

For
the
Future

Limestone
Coast
Policy





Foreword

The Limestone Coast plays a key role in the economic and social fabric of our State with important industries including forestry, agriculture, aquaculture wine and tourism.

At the heart of the region is Mount Gambier, the State's second largest city with almost 30, 000 people in the city and environs.

I recognise the importance of the region to the future of South Australia and that is why Labor has developed a series of initiatives specifically for the region.

Our focus is to support the economic growth and well as addressing the social challenges that directly impact the Limestone Coast in areas like health, education and skills, transport, housing sport and recreation.

Our key commitments to the Limestone Coast include:

- ✔ Appointing a Cross Border Commissioner to be based in Mount Gambier with a remit to to advocate for residents in the region on policies that impact cross-border communities.
- ✔ Investing \$15 million over ten years for a new Centre for Excellence to create a long-term Forestry Research and Development Hub at Mt Gambier, incorporating the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation and other forestry funding streams.
- ✔ Providing \$2 million to replace fire towers with new technology including cameras to provide a landscape level fire detection program, while ensuring existing fire towers are serviceable during the transition period.
- ✔ Supporting and expanding the role of Forest Industries Advisory Council (FIAC-SA) and developing a Forest Products Domestic Manufacturing and Infrastructure Masterplan, under FIAC-SA.

- ✔ Undertake a scientific review of the options for diverting water from the drainage network rather than just allowing it to flow out to sea along with reviewing the assessment criteria for water allocation under the 2013 Limestone Coast Water Allocation plan.
- ✔ Continue to support the Moratorium on fracking in the Limestone Coast.
- ✔ We will build a new technical college in Mount Gambier and spend \$5 million upgrading the Mount Gambier TAFE with a focus of addressing skills shortages in the region. Additionally, we will dedicate up to \$1 million per year (\$4 million over forward estimates) from the Regional Development Fund for a 'Critical Regional Industry Training Fund' and provide additional funding for upgrades to regional training facilities.
- ✔ Make ongoing the country loading for teachers choosing to stay and work in the Limestone Coast.
- ✔ \$28 million to upgrade hospitals in the Limestone Coast.
- ✔ Funding an additional 24 paramedics in Mount Gambier and Keith.
- ✔ Begin the duplication of the Dukes Highway to improve safety and transport efficiency on this key route through the region between Adelaide and Melbourne.
- ✔ \$1.4 million to secure the future of the Overland by reinstating the funding cut by the Marshall Liberal Government.
- ✔ Fund a Regional Public Transport Services Review, recognising the existing services do not meet community needs.
- ✔ Guarantee a proportion of the statewide public housing blitz is dedicated to the region to improve the number and quality of public housing in the region

- ✔ Task the SA Tourism Commission with developing a new campaign to lift the profile of the region and support the development of new tourism products.
- ✔ Provide funding for local sporting clubs to upgrade their facilities, including building new female changing facilities.
- ✔ Provide funding for upgrades at the Mount Gambier Racing Club.

These initiatives and this policy have been formed following consultation with regional leaders and the local community over the past three and a half years. I recognise the importance the Limestone Coast will play in my vision for the Future of South Australia and will continue to listen to and work with the people of the region.



Peter Malinauskas MP
SA Labor Leader





LIMESTONE COAST

The economic centre of the Limestone Coast is the city of Mount Gambier, but it also incorporates a number of prominent agricultural towns including Keith, Naracoorte, Bordertown, Millicent and Penola as well as the coastal towns of Kingston SE, Robe, Beachport and Port MacDonnell.

Forestry directly and indirectly employs 18,000 people in the region. It is more than a primary industry; it is also a manufacturing industry, with processing plants and value-added products along the value chain. The industry includes growers, forest managers, landscape suppliers, harvesters and hauliers, sawmills, panel board plants, paper mill, preservation plants, engineering and fabrication plants, importers and distribution outlets, as well as timber merchants, wholesalers and retailers.

The industry has been challenged by the increased export of logs to be processed offshore, major changes in pulpwood use in the region, increased competition from imports and the rationalising of mills or their changing ownership.

Forestry will remain a key driver of the local economy, but the region will also have to continue to build its emphasis on sustainable and high-quality agriculture and aquaculture produce to meet the increasing global demand.

The region is home to arguably some of the nation's highest quality beef, lamb and seafood.

The region is also home to one of Australia's premier wine regions, the Coonawarra, which



is internationally recognised for its Cabernet Sauvignon, which is highly sought after. Nearby are other wine growing regions at Padthaway, Wratttonbully, Mount Benson and Cape Jaffa. Wines from the Limestone Coast are premium in quality and exported nationally and internationally, winning gold medals at many international shows.

The Limestone Coast includes a number of popular tourism destinations, but there has been a failure to invest in products to showcase the region's strengths and to market them to the rest of South Australia, the nation and the world. Tourism has enormous potential to be a major area of jobs growth.

The community's links are as strong across the border into Victoria, as they are to the rest of South Australia and cross border travel for employment, education and healthcare are part of everyday life for people living in the region. Covid-19 has presented enormous challenges to these arrangements and increased the need for greater co-ordination with Victoria in particular.

Demographically, the region is ageing with the biggest increases in the 55+ age range. While this presents challenges, this also creates employment

opportunities including in the provision of aged care services. In terms of employment generally, the region regularly sits below the state average for the number of people unemployed.

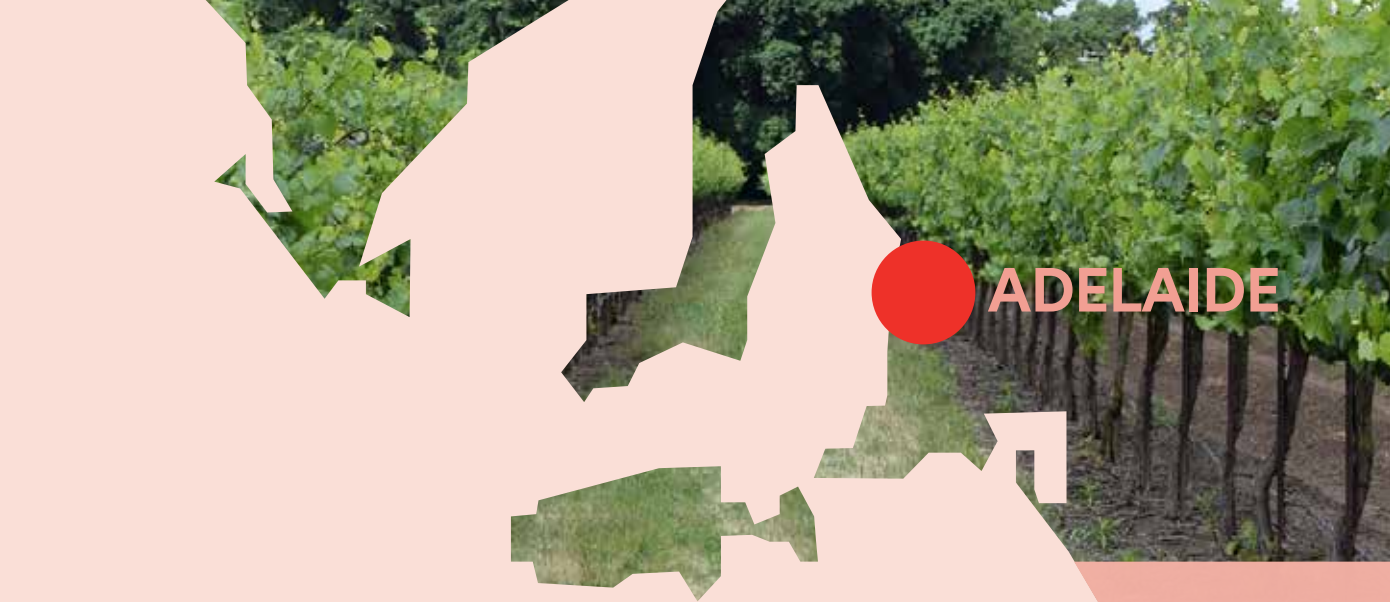
Like communities elsewhere in the state there are growing concerns about the quality of the health system; particularly in the availability of ambulances to serve this growing community, drug and alcohol services and mental health services.

Welcome to
SOUTH
AUSTRALIA



Government of South Australia





A Malinauskas Labor Government acknowledges the importance of the region to the state’s prosperity and will support the local community to reach its full potential.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

ESTABLISH A CROSS BORDER COMMISSIONER

COST: \$2 million

Mount Gambier is in a unique position as the state’s second largest city that is as close to Melbourne by road as it is to Adelaide. Many of the residents in the city and broader region work, live and travel across both South Australia and Victoria.

The border closures forced by measures to control the spread of Covid-19 highlighted the dependency of residents on decisions made in both states and highlighted the need for the region to have a prominent voice on the ground to be heard across both jurisdictions.

Labor will appoint a Cross Border Commissioner to be based in Mount Gambier with a remit to advocate for South Australian residents and establish close working relationships with the Victorian Cross Border Commissioner to streamline processes and reduce red tape for both residents and businesses.

- 1. Keith
- 2. Bordertown
- 3. Padthaway
- 4. Naracoorte
- 5. Penola
- 6. Mount Gambier
- 7. Port MacDonnell
- 8. Millicent
- 9. Beachport
- 10. Robe
- 11. Kingston S.E.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

COST: \$19 million

Labor will support the sustainable Forestry Industry to maximise its capacity to produce vital fibre for Australian construction and manufacturing, supporting South Australian jobs through:



- ✓ \$15 million over ten years for a new Centre for Excellence to create a long-term Forestry Research and Development Hub at Mount Gambier, incorporating the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation and other forestry funding streams.
- ✓ The new Centre for Excellence will establish Mount Gambier as a high-status recognised centre of forestry research in Australia.
- ✓ Develop the Trees on Farms initiative to quantify and promote the environmental and economic benefits of on-farm plantations (including soil protection, shade and shelter for livestock, income diversification) and guide appropriate partnerships between timber processors and landholders.
- ✓ Investigate the feasibility of incentives to ensure that arrangements favour smaller-scale processors who may be locked out of contracts with the larger forest growers.
- ✓ Supporting and expanding the role of Forest Industries Advisory Council (FIAC-SA) so that there is a clear, ongoing platform for government and industry to work together. This will include clear KPIs, a revised charter that embeds a collaborative approach with other key agencies (DTF, Transport & Infrastructure, DEW)
- ✓ Provide FIAC-SA \$2 million over three years to develop a Forest Products Domestic Manufacturing and Infrastructure Masterplan.
- ✓ Provide \$2 million to replace fire towers with new technologies such as camera technology to provide a landscape level fire detection program, while ensuring existing fire towers are serviceable during the transition period. Some of the existing fire towers are now dangerous to use. A swift transition to modern technologies will be both cost effective and improve safety. However, some repairs may be necessary to existing towers until transition is complete.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

ENSURE BETTER WATER MANAGEMENT

Water management is crucial to the many industries in the Limestone Coast, an area usually blessed with abundant water. Our collective understanding of how water works in the Limestone Coast is continually evolving, and all sectors are keen to find solutions that allow growth and development. Labor will:

- ✓ Undertake a comprehensive, independent review of the 2013 Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan, including its social, economic and environmental impacts.
- ✓ Establish a formal industry reference group to work with the Landscape Board (NRM Board) to ensure all industry sectors are involved in scientific input for the review, and development of the next Water Allocation Plan.
- ✓ Appoint a hydrologist and an ecologist from the Department of Environment and Water to posts based in the Limestone Coast.
- ✓ Investigate the options for diverting water flow from the drainage network away from the sea and retaining it in the landscape, based on a scientific analysis and principles of improved environmental and sustainability outcomes.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

ADDRESS SKILLS SHORTAGES

COST: \$40 million

Labor recognises specific skills shortages in the Limestone Coast can severely curtail local industries' expansion and ability to create more jobs. While state-wide demand for some courses may be low, they may provide skills that are crucial to a local industry or to South Australia's sovereign capability.

To identify opportunities and skills shortages, we will work with local businesses to identify where there are critical shortages now and in the short to medium term future and use this advice to guide the training that is being offered locally.

- ✔ Labor will invest \$35 million build a new technical school in Mount Gambier adjacent to Mount Gambier High School, to offer both school completion and trade skills training critical for providing job opportunities and meeting skills shortages in the local community. A further \$5 million per annum will be provided for operating costs to provide for additional teaching staff, resources and equipment.
- ✔ The Mount Gambier TAFE will be upgraded with a \$5 million investment to ensure the courses it can offer are appropriate for local industry requirements.
- ✔ Labor will dedicate up to \$1 million per year from the Regional Development Fund for a 'Critical Regional Industry Training Fund' and provide additional funding for upgrades to regional training facilities where necessary to enable the training delivery.
- ✔ Labor will also ensure there is regional representation on the board of TAFE SA to ensure local industry skills needs are being listened to on an ongoing basis.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

SUPPORT TEACHERS IN THE LIMESTONE COAST

Every school is important and every school deserves great teaching. Currently teachers choosing to go to the country have an additional allowance only for the first few years, and many teachers leave at the end of that allowance period to go back to the city. This is not fair for teachers who want to stay on, and drives more churn in the system. This will contribute to the reform of the teacher placement process which puts children at the centre of school decisions.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will make the country loading ongoing for teachers going to work in regional schools.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

We will be providing a steady stream of work for local manufacturers and trades through a new approach to government Procurement. How public money is spent is one of the most powerful ways to shape the economy and the labour market.

We should be making South Australians' dollars work for South Australians and that also means for local businesses in the Limestone Coast.

A Malinauskas Labor government will adopt the following principles for government procurement:

- ▶ Value for money
- ▶ Creating SA jobs - especially in regional areas
- ▶ Increasing the numbers of local apprentices and trainees
- ▶ Stimulating innovation and new businesses
- ▶ Use of renewable, low carbon products
- ▶ Achieving environmentally sensitive, low carbon, socially-just outcomes

To do this, Labor will overhaul how government sets about spending public money to get maximum benefit for the whole community and to drive economic growth and jobs.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

INVEST IN NEW INDUSTRY

Attracting new industries to the region will be a target for the re-established *Invest in SA* agency which will be tasked with working with Regional Development Australia in the Limestone Coast to identify opportunities for future industry and investment.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

UPGRADE MOUNT GAMBIER HOSPITAL

COST: \$21 million

Labor has made it clear that it will be spending more than \$100 million in our regional hospitals rather than on a basketball stadium in the city.

Mount Gambier is our largest regional centre, home to almost 30,000 South Australians. In recent years, demand on Mount Gambier’s mental health and emergency services has substantially increased, without the equivalent resources to keep up.

A Labor Government will double the size of the local mental health unit, with an additional six beds at the Mount Gambier Hospital.

We will also upgrade the emergency department to improve the capacity to treat more patients and improve the safety for patients and staff.

Mount Gambier drug detoxification beds

Community health workers have warned there is an urgent demand for drug detoxification beds in the South East.

Without these beds, people experiencing significant drug and alcohol dependency are far more likely to continue cycling in and out of hospital – taking up bed space in the process.

Labor will invest \$4m to fit-out and operate four dedicated drug detoxification beds in the Mount Gambier Hospital.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

DELIVER AN EXTRA 24 PARAMEDICS

COST: \$6.5 million

A Malinauskas Labor Government will invest \$6.5 million to recruit 24 additional paramedics to improve ambulance coverage in the South East.

This will include an additional 24/7 paramedic crew and one 12-hour ambulance crew based in Mount Gambier, and an additional 12-hour crew based in Keith to reduce demand on resources coming from the South East.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

UPGRADE NARACOORTE HOSPITAL

COST: \$8 million

Naracoorte Hospital is part of the Upper South East Health Service. The facility includes 39 public beds, six day surgery beds and two operating theatres along with an attached residential aged care unit.

The local community has been calling for a modernisation of the facility and Labor will provide \$8 million to upgrade Naracoorte Hospital and review health infrastructure requirements in other parts of the region.

The Marshall Liberal government continues to overlook the transport needs of the Limestone Coast.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

DUPLICATE THE DUKES HIGHWAY

COST: \$200 million over four years

Roads in the region provide a major link in the freight corridor between Adelaide and Melbourne. The Dukes Highway is South Australia's busiest regional freight corridor. It carries more than 1100 commercial vehicles and many more passenger vehicles every day. It is a single lane carriage way in each direction over its 190km between Tailem Bend and the Victorian border. Apart from providing the major road link to Melbourne, the Dukes Highway also plays a key role in connecting the local agriculture, forestry and fishing industries of the Limestone Coast with their major markets.

The Victorian government has already committed to duplicate the Western Highway which connects with the Dukes Highway at the Victorian border.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will partner with the Commonwealth to deliver the project. Duplication of the Dukes Highway will not only improve transport efficiency, it will improve safety and will reduce the number of people injured and killed on the road every year.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

HELP FUND THE OVERLAND TRAIN

COST: \$1.4 million over four years

The Marshall Liberal government axed the state's contribution to funding the iconic Overland train service that provides a valuable rail link between the Limestone Coast (Bordertown) and Adelaide or Melbourne. Following lobbying from Labor in South Australia, the Victorian Labor government agreed to meet the shortfall in funding for the service; but we can't take this for granted into the future, so a Malinauskas Labor Government will fund our share to support this valuable transport link into the future.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN MOUNT GAMBIER

For those that don't drive, there are limited bus services available in Mount Gambier itself and providing links to other towns in the region. They are running on a model agreed in the 1990's and don't reflect the growth of the new Mount Gambier suburbs or provide easy links to tourism assets.

A review of these services has been completed but the results have not yet been made public.

Labor recognises that we need to ensure public transport in South Australia's second largest city needs to meet community expectations. Labor commits to providing a public bus service for Mt Gambier that is sustainable as the city continues to grow.

Mount Gambier's 'grossly inadequate' public transport service must be a priority: Mayor

The Premier and Transport Minister have been invited to Mount Gambier to board a bus - and if they need directions, residents have a hint, the city isn't in Victoria.

Messenger, Mount Gambier | 5 August, 2021



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

RENEW REGIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING

Public housing provides a vital safety net for the most vulnerable members of our community. This is critical for people escaping family violence, the homeless, people with disability, and those with limited resources - especially older people. Mount Gambier has a significant proportion of the State's public housing stock. According to the most recent figures released by the South Australian Housing Authority there are 1050 Housing Authority. According to the 2016 Census, there were just over 12,000 private dwellings in Mount Gambier which means it had about 8% of homes as public housing - this above the state average of around 5%.

Labor will be committing \$350 million to build 2,000 new homes over the next five years to renew our State's public housing stock in metropolitan and regional areas. We will also begin a substantial program of upgrading and refurbishing existing stock. A proportion of this new stock will be allocated to Mount Gambier to meet their growing needs.

A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

MARKET THE REGION TO AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD

The Tourism Industry in the Limestone Coast has enormous potential for growth.

The hero experiences of the Region are centred around the natural landscapes of volcanoes, craters, lakes, caves, sinkholes, swaps, ancient coastline and forests. These include Naracoorte Caves (SA's only World Heritage Site), The Blue Lake, Umpherston Sinkhole, Piccaninnie Ponds, Ghost Mushroom Lane and pristine uncrowded beaches with premium food and wine experiences make the region one of the jewels in the South Australia's tourism crown.

But it is underdeveloped and under promoted.

The Limestone Coast has been under promoted in the past and as a result many people in South Australia, interstate and overseas are not aware of the many tourist attractions in the region.

Under Labor, the South Australian Tourism Commission will be tasked with lifting the profile of the region through targeted marketing campaigns and through working with Invest in SA to identify investors and existing operators to develop new products and accommodation experiences, focusing on adventure and wellness tourism.

Labor will also ensure local events such as the Generations in Jazz Festival, which draws tourists from across the state and Interstate, are funded to grow and thrive.





A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

INVEST IN SPORT AND RECREATION IN THE LIMESTONE COAST

The Limestone Coast has a proud reputation with its sporting culture.

There are more than a hundred local sporting clubs providing a full range of sport and recreation activities. These clubs rely on the hard work of volunteers and the financial support of local sponsors to keep going. Labor will introduce a new package of grants to support these clubs upgrade their infrastructure.

We will also bring back the popular program to build female facilities at clubs that was axed by the Marshall Liberal government. This program will provide grants of \$750,000 to local clubs to build facilities to encourage greater participation by girls and women.

Labor will continue to support the voucher scheme we first introduced in 2015 to ensure families can afford to have their children play at their local clubs and that the clubs have greater certainty over their income from offering junior sport.

Under a program to support state and Regional sporting bodies, Labor will provide an additional \$200,000 over four years to the Limestone Coast Sporting Academy to assist in its work to identify and develop talented local athletes and identify pathways for them to represent their state or Australia.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

BOOST FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE LOCAL RACING INDUSTRY

With a long and proud history, the Mount Gambier Racing Club is the largest Race Club in the Limestone Coast and is a full time Training Centre for the industry. The club holds 15 race meetings a season, with the highlights including the Twilight Gold Cup in December and the Summer Cup in January.

Labor is committed to significantly boosting financial support to the racing industry for both prize money and improving racing infrastructure.

We will require that a proportion of this additional funding is directed to Country Racing to ensure we keep trainers and their horses here and therefore maintain the jobs they support.



A Malinauskas Labor Government will:

CONTINUE THE FRACKING MORATORIUM

In 2018 a grassroots campaign to stop fracking in the Limestone Coast won support in the Legislative Council and a 10-year Moratorium was passed into law.

Labor supports the law and will continue to back the Moratorium in government. We recognise the importance of the region's sustainable and high-quality agriculture and aquaculture industries.

