

ADELAIDE HILLS COUNCIL

Life on the Fringe

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Adelaide Hills Council

- Located 20 – 30 minutes from the Adelaide **CBD on the traditional lands of the Kurna and Peramagnk people**, the Hills is a working agrarian landscape of scenic beauty with urban, township and rural lifestyle offerings
- Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) has an **area of 795 km²** - more than the combined area of the inner Adelaide metro area, with **57 townships & settlements**
- In 2022 the population was **41,448 (ERP) living in 16,237 dwellings with an average household size of 2.61**, and a population density of 0.50 per square kilometre



Who & What are we?

We see our district as a **Provider and Protector**

- **Providers of:**
 - **Water** catchment and quality
 - **Food** production and security
 - **Primary production** opportunities
 - Diverse **living** options
 - Easily accessible **food and wine** experiences
 - Diverse **outdoor activities**
- **Protectors of:**
 - **Native flora & fauna** conservation
 - Natural and early settlement **Landscape**
 - **Character & Heritage**





“Our aspiration for our exceptional region is to make it easier for our community to prosper while maintaining and enhancing the unique environment, character and livability of our area.”

AHC Strategic Plan 2020-24

The Limits to Growth

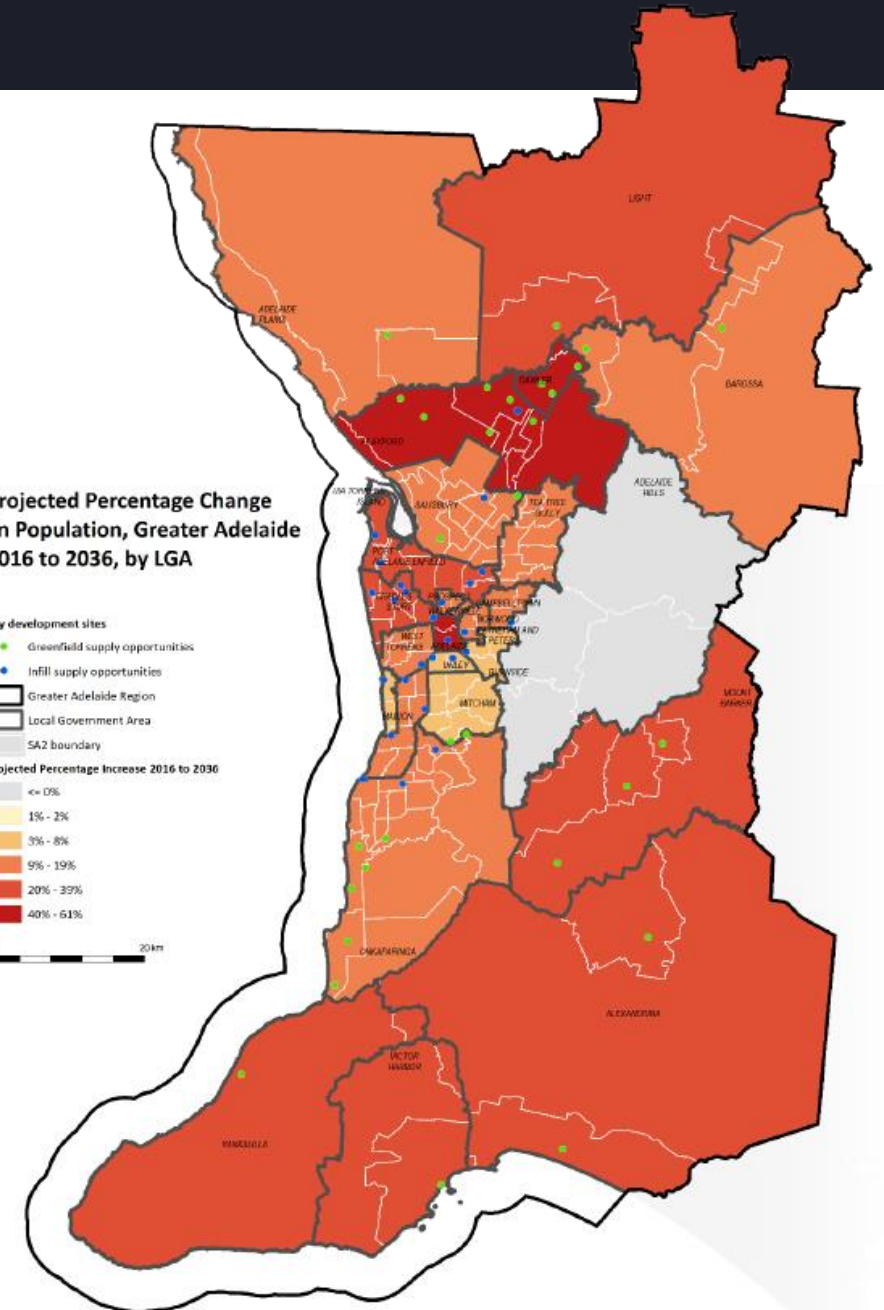
- **Mt Lofty Ranges Watershed area covers 89% of AHC**, constituting 42.7% of the entire Watershed. The Watershed provides ~60% of Metropolitan Adelaide's potable water.
- Majority of **land outside townships protected from residential development** by the Environment, Food and Production Areas (EFPA). This land is zoned for Primary Production or Conservation.
- **Most of the land is classed as high bushfire risk** characterised by steep topography, difficult access and high flammability.
- Nationally recognised biodiversity hotspot with **large tracts of native vegetation**.
- Existing infrastructure **capacity to support future development is limited**, with a majority of the district lacking mains water, sewer or stormwater connections.



Finding Balance

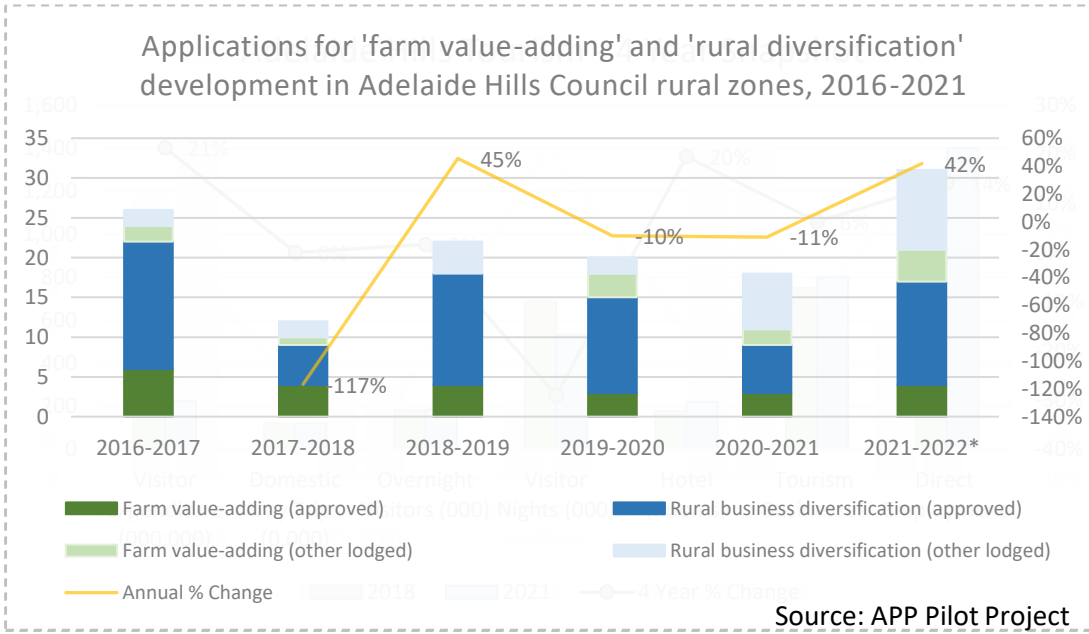
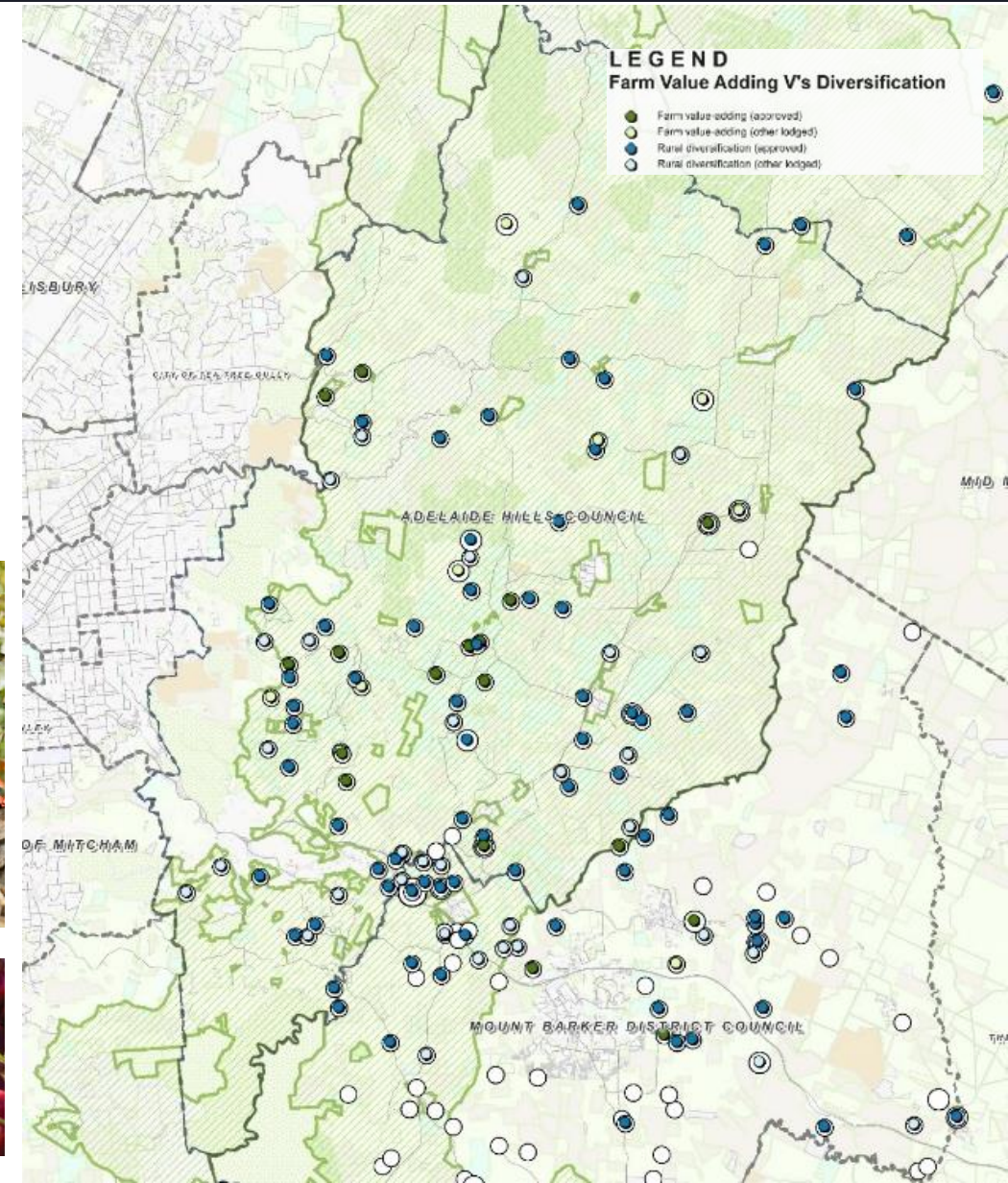
Pathways to a sustainable future in a low population growth scenario:

- **1. Support Innovation** – administer a regulatory framework in a way that supports and advocates for important sectors like agriculture and tourism, while protecting the qualities that make the Hills unique.
- **2. Defy the Projections** – provide opportunities for diverse housing typologies where it can be reasonably accommodated like inside urban areas and townships.
- **3. Targeted Investment** – invest in strategic infrastructure and projects that meet resident needs while supporting increased visitation to the region.



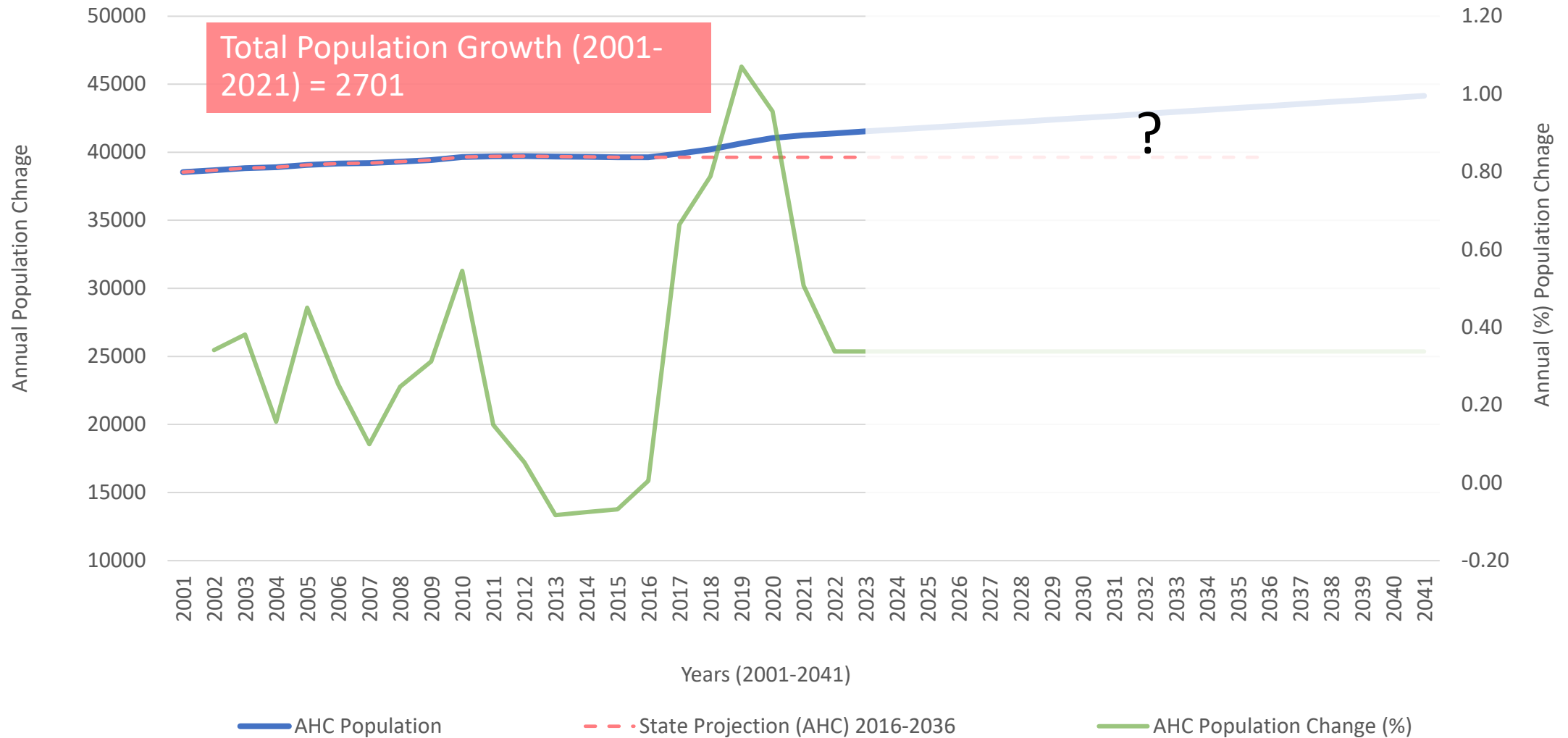
Key-Industry Development Snapshot

- Strategic economic development focus on agriculture and tourism.
- Apples, Pears and Cherries \$114m output (20/21 >85% SA apple and pear crop), Berries \$9m output (20/21), Nurseries and Cut Flowers \$16m output (2021)
- Grapes (wine and table) \$18m output (20/21), an additional 600+ hectares under vine across the GI, Approved 9 new wineries (in AHC) and 25% increase in cellar doors across the GI.



Population Snapshot – 20 Years

AHC Population 2001-2041



Residential Development Snapshot – 10 Years

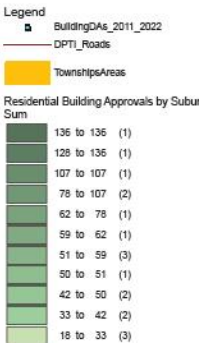
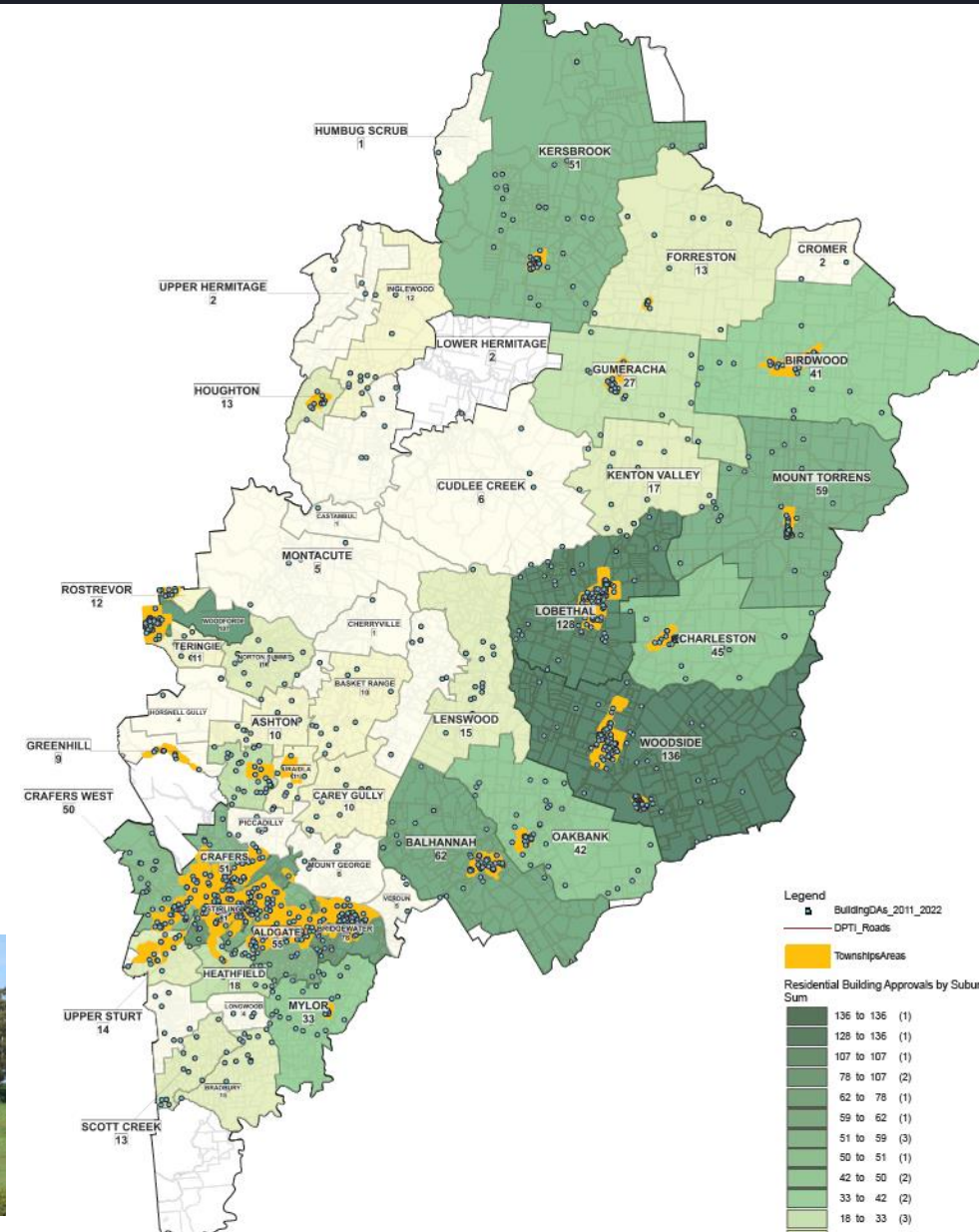
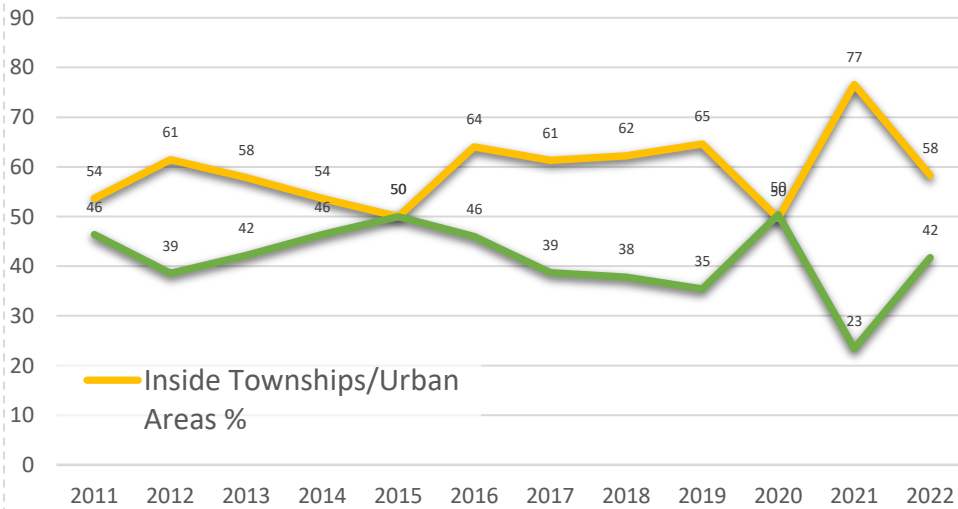
Residential Building Approvals 2011-2022




Residential Development Snapshot – by Locality

- Council has sought to **increase housing diversity, to provide better choice for various household lifecycle stages** (i.e. downsizers, first home buyers etc.)
- Achieving this has required **targeted policy intervention in our township and urban localities**. In total 843 dwellings have been approved in these areas since 2011 (60% of total).
- This contrasts with the **demand for rural living residential development which has continued to grow**, with 550 dwellings approved outside township and urban areas since 2011 (40% of total).

Percentage of Residential Building Approvals Inside vs Outside Township/Urban Areas





“The Region is a place of conflicting goals, preferences and aspirations. These conflicts involve issues of urban growth, the maintenance of rural character, provision of recreation and tourism, and the extent to which regional resources such as agricultural land, water and scenic diversity should be protected and enhanced.”

*Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Strategy Plan (1993) Policy Branch – Planning Division,
Department of Housing and Urban Development*

Agriculture

Key Challenges

- Farmland fragmentation caused by rural living encroachment
- Land use conflicts with housing & rural diversification (e.g. bird scaring devices, chemical spray drift, smells, noises from farm machinery, late night harvesting, etc)
- Wider setbacks and buffers increasingly required to mitigate interface issues (at a width of 10m+)
- Impacts of hobby farming (e.g. biosecurity)
- Environmental Covers (protective tree netting) provides multiple benefits for producers but can impact scenic landscapes

Key Opportunities

- [Education](#) series developed to target ‘tree changers’ with a focus on highlighting the Hills as a working agricultural landscape.
- Buffers Policy in place for 20 years to support equitable outcomes with regards to interface issues.
- Planning policy changes introduced to allow environmental covers and value adding opportunities to make it easier for farms to protect crops and diversify.
- Stronger strategic direction and policy improvements continue to be pursued – Integration of the Primary Production Priority Areas mapping considered a priority.



Housing

Key Challenges

- Finite land supply within townships + uneven distribution of land available
- Demand for treechange, rural living and lifestyle properties increasing
- Impact of housing in the rural landscape
- Preference for detached dwelling (separate home) remains strong
- Affordable/resilient housing options are limited
- Limited community support for township expansion or density increases.

Key Opportunities

- Regional Planning process provides an opportunity to further recognise the constraints to growth.
- Regional Collaboration/Research partnerships to strengthen evidence base between stakeholders with shared interest to inform policy.
- Unlock innovative housing opportunities within townships (i.e. co-housing, eco villages, gentle infill)
- Stronger policy to direct rural dwellings away from prime agricultural land and protect scenic landscapes
- Introduce Local Design Review to support contextually appropriate development outcomes.



Summary

- Urbanisation in the Adelaide Hills Council is **limited by State significant assets, natural hazards, infrastructure impediments and community expectations**. But there's a lot playing out under the surface.
- It remains a highly contested space **with the responsibility for water protection, biodiversity conservation, food production and security, land use conflict and rural character preservation** creating a challenging planning environment and requires strong strategic intent and a need for a more whole of government integrated approach.
- The new planning system has introduced some stronger strategic direction (SPPs), legislative mechanisms (EFPA) and some good policy initiatives (Value Adding support). However, with the transition to the Planning and Design Code **good local policy has been lost and there remains opportunities to reconcile this to respond better to ongoing and emerging issues**. This will be explored as part of the Greater Adelaide Regional Planning process and future iterations of the Planning and Design Code.





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Questions