

Friday, 21 January 2011

REGIONAL PLAN TO MAKE THE MURRAY AND MALLEE SUSTAINABLE

Minister for Urban Development and Planning Paul Holloway said today a new planning strategy for the Murray and Mallee will guide the sustainable development of the region's job-creating industries.

Mr Holloway says the *Murray and Mallee Region Plan* sets out land-use policies and principles to protect and manage environmental assets that are the foundation of the region's agricultural, industrial and tourism industries.

The Region Plan identifies the different roles and functions the various towns and parts of the region can play to support growth and jobs within existing industries such as a growing processing and manufacturing sector, as well as fostering new industries such as renewable energy supplies, he says.

“To secure a sustainable economy for the long term, we have identified where housing, population and industry growth is best located and not located in the Murray and Mallee,” Mr Holloway says.

“The Plan tackles issues such as soil salinity, efficient water use and the interface between industry, residential areas and valuable environmental assets, such as the River Murray.”

Mr Holloway says more than 700,000 tourists visit this rich and varied landscape each year, lured by some of our State's proudest natural attractions, such as the River Murray, the Coorong and the Riverland.

“Land-use arrangements protecting the environmental assets upon which these tourist and service industries rely are absolutely critical to the long-term prosperity of this important region,” he says.

The *Murray and Mallee Region Plan* is the result of a collaborative process involving nine local councils as well as Regional Development Australia—Murraylands and Riverland, the Riverland Development Corp. and the SA Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board during 2007–08.

The final Plan has been adopted as a volume of the South Australian Planning Strategy after a two-month public consultation period in August and September last year. Twenty-nine submissions were received during the consultation process, mostly from state government agencies and local councils.

Specifically, the *Murray and Mallee Region Plan* aims to:

- promote regional job creation through industrial growth and commercial development, particularly in Murray Bridge, Tailem Bend, Monarto, Berri and Renmark;

- recognise and promote the region's strong, vibrant and healthy communities, their attachment to the region and the value these communities provide to the vibrancy of the region;
- strengthen the roles and functions of towns to build sustainable centres supported by strategic infrastructure and services planning;
- support regional communities through provision of infrastructure, including broadband access; waste management, effluent disposal and water re-use facilities; and social, community, education and health facilities and services;
- manage town growth to protect environmental and industry assets;
- manage development to protect areas of environmental and conservation significance across the region, including the Ramsar-listed wetlands, the River Murray and Floodplain, the Coorong and Lower Lakes, and remnant terrestrial biodiversity including the Mallee;
- expand and strengthen nature-based and ecotourism with accommodation located in already cleared areas, focusing on the Coorong, the Lower Lakes, the River Murray, Marine Parks and the wilderness and conservation parks in the Mallee and;
- retain built heritage, promote cultural heritage and link these with tourism to the region.

These 29 submissions received during the consultation process resulted in changes that ensure the final Plan considers current research, such as research informing the Murray Darling Basin Authority's *Guide to the Basin Plan*, infrastructure investment and planning undertaken by other agencies or organisations.

Formal adoption of the Plan means it has statutory effect and will provide direction to local councils and the private sector about development.

The Department of Planning and Local Government (DPLG) will be working with councils and Regional Development Australia – Murraylands and Riverland to prepare an action plan for implementing short, medium and long-term priorities.

These plans will be developed as part of regional forums to be held in every South Australian Government region during 2011, with timing for each settled by the end of this month.

A copy of the *Murray and Mallee Region Plan* can be found online on the planning section of the DPLG website at: <http://www.dplg.sa.gov.au/go/murray-mallee-plan>

Hard copies are available from each of the local councils in the region and copies are also available on CD-ROM.