

22 November 2017

## “Growing our Regions”

*To all candidates in the 2018 South Australian election,*

Strong regions are the building blocks for a strong state.

Regional South Australia contributes \$20 billion towards the state's economy, around half a million jobs and 50% of exports<sup>1</sup>.

Around a third of the nation's renewable energy<sup>2</sup> is produced in country South Australia, along with one quarter of the national barley crop<sup>3</sup> and just under one half of Australia's wine grapes<sup>4</sup>. Regional South Australia has one of the largest and most diverse aquaculture industries in the nation<sup>5</sup> and our mining potential is ranked in the top twelve jurisdictions in the world<sup>6</sup>.

Rural South Australian's are custodians of most of our state's remaining native vegetation and wildlife habitat, scenic landscapes, agricultural land, rivers and coasts.

Our regions offer a safe, affordable lifestyle, job opportunities, a strong sense of community with high levels of volunteering and local investment into services and facilities.

But in comparison to other states, South Australia is well behind the mark in supporting country areas.

There are 30 regional cities in Australia with populations over 30,000 and 10 with populations over 100,000<sup>7</sup>.

None are in South Australia.

It is the role of Government to foster confidence in our regions and ensure they have the enabling infrastructure and services to help build strong communities where people want to live, work and do business<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 2011; ABS; Census Data Labour Force, Trade, GRP Gross Value Added by Region

<sup>2</sup> 2017; Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy; Australian Energy Update

<sup>3</sup> 2012; ABARES; Australian Crop Report – Prepared by the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Science June 2012 No 162

<sup>4</sup> 2015; Australian Grape and Wine Authority Economic Contribution of the Australian Wine Sector Report

<sup>5</sup> South Australian Seafood Industry Food Plan 2010 – 2015; South Australian Seafood Industry Federation Inc

<sup>6</sup> SACOME; Mining in South Australia; [http://www.sacome.org.au/images/stories/Mining in South Australia2.pdf](http://www.sacome.org.au/images/stories/Mining%20in%20South%20Australia2.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> 2016; ABS; Census data; Greater Capital City Statistical Areas and Significant Urban Areas; accessed 20/09/17

<sup>8</sup> 2013; O'Neil M; 'Making Regions Matter' forum April 2013; pers. comm

We seek a commitment from all political parties and candidates in the forthcoming March 2018 State election to the following three strategic policy initiatives to secure the future growth and prosperity of regional South Australia -

### 1. Growing our Regional Centres

Goal of 30% of South Australia's population to be based outside Greater Adelaide, with a focus on our regional service centres.

This target brings SA in line with the national figure of one third of the population living in regional areas. Currently the SA Strategic Plan commits country regions to simply maintaining 18% of the state's population.

### 2. Royalties for Regions

Last year mining royalty revenue to the SA Government was worth about \$221 million. If a 'Royalties for Regions' program was in place that quarantined 25% of this revenue for country communities, it would have meant a direct investment of \$55 million to regional SA last year – more than trebling the state's current \$15 million Regional Development Fund.

Based on the SA Government's own budget figures, mining royalties are estimated to grow to about \$278 million by 2019/20 - potentially returning just under \$70 million per annum to regions for new infrastructure.

### 3. Regional Decision Making

Goal of 30% of the state government public service to be based outside Greater Adelaide.

The ongoing centralisation of the public service to Adelaide has meant a direct loss of jobs and residents living and working in regional South Australia and a disconnect that is reflected in centralised policy and decision making. Put simply, the more the public service is centralised into Adelaide, the more policy decisions are formed through a 'city' lens and the more connection with the country is lost.

We look forward to a strong commitment by the next Government and Members of Parliament to grow our South Australian regions.



Mayor Erica Vickery  
Limestone Coast LGA



Mayor Sam Johnson  
Spencer Gulf Cities



Mayor Sam Telfer  
Eyre Peninsula LGA



Mayor Peter Matthey  
Legatus Group



Mayor Bill Spragg  
Southern and Hills LGA



Mayor Dave Burgess  
Murraylands and Riverland LGA