Regional Development Strategy
Submission

Naracoorte Lucindale Council Profile
The Naracoorte Lucindale Council is located at the heart of the Limestone Coast region. The council is approximately 330 kilometres from Adelaide and 450 kilometres from Melbourne and encompasses an area of approximately 452,990 hectares in area.

Naracoorte is the main service centre for the Council district, which also contains the smaller towns and communities of Lucindale, Hynam, Kybybolite and Frances.

The Council area contains prime agriculture land characterised by reliable rainfall and accessible underground water. The district is home to a thriving and vibrant rural economy and the Naracoorte Lucindale Council is central to some of Australia’s most famous wine producing areas.

There is a strong tourism industry in the Council supported by the Visitor Information Centre in Naracoorte. The district is home to the World Heritage Listed Naracoorte Caves, located some 15 minutes’ drive south of the Naracoorte township. Other attractions in the area include the Sheep’s Back Museum, Mini Jumbuk Centre, Bool Lagoon, Limestone Coast Cheese Factory, Lucindale Country Club and the Naracoorte Swimming Lake.

The estimated resident population is 8,628 people (as at 2017, according to ABS LGA 45090). There was a 2.16% population growth as at the 2016 Census.

Economic Profile
Our Council has a diverse economic profile and this predisposes us towards ongoing growth and development.

Key Industries include:
- beef and dairy cattle
- sheep for both wool and meat
- cropping
- two large enterprises; Teys Australia beef processor and Mini Jumbuk wool manufacturing
- grain storage facilities supporting the cereal growing industry.
• Viticulture - Naracoorte Lucindale Council is central to some of Australia’s best wine producing areas with all of the Wrattonbully and part of the Padthaway and Coonawarra wine regions within the district.
• several seed processors and distributors, as well as some horticultural production.
• strong tourism industry in the Council area supported by the Visitor Information Centre in Naracoorde. Natural features of international significance in the district are the World Heritage listed Naracoorte Caves and the Bool Lagoon Game Reserve and Hacks Lagoon Conservation Park. The principal town is Naracoorte with another four small towns spread across the district.
• Naracoorte Regional Livestock Exchange - $1.2B over past 10 years in sales - improvements in services and competitive prices has made the Naracoorte Regional Livestock Exchange (NRLE) attractive to sellers and buyers, as one of the State’s best facilities. The ten year average is approximately 100,000 cattle and 500,000 sheep and lambs per year.
• Retail - Naracoorte is an attractive shopping destination because it has a range of supermarkets, specialty food shops, cafes and restaurants, and other retail shops. A range of agri-businesses and support services are also available, assisting the town’s agricultural based customers.
• Government Services - The district hosts depots/offices for DEW, DPTI and PIRSA, although a regional presence, services and employee numbers have declined.
• Aged Care – growing industry and excellent facilities (supported by good health services)
• Health Care – regional service centre
• Education Sector – High School, Area School, 4 Primary Schools, pre-learning centres.

Regional Growth Strategy
The Limestone Coast is at a crucial turning point. It has the potential to establish itself as a dynamic and highly competitive economic region over the next decade. Yet potential growth faces a range of constraints. Achieving success will require a proactive and coordinated response at the regional and state level to galvanise commitment, focus, and resources to deliver on this potential.

The key enablers to realise our potential are discussed in the Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy (2018).

The Regional Growth Strategy provides a focus on the opportunities and priorities to enable our region to grow and prosper. Our success is critical not just for the Limestone Coast Community but also for the prosperity of SA. We believe this growth strategy should be considered by the Advisory Panel in its investigations into how we can create a world class and competitive regional economy in South Australia.
The six priorities identified in the Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy, align themselves strongly with the areas of focus identified in the SA Regional Development Strategy Discussion Paper of regional population, capability development, and attracting investment, innovators and entrepreneurs.

- To invigorate the working age population, we are focusing on;
  - Collaborate across the region to develop a targeted migration strategy.
  - Support the development of social infrastructure.
  - Enable greater retention of the region’s youth.
  - Encourage older workers to remain active in the workforce.

- To build on competitive advantage in Agribusiness;
  - Lift SME capability throughout the region with an emphasis on value-adding and small business skilling.
  - Foster greater collaboration along the supply chain to support diversification, research and development, and innovation in the agribusiness industry.
  - Partner with industry and regional agribusinesses to investigate and implement industry led approaches to addressing skills and training needs.
  - Collaborate to increase awareness of the region’s quality agricultural produce by delivering coordinated, strategically focused marketing and regional branding of locally made value added produce.
  - Capture more of value add chain prior to export.

- To capture employment opportunities in growing sectors like healthcare and social assistance;
  - Promote the value of Healthcare and Social Assistance as a high growth industry to the region.
  - Build stronger pathways between schools, training organisations and the regional health and aged care industry to meet growing demand for health services skills across the industry.
  - Coordinate effort across the region to attract medical and allied health professionals to overcome skills shortages.
  - Facilitate NDIS rollout initiatives.
  - Support the attraction of retirees and investment in aged care infrastructure.

- To support the development of a vibrant business ecosystem;
  - Promote entrepreneurial activity in the region by producing engaging stories about local businesses innovating, value-adding, or doing things differently to inspire a regional culture of entrepreneurship.
  - Support region-wide access to business upskilling and mentoring for SMEs.
  - Encourage businesses across the region to position themselves as “employers-of-choice”.
  - Raise the level of digital skilling across the region to ensure businesses are able to take advantage of digital economy growth opportunities.
  - Expand awareness and take-up of programs lifting business performance.
To enable region-wide collaboration to develop a more coordinated tourism market:
  - Resource and strengthen the capability of the Limestone Coast’s regional tourism organisational framework (RTO).
  - Through the RTO, deliver regionally coordinated destination marketing activities.
  - Deliver regionally coordinated tourism destination and industry development activities.
  - Seek investment in regional tourism infrastructure, marketing, destination and industry development activities.

Securing investment to deliver regional infrastructure priorities enabling growth:
  - The regional infrastructure audit and prospectus will provide a focus on the infrastructure directors to enhance the capacity of the economy.

Discussion Paper Questions

1. What are the essential services in your community?

To support economic and population growth (and retention), it is critical that essential services including health, education, housing, and sport & recreational options are maintained and further developed.

2. How would they best be delivered?

Naracoorte already has a strong health service model, and is a service centre for the Council area, but also for parts of South West Victoria, and parts of Kingston, Robe, Tatiara, and Wattle Range Councils.

Health Care – Council, Kincraig Medical Centre and UniSA are exploring a Regional Health Training Hub. The project aims to create a Healthcare Training Hub to support the growth of healthcare professionals through attraction and retention, and creating a supply of health services (and professionals), rather than a reactive demand driven service delivery. This Hub would also act as a placement centre (attraction and retention), and a training hub.

Housing – there is an acute housing shortage in Naracoorte and we are collectively working with our local State and Federal Members, key employers, and private sector to broker a solution.

Education – we have excellent education facilities of Naracoorte High School, Lucindale Area School, 4 Primary Schools, Sunrise Christian School, and pre-school centres.
Sport & Recreation - Council is developing a Naracoorte Regional Sports Centre Masterplan as a blueprint for the future development of integrated facilities, and provision of a variety of sport and recreational opportunities.

Naracoorte Library Development – as a community space and place, a learning centre, and cultural hub

Additionally, we continue to develop our open spaces for non-structured recreation, and walking trails for tourism and community health and wellbeing.

How should these services be best delivered – preferably in a planned and structured approach that recognises community engagement and ownership, but also what is a sustainable and fact driven demand (there could be greater level of engagement with local government before funding is provided).

3. What priorities should drive government investment in infrastructure

Government investment should be prioritised in partnership with key stakeholders, and should value add or be major enabling infrastructure to sustain or grow communities or business outcomes.

4. How should regional infrastructure priorities be supported and funded? Is there a role for government here?

There are some positive examples of data driven plans and prioritisation (rather than political motivations) and Government could play a key role in this by requiring some form of regional partnership or agreement before funding can be provided.

Examples of this approach include:

- LC Regional Growth Strategy – priority projects agreed across seven Councils and other stakeholders
- LCLGA Regional Transport Plan – agreed approach across seven Councils on what roads should be recommended for State/Federal funding based on agreed criteria and independently assessed. (this model could be utilised for other ‘classes’ of infrastructure)
- Proposed Regional Planning Board (and development of Regional Plan for land use to promote/encourage industry development)
- Council Long Term Financial Plans and Asset Management Plans. Although required by legislation (LG Act) – these Plans are becoming a critical and strategic tool for Council decision making and financial management. The State provides this legislation for local government, but does not have a similar model or approach for its own purposes.
There have been many examples where funding is provided for projects (by State and Federal Governments) that just don’t make sense from an objective and logical perspective. We understand the political environment that provides for these outcomes – but a planned and structured approach would make Councils/Regions/Stakeholders do the ground work on what, where, and how infrastructure investment is provided— and set priorities to assist in funding provision and strategic outcomes.

LCLGA and RDA Limestone Coast have jointly undertaken an Infrastructure Audit for the region – and this is currently a work in progress in setting priorities for hard and soft infrastructure.

5. How can regional SA retain its existing young and working age population

Access to education, and employment opportunities.

Whilst Naracoorte is well served through educational institutions, many students also access education at Mount Gambier and/or Adelaide, and this can have a detrimental effect on retention of young people.

UniSA is further developing its offerings at the Mount Gambier Campus and this will over the longer term hopefully assist in retaining young people within the region.

TAFE system and offerings have reduced significantly over the past 5-6 years in regions – and improved access to vocational education is critical ie for trades, etc. as there are many who don’t wish to or are not suited to higher education / University.

A further challenge for (say) regional apprentices is accessing the block training that is generally offered in Adelaide. This requires travel, accommodation, meals, and other expenses for people who are generally young, on minimal pay, and from an economic, social, and road safety perspective – is a significant challenge.

6. What is required to encourage greater overseas and city-to-regional migration to regional South Australia?

As previously identified – housing is a major inhibitor to migration for our area.

We have the jobs (Teys Australia, Viticulture, Aged Care, etc) and have identified in the LC Regional Growth Strategy that migration is key to providing and maintaining our working age population.

We want migration to be permanent rather than seasonal – and a housing solution is key to assist in relocation of family units rather than individuals.
Community integration and education is critical, but there are programs, good volunteer base, and support for this to occur.

Of additional interest within the latest 2016 Census, and an indication of changing demographics and the increasing influence of migration to our Council area

- 19.6% (15% in 2011 Census) of Council population nominated their country of birth as non-Australian; and
- Without migration, population would have declined. (Migration population increase of 4.6% - overall population increase 2.16%)

Additionally, a major employer in this region has a diverse population demographic that provides for 29 different nationalities (other than Australian) and this accounts for some 50% of that workforce of approximately 500 people.

7. How can we build a pool of the next generation of business and community leaders?

Interesting and challenging question (and links somewhat to Q14)

Regionally, we have a LC Leadership Program which aims to identify current & future leaders and provide a supported leadership program which has been in place for 12 months.

The challenge regionally is that many local leaders are often on many boards, organisations, etc – and that does place pressure on existing leaders. There is real danger of burnout and sustainability of leaders.

13. What needs to happen to encourage investment in regional SA?

There are often opportunities lost for investment, or found to be uneconomical for various reasons including:

- Provision and cost of critical infrastructure such as power, gas, water – where the cost to provide and/or upgrade third party infrastructure just makes it impossible to do. Government could provide greater level of investment in this critical infrastructure;
- Culture and Bureaucracy – State Agencies need to change their culture to have a more ‘can do’ approach, rather than a risk averse approach. Cross agency cooperation would be hugely beneficial rather than operating in isolation. No different to a Council (Council is the entity, not a Council department), and the same should apply to the State.
- Land Use – and we acknowledge the new PDI Act and approach. Proposed regional developments are at times in conflict with land use (from a historical sense) and by the time that this is changed – the opportunity has disappeared.
• Approval process - improved balance between environmental, social, and economic outcomes by all State agencies. Legislation and facts should drive decisions, not agency (or agency personnel) ideals.

14. What factors would encourage innovators and entrepreneurs to remain or locate in regional SA?

• Similar to Q13. A less risk averse approach, attitude, and culture to new ideas and innovation.
• There needs to be some level of measured acceptance that there will be failures when innovation and entrepreneurship is involved.
• Flinders Uni and New Venture Institute Program – now have a base at Mount Gambier – great program for new businesses and entrepreneurs – accessible and achievable. A great example of what could be provided to a greater extent in Regions.
• Council has a Business Entrepreneur Fund where we allocate up to $20,000 per annum to businesses that are seeking to develop or innovate.

Key Infrastructure Projects

With methodology and approach discussed within the above submission, there are some clear ‘enabling’ projects that would benefit from government investment. These include:

• **Naracoorte – Driving Growth, Linking Industry**
  The project will create linkages across the heavy vehicle network serving the central and upper Limestone Coast agricultural sector and supporting industries, transforming Naracoorte into a commercial and industrial hub where people want to live and work.

  Key road infrastructure and intersections will be constructed and upgraded, establishing a network of routes suitable for larger vehicle configurations and allowing access to undeveloped industrial land.

  Investment Opportunity: $20M (Federal and State recent announcement of $8M towards this project)

• **Naracoorte Healthcare Training Hub – Fostering Growth & Sustainability in healthcare Services**
  The project aims to create a Healthcare Training Hub to support the growth of healthcare professionals through attraction and retention, and creating a supply of health services, rather than a reactive demand driven service delivery.

  With the region aiming to attract working age population people, and healthcare and social assistance becoming a high growth industry – we need to ensure that we are able to provide services in the healthcare sector to assist in attracting people and new business opportunities.

  Investment Opportunity: Undetermined – Planning Phase
• **Naracoorte Regional Livestock Exchange (NRLE) Infrastructure Development**
   As outlined in the NRLE Strategic Plan 2017-2028 – this facility aims to remain as the premier livestock selling centre in the Limestone Coast region, and establish itself as a leader in the Australian livestock selling industry. The Naracoorte Lucindale community derives significant direct economic benefit from the NRLE.

   Ongoing investment in infrastructure and services will enable significant economic benefits for the State, Region, and Council area.

   Total Stock Sales: $1.2B over past 10 years
   Cattle Sold – 93,000pa (3 year average)
   Sheep & Lambs Sold – 375,000pa (3 year average)

   Investment opportunity: $5.5M (Cattle & bull pens, loading ramps, Walkways, Sheep Pen shade, Roadside Signage & Marketing, Solar Energy, Sheep Electronic Tagging)

• **Naracoorte Regional Sports Centre Masterplan**
   Development of the Naracoorte Regional Sports Centre Masterplan will be completed in the 4th quarter of 2019 to assist Council in the long term sustainable development and utilisation of the Sports Centre site and facilities in line with their vision of increasing participation and meeting current and future needs equitably.

   Investment opportunity: Up to $30M (cost estimates and opportunities to be determined within completed Masterplan)

• **Lucindale Masterplan**
   Development of a Masterplan for the Lucindale Township will be completed in the 4th quarter of 2019, with aims and objectives being to redesign and revitalise the Lucindale Township to achieve a public domain of exceptional quality which meets the needs of the residents and the broader community well into the future.

   Investment opportunity: Up to $10M (cost estimates and opportunities to be determined within completed Masterplan)

• **Naracoorte Library Hub**
   Development of the Naracoorte Library Hub – a regional centre that meets the expectations of our community and regional visitors through a modern learning, community integration, and community based facility.

   Investment opportunity: To be determined – planning phase

• **Asset Management and Maintenance of the South East Drainage System**
   The total drainage system of the Limestone Coast region is a critical part of the region’s infrastructure, supporting its capacity to undertake economic activity and maintain transport networks.
The value of different land-based primary production activities are; Livestock (slaughtered) $603M, Forestry (harvested logs) $312M, Broadacre cropping $178M, Vegetables $125M, Grape Production $85M, Hay $75M, other livestock products (wool, dairy etc) $124M (source ABS 2016, ABARES 2019).

This produce is almost exclusively transported via roads, which are intersected by the extensive drainage network. The region has hundreds of large bridge crossings and thousands of culvert crossings in the road network. Larger, more efficient transport vehicles are being permitted on roads placing additional pressure on bridge infrastructure, and in some cases, routes are not available for use to the bridge condition. Agricultural equipment is also increasing in size and bridges restrict their movement if inadequate in width. Failure to maintain and upgrade as required will lead to restrictions in transport options, higher costs and lower returns to the producers, with inevitable flow on effects to the regional community.

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