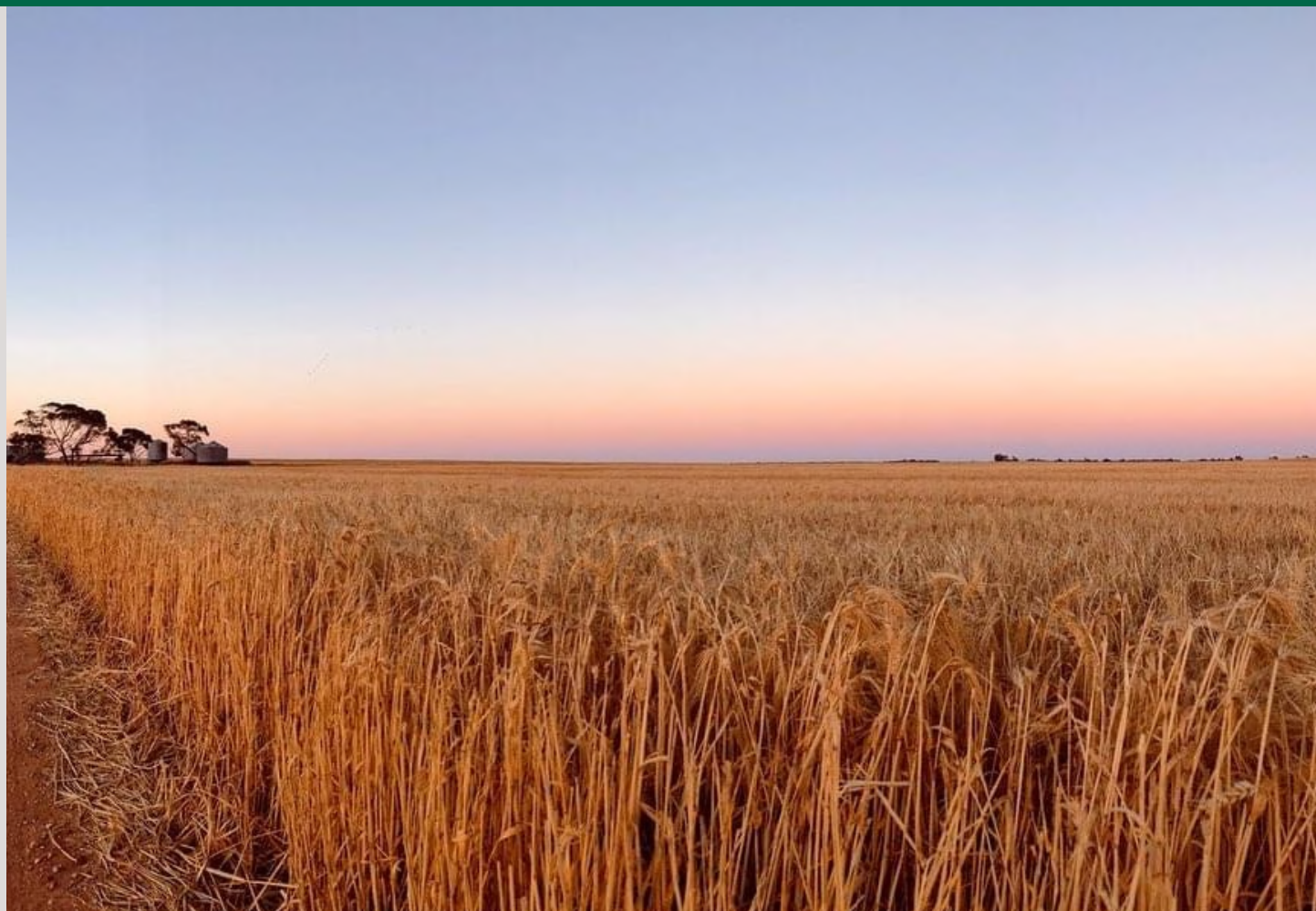


Environmental Action Plan 2021 - 2024

Southern Mallee District Council



Adopted September 2021

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Acknowledgment of Country

Southern Mallee District Council acknowledges the Ngarkat people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and work. We respect their culture and we extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Message from the Mayor & CEO

We are pleased to present the first Environmental Action Plan for the Southern Mallee District Council.

The Southern Mallee is an extremely special place and we are committed to ensuring we strive towards delivering our vision of:

'A prosperous and welcoming community where we share a sustainable and safe environment and a diverse economy.'

Economic activity in the Southern Mallee largely centers on agriculture and horticulture. This plan acknowledges the intrinsic link between these industries and the natural environment. Protecting our environment and ensuring its long-term sustainability supports our region's future economic outcomes including employment opportunities, food production capabilities, tourism and further commercial development.

Protecting the long-term sustainability of our region and the environment will also help to ensure higher quality of life for our future local residents in generations to come. This will be achieved through a strong local economy, the provision of high quality infrastructure and services and the preservation of natural resources for both industry and recreational activities.

This plan acknowledges the role Council can play in planning and implementing strategies to mitigate the challenges facing our community as a result of climate change, including extreme weather events such as drought, heatwaves and fires. Preparing for these events and putting in place strategies and actions to reduce waste and save energy will help our district mitigate these challenges and support the long-term prosperity of our economy and the safety of our community.

This plan outlines the key focus themes and actions that will help guide Council in its decision making going forward. The plan also identifies a range of actions we will implement over the next 4 years. We look forward to leading by example and also working with the community to implement this Environmental Action Plan.



Cr Jeffrey Nickolls
Mayor



Jason Taylor
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

Over the past decades there has been an accelerating awareness globally and within Australia of the importance of protecting our natural environment. The link between a healthy and sustainable environment and the outcomes of long-term economic prosperity and a high quality of life for future generations is apparent. There are a number of strategies and actions that can be undertaken to reduce our impact on the environment such as saving energy and reducing waste. Planning and investment can also help with the development of climate smart innovation and the mitigation of severe climate events.

The Southern Mallee District Council is committed to supporting our local businesses and industries, and working with our local community as well as state and federal government to achieve climate smart outcomes. In developing and implementing this plan we are acknowledging the leadership role we can undertake. This plan identifies 7 key focus themes and the environmental actions we will implement over the timeframe of 2021-2024. Initially we are focussing on actions that can be achieved with minimal but efficient resource allocation, the aim being continual improvement. This plan will remain open to new opportunities and actions arising from stakeholder engagement, innovation and advances in technology. The plan also identifies a list of actions that should be re-evaluated for the inclusion in the development of subsequent Environmental Action Plans.

Southern Mallee & the Environment

Southern Mallee District Council is a diverse municipality with rural and township based communities which is located 200 kilometres to the east of Adelaide covering 6,000 km² in South Australia.

The Southern Mallee has many integral links to our natural environment across our key industries, local economic outcomes, recreational landscapes and services and infrastructure provided by Council. In the development of this plan we have identified and considered:

- The prominence of agriculture and horticulture as major sources of employments and contributors to the local economy.
- The Ngarkat and Billiatt Conservation Parks featuring as a major landmark in the region.
- Protecting our natural landscapes, ecosystems, habitats and our water supply.
- The importance of the waste services provided by Council including rubbish collection, effluent and storm water management.
- The significance of roads and footpaths in our region to both industry and the community. The Southern Mallee District Council services a total of 1,335 kilometres of roads with a large network of roads per population. Transport plays a huge role in connecting our communities and industries with opportunities.
- The opportunity to engage with an active community on environmental impacts but also to lead from the front in assessing Council's buildings, urban environments and assets for innovative solutions.
- The ability to mitigate, respond and adapt to natural disasters such as drought, heatwaves and fires.
- The importance of understanding our greenhouse gas emissions in a measurable way.

These key factors have contributed to the development of our 7 focus themes and the aligning actions.

Themes & Actions

FOCUS ONE: Climate smart business and agricultural practices

- Support climate smart business innovation, business establishment, risk management and growth.
- Support the agriculture sector in efforts to adapt, innovate and reduce net emissions.
- Facilitate awareness and education of climate smart business and agricultural opportunities.

	ACTION	TIMING
1.1	Provide letters of support for grant applications for climate smart business opportunities.	Ongoing
1.2	Advocate for further research into environmentally sustainable practices in the agricultural industry that promote jobs, growth, productivity and diversity in the sector.	Ongoing
1.3	Support events and information sessions that provide industry information and showcase environmental strategies within agriculture.	Ongoing
1.4	Partner with government organisations on delivering drought assistance programs.	Ongoing
1.5	Monitor government funding opportunities in relation to climate smart business opportunities.	Ongoing

Timing: Year 1 = FY21/22 Year 2 = FY22/23 Year 3 = FY23/24



Themes & Actions

FOCUS TWO: Reduce waste emissions

- Reduce waste by encouraging circular resource use (re-use, recycle, composting).
- Continue to provide waste management services that are responsive to the community and environment.

	ACTION	TIMING
2.1	Undertake major review of Councils current waste management system and long term plans.	Year 1
2.2	Participate in the Murraylands Regional tender for the disposal of mixed recyclables.	Year 1
2.3	Investigate the opportunity for increased frequency in recycle bin pick up to divert recyclables from landfill.	Year 1
2.4	Develop a communication / education plan to help households, farmers and businesses understand waste minimisation and recycling.	Year 1
2.5	Investigate the feasibility of introducing permanent recycling bins in our commercial centres.	Year 1
2.6	Explore funding opportunities available to establish a kitchen caddy program to encourage residents to manage their own green waste diverting it from landfill.	Year 1
2.7	Investigate the opportunity of implementing a 3 bin system (general waste, recycling and green waste).	Year 2
2.8	Investigate recyclable schemes and possible partnerships for minor recyclables i.e. e-waste, ink cartridges, glasses, batteries, poly pipe, silage wrap and light plastics.	Year 3
2.9	Conduct a review of our waste and recycling policy.	Year 3
2.10	Continue to facilitate the DrumMUSTER program to encourage recycling of chemical containers.	Ongoing
2.11	Monitor government funding opportunities in relation to waste improvements.	Ongoing

Timing: Year 1 = FY21/22 Year 2 = FY22/23 Year 3 = FY23/24

Themes & Actions

FOCUS THREE: Reduce transport emissions

- Support the uptake of low and zero emissions vehicles and fuels.
- Create walkable, connected neighbourhoods.
- Support public transport opportunities.

	ACTION	TIMING
3.1	Apply through funding opportunities for the installation of electric re-charge stations.	Year 1
3.2	Investigate the addition of bike tracks to major towns and purchasing bikes to have available for hire with a community trail.	Year 3
3.3	Advocate for improved Communications/NBN services across the district to allow for virtual meetings and reduce travel.	Ongoing
3.4	Undertake condition assessment of the pavement for walkability, and improve the network in high use areas to encourage the greater uptake of low emission transport.	Ongoing
3.5	Support and promote community passenger schemes in our region to encourage group transportation for community members.	Ongoing
3.6	Monitor government funding opportunities in relation to reducing transport emissions.	Ongoing

Timing: Year 1 = FY21/22 Year 2 = FY22/23 Year 3 = FY23/24



Themes & Actions

FOCUS FOUR: Climate smart buildings, urban environments and assets

- Support climate smart design, construction and adaption of buildings, urban environment and assets in our district.
- Consider opportunities to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in our built and urban environments.
- Continue to proactively manage and invest in stormwater infrastructure.

	ACTION	TIMING
4.1	Undertake upgrades to the Lameroo and Pinnaroo pools to ensure they alleviate the current environmental concerns reported in the 2020 audit.	Year 1
4.2	Undertake master planning for the Southern Parklands (Pinnaroo) and Lake Roberts (Lameroo) to improve the landscapes.	Year 1
4.3	Apply for grant funding to install water fountains or bottle re-fill stations in our commercial centres.	Year 1
4.4	Deliver the Commercial Centre Projects which include improved green spaces, street plantings and a low tech rain garden in front of museum.	Year 1 & 2
4.5	Undertake the greening elements of the Cemetery Action Plan.	Year 2 & 3
4.6	Review all Council owned buildings for climate smart adaptations (i.e. sensor lights, efficient appliances).	Year 3
4.7	Undertake condition assessments and maintenance of stormwater systems and footpaths to ensure they are fit for purpose.	Every 5 years
4.8	Continue to investigate and undertake opportunities to install solar panels on Council owned buildings and facilities.	Ongoing
4.9	Ensure development applications meet the current environmental standards.	Ongoing
4.10	Monitor government funding opportunities in relation to climate smart buildings, urban environments and assets.	Ongoing

Timing: Year 1 = FY21/22 Year 2 = FY22/23 Year 3 = FY23/24

Themes & Actions

FOCUS FIVE: Climate smart landscapes and habitats

- Advocate for appropriate investment in our local Conservation Parks to effectively manage and maintain them as an environmental, recreational and tourism asset.
- Advocate for improved management of remnant roadside vegetation and land restoration activities.
- Acknowledge and advocate for appropriate investment in ensuring the quality of our underground water supplies and the water reuse facilities.

	ACTION	TIMING
5.1	Investigate the introduction of bylaws for the appropriate management of animals in order to protect our biodiversity.	Year 1
5.2	Conduct a review, update and finalise a revised tree management policy.	Year 1
5.3	Undertake the native revegetation planting required to offset the native vegetation clearance required to expand our cemeteries as detailed in our Cemeteries Action Plan.	Year 1
5.4	Continue to assist the implementation of the pest eradication program - Southern Mallee Pests and Weeds Project.	Year 1
5.5	Support the Pinnaroo Wetlands group in the monitoring and eradication of bulrush in the Pinnaroo Wetlands through further investigating the opportunity to identify linking waterways and weed management in these areas.	Year 1 & 2
5.6	Install detention basin as part of the Pinnaroo Village Green project to help manage stormwater.	Year 2
5.7	Conduct a review of our firewood collection guidelines and roadside revegetation management plan including the process for issuing permits.	Year 2
5.8	Explore opportunities to partner with external groups to foster climate smart landscapes and habitats.	Ongoing
5.9	Explore opportunities and/or continue to provide council representation on environmental boards and committees (i.e. Box Flat Wild Dog Coordinating Committee)	Ongoing
5.10	Monitor government funding opportunities in relation to climate smart landscapes and habitats.	Ongoing

Timing: Year 1 = FY21/22 Year 2 = FY22/23 Year 3 = FY23/24

Themes & Actions

FOCUS SIX: Climate smart resilient communities

- Support our community in building resilience and adapting to allow for climate variation.
- Develop and educate our community on emergency management response due to climate variation - drought, bushfires, heatwaves.
- Partner with regional councils and other groups to develop regional projects to address climate change.
- Support and empower local community groups to take responsibility for environmental outcomes.

	ACTION	TIMING
6.1	Introduce an environmental innovation or sustainability criteria to the current community grant program evaluation.	Year 2
6.2	Review and update Councils emergency management policy and plan.	Year 3
6.3	Support community initiative to establish community gardens.	Ongoing
6.4	Support community groups in obtaining grant funding relating to environmental innovation or sustainability projects in our district.	Ongoing
6.5	Support community groups to facilitate environmental events.	Ongoing
6.6	Participate in emergency management meetings to effectively plan for and respond to emergency events.	Ongoing
6.7	Advocate for adequate emergency management support to the district including funding to local Country Fire Service.	Ongoing
6.8	Monitor government funding opportunities aimed at community groups that encourage environmental sustainability or innovation.	Ongoing

Timing: Year 1 = FY21/22 Year 2 = FY22/23 Year 3 = FY23/24



Themes & Actions

FOCUS SEVEN: Council leading by example

- Work towards reducing emissions directly from Council.
- Embed climate change risk and opportunity into our Council strategy, policy and practice.
- Ensure climate variation is considered in projects, contract management and risk registers.

	ACTION	TIMING
7.1	Investigate the feasibility of Council investing in hybrid vehicle technology for its current fleet and continually look to optimise the size and efficiency of the fleet.	Year 2
7.2	When reviewing the procurement policy consider the opportunity to include standards relating to energy and water efficiencies.	Year 2
7.3	Provide policy support for car share programs.	Year 2
7.4	Investigate the ease in which an ongoing process of measuring Councils internal energy consumption from sources such as power, gas, water and fuel could be implemented.	Year 3
7.5	Monitor and investigate the opportunity for Council to join the LGA Circular Procurement Project currently being piloted.	Year 3
7.6	Ongoing commitment to having an active Environmental Action Plan.	Every 5 years
7.7	Ensure all Council projects and upgrade works give appropriate consideration to environmental aspects.	Ongoing
7.8	Ensure designs for Council owned building improvements consider environmental sustainability and impact.	Ongoing
7.9	Monitor and communicate our districts CO2 Emissions and support research into the accurate data tracking in this area.	Ongoing
7.10	Monitor paper use and implement paper saving measures across the organisation (paperless timesheets, paperless offices, encourage use of iPad/surface pros over printouts, ensure printers are automatically set to print double sided and in black and white).	Ongoing
7.11	Monitor government funding opportunities aimed at local government that encourage environmental sustainability or innovation such as Green Industries SA.	Ongoing

Timing: Year 1 = FY21/22 Year 2 = FY22/23 Year 3 = FY23/24

Themes & Actions

FUTURE FOCUS: Environmental actions for consideration in future years

Council has identified some potential actions for consideration in future years acknowledging that in order to achieve sustainable environmental outcomes a long term approach of continual improvement is key.

Any future Environmental Action Plan developed will require all ideas be re-evaluated at the time of development in regards to potential environmental impact, resource constraints, and priorities of the community, council and the government.

	ACTION	FOCUS THEME
8.1	Consider funding a local grant scheme specifically for environmentally sustainable innovation of businesses and/or broader environmental initiatives by community in our district.	One
8.2	Provide financial incentives to landowners who practice environmental rehabilitation ie rate incentives.	One
8.3	Explore opportunities to advocate and support research into carbon sequestration programs that focus on dryland areas.	One
8.4	Advocate for further research into development of opportunities for using biomass - such as agricultural and wood waste for soil improvement, bioenergy and other industrial uses.	Two
8.5	Support community groups / industry / schools on projects that recycle if they arise.	Two
8.6	Investigate the feasibility to make and sell mulch.	Two
8.7	Provide an education program that supports electric and other low carbon vehicle uptake.	Three
8.8	Research joint solar incentive schemes - i.e. help households with finance.	Four
8.9	Review Councils irrigation methods and scheduling - potentially utilise software that can help design more environmentally friendly water usage and detect leaks and inefficiencies.	Four
8.10	Keep the asbestos registers of Council buildings and structures up to date ensuring the safe removal of all asbestos over time.	Four
8.11	Provide incentives to encourage developers to submit planning applications that meet a high standard of ecologically sustainable development.	Four
8.12	Investigate the feasibility of investing in hydrogen power for Southern Mallee District Council.	Four
8.13	Investigate carbon offset opportunities through regeneration and planting of native vegetation to offset emissions and enhance conservation outcomes.	Five

Themes & Actions

FUTURE FOCUS: Environmental actions for consideration in future years
CONTINUED

	ACTION	FOCUS THEME
8.14	Consider revegetation over our waste cells once closed.	Five
8.15	Review and plan for the future requirements of our water reuse facilities considering the environment and regulations i.e. maintenance budget.	Five
8.16	Evaluate the benefits of establishing a new sustainability advisory committee that focuses on an Environmental Strategy.	Six
8.17	Partner with local schools to engage younger generations in being environmentally active if the opportunity arises.	Six
8.18	Support a community group in implementing a local harvest program if the opportunity arises.	Six
8.19	Support community efforts to reduce and offset the carbon footprint of signature events such as the Pinnaroo Show Day if opportunities arise.	Six
8.20	Consider in the budget process any savings that can be directly attributed to environmental change (i.e. Solar investment) is re-invested directly into new environmental strategies.	Seven
8.21	Investigate the feasibility of becoming GDS 21 compliant.	Seven
8.22	Consider public tender of Council vehicles and plant as opposed to trade in once Council fleet is hybrid or electric to encourage the take-up rate of these vehicles within our community.	Seven
8.23	Research a staff incentive program to help finance solar panels or another positive environmental outcomes.	Seven
8.24	Set a specific and measurable goal to ensure a percentage of the electricity used directly by the Southern Mallee District Council activities is from green power.	Seven



South Australia's Climate Goal

South Australia has had a goal since 2015 to reach net zero emissions by 2050, in February 2020 our government announced an interim goal of a 50% reduction on 2005 emissions levels by 2030*. Recently the South Australian Government released the Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025 to help further identify and facilitate practical measures to address climate change that also aim to create jobs and growth, protect the environment and support community wellbeing.

Our Environmental Action Plan has been developed in alignment with the South Australians Climate Change Action Plan, in particular in identifying our focus areas. Consistency in these focus areas aligns our objectives which will help ensure our plan is achievable.

Measuring our Carbon Emissions

A key component of this plan is acknowledging the importance on having an accurate way of tracking Southern Mallee's greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2019 Southern Mallee District Council contributed to the development, maintenance and release of the Snapshot Climate Tool (Snapshot). Snapshot is the first national tool providing community-wide greenhouse gas profiles for every council across Australia. It calculates major sources of carbon emissions, including stationary energy, transport, waste, agriculture and land-use change.

The latest release of Snapshot data showed a total of 125 800t of CO₂e in the Southern Mallee District in 2018 and attributed 77% of its major emissions to agriculture followed by transport at 18% (see Appendix A for complete report).

The framework for this data is being continually improved and over time will allow us to have a clearer picture of our local greenhouse emission sources. This will help us understand and prioritise resources to the most effective reduction strategies. As this tool is refined it will also allow us to understand long-term data and trends to set more specific goals in our future environmental plans.

Conclusion

Finally, Council would like to acknowledge and thank all who have contributed to the development of this plan. We look forward to working with all stakeholders in the successful implementation. We are committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our environment and the long-term future of our district.

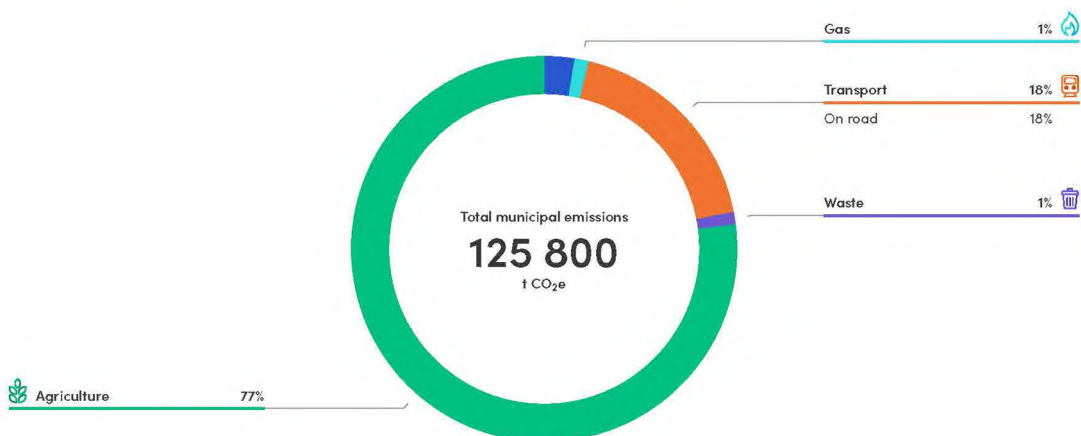
*Government of South Australia 2021, South Australian Government Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025 viewed 12/04/2021 <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/climate-change/>

Appendix 1: Southern Mallee Snapshot Report

Snapshot Report

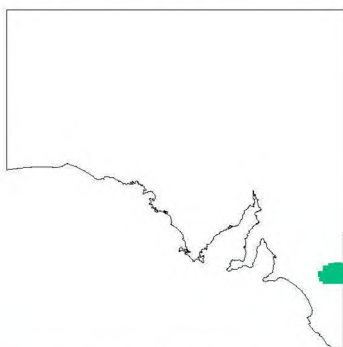
Southern Mallee

2018 municipal emissions snapshot



Southern Mallee is a district council area that is moderate in size relative to the state average and has a very low urban density. It's major emissions source is agriculture, due to the community's relatively large amount of agricultural activity and low population. The second largest source of emissions is on road transportation.

There are many reasons why a profile can change over time including changes in emissions sources, updates to methodology and more accurate data sources. Read our FAQs for more information.



Source	Sector	Emissions (t CO ₂ e)
Electricity	Residential	2 100
	Commercial	900
	Industrial	200
Gas	Residential	1 000
	Commercial	100
	Industrial	400
Transport	On road	22 900
	Domestic air travel	0
Waste	Landfill	900
	Water	400
Agriculture		96 900
Land Use		0

Land Use data is not used in the chart nor the displayed total municipal emissions.

Characteristics	
Land area	5 702 km ²
Population	2 094
Gross regional product	\$ 141 750 000
Climate zone	4

Source: V7M • Last modified: 2020-08-10
Snapshot report



snapshotclimate.com.au • page 1 of 2

Appendix 1: Southern Mallee Snapshot Report (cont.)

Snapshot Report



About this report

Sources of emissions

This report outlines the major sources of carbon emissions for the entire municipality. Due to the approximate nature of the profile, the emission values are represented as rounded numbers. This report includes the following sources:

- Stationary energy (grid supplied electricity/gas)
- Transport (on-road use and domestic passenger air travel)
- Waste (landfill and wastewater)
- Agriculture (enteric fermentation, manure management, and synthetic fertilizer use)
- Land Use Change (land clearance and reforestation)

It has been developed to be consistent with the Global Protocol of Carbon Emissions reporting (GPC Protocol), the main international standard for cities and local government areas.

Inclusions & Exclusions

The Snapshot provides you with a profile of your municipality's emissions for the inventory year (2017) and gives a breakdown of emissions by sector. This Snapshot of your local government area's greenhouse gas emissions profile is based on portioning state level data sets. Snapshot can be used alongside local data sets where more detail is needed.

There are a number of minor emissions sources that are included as part of a larger total or excluded. The full list of inclusions and exclusions can be found in the Methodology document.

Understanding uncertainty

With any data, there is some level of uncertainty. This report will be more accurate for municipalities that are closer to the average across Australia. You may have local data that doesn't match up exactly with what you are seeing here. That's ok — the purpose of this profile is to provide comparisons that work for everyone across Australia, and it may be that in some areas there is locally supplied data which is more accurate or measures different areas than the Snapshots. What makes it unique is that it uses a common framework. This means the total of all local profiles match the national emissions total and no emissions go unaccounted for.

CO₂e

Carbon dioxide equivalent

All data is presented in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). This measure combine all the different greenhouse gases (such as methane) into a single figure + represents an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide being released.

Characteristics

Climate Zone 4

Hot dry summer, cool winter

For help using this report to plan CO₂ reductions strategies, please see our [user guide](#).