



# **Submission by the South Australian Farmers' Federation (SAFF)**

*in response to*

**The Government of South Australia  
Department of Planning and Local Government**

**The draft 30-YEAR PLAN FOR GREATER  
ADELAIDE**

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## PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND

The area covered in the 30-year Plan for Greater Adelaide (the Plan) takes in the Fleurieu Peninsula, Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley and most of the Lower North. By the calculations in the Plan this comprises at least 115,000 hectares of environmentally significant land and up to 375,000 hectares of primary production land.

According to the Plan this environmentally significant land and primary production land will be protected. SAFF is not only concerned with the primary production land that will be lost to the urban sprawl (no estimate is given of how much land will be lost), but the effect of the Plan on the remaining primary production land. There is already a conflict between farming and other activities (urban development, mining, etc) with farmers finding they are having increasing difficulties in operating their farms when new residential areas are developed near them with complaints about noise, smells, chemical spraydrift and even general farm activities. As part of developing the Plan and protecting primary production land, there is a need for the introduction of strong Right to Farm legislation.

SAFF supports defined lines on the map to protect agricultural areas of high value. This is necessary to ensure that agricultural land is protected for future generations within a changing climate.

The Economic Statement released by the South Australian Economic Development Board in March 2009 identified that:

- Agribusiness, including farming, has been a staple of the State Economy since colonisation and accounts for a greater share of output in South Australia than every State except Tasmania
- South Australia's agricultural production provides the base for secondary-level wine and food production now taking over from machinery and equipment as the leading manufacturing activity.

A significant proportion of the State's agricultural production comes from the area covered by the Plan (again no calculations are given) and any reduction in both volume and value will be detrimental.

More detail is required on how the primary production land will be protected. More is needed than just a glib statement that this will be "*through land-use policies which protect the integrity of high-value primary production land.*"

It is all very well to boast that "*Adelaide is the only capital city to have a large high-quality food bowl in such close proximity*" (page 31) but if the Plan is actually put into effect this could all be lost.

On page 33 in the Plan there is an outline about "*Meeting the needs of a growing population*" concentrating on supply of land for housing and employment. But there is no mention of providing food and other agricultural products for this growing population (wine, wool, leather, flowers, etc).

## VALUE OF AGRICULTURE

It is pleasing that on page 40 that the value of agriculture to Greater Adelaide area is recognised – *“Mining and agriculture remain strong fundamentals of the South Australian and Greater Adelaide economy. The challenge will be to ensure that they remain strong over the long term by protecting land for their expansion, protecting freight and transport corridors, and encouraging the ancillary services and administrative headquarters of mining companies, in particular to locate in Adelaide.”* Indeed there will be the challenge as indicated, but no details are given of how to meet this challenge. Some indication is needed before those involved in primary production can even agree to endorse and participate in this 30-year Plan.

It is noted that support is to be given to assist mining companies to have their headquarters in Adelaide, but there is no mention of supporting agribusinesses.

The Plan does not adequately identify high agricultural production zones, such as Roseworthy for grain and the Adelaide Hills/Mount Lofty Ranges for beef cattle production. The Plan also has no capacity to value this land in the future from a climate change perspective. With climate change, this land will become even more valuable in terms of food production and value to the State.

## **PROJECTED REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH**

The figures of the projected regional population growth as succinctly shown in the map on page 91 are frightening by the sheer size of these figures.

An extra 139,000 people in the Barossa Valley is dramatically going to change that region. Will there even be room to grow any vines? Or to follow other agricultural pursuits? And even if there is, how efficient will be any farming practices when they will be hamstrung by the constraints imposed by this extra population?

An extra 140,000 people in the Northern Adelaide Plains will also put enormous pressure on the existing horticultural ventures in the Virginia area. Already producers in this area are feeling the pressures of urban encroachment and are considering moving further out from the city.

Even the extra 29,000 people in the Adelaide Hills and the extra 22,000 people in Fleurieu region will have a restrictive effect on farming practices in these two areas even if no or little land is lost to urban development.

There will be a need for buffer areas around townships or expanded urban areas to ensure that farmers are not adversely impacted on, eg straying dogs, complaints about noise, use of chemicals, pest plants etc

It has even been pointed out that the increasing urban density within the current suburbs of Adelaide will reduce the backyard growing of fruit and vegetables, which is already being severely curtailed by the current continuation of water restrictions.

## **SUPPORTING PRIMARY PRODUCTION**

The draft policies and draft targets outlined for primary production on page 106 are a good starting point, but these are vague. To ensure that these are more than just a wish list, SAFF would be prepared to participate towards assisting to develop these policies to meet the draft targets.

It is noted that there will be other pressures on primary production:

- There is the need to protect biodiversity. At least the Plan recognises that primary production land is also often part of areas of environmental significance.
- The effect of climate change. As this is only a 30-year plan, the effect of climate change can only be small within this time frame. It is noted for example, that there is no consideration of land being lost as Adelaide's coastline disappears.
- The need for water security in urban areas. Inevitably this must conflict with water for agriculture.
- There needs to be exclusion zones for mining activities, to protect and retain agricultural areas.

The current plan does not identify current freight corridors and how this may be changed over the life of the 30-year plan. This is critical for the movement of agricultural produce to processing works, access to ports for export or to areas for consumption.

## **THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Some current residents of the Adelaide Hills purchased properties based on their view and proximity to a natural environment. The proposed housing developments must not impact on the scenic value of the region. The scenery and the close proximity to Adelaide make this region very distinctive.

The plan does not take into consideration the cumulative impacts on biodiversity and productive land by individual land use change applications. A number of individual applications can make a significant impact in an area.

South Australia needs to promote its current 'clean and green' image. This could be enhanced by having both widespread sustainable living and farming practices.

All housing estates, by legislation, should be required to have underground rain water tanks, large enough to be a sustainable reservoir of water; and solar electricity and hot water. New housing estates must set aside an area of land that can be forested so the development is 'carbon neutral'. They must also have wetlands and be able to recycle the residential water.

The State Government must support and encourage an ecologically sustainable economy and not a large population economy.

## REGIONAL TARGETS AND DIRECTIONS

It is noted that the Plan does not reflect how regional plans will interact with this Plan. All council plans must align with the 30-year Plan.

Chapter F provides a summary for each region of what the effect of the Plan will be, and it does not make for a comfortable read.

While there are only summary tables for each region, the details in each regional map clearly show that if the Plan is to be put into effect it will not be possible for existing agricultural land to remain agricultural land. And in addition, current agricultural and viticultural practices in the Greater Adelaide region will not be able to remain as they are currently practiced.

Much of the Plan is going to be self-defeating. South Australia boasts about how close Adelaide is to its wine producing areas such as the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale and Adelaide Hills, to fruit growing in the Adelaide Hills, and to market gardening at Virginia. Just as almond growing was forced to move to the Riverland from the Willunga area, these other primary production activities will not be able to remain in the Greater Adelaide area.

For all regional areas that will be accommodating future population growth, there must be a commitment from the Government to provide significant transport networks and infrastructure, social infrastructure and services to provide for these additional people. There must be equitability with the metropolitan area, in that regional towns must have access to train/bus/bike paths.

SAFF supports the idea of 'centres of excellence' in education, environment, cultural knowledge, etc. This will give identities to specific regional areas and townships and encourage tourists and residents.

Housing estates must set aside an area for low income housing that has a cooperative structure.

SAFF does not support the expansion of Roseworthy due to potential impact on high value agricultural land and lack of services at Roseworthy to support such an expansion. This also has the potential to conflict with the existing grain receivable centre at Roseworthy eg dust, noise.

Barossa Valley must be retained as the cultural, wine and food centre of excellence. It is a nationally and internationally renowned attraction that brings interstate and international tourists to the State, due to its character and proximity to Adelaide. We need to be able to continue to sell what is special about our State – our individuality, uniqueness, character and history!

With changes in Government, the ideas and goals of a revised 30-year Plan must continue to ensure sustainability of the Plan and continue with the State's long term planning goals.