

Mount Barker/Adelaide Hills Transport Study

What is the Mount Barker/Adelaide Hills Transport Study?

The South Australian Government is delivering on its commitment to undertake a study into the transport issues impacting Mount Barker.

Our aim is to gather local insights from those who know the Hills best – those that live, work, and travel within the region – and to review available information, undertake further analysis and prepare a transport plan for the Adelaide Hills.

Together, we will consider transport issues and investment priorities to support population and economic growth and liveability in the region, building on the \$580 million already being invested here over the next few years.

Our focus is to understand the needs of those travelling to, from, within, and through the Adelaide Hills region – defined by the local government areas of the Adelaide Hills Council and Mount Barker District Council.

The Adelaide Hills region covers a total land area of around 1,400km², roughly the same size as metropolitan Adelaide. However, it differs markedly from the metropolitan Adelaide area in terms of:

- Its hilly topography;
- The mix of land uses, with residential and commercial areas surrounded by large areas of open land and primary production;
- The density, distribution, and demographics of the population, with one large centre (Mount Barker), several smaller to medium-sized towns, and then a very spread out population;
- The important role of primary production in the region; and
- The growth expected in Mount Barker and the stable population forecasts elsewhere.

Because of these factors, this region has unique transport needs and issues.

Across most of the Adelaide Hills, the resident population is set to remain stable or decrease. However, there is an expectation of strong growth in Mount Barker and Nairne populations.

The population of Mount Barker is likely to increase from 20,000 to around 28,500 in the period up to 2036. It could potentially grow further, up to 50,000, more than doubling its current size.

As with population, the number of jobs is set to remain relatively stable (or decrease) for most areas of the Adelaide Hills region except for Mount Barker, where some growth is anticipated.

With population growing at a greater rate than employment in the Hills, there will likely be an increased need for Hills residents to travel outside of the region for work.

As the population and travel demand increases, pressure on the region's roads will rise. Our analysis indicates that the following roads are likely to experience notable increases in travel demand in the next 20 years:

- South Eastern Freeway;
- Roads within Mount Barker; and
- Onkaparinga Valley Road to the north of Woodside.

Additional population growth in Strathalbyn is also relevant, given that Strathalbyn's main access to the metropolitan area is via Mount Barker and the South Eastern Freeway.

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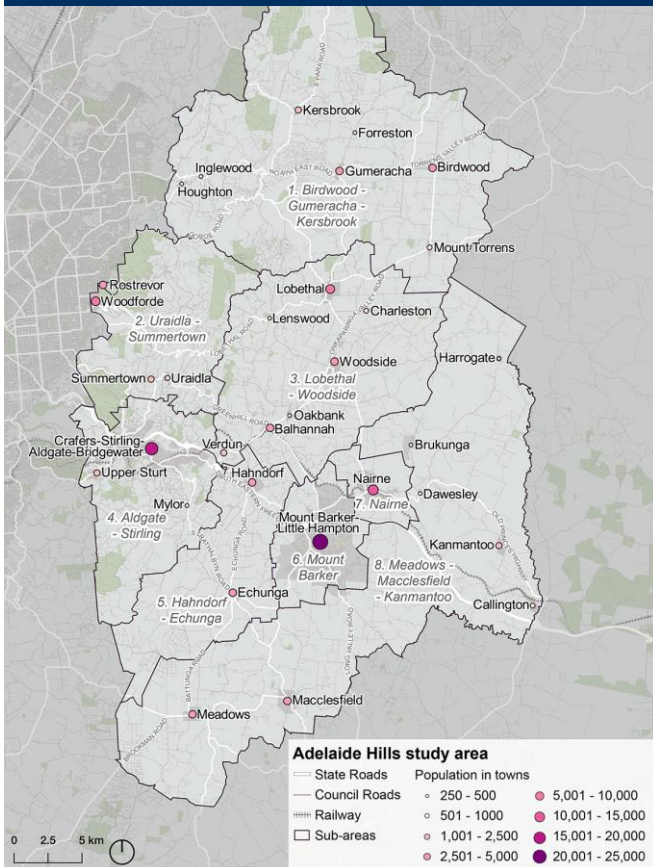
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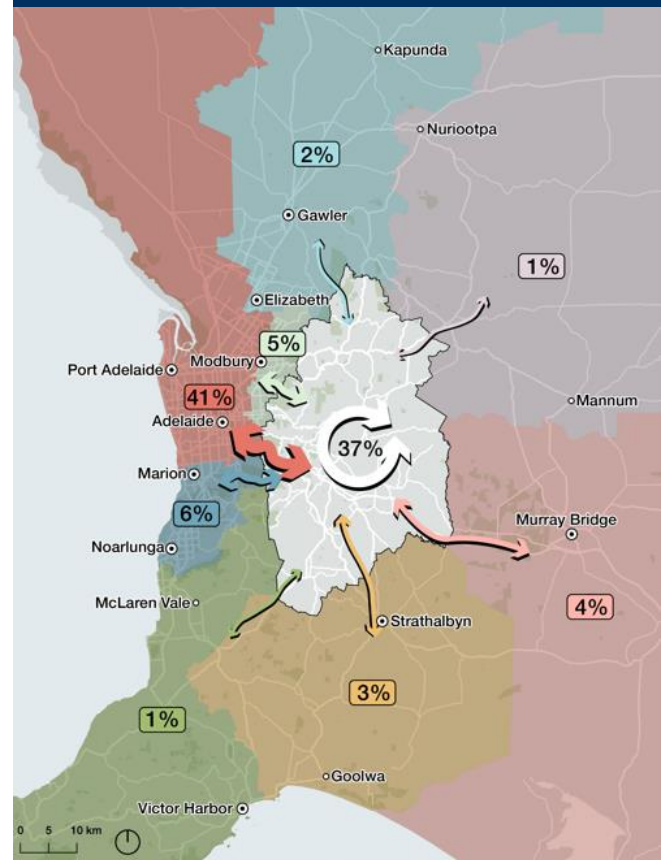
Government
of South Australia

Department for Infrastructure
and Transport

Population



Where people travel



SOURCE: derived from ABS 2016 data

Key local places and destinations

Three quarters of the Adelaide Hills population live in one of the 32 townships and urban areas in the Hills. The towns along the South Eastern Freeway corridor are the most populated: almost half of Hills residents live within 3 kilometres of the Freeway.

The larger Adelaide Hills towns (Mount Barker-Littlehampton and Crafers-Stirling-Aldgate-Bridgewater) provide a large range of services and facilities across community, education, health and recreation, becoming important destinations.

Service availability across other towns is uneven and residents in those locations travel further to access many services. Regular weekend markets in Mount Barker and Stirling attract both local visitors and those from further afield. Mount Barker has the largest concentration of shops and services in the Adelaide Hills.

Where Adelaide Hills residents work

Some 40% of the Adelaide Hills residents work in the region. Overall, 37% of all journeys to work by those living or working in the Hills are made entirely within the region.

It is estimated that close to one half of all work trips to/from the Adelaide Hills are made via the South Eastern Freeway. One third of these work trips is to the Adelaide CBD.

How people travel

More people in the Adelaide Hills travel to work and school by car than in Greater Adelaide (over 91% compared to 87%), and public transport use is lower (6% compared to the Greater Adelaide average of 10.5%).

Rates of public transport usage are highest in townships along the South Eastern Freeway where the most direct public transport services to Adelaide are located.

Rates of walking and cycling to work or school are slightly higher than in Greater Adelaide (2.8% vs 2%).

Cycling network

The region attracts recreational cyclists drawn to its challenging hills and scenic terrain, but there is limited formal cycling infrastructure in the Hills. The Amy Gillett Bikeway and routes in Mount Barker are highly valued. Most cyclists share the roadways with other road users.

Car ownership

The Adelaide Hills has a higher-than-average number of cars per household (2.05 for the region, compared to 1.68 for Greater Adelaide).

This likely reflects both the need to use a car to meet daily needs and the generally high levels of socioeconomic advantage across the region overall.

Road network

The roads in the Hills are vital for both people and businesses. While there are localised issues at particular points, and steep gradients and slow-moving heavy vehicles can cause delays, from an overarching perspective, most roads in the Hills are able to handle morning peak traffic.

The main areas where the road network comes under more pressure are along sections of the South Eastern Freeway between Stirling and Verdun, Upper Sturt Road, and Greenhill Road, and there are also localised issues within the townships of Mount Barker and Stirling.

In addition to delays at busy times on the Freeway, crashes or incidents can lead to substantial delays. This is because, with few alternatives available, there are limited opportunities to redirect traffic while the incident is cleared.

Public transport

The public transport system in the Adelaide Hills region comprises scheduled bus services, Park and Ride facilities, and On Demand buses, reaching most of the main population centres.

Direct connections between Adelaide CBD and Mount Barker are focused on peak travel times. Outside of peak hours one bus per hour operates on the South Eastern Freeway. As a result, the public transport network is most useful for the typical 9-5 working day.

The On Demand service operates within Mount Barker, Nairne, and Littlehampton, and is popular with users.

Public transport for work

As increasing numbers of people are commuting out of the region for work, public transport can help to reduce reliance on the car.

Public transport for other trips

Public transport can support an ageing population and increasing number of young families, by facilitating other trip purposes (shopping, schooling etc). It is important that the service reflects and responds to these needs.

Safety

Safety is critical for all users of the transport networks in the Hills. Data suggests that overall, the biggest concentration of crashes which result in injuries and fatalities occur around Mount Barker and Stirling where there is most activity.

However, the most severe crashes align more closely to locations with frequent narrow and tight bends, such as North East Road, Gorge Road, and Norton Summit Roads.

The Crafers – Stirling – Aldgate – Bridgewater area combines high levels of activity with a tightly winding road network, and more of the most severe crashes occur here than in the more densely populated Mount Barker.

Cyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists are overrepresented in the region's crash statistics.

Crashes

Targeted improvements to the road network will help to reduce the risk of crashes.

Emergency

It is important that emergency services have adequate access, and that the transport network facilitates safe passage in emergencies such as bushfires.

Supporting economy

A third of the region's employment is in three key sectors (retail, health, and education) which are connected with serving the region's residential population.

Outside townships, employment is spread thinly across the Hills, and overall, only 13% of the region's jobs are found outside one of the townships or urban areas. Illustrating this, while land used for livestock and production of timber, dairy, fruit and vegetables, and wine accounts for nearly 50% of the region's total land area, agriculture, forestry and fishing account for just 6.7% of the region's jobs.

Industry within the region is clustered around Lobethal, along the South Eastern Freeway corridor at Littlehampton and Hahndorf, and along the Onkaparinga Valley Road at Balhannah and Woodside.

The region's produce includes perishable goods requiring rapid supply chains to market. Premium wine growing and production is also a significant industry.

Tourism is a major component of the Hills economy with Hahndorf the most popular destination. Tourism offerings aim to make the most of the Hill's natural landscape and allow visitors to escape busy, urban lives, with close proximity to Adelaide, nature and wildlife experiences, and popular wineries acting as major attractions.

Recreational walking and cycling also play a big part in drawing visitors to the region.

Growth in tourist spend across the Adelaide Hills area has been significant in recent years, and is forecast to grow to up to \$310 million per year by 2030.

Tourism

Tourism is and will continue to be a large part of the Adelaide Hills economy. The transport network needs to support access to tourism destinations in townships, such as Hahndorf, as well as wineries, reserves, and walking trails.

Productivity

Transport is vital in ensuring that the productivity of the region can continue to flourish. Due to the dispersed nature of production in the region, a connected freight network is important. Reliance on the South Eastern Freeway for local trips, inter-regional trips, and through trips means that the capacity and reliability of this corridor should be maintained.

What's being done now?

The South Australian Government is already working on a range of improvements to the Mount Barker/Adelaide Hills transport network drawing on the \$580 million in Federal and State government funding, including:

- The *Hahndorf Township Improvements and Access Upgrade Project* to address congestion, connectivity, freight efficiency and safety in and around Hahndorf;
- The *Adelaide Hills Productivity and Road Safety Package* to improve the regions state-managed road network;
- Planning for a new dedicated express bus service, fleet and depot, expanding the Crafers Park 'n' Ride, and planning for a Bridgewater Park 'n' Ride;
- Upgrades to the South Eastern Freeway (*Smart (Managed) Motorway (Stage 2)*) to reduce the impact of traffic incidents on traffic flow;
- Making the Heysen Tunnel safer, with new lighting, ventilation, fire suppression, traffic management systems, and emergency communication systems;
- A review into the Mount Barker Infrastructure Deed and planning for future upgrades to Adelaide Road, Flaxley Road, Wellington Road and the Heysen Boulevard;
- A business case for a *Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass* to consider how we could re-route trucks and heavy vehicles not destined for Adelaide around the metropolitan area (avoiding the South Eastern Freeway).

You can access information about a range of current transport projects in the Adelaide Hills on our website.

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Keep in touch

 1300 794 880

 DIT.Engagement@sa.gov.au