$400k.	
CEO	Future Drought Fund (FDF) Regional Drought Resilience Planning (Program)	Office of Recreation Sport and Racing (ORSR) : Follow up with Riverland Councils regarding the 'Connected & Active Community's Program' and to see where / how the program can widen any to surrounding Councils (in 25/26 and 26/27).	-
		Continue as a member of the "consortium" for Murraylands and Riverland region as it relates to the Regional Drought Resilience Planning (a federal program under the Future Drought Fund). Participate (by way of leading, partnering and /or supporting) in processes that support greater funds into region and ensure outcomes or project selection are of a nature that directly improve drought resilience planning.	
		<i>Implementation Plan</i> – \$140k of Federal funding will be provided to the region under the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program to support Plan updates, revisions, implementation.	
		<i>Delivery</i> - \$300k of Federal funding will be provided to the region under the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program to support delivery.	
	Emergency Management	Continue as a (non-funding) partner with SA Drought Hub to build strong working relationships with Hubs, University's and agricultural body's as the model expands in regional SA. Where appropriate, link prevention and public health and wellbeing with drought resilience planning.	-
		Attend and contribute to the Murray and Mallee Emergency Management Zone Committee meetings.	-
	Research / Network	Participate and contribute to any flood inquiry or lessons learned processes that may arise (including the outcome of the Independent Inquiry).	-
LGA	Wellbeing Officer	Attend relevant public health + wellbeing or emergency management events for emerging opportunities, risks and funding opportunity.	\$600
		Continue to collaborate with this role to identify emerging opportunity's for the region.	-

Plan for changing water security and stewardship (S)
 Create sustainable region waste management (L)
 Improve climate change adaptation (P)
 Sustainable management of natural environments & systems (S)

	Task	Description	Budget
Advocacy	Waste Levy	Develop an advocacy statement, evidence and pathway relating to waste levy's for regional councils (and submit it to the Ceo Network & Board for consideration).	-
	EPA Reform	Monitor the proposed EPA reform and alert Councils to any emerging responsibilities or requirements that may increase their costs, work, resource draw or community impact(s).	-
	Restoring Our Rivers Framework	Monitor the SA Government Business Case proposal (and associated Water Working Group process) and contribute ideas, risks, evidence, and advocacy that supports increased funding to the region and well scoped projects that demonstrate it can deliver a direct outcome for water efficiency and/or economic transition, restoration or rebuilding.	-
Regional Public Health & wellbeing Committee	Regional Waste & Resource Recovery Plan (and Implementation Plan) (2021 - 2026)	Joint Procurement & Waste Contracts This is an annual service to Councils participating in the joint waste service contract 22001. Provide (select) Contract Administration support to Councils, including the establishment of a Payment Calculator Template (linked to rise and fall), monthly checking of claims and certification, centralised templates to measure performance, financials, credit returns and running the Quarterly Performance Working Group.	\$75,000 (funded through a grant)
		Waste Education This is an annual service to Councils participating in the joint waste service contract 22001. Provide Waste Education Services, including the design and delivery of an annual waste education program (and its associated metrics, activities, focus areas and/or outcomes).	
		Council Kerbside Waste Service Review Pursuant to the Strategy, review the existing kerbside waste service model and explore alternative and affordable kerbside collection services for all Councils and where a Council may seek to undertake a service change (assist in an agreed capacity).	
		Regional Infrastructure and Circular Opportunity's Pursuant to the Strategy, develop best practice resource recovery infrastructure. Early preliminary work for regional compositing infrastructure has begun with Councils. Further scoping, research and feasibility work will be undertaken (and some of it in conjunction with the kerbside waste service review). And where appropriate develop circular business case opportunity's to present to the Ceo Network and Board.	
		Regional Reporting Prepare and deliver quarterly strategic reporting to the Board against targets outlined in the regional strategy.	
Ceo	Research / Network Circular Economy	Attend relevant Circular Economy and Waste Management events for emerging opportunities, risks and funding that assists the RW&RRC.	\$600
	Research / Network Murray Darling Basin	Attend relevant Murray Darling Basin events for emerging opportunities, risks and funding that assists the region or Councils with its pursuit(s) on MDB issues.	\$600
LGA	Central Co Ordinator, Regional Climate Partnerships	Continue to collaborate with this role to build climate change adaptation opportunities for the region. The current business case is to establish regional hub models, which MRLGA has offered to pilot.	-

Initiate place-based economic development (RDA lead) (P)
 Attract investment for enabling infrastructure (P)
 Coordinate effort to improve MRLGA councils' shared services (initially concentrating on 1 or 2 areas) (L)
 Attract and develop skills to grow the region (S)

To echo the statements of State and Federal Governments and Regional Australia Institute (RAI), Councils play fundamental roles in supporting and fostering development, economic growth, prosperity and liveability within regional communities. In light of recent challenges, including drought, frost, fruit fly outbreaks, wine export issues, business closures, flooding, and water recovery, there is a valuable opportunity to elevate existing work that goes towards promoting and facilitating the region's wide-ranging potential for economic growth and prosperity. By developing strong advocacy statements, building evidence, and leveraging key relationships, Local Government can continue to take proactive roles in driving positive change and achieving successful outcomes.

	Task	Description	Budget
Advocacy	Agriculture	Develop an advocacy statement, evidence and pathway that supports increased awareness and support for Agriculture as a major economic provider in regional areas (and submit it to the Ceo Network & Board for consideration).	-
	Economic Prosperity	Develop an advocacy statement, evidence and pathway that supports increased awareness and supports for business expansion in regional areas as an economical option (and submit it to the Ceo Network & Board for consideration).	-
	Services associated with residential growth	<i>SA Water & Irrigation Trusts</i> Work with established irrigation trusts to support their ongoing business sustainability and importance in the region. And with SA Water in its infrastructure roll out needed for growth.	-
	Energy	<i>Rates – Electricity Generation Bill</i> Develop an advocacy statement, evidence in response to the current Bill (and submit to the Ceo Network & Board for consideration). <i>Energy Projects</i> Liaise with emerging energy projects (including Green Hill Energy and others) and be available to listen to any challenges they experience in brining business to regions.	-
	Tourism	In 2025, advancements have happened at major tourist attractions (some include Dark Sky Reserve (21.0), Monarto Zoo Accommodation and Gather Round). MRLGA to invite presentations from and be available to Murray River, Lakes and Coorong Tourism Alliance and Destination Riverland, Tourism SA and others to leveridge key relationships for increased support.	-
	State Government Relations	Liaise with relevant State departments to promote opportunity's for more information exchange and/or delivery partner opportunity's including: PIRSA and Department of Infrastructure & Transport, Office of Recreation, Sport and Racing, Preventive Health (and possibly others).	-
	LGA role in DPC	Liaise with the LGA on the status of its proposed Coordination role and participate in any processes associated with implementation.	-
Ceo Network	Shared Services	Identify shared services opportunities with CEO Network, selecting 1-2 areas that can be further explored through a scoping and benefits exercise and report to Board. (This may include: a partnership with a metropolitan based Council for Planning, Building, Landscape Architecture, Environmental Health etc or it may include a shared service role(s) across multiple Councils).	\$5,000
Ceo	One River Murray Authority	Review existing developed work for the authority and present an opportunity's paper to the Ceo Network and Board to revive the proposal, having regard for current day costs, relevance, opportunity's and risks.	\$10,000
	Research / Network	Attend relevant events for economic development opportunities in the region as well as emerging opportunities and risks.	\$600
	Present on the region's economic position	Research and present to the Board once a year on the regions economic position (as it relates to GDP, GRP, Population, economic category's, housing, annual income, employment, inflation, administration, RBP statistics, etc).	-
	Regional Development	In conjunction with Councils, liaise with RDAMR on regional development initiatives that arise for/within the region.	

Operate the Association in accordance with the MRLGA Charter and Act as it continues its mission to *‘being a unified local government sector working in the best interest of the region and our communities’*.

Operate, promote and grow a culture that supports - Integrity, Leadership, Collaboration, Credibility, Unity.

Continue the Associations objectives that seek to - Speak with one voice, plan for and with the region, build partnerships, coordinate resources and representation, work with the LGA and enhance efficiencies.

	Task	Description	Budget
Board & CEO Network	MRLGA Charter	Review the Charter and carry out any changes approved by the board where necessary (including a legal review if changes are made).	\$5,000
	Strategic Plan (2026-2031)	In consultation with the Board and Ceo Network, develop a project plan and carry out an update to the MRLGA Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. The program will include a method for constituent Councils to review any draft and submit feedback and input.	\$5,000
Ceo	Audit	Liaise with appointed consultants to undertake an annual audit and incorporate the audit into the Annual Report.	\$7,500
	Annual Report	Prepare an Annual Report for the previous financial year.	-
	Board / Committees	Convene Quarterly Board Meeting and Chair Committees (RPH&WC, RT&AC, RW&RRC).	\$2,000
	Ceo Network	Convene online meetings for presentations on emerging issues / opportunities relevant to a Ceo of a regional Council.	-
	Insurances	Keep insurances active and paid.	\$12,000
	Events	As part of regional capacity building, the association can contribute a percentage of ticket pricing for committee members (or proxy's) to attend relevant events relating too : Roads & Public Assets, Waste Resource and Recovery Management, Public Health and Wellbeing and Economic Development. Emails will be released to Councils at relevant times for these opportunities. Note: The value has been formulated with regard for each Council as 1 Director for each Committee, which is 16 Directors/General Managers (plus proxy's). This expenditure is linked to a grant program MRLGA can access.	\$9,000
	Fleet	Prepare a feasibility assessment to compare the cost of purchasing/leasing a fleet car (inclusive of on road costs and insurance) versus car allowance(s) and present it to the Ceo Network and Board for consideration.	\$35,000
	Policies	Review and update where required (including a Travel Policy for new EFT)	-
		Carry Forward from 24/25. Explore, design and implement a Corporate Wellbeing Program.	\$1,000
	Regional LGA	Attend Regional LGA meetings to stay connected with projects/initiatives/challenges in other regions.	-
	Staff Management	Undertake all Managerial and HR related matters to employed staff under contract.	
	Subscriptions	Monitor inflation as it relates to subscriptions.	-
	Webpage review	Maintain a webpage (with operating costs of <\$1,000 p.a).	\$1,000