



Marshall
LIBERAL TEAM

RECHARGING OUR
REGIONS
#RegionsMatter





Front cover photo courtesy of L Forbes & N Clift, harvesting of a wheat crop, Black Point, South Australia



“We are committed to creating jobs and growing South Australia’s regions by delivering our strong regional plan.”

Steven Marshall MP
State Liberal Leader





PRIMARY INDUSTRIES & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our regions form the backbone of the South Australian economy.

Many of our state's economic and cultural offerings are derived from the farming, mining and tourism activities that occur in our regions.

In fact, our regions generate more than one quarter of our gross state product, more than \$25 billion annually, while the food sector alone employs more than 147,000 people, accounting for one in every five jobs.

The benefits derived from our regions flow through to the rest of the state, driving our exports and lining our tables.

The State Liberals recognise that our regions are crucial for the future prosperity of our state as a whole.

That's why South Australia needs a strong regional plan, and a Marshall Liberal Government to implement it.



DAVID RIDGWAY MLC

**LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
SHADOW MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES,
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND TOURISM**

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THE PROBLEM

After nearly 16 years of the current government there is no doubt that South Australia's regions are suffering.

Weatherill's city-centric approach has delivered devastating cuts to regional services and programs, and chronic underinvestment in infrastructure.

As part of a Labor Cabinet, Minister Brock has been an ineffective advocate for regional South Australia, and has failed to deliver real outcomes for our regions.

Unfortunately there are a host of key indicators which demonstrate this failure.

ABS data shows that regional population growth is less than half that of Greater Adelaide. In 2016 South Australia's regional population grew by just 0.3 per cent, or 1,300 people.

Between 2016-17 and 2020-21 the Weatherill Government is planning to cut almost \$100 million from the Primary Industries and Regions budget.

That's \$100 million less being spent to create jobs, improve services and support the industries that grow our regions.

In the last State Budget, the Weatherill Government cut spending on Primary Industries and Regions by nearly \$48 million; a \$48 million cut to the sector contributing over \$25 billion towards the South Australian economy.

Jay Weatherill's city-centric approach to investment has delivered devastating cuts to funding for regional services and programs.

Regions have sustained continuous cuts to research and development funding for our primary industries, which are one of the biggest employers in regional South Australia and vital to growth. Without new methods and technologies, our state will only fall further behind.

The Weatherill Government has also cut health services in our regions and failed to invest in key road, rail and port infrastructure.

This Weatherill Government has failed South Australia's regions.



THE PLAN

A Marshall Liberal Government will recognise that South Australia's regions are absolutely fundamental to the future prosperity of our great state.

That's why we've developed Recharging our Regions.

Recharging our Regions is a comprehensive plan that will:

- create jobs and grow regional economies
- reduce the cost of living and cut stifling taxes
- invest in key infrastructure
- restore regional health, education and other essential frontline services.

Last year primary industries accounted for 12 of our top 20 merchandise exports, with wheat, wine and minerals consistently driving our exports.

We will recognise the importance of supporting our primary industries to grow our exports.

South Australia is blessed to have some of the most beautiful and diverse regions in the world.

A Marshall Liberal Government will encourage regional development through our bold tourism and infrastructure policies.

A Marshall Liberal Government will strengthen the relationship between the State Government and Regional Development Australia (RDA) boards to reconnect with the regions at a grassroots level.

A Marshall Liberal Government will deliver for South Australia's regions.

A Marshall Liberal Government will implement a suite of policies to cut taxes, invest in key infrastructure projects and restore fundamental health and education services in our regions.



Creating Jobs

- Regional Growth Fund
- New trade offices
- Opening up our reservoirs
- Economic advice and support
- Supporting farmers
- Farm debt mediation
- Review of marine parks
- Protecting the livestock industry



Reducing the Cost of Living

- Liberal Energy Solution
- Slashing ESL bills
- Reducing the cost of road maintenance
- Capping council rate rises
- Capping NRM levies
- Water pricing inquiry



Unlocking Investment

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- Royalties for Regions
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- Greater certainty for water allocations
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- Reinstating country speed limits
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Delivering Frontline Services

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- Reinstating community legal services
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- Winning the war on drugs
- Literacy and dyslexia support
- Yorketown hospital
- Preventative health
- Entrepreneurial schools
- Mt Gambier renal dialysis services

Creating Jobs

A Marshall Liberal Government will back business so it can invest in our state with certainty, develop new and innovative products and services, increase export potential to drive sales and opportunities, and create real and lasting jobs. That's why we will undertake the following measures.

Regional Growth Fund

We will create jobs and unlock new economic activity in our regions by investing in the Regional Growth Fund, a 10-year, \$150 million program.

This fund will support projects that unlock new economic activity in our regions, creating jobs, growing export opportunities and strengthening regional communities.

New trade offices

We will provide exporters with improved access to overseas markets by opening up new trade offices in Japan, Malaysia, Dubai and the United States.

This will be part of a comprehensive policy to boost South Australia's international trade and support our exporters.

This will support growth in production at home, creating jobs and prosperity across regional South Australia.

Opening up our reservoirs

We will boost tourism in regional areas through our plan to open up a number of South Australia's reservoirs for recreational activities.

This change will provide a much needed boost to regional tourism offerings, as well as providing local communities with greater opportunities to make use of these public assets.

Economic advice and support

We will ensure Regional Development Australia boards are able to continue providing vital advice and support on the economic development of each region by providing \$3 million in annual funding.

Under this arrangement, each board will be required to submit a four-year business plan which will encourage boards to undertake work on a wider range of cross-regional issues and economic development projects.

Supporting farmers

We will give farmers support to grow their business by waiving stamp duties charged on multi-peril crop insurance policies.

This will enable South Australian farmers to manage risks, plant more crops and target higher yields.

This will be great news for South Australia's economy and exports and enable South Australia to capitalise on our world-renowned primary industries sector, in which we have a significant competitive advantage.

Farm debt mediation

We will support farmers experiencing financial hardship by enforcing a mandated mediation process, avoiding banks foreclosing on farming operations prematurely.

This process will be mediated by the Small Business Commissioner, increasing the likelihood that the dispute can be resolved without farming operations being foreclosed upon.

Review of marine parks

We will undertake a science-based review of our network of marine parks, ensuring that a successful balance is struck between economic development and environmental preservation.

Protecting the livestock industry

We will protect the state's \$4.7 billion livestock industry by providing funding to employ two wild dog trappers.

These trappers will particularly help South Australia's 7,000 sheep, lamb and wool producers, which farm 11 million sheep, producing output valued at almost \$500 million.

They will also help prevent these vicious dogs from heading further south into the Barossa Valley and Adelaide Hills.

Reducing the Cost of Living

After 16 years of Labor Government, our cost of living has skyrocketed. We pay some of the highest utility prices and state taxes in the nation and we think that's simply not good enough. That's why we will undertake the following measures.

Liberal Energy Solution

Our comprehensive energy solution will drive down wholesale prices which will reduce average household electricity bills by over \$300 per year, with businesses saving even more.

Key components of this solution include:

- \$200 million Interconnection Fund, enabling us to import and export more electricity from the national grid
- grants averaging \$2,500 per household to help install batteries in 40,000 homes
- banning exit fees and enforcing minimum notice period on changes to energy contracts by retailers
- improved reliability by bringing currently underutilised generation capacity into the market when we need it.

Slashing ESL bills

We will slash Emergency Services Levy bills by \$150 for the average household, putting \$90 million back into the pockets of South Australian families and businesses.

This cut in the ESL will cover all eligible fixed property regardless of the type of land use, providing relief to households, businesses, farmers and a wide range of community groups.

We will ensure this tax cut applies from 1 July 2018, while maintaining the current level of emergency services provided to South Australians.

Reducing the cost of road maintenance

We will reduce the cost of road maintenance for regional councils, easing pressure on council rates while ensuring quality rural roads.

We will reverse an earlier decision by the Weatherill Government to remove the exemption for paying extractive mineral royalties on road rubble pits owned by local governments.

Capping council rate rises

We will cap council rate increases, ensuring councils continue to provide high quality services without exposing ratepayers to excessive increases in council rates year on year.

The cap will be calculated on a measured and transparent basis to reassure property owners they are not paying more than they should.

As part of this process, an independent regulator will determine the appropriate cap on a region by region basis, recognising that council costs can vary between regions.

Capping NRM levies

We will cap land and water levy increases through our new Natural Resource Management structure which will ensure spending is kept under control.

NRM levies have consistently increased well beyond CPI, adding to cost of living pressures for households, businesses and farmers.

Our cap will ensure transparency in how levies are spent, with all levies collected in a region to be spent in that region.

The cap applied will be set by an independent body.

Water pricing inquiry

We will establish an independent inquiry into water pricing to ensure South Australians pay a fair price for water and don't continue to be ripped off by the government.

South Australians pay some of the highest water prices in the nation, with average water bills rising by 232 per cent while Labor has been in government, compared to inflation running at only 43 per cent.

An independent inquiry is the only means of establishing what the real price of water should be in South Australia, with the outcomes of this inquiry to inform improvements to pricing policy.

Unlocking Investment

For too long our businesses have been shackled by high costs, high taxes and unnecessary red tape. Our business sector needs immediate relief and only a Marshall Liberal Government will make this happen.
That's why we will undertake the following measures.

Globe Link

We will supercharge South Australia's exports by reducing the cost of freight and opening new export markets through our Globe Link plan.

Globe Link is a generational upgrade to South Australia's freight export infrastructure, starting with detailed planning work for a non-stop freight corridor bypassing the hills and a 24-hour freight airport at Monarto.

A detailed business case will be prepared as part of the master planning process.

Royalties for Regions

We will ensure better, safer infrastructure with Royalties for Regions, a dedicated roads and infrastructure fund using 30% of mining royalties, estimated to be \$750 million over ten years.

This commitment provides a dedicated funding stream to ensure the delivery of key projects in addition to other productivity and safety-enhancing projects.

Moratorium on fracking in the South East

We will protect the livelihood of farmers, irrigators and other stakeholders in the Limestone Coast area by introducing a 10-year moratorium on the exploration for and production of oil and gas using hydraulic fracture stimulation (fracking techniques) in the region.

This policy will provide certainty for businesses and producers in this region, while providing industry with an opportunity to demonstrate the safety of the technology, addressing any concerns held by stakeholders.

Greater certainty for water allocations

We will give greater support to River Murray irrigators in their forward planning, strengthening their businesses by giving them the information and tools to plan ahead through the provision of quarterly probability scenarios for water allocations.

Giving irrigators greater certainty in their business planning will also assist the efforts to ensure the River Murray is sustainably managed.

Blocking the state bank tax

We have protected South Australians from the Weatherill Government's \$417 million state bank tax which all households and businesses would have ended up paying.

The cost of this tax would have been passed onto borrowers through higher lending costs, shareholders (including superannuation fund members) through reduced dividends, and the economy as a whole through deterring investment.

Reinstating country speed limits

We will reverse the Weatherill Government's reduction in speed limits on eight country roads and review country speed limits more broadly, while investing in improved road maintenance to ensure safety.

Our approach prioritises better investment in public infrastructure rather than superficially dropping speed limits.

We will properly invest in our regional roads rather than apply a band-aid fix.

A new approach to NRM

We will give farmers, primary producers and landowners security and confidence by working with them on Natural Resource Management (NRM), repealing the NRM Act (and boards) in favour of Landscape South Australia – a new approach that focuses on getting back to the basics of soil quality, pest control, and water management.

We will provide for stronger local representation on the boards by requiring that three of the board members be directly elected by the community, while also capping land and water levy increases to ensure they are not an unfair impost on primary producers and businesses.

Boards will be required to identify their priorities in a 5-year plan and to outsource aspects of these priorities to the private and non-government sector to create jobs and drive investment further.

Delivering Frontline Services

For too long, this city-centric Weatherill Government has neglected health, education and community safety and justice in regional areas. Our priority is making sure South Australians across the state have access to the services they need, when and where they need them. That's why we will undertake the following measures.

Investing in country health

We will fix the backlog of capital works requirements in country hospitals by urgently addressing high risk repairs and maintenance jobs, implementing a country capital renewal strategy, and ensuring money raised in communities is spent in those communities. We will also allow hospitals to retain part of any private patient revenue.

Drug rehabilitation

We will pilot a community-based rehabilitation program in the Riverland to address the scourge of drugs in our regional communities.

This program will treat some of the most vulnerable members of our community through intensive outpatient addiction recovery programs supported by inpatient rapid detox beds.

Reinstating community legal services

We will ensure people in the Riverland, Mallee and Mid Murray will be able to access in-person community legal services when they most need them by reinstating a full-time, on-the-ground, legal community service in the Riverland.

Regional Health Boards

We will strengthen country health services through local decision making by new regional health boards.

Each board will be responsible for managing the budget and services within the local area, and will actively engage with the community and frontline health professionals.

Winning the war on drugs

We will introduce a suite of measures to stop the scourge of drugs in our communities including new rehabilitation beds, mandated youth drug treatment, limiting drug diversions, and abuse prevention programs for all school children.

Literacy and dyslexia support

We will improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students across South Australia through our Literacy Guarantee: a comprehensive program including specialised literacy coaches, free dyslexia workshops for parents (including in dozens of regional centres not currently serviced), extra support for school breakfast programs and a range of other measures which will help all students, particularly those with dyslexia and other learning difficulties.

Yorke town Hospital

We will support access to surgical procedures in the southern Yorke Peninsula by funding urgently needed capital works at the Yorketown Hospital.

Preventative health

We will support community-wide preventative health initiatives by investing \$1 million over four years to fund projects in regional areas.

Effective prevention requires dedicated long-term action in many areas of our community and we will invest in prevention by providing grants of up to \$50,000 towards projects that have measurable and immediate health and welfare benefits for the regional communities.

Entrepreneurial schools

We will prepare our children for the jobs of the future by developing specialist entrepreneurial programs in two regional schools which will be in addition to new business and entrepreneurial-focussed SACE subjects which will be available in all schools in South Australia.

Mt Gambier renal dialysis services

We will improve the quality of care for patients undergoing renal dialysis in the state's South East by upgrading and expanding the facilities available.





If you would like to provide feedback on our policy or learn more about our plan, please get in touch via:

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