



# City of Adelaide Future of the city – Strategic Leader Visioning Report

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MCGREGOR **TAN**  
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# Methodology

This research project was conducted by McGregor Tan from 26th June to 9th August 2023



This research aims to gather insights from strategic leaders to help inform Council decisions and contribute to shaping the city's future.



Market research has been conducted in accordance with ISO 20252.



A total of 11 in-depth interviews were facilitated.

This involved engaging with community, Government and business leaders from diverse organisations based in Adelaide.



Over the past 40 years, McGregor Tan has grown to be one of the largest independent market and social research companies in Australia.

We have achieved this through the vision of our researchers which is underpinned by a strong company ethos respecting tradition while driving innovation and new technologies.



# Executive summary



# Executive summary:

## STRENGTHS



### **A livable city with a high standard of living:**

Adelaide is a liveable city, offering a high standard of living at a reasonable cost. Its well-structured grid system and historic charm make it an accessible and easy to navigate metropolitan centre. A vibrant culture, quality amenities, and natural beauty makes it a compelling choice for residents, workers and visitors alike.



### **A city of opportunities:**

Adelaide offers a blend of affordability and convenience, creating an appealing quality of life for families, professionals, and students. Its safe environment, accessible amenities, and dynamic lifestyle is attractive for people who enjoy inner city living. For professionals, the central location fosters work-life balance, while students benefit from integrated education and city living. Adelaide thrives as a city of opportunities for all.



### **Small scale city:**

Adelaide's scale sets it apart from larger cities, enabling a more intimate connection between residents and surroundings, fostering a sense of belonging and avoiding overwhelming hustle.



### **A city within a park:**

Adelaide's "City within a park" identity blends urban life with natural beauty. Its grid layout and abundant parklands creates a unique metropolitan environment. Yet, untapped potential in certain areas call for strategies to activate these spaces year-round.



### **Known for quality hospitality and major events:**

Adelaide hosts a number of world-renowned events and has a strong reputation for a diverse and high-quality hospitality culture. These attributes are seen by many as the city's lifeblood and that further support to the hospitality and events sector is needed in the future.

## CHALLENGES



### **Conservative mindset:**

Council delivers its core services to a high standard however is perceived to be conservative in its approach to growth and development. To lead Adelaide into the next phase, participants believe the Council needs to demonstrate and widely communicate its commitment to new ideas, innovation and growth.



### **Need for a progressive and cohesive approach:**

Adelaide's success relies on cooperation between industry associations, State Government, neighboring councils, and within the Adelaide City Council administration itself. This collective approach will allow for clear direction, essential for overcoming challenges and fostering unity in strategic vision. Whilst there is an appetite for development, it is perceived that a "not in my backyard" attitude is dominating Council decision making.



### **Population density:**

Adelaide's future hinges on sustainable population growth, necessitating strategic placemaking and transitioning to 24 hour economy. Council's role in providing quality amenities and supporting projects that facilitate desirable growth will be key to attracting residents, students, workers, and innovators to the city.



### **Residential housing:**

Enabling population growth creates a need for delivering suitable residential development; from affordable housing options to family friendly and higher end homes. Council's current approach to re-purposing underutilized buildings into residential accommodation is applauded by many, others would like to see more focus on supporting higher quality projects to attract more professionals and families to the city.



### **Underutilized areas and further enhancing precincts:**

Addressing dormant pockets within the city, including revitalizing parklands, laneways and main streets is crucial for enhancing its vibrancy. Inactivate areas hinder urban vitality and community engagement.

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# Executive summary:

## FUTURE VISION



### A capital city within a park:

A greener Adelaide, where streets and pathways are enriched with greenery is a vision many leaders would like to see for the city. Collaborations with businesses and educational institutions to add greenery to buildings, lighting and road verges will support the "city within a park" ethos.



### Adelaide; always on:

To thrive, many believe Adelaide must cultivate a 24-hour economy. Leveraging events and boosting population density fuels economic vibrancy, creating demand for extended nightlife and dining. A number of precincts are well placed to be supported to grow into areas with later and longer trading, however the population growth and corresponding demand must first be addressed.



### A global leader in higher education:

Collaboration with education and research institutions is pivotal for this vision's viability. While this is perceived to be a State Government role, leaders believe Council's support in developing a vibrant and exciting city for students and residents is essential.



### Home to a vibrant knowledge economy:

Adelaide has the potential to be a vibrant knowledge hub, bolstered by leading universities and a biomedical district. This vision requires fostering innovation, attracting a wide range of employer businesses/ organisations and being able to meet the needs of the workforce that is attracted to these opportunities. Collaboration with industries and institutions is crucial.



### A city with unique precincts:

Adelaide is already blessed with a number of distinct precincts. Further activation, transforming them into vibrant neighborhoods, inspired by global examples, will make the city more appealing for future residents, workers and businesses looking for places that align with their vibe and values. Enabling precincts to develop their own identities can create authentic and dynamic community-driven activations.

## COUNCIL'S ROLE



### Adopt a growth mindset, be enablers:

Council's role in stewarding the city into the next phase will require a growth mindset. Participants believe this is achieved through removing the "not in my backyard" lens to growth and development, having a united public facing position to major strategic issues and proactively enabling businesses through transparent communication and streamlined processes.



### Focus on the fundamentals:

Maintaining Adelaide's highly desirable standard of living hinges on foundational elements, with particular emphasis on cleanliness, urban aesthetics, and safety. The council is crucial in shaping a welcoming, safe and attractive city, which many believe should be the priority for council's future strategy.



### Proactive and transparent communications:

Proactive communication is key for Adelaide's transformation. The council's transparent dialogue with residents, businesses, and stakeholders fosters collaboration and reinforces a shared purpose. Through effective communication, particularly regarding developments and growth industries, is considered a key role of Local Government, regardless if it is pertaining to Council led, private enterprise or State Government projects. The community look to Council for all things "Adelaide", and leaders believe more can be done in this space from the administration in addition to the Mayor's strong communications and social media presence.



### Advocacy role in environmental sustainability:

As the capital city of a State which has a strong history of regenerative practices and environmental policy, participants believe Adelaide City Council should play a leadership role in advocating for environmental sustainability. Initiatives like water-sensitive urban design, green economic zones, and communicating their own Impact Plan and ESG Policy would position Adelaide as a leader in the Local Government Sector.