

# Annual Progress Report

2021-22



This report was prepared for the signatories to the Resilient Hills & Coasts Sector Agreement (2020–2025), pursuant to the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007*.

Endorsed on behalf of the Resilient Hills & Coasts Steering Committee by

Dr Monika Rhodes, Chair

Monika Rhodes Signature

24 October 2022 Date

## Who we are

Resilient Hills & Coasts is a collaborative, cross-sector partnership working to strengthen the climate resilience of communities, economies and natural and built environments, across the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island region.

Resilient Hills and Coasts is one of eleven Regional Climate Partnerships across South Australia.

Our partners are:

- Six Councils – Adelaide Hills, Alexandrina, Kangaroo Island, Mount Barker, Victor Harbor and Yankalilla
- The Southern & Hills Local Government Association
- Two Landscape Boards – Hills & Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
- Regional Development Australia (RDA) Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
- The Department for Environment and Water

The partners work together through a Steering Committee to progress priority actions laid out in our [Action Plan 2020-2025](#). Our Action Plan reflects the strategic priorities in our [Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) (CCAP), which was developed in consultation with our communities and adopted by our partner Councils in late 2016. The partners have committed to working together to implement CCAP priorities under two Regional Sector Agreements, the first of which ran from June 2017 to June 2020, and our current Agreement, which was signed in 2021 and will continue until 30 June 2025.



## Our priorities

Our goal is to strengthen the climate resilience of our communities, economies and natural and built environments.

In 2020, we evaluated our progress against our Climate Change Adaptation Plan and refocused our efforts to where we can make the most impact, establishing our Action Plan 2020-25. We updated this plan following a biennial evaluation of our progress and priorities in April 2022.

Our current priorities for action are:

<i>Climate-ready development</i>	Leverage our leadership and networks to encourage residential and infrastructure development that avoids natural hazards, is built to maximise resilience, and is energy efficient and water sensitive
<i>Climate risk reduction</i>	Support partners and communities to map, understand, plan for and adapt to climate risks, especially those arising from coastal, bushfire and urban heat hazards
<i>Resilient agriculture</i>	Build on and spread regional best practice in enabling agriculture that is regenerative, water smart, resilient to a variable climate, and supports carbon farming as part of a zero emissions pathway

## Our major achievements to date

Resilient Hills & Coasts has generated significant momentum, knowledge, and practical on-ground action by working together. Our achievements include:

- Recipients of a \$100,000 [Preparing Australian Communities](#) grant for the Bushfire & Biodiversity project to better understand the latest knowledge and best practice, and map next steps for the region to build balanced bushfire and biodiversity resilience (2022)
- Undertaking two Climate Smart Farming Forums (2021 – 2022)
- Securing funding to reinstate a RH&C Coordinator in December 2021
- The [Where We Build What We Build](#) project, providing evidence on the climate resilience of our region's housing stock and the economic benefits of building or retrofitting to a climate ready standard (2020)
- The evaluation of our progress against the Adaptation Plan and the development of the RH&C Regional Action Plan 2020-2025 (2020)
- Coastal hazard mapping and adaptation initiatives with [Kangaroo Island](#), [Alexandrina](#) Councils and [Victor Harbor](#) (2019 – 2022)
- Increased regional capabilities and uptake of water sensitive urban design and urban greening (2020 – 2021)
- Climate Risk Governance Assessments by five Councils, to assess and embed climate risk management throughout Council business (2019)
- Leading the low carbon transition, including by joining the [Cities Power Partnership](#), installing solar generation, transitioning to LEDs and electric vehicle fleets, and exploring options for a [Community Energy Program](#) (2018)
- The December 2016 launch of our [Resilient Hills & Coasts Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#), which was developed by regional partners with significant input from community, business, government, industry and academia over a two-year period (2016).

## Our progress 2021-22

<p><i>Climate-ready development</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoped and progressed a House of Tomorrow initiative to influence consumers engaging with volume home builders to make more climate-ready building choices</li> <li>• Established a cross-sectoral Resilient Housing Community of Practice to build momentum, knowledge sharing and networking, and to scope practical projects for collaborative action between state and local government</li> <li>• Advocated for climate ready improvements to the Planning &amp; Design Code and National Construction Code</li> </ul>
<p><i>Climate risk reduction</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed a Bushfire and Biodiversity project to better understand the latest knowledge and best practice, and map next steps for the region to build balanced bushfire and biodiversity resilience</li> <li>• Secured a \$100,000 Preparing Australian Communities grant for the Bushfire &amp; Biodiversity project, established a Working Group and consultant to oversee and execute the project</li> <li>• Shared knowledge to support Council activities including carbon accounting and reduction, tree mapping and inventories, and coastal adaptation planning and mitigation</li> <li>• Explored options to leverage and expand on Climate Governance assessments across our region</li> <li>• Applied for LGA Research &amp; Development funding for a Council carbon offsetting assessment and partnerships between metropolitan and regional councils</li> </ul>
<p><i>Resilient agriculture</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held Climate Smart Farming Forums in May 2021 and June 2022</li> <li>• Scoping a Carbon Farming Pilot to support private landholders to generate carbon credits at a lower cost, and continuing to explore funding opportunities</li> <li>• Explored other options to lower barriers of entry to the carbon farming market for regional landholders and other stakeholders, including by hosting a cross-regional online forum</li> <li>• Made a submission to inform South Australia’s Carbon Farming Roadmap</li> <li>• Explored options for a business resilience planning initiative</li> </ul>
<p><i>Governance and engagement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secured funding to reinstate a RH&amp;C Coordinator – the position was filled commencing December 2021</li> <li>• Completed a biennial evaluation of our progress and priorities, and updated our Action Plan 2020-25 accordingly</li> </ul>

## Our future plans

Over the next year, we will focus on progressing our three strategic projects:

- **Bushfire and Biodiversity**  
Better understand the latest knowledge and best practice, and map next steps for the region to build balanced bushfire and biodiversity resilience. Apply for additional Australian Government funding to deliver further stages, as scoped in the \$100K funded project.
- **Carbon Farming Pilot**  
Support landholders to generate carbon credits at a lower cost. Apply for \$100K funding through PIRSA's Growing Carbon Farming program (application submitted September 2022). Explore additional opportunities to further leverage this project and build the region's expertise in carbon farming.
- **Council Carbon Offsetting**  
Assess the carbon offsetting risks and opportunities available to councils. Explore the viability of aggregated approaches between regional and metropolitan councils to enter carbon offsetting partnerships.

We will also progress the following engagement initiatives:

- Following the 2022 Council elections, raise newly Elected Members' awareness about climate risk and the imperative to embed climate-readiness into Council business.
- Continue to support staff in partner organisations to understand, disclose and mitigate against climate risk, including by hosting a series of webinars to share regional knowledge and bring in external expertise.
- Continue to engage in relevant Federal, State and LGA policy and strategy development.
- Continue to engage in cross-regional and cross-sector activities to share knowledge, improve uptake of best practice, and drive progress on practical on-ground projects, including through the RH&C-initiated Resilient Housing Community of Practice.

## Our funding

We operate on a lean budget, enabled by significant in-kind contributions from all our Steering Committee representatives. Our budget funds an RH&C Regional Coordinator to support the Steering Committee, identify and pursue funding opportunities, support strategic projects, and undertake advocacy and engagement. Funding to deliver strategic projects is raised separately via partnerships, grants and Council budget bids.

The total available operational budget for 2021–22 was \$85,454. This comprised \$54,954 in combined contributions from Adelaide Hills, Alexandrina, Mount Barker, and Victor Harbor Councils, \$10,000 from the Hills & Fleurieu Landscape Board, \$6,262 from the RDA Adelaide Hills Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island (rolled over from 2020–21), and a rolled over saving of \$14,238 from 2020–21. Expenditure was \$38,500, with the RH&C Coordinator in place for 7 months (at 0.4FTE).

At this stage, the total available operational budget for 2022-23 is expected to be \$101,908. This will comprise \$54,954 in combined contributions from Adelaide Hills, Alexandrina, Mount Barker and Victor Harbor Councils, and a rolled over saving of \$46,954 from 2020-21. Expenditure is expected to be \$71,000, including the RH&C Coordinator in place for 12 months (at 0.4FTE), and a small operational budget. Rolled over savings are needed to cover a projected shortfall in Coordinator funding in future years (within the period of the Sector Agreement).

The Bushfire and Biodiversity project has been awarded an Australian Government grant of \$100,000, to be expended in 2022-23.