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20th September, 2018

Sarah Elding,
Project Lead State Planning Policies
Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
GPO Box 1815
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Sarah,

Re: State Planning Policies for South Australia

Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland (RDAMR) is the key strategic economic development agency for the Murraylands and Riverland region and a major component of our role is to promote and facilitate growth. We do this by bringing together the efforts of all levels of government and the business community through advocacy, facilitation and delivery of economic development projects. We build alliances with many other organisations who are also seeking to improve the economic outcomes for our region.

The Murraylands and Riverland region spans 36,000 square kilometres, is home to approximately 70,600 people and some 6,120 businesses. Our major economic output is primary production which accounts for 34% of our gross regional product and contributed \$3.7 billion to the South Australian economy in 2017. The region boasts several core strengths including:

- its proximity and access to the Murray River and underground water;
- fertile, flat and affordable land;
- a stable climate with strong biosecurity credentials; and
- access to Adelaide and East Coast markets.

Our vision for the region is to become “a vibrant resilient region that capitalises on change, embraces economic development and prosperity, and provides an inspirational living, investment and working environment”. This vision is in line with what the South Australian Government has set out to achieve by developing a new framework for State Planning Policy.

Businesses are taking advantage of our regions core strengths with more than \$800 million in capital investments planned for this financial year, through both private and government funding, new business operations and expansion of existing business. Business confidence in our region is high.

We need to promote our region as a place for South Australian’s to live and work and the proposed State Planning Policies will help us achieve this. The Planning Policies are also vital to continue to unlock economic opportunity in our region.

Specifically, we offer the following observations and comments to the proposed policies.

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State Planning Policy 1: Integrated Planning

Objective: Integrated planning is an essential approach for liveability, growth and economic development, maximising the benefits and positive long-term impacts of development and infrastructure investment.

RDAMR supports the objective of this policy, specifically to plan growth in areas of the state that are connected to, integrated with, and protect, existing and proposed transport routes, infrastructure, services, employment lands and their functions. The Murraylands and Riverland region meets this criterion.

In addition, RDAMR would like to see Integrated Planning policy positively facilitate the development of regional enterprises to enhance existing industry which want to expand to meet demand. Eg expansion of regional buildings/shedding which could include the establishment of a temporary concrete plant to cost effectively supply materials to the build which are not available locally.

State Planning Policy 4: Biodiversity

Objective: Biodiversity is valued and conserved, and its integrity within natural ecosystems protected.

RDAMR supports the objective of this policy, specifically to encourage nature-based tourism and recreation that is compatible with, and at an appropriate scale for conserving the natural values of that landscape. The region is rich in nature-based tourism assets including the Murray River and the Coorong National Park. These underpin a vibrant tourism industry and provide community amenity to those that choose to live in our region.

State Planning Policy 6: Housing Supply and Diversity

Objective: A range of diverse, affordable, well-serviced and sustainable housing and land choices is provided as, where and when required.

This policy is vital to supporting regional population growth. Affordable housing options are a key competitive advantage regions can exploit in attracting residents. Specifically, we support the policy to

- enable the provision of a well-designed, diverse and affordable housing supply that responds to population growth and targets, and the evolving demographics and lifestyle needs of our current and future communities.
- Support regional centres and town growth and the demand for increases in housing supply within the existing town footprint or outside towns where there is demonstrated demand and it is contiguous with the existing development area.

State Planning Policy 8: Primary Production

Objective: A diverse and dynamic primary industry sector making the best use of natural and human assets.

As reflected in the economic statistics cited earlier, primary production is the lifeblood of the Murraylands and Riverland region.

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This objective is vital to ensuring the continuation of this industry. We support all 4 proposed policies in this key area:

- Identify and protect key primary production assets and secure strategic opportunities for future primary industry development. An example of this is the Horticultural netting initiative.
- Create local conditions that support new and continuing investment in primary industry while seeking to promote co-existence with adjoining primary industries and avoid land use conflicts.
- Enable primary industry businesses to grow, adapt and evolve through technology adoption, intensification of production systems, business diversification, workforce attraction, and restructuring.
- Equitably manage the interface between primary production and other land use types, especially at the edge of urban areas.

This policy area should also consider how planning legislation can further support & generate economic growth. An example could be the establishment of innovation zones that allow trials under a reduced red tape regime to achieve a proof of concept to then support further uptake by the broader industry.

State Planning Policy 11: Strategic Transport Infrastructure

Objective: Land development policies are integrated with existing and future transport infrastructure, services and functions to preserve and enhance the safe, efficient and reliable connectivity for people and business.

Transport infrastructure plays a vital role in the economic performance of our primary industries. In our regional alone freight transport movements associated with the movement of primary produce alone from farm to the first point of processing or sale are estimated to equate to 300 semitrailers per day (or 175 B-Doubles per day), 365 days a year.

Connecting produce to markets relies on access to safe, efficient and reliable freight pathways. This policy is vital to underpinning our region's economic performance into the future. In addition, in our bid to attract the required workforce to our region we need to enable safe, efficient and reliable transport pathways from our residential centres to the place of work.

Specially, we support the following policy points:

- Enable an efficient, reliable and safe transport network connecting business to markets and people to places (i.e. where they live, work, visit and recreate).
- Allow for the future expansion and intensification of strategic transport infrastructure and service provision (corridors and nodes) for passenger and freight movements.
- Enable development that is integrated with and capitalises on existing and future transport functions of transport corridors and nodes.

State Planning Policy 12: Energy

Objective: The ongoing provision of sustainable, reliable and affordable energy options that meet the needs of community and business.

Energy security provides business confidence to our primary producers to allow continued innovation and investment in this important sector. Energy is required to deliver a secure source of water – of which the importance is highlighted in the following point. We support the intent to ensure renewable energy technologies support a stable energy market and continued supply and do not adversely affect the amenity of regional communities.

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The inclusion of gas as an energy source should be considered in this policy point.

State Planning Policy 14: Water Security and Quality

Objective: South Australia's water supply is protected from the adverse impacts of development.

We support the intent to provide for the protection and security of the state's water supply to support a healthy environment, vibrant communities and a strong economy.

Water security, like energy, is vital to underpinning business confidence in the region. This region relies on the Murray River as its water source and must be protected for sustainability reasons. This is addressed through the policy point "Prioritise the protection of water supply catchments - The River Murray Protection Area under the River Murray Act 2003".

In addition, ensuring our water supply, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure meets the needs of a growing population and economy while balancing environmental outcomes is necessary. Consideration also needs to be given to the continuation of the Adelaide desalination plant triggers to manage business risk particularly in low water times when Murray River Water Allocations are restricted.

In closing, we thank the State Planning Commission for the opportunity to provide feedback to the draft policy.

We look forward to hearing the outcomes of this consultation.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me on (08) [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,



Jo Podoliak
Chief Executive Officer