

**Connected  
and Active  
Communities**

Limestone  
Coast

# STRENGTHS REPORT



Government  
of South Australia

Office for Recreation,  
Sport and Racing

# Strengths

1. Sport and Recreation
2. Demographics
3. Places and Spaces
4. Community Stakeholders
5. Culture, People and traditions
6. Social Impact



# 1. Sport and Recreation

## 1.1 Traditional Sport

- "Loads of kids play loads of sport here".
- "There's plenty of sport. Enough to keep everyone who wants to play active".
- "The biggest thing is helping clubs create the right environment. Give us the tools, and the ones who get it right, no matter what the sport, will thrive".
- "Our aim is to have the most inclusive environment of all the clubs in our comp, and we're proud of the think that we're successful in doing that".
- "Our biggest advantage is that footy will never change. We win by them being them".

## 1.2 Recreation

- Young people want to have spaces designed for them to play autonomously – away from coaches and parents (like BMX tracks and 5aside zones).
- "I don't have time to play for a club".
- "I'm a Parkrunner. The community is what gets me to be consistent".
- "Recreational activities have developed around natural assets, such as mountain biking, parkrun and disc golf".

## 1.3 New Sports and Social Sports

- "Non-traditional sports are growing in the area because those sports are more open to innovation, adaptation and flexibility".
- "Our biggest growth has been social sport. Non-committal for time flexibility, and no toxic behaviours".
- "People in the community have loads of options for social sport".

## 1.4 Creative Expression

- "Showing kids who don't play sports that the arts are a pathway keeps people active".
- "Art plays an important role. For those kids who don't fit in at sports, it's a place where they do things in a space where they feel connected".

## 1.5 High Performance / Limestone Coast Academy / Pathways

- "The regional academy is a strength. Can be leveraged for performance across sport - and for social connections for kids who love sports".
- Local soccer clubs in Limestone Coast would like to have partner clubs in Adelaide similar to how SANFL have associate connections to the region.
- "Use the sports academy to bring sports scientists to the community"



# 2. Demographics

## 2.1 Women

- "Female leaders opens the door for female volunteers".
- "There's definitely a disconnect between male and female roles in the community. We need more female decision makers who are empowered and respected in their clubs".
- "Women's soccer is exploding, and we want to host a WNPL "magic round".
- "Viola League in girls footy has broken all the barriers the mens footy league is facing".
- "Gyms are massive in small towns. It gives a chance for mums with bubs to get active".

## 2.2 Elderly

- "We are looking to adapt our sport to fit the needs of older people"
- "We love our [bowls] club. The first thing we did when we moved here was find a club. It's how we met all of our friends".

## 2.3 Young People

- People referenced that sport is more important than school for many young people in Limestone Coast.
- Young people asked for accessible public spaces that are designed for them to play freely with their mates.
- Clubs have a huge role to play in addressing youth drinking culture - citing that 56% of year 10 students who play/train 3x a week had been drunk in the past 30 days.

## 2.4 Low SEIFA Communities

- "For underprivileged kids, school sport is their only opportunity to experience team sports at a decent level"
- Young people referenced that they had never really been to a footy ground or a basketball court. When asked what spaces they loved the most, they referenced publicly available spaces that let them play with friends.
- If there's a free sporting opportunity - the people at the school will make it happen for their students.

## 2.5 Migrant Populations

- Migrant population have a strong uptake in soccer and basketball.
- "A strength of the area is the multicultural community - especially Kirani and Sudanese community".
- "Naracoorte is hosting a cultural tournament. Celebrating new cultures is important because that's exactly how clubs like Inter, Apollo and Centrals began".

## 2.6 All-abilities

- Several sports discussed a desire to tap into potential NDIS funding by running inclusive programs and tournaments

## 2.7 Gender and Sexual Diversity

- "Someone needs to create something for the LGBT people in this community. They don't have a place or space in this community. There's nothing for them. It's heartbreaking".



# 3. Places and Spaces

## 3.1 Sporting Facilities

- Wulanda Recreation Centre is a huge opportunity.
- In general, people were proud of their facilities – with a sense that the communities want to invest to make them even better.
- Women’s sport has increased the demand for finite fields and courts.
- Clubs are exploring how to maximise the use of their facilities during non-peak times.

## 3.2 Natural Assets

- Areas like McDonald Beach, Mount Shank, Little Blue Lake, Piccaninnie Ponds, the Rail Trail, Lake McIntyre and more were seen as natural assets for the community.
- A strength of the area is the innovative nature in which natural assets have been used to drive both recreation and tourism – Parkrun, mountain biking and Disc Golf are prime examples.
- There is a clear link between natural asset based recreation and tourism.
- “The area is bursting with natural assets”.

## 3.3 Public Spaces

- “Public school ovals are also public parks that people value”.
- “Schools have sports infrastructure. Unlocking gates and improving the facilities benefits everyone”.
- “We have an abundance of open spaces. Let’s make the most of it”.
- Greenrise rec reserve is the hub for all recreation activity in Penola (walking, running, general fitness).

## 3.4 Private Enterprise (places that require membership/entry fee)

- “A lot of people find their fitness community at a gym – especially mums”.
- “Gyms and fitness centres create environments where people are driven to create connected communities from a sense of business success. They are incentivised to meet the needs of the community in a way sports clubs aren’t”.
- Places like the High Ropes Course are valued by the community.

## 3.5 Cross-Border Opportunities

- “The towns are part of a wide, large, connected cross-border community”.
- SA / Vic Limestone area is a premium talent catchment area that is disrupted by the state borders.
- Location of Mount Gambier – situated in a prime area between two major cities - seen as a strength in the community
- The Regional Commonwealth Games in Victoria is a strength.

## 3.6 Urban planning

- Developments such as Greenwise provide opportunities to establish recreation spaces through urban planning.



# 4. Community Stakeholders

## 4.1 Potential partners

- Lions Club.
- NBL1 / Pioneers.
- SATC.
- Shops, pubs and hotels.
- One Forty One and Timberlink.
- Building Better Regions Fund and funding programs for regions.
- Headspace.
- Wellbeing SA.
- Centacare, AC Care, and community organisations.

## 4.2 Business

- “Our club has benefited from the skill sets within our club. We can navigate funding processes effectively”.
- “Developing facilities create construction jobs, so construction companies should have a vested interest in securing infrastructure grants”.
- “The clubs connected to businesses are rich and getting richer”.
- “I employ half of the Burmese community. As a result, most of them play here at the club”.

## 4.3 Industry

- “Farming families have money and invest it into clubs they have a personal connection to”.
- Timberlink are sponsoring a youth leadership program – “Riddoch Youth Leaders”
- Timberlink/Tarpana are growing, and they will be bringing more workers.
- Teys and One Forty One give back to the community.

## 4.4 Schools + University

- “Sports getting into schools is the big thing. Once parents see that it brings their kid happiness, it opens all the doors”.
- “School sport is so important”.
- “Free opportunities for kids to play sport at school make the world of difference for under-privileged kids”
- “Uni has a role to play. We need to give young people a reason to stay in the area”.

## 4.5 Collaboration / Innovation

- “In Mt Gambier, the council and the community are always thinking of proactive ways to connect the community”.
- “We need more collaboration and less administration... but collaboration amongst sports will never happen”.
- Sports that employ a person to drive participation are seeing high levels of growth.
- “We need education to teach us what skills we're lacking. We think we're doing a good job, but we don't even know what we're not good at”.
- “The local captain works for headspace. When a 15 year old player committed suicide, he offered consults to people within the club. It's made a massive difference”.
- “Some sports understand that success is about the growth of the game, bringing the community together and helping kids enjoy themselves. There are still some that focus only on success and winning, but it's a minority that's getting smaller”.
- “SANFL have partner clubs in Adelaide. Why can't other sports make those partnerships?”



# 5. Culture, People and Traditions

## 5.1 Volunteerism / People

- "Local champions who have the best interests of others in mind are the best asset a community can have".
- "Identify talented volunteers the same way we identify talented kids."
- "Because communities in small towns are tight, super-volunteers end up on loads of committees. This opens the doors for local collaboration".

## 5.2 Limestone Coast Culture

- Limestone Coast has a reputation for sporting excellence.
- "A strength of the area is our resilience. There's 20 tons of s\*\*t piled on us, but we're still making things happen".
- "The first thing I think of when I think of sport is community"
- "We all talk about sport - but the people driving sport don't play. We ride, run and walk. Recreation is important".

## 5.3 Mt Gambier Culture

- "In Mt Gambier, there are loads of local opportunities for the people who have the capacity to make it work".
- "The city council of Mt Gambier is amazing and have a really strong sporting focus".
- "Mt Gambier people love sport".

## 5.4 Small Town Culture

- "Small towns have a tendency of recognising that they need each other to survive".
- "The rivalry between towns is a strength IF it is leveraged correctly".
- "We don't have a pub. The sports club is the heart of the community".
- Small towns in general appreciate their family-orientated culture, and compare it against the more "corporate" sporting culture of Mt Gambier.

## 5.5 Naracoorte

- Naracoorte are connecting effectively with migrant communities and primary industry to drive sport.

## 5.6 Penola

- Greenrise is a highly valued strength in the area, with aims to create recreational spaces. Riddoch Business and Community Association are also looking at recreational spaces such as pump tracks.

## 5.7 Millicent

- "This town [Millicent] is so passionate about sport. It's their life"
- "Sport thrives when our town thrives. Our town thrives when sport thrives. Our clubs are indistinguishable from our town [Millicent]".
- For us, success is about culture. If we can have the best culture and community, we can compete and gain a unique advantage".
- "A lot of older people come to Millicent to calm down and retire. The first question they ask is "where's the bowls club"

## 5.8 Kongorong

- The Kongorong footy club have calves that they grow and sell year in, year out, and use to fund "progress projects".
- The footy club has unique position of having no pub in town, therefore they are the social hub. They are the heart of the community.



# 6. Social Impact

## 6.1 Mental Health

- "Sports give men a chance to talk".
- "Suicides have been a big issue here. The solution and the problem rest in sporting clubs".
- "Having someone in the club who players know they can talk to has had a huge impact".

## 6.2 Social Connectedness

- "Sport is an intervention into loneliness".
- "We moved here. This club became our family. We love giving back".
- "Kids sport is where parents meet new people and make new friends and new connections. When you're kids move out of home, those people become your family".
- "Sport creates spaces to mesh and connect".
- CALD communities, have found connections in community through sport.
- "The club is a family, and families are supposed to care for each other".
- "The club is a community centre".

## 6.3 Social Outcomes

- There are clubs that are committed to creating health cultures, and they are seeing positive rewards.
- "Sporting clubs is where community services can have the biggest impact. Sports outreach has a bigger impact than school outreach".
- "If you want to have an impact in the community, clubs are the way to do it".
- One club is exploring a way to connect employers to clubs.
- "Clubs have a huge role to play in addressing youth drinking culture".

