HOUSING
Action Network

Junction
AUSTRALIA

Barossa Regional Study:
Housing and Community

Report Commissioned by Junction Australia
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Executive Summary

On the surface, the Barossa Region presents an arcadian picture of prosperity, success and social cohesion. The proverbial wine glass is half full. Yet, as shown in this Report there is another side to the Region. For vulnerable people living in isolated communities the glass is very much half empty.

The Barossa Region is set to face continued rapid population growth. It may well become the fastest expanding region in Greater Adelaide. Yet little has been put in place to ensure the transport, social and community infrastructure will be able to match this rapid rate of growth.

Although housing affordability is not a major challenge in the Region, the current trends are not positive and will worsen with the fast rate of future growth. Government should make detailed provision to support the delivery of affordable, diverse, well-located and accessible housing. There also needs to be planning for high quality jobs to ensure the Region is sustainable and does not become a dormitory suburb of Adelaide.

The current Barossa Region housing stock lacks diversity in terms of built form and tenure. There are very low levels of social housing other than in Gawler, and here there is a need for renewal. If left to market forces, the Region's housing will increasingly fail to address local need and changing demographics.

Through a detailed analysis of ABS Census data, this Report highlights surprisingly high numbers of pockets of social disadvantage. These span neighbourhoods of country towns, remote rural locations as well as many areas in the south of Gawler that increasingly form a corridor of disadvantage with Playford and Elizabeth.

Within these areas, and more widely dispersed, many people in the Barossa Region are facing social challenges. Domestic violence, substance abuse, youth alienation and homelessness are problems though often not publicised. The level of service provision in the Region is patchy, and often not locally accountable.

The Barossa Region benefits from high levels of social capital, and there are a number of effective networks spanning service and housing providers and councils. However overall the networks are fragmented and need greater coordination. Councils are working together more, though there is room for a more systematic, planned and coordinated approach by them across social and housing issues.

Junction Australia - building on the valuable legacy of Barossa and Districts Housing - is well placed to play a greater role in the Region. The organisation has a proven track record in delivering community outcomes, understanding the connectedness of social, community and housing issues.

Most solutions to challenges in the Barossa Region will come from local people, local organisations and local councils. This Report's role is to provide a research base, though further and more detailed work could usefully be commissioned.

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Definitions

Barossa Light and Lower North: the SA Government planning region covering the Barossa Region

Barossa Region: four LGAs - the Town of Gawler, District Council of Mallala, The Barossa Council and Light Regional Council

Community housing: social housing managed and/or owned by not-for-profit organisations with a clear social mission

Greenfield development: new residential building in areas with little prior housing construction and infrastructure provision

Housing stress: situations where a household is paying more than 30% of total household income on housing costs, either rent or mortgage loan repayments

Junction Australia: Junction and Women's Housing Ltd trading as Junction Australia

Peri-urban: locations on the edge of larger cities with a mixture of urban and rural characteristics

Public housing: social housing owned and managed by State Government

Residualisation: allocation of social housing to tenants with high, complex or multiple needs - not just those on low incomes

Social housing: rental housing provided at a discount to market rent levels, managed either by public or community housing providers

Tree change: migration from urban centres to rural or small town locations

Abbreviations

ABS: Australian Bureau of Statistics

BDHA: Barossa and Districts Housing Association

LGA: Local Government Area

NRAS: National Rental Affordability Scheme: a capital subsidy for constructing new affordable rental housing, part funded by Commonwealth and States

RDA: Regional Development Australia

SA: South Australia

SA1 etc: a unit of area used by ABS. SA1 is a small neighbourhood, SA4 a large region

SEIFA: Social Economic Index for Areas – an algorithm used by ABS to measure relative social disadvantage

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1   Background

In May 2015 Junction Australia commissioned the Housing Action Network to independently review social, community and housing issues in the Barossa region of South Australia ('SA'). This approach followed the merger of Junction Australia with Barossa and Districts Housing Association ('BDHA') in late 2014.

Junction Australia has for 35 years provided support to disadvantaged and higher need people in SA. Over the last decade the organisation has widened the geographical base in which it operates, and become a major provider of community housing through its Tier 1 registered community housing provider Junction and Women's Housing Ltd.

Junction Australia has adopted an 'integrated service delivery approach' across both services and housing provision. The strategy involves forming strong partnerships with government and non-government agencies.

This Report forms one part of a larger process initiated by Junction Australia and financially supported by BDHA funds to better understand - and help frame potential responses - to community and housing issues in the region.

1.1   Research method

This report is based on mixed methods research. Data has been gathered from:

- Primary statistical information, mainly the ABS census and data collected by State Government.

- Analysis of website and other data provided by the main organisations operating in the region including local councils, State Government agencies, Regional Development Australia ('RDA') Barossa and not-for-profit support and human service providers.

- A review of secondary publications assessing regional trends and issues. These are listed in the Reference section of this Report.

- Interviews and workshops with key individuals in the region. Details are included in an Appendix to this Report.

The interviews and workshops took place in July 2015 and allowed for issues raised by the background analysis to be explored in further detail. The 22 people involved in the research gave a wide range of views, though the sample is not representative of all stakeholders in the region.

The views expressed in this Report are those of the author, and not of Junction Australia or individual interviewees.

1.2   Regional characteristics

The term 'Barossa' is closely associated with the world-famous wine growing region centred on the towns of Tanunda, Nuriootpa, Lyndoch and Angaston. More challenging is the task of defining a wider 'Barossa region'.

Barossa region

SA Government defines 12 planning regions for the State of which 4 are 'Adelaide

Metropolitan', 3 'Greater Adelaide' and 5 'Country'. The 'Barossa Light and Lower North' is the region taken as the 'Barossa Region' for this report and covers four Local Government Areas ('LGAs'):

- Town of Gawler

- District Council of Mallala

- The Barossa Council

- Light Regional Council

As shown in Figure 1, 'Barossa Light and Lower North' (in purple) is one of the 7 planning regions of the 'Greater Adelaide' metropolitan region, as defined in the 30 year plan for Adelaide. This region stretches from Kapunda in the north to Mount Pleasant in the east and Gawler in the south.

The Barossa Region definition used in this report is also used by RDA Barossa. However, there are other approaches possible:

- The ABS 'Barossa SA4' region excludes the Town of Gawler. This highlights how the urban character of Gawler is in contrast to much of the rural nature of the rest of the region.

- Several interviewees for this Report questioned State Government's regional definitions. Some suggested the Barossa region should be wider, including LGAs north of Mallala. Others suggested the Barossa region should just include the mainly rural areas in the Barossa and Light LGAs.

Figure 1: Greater Adelaide planning region

Source: SA Government (2010a) p.23
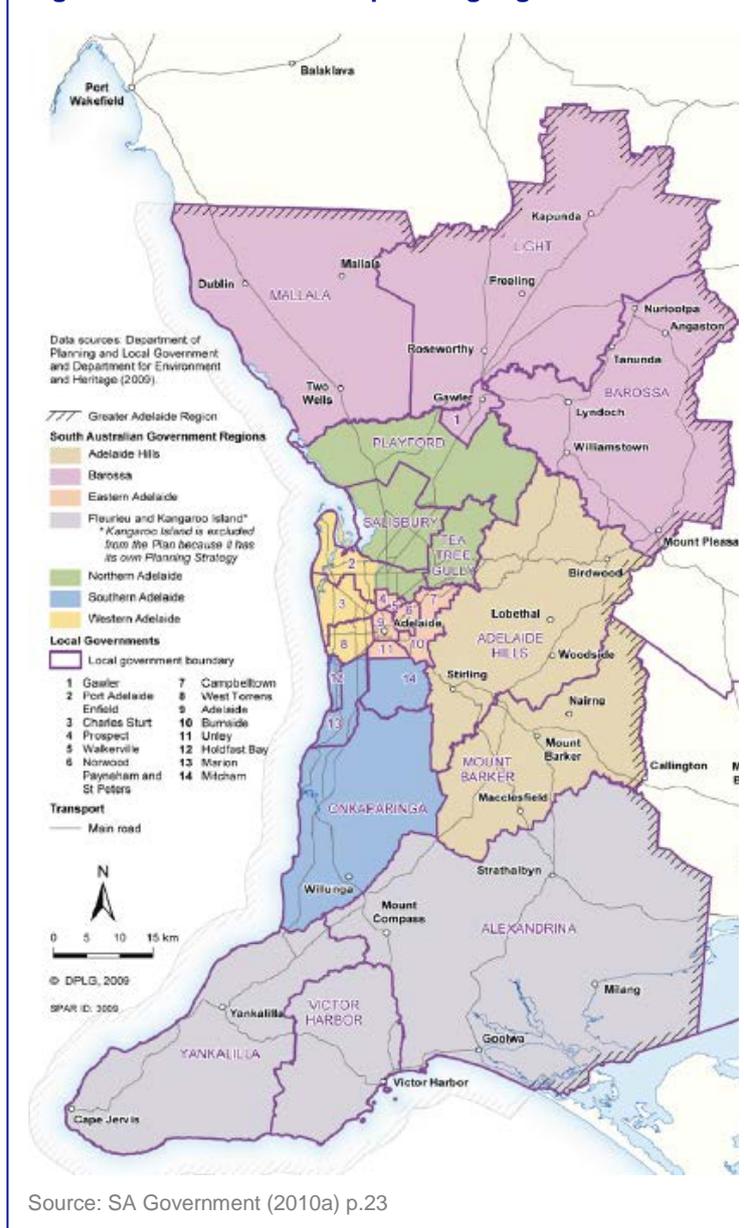
Regional overview

The Barossa Region contains some of the State's best agricultural land, encompassing the wine growing regions of the Barossa and Eden Valleys and the livestock, grain and horticultural regions of the western Barossa and Gawler rivers. In contrast, to the south, Gawler and Roseworthy are growing urban areas with associated light industry (RDA Barossa, 2014).

Figure 2: The Barossa Region
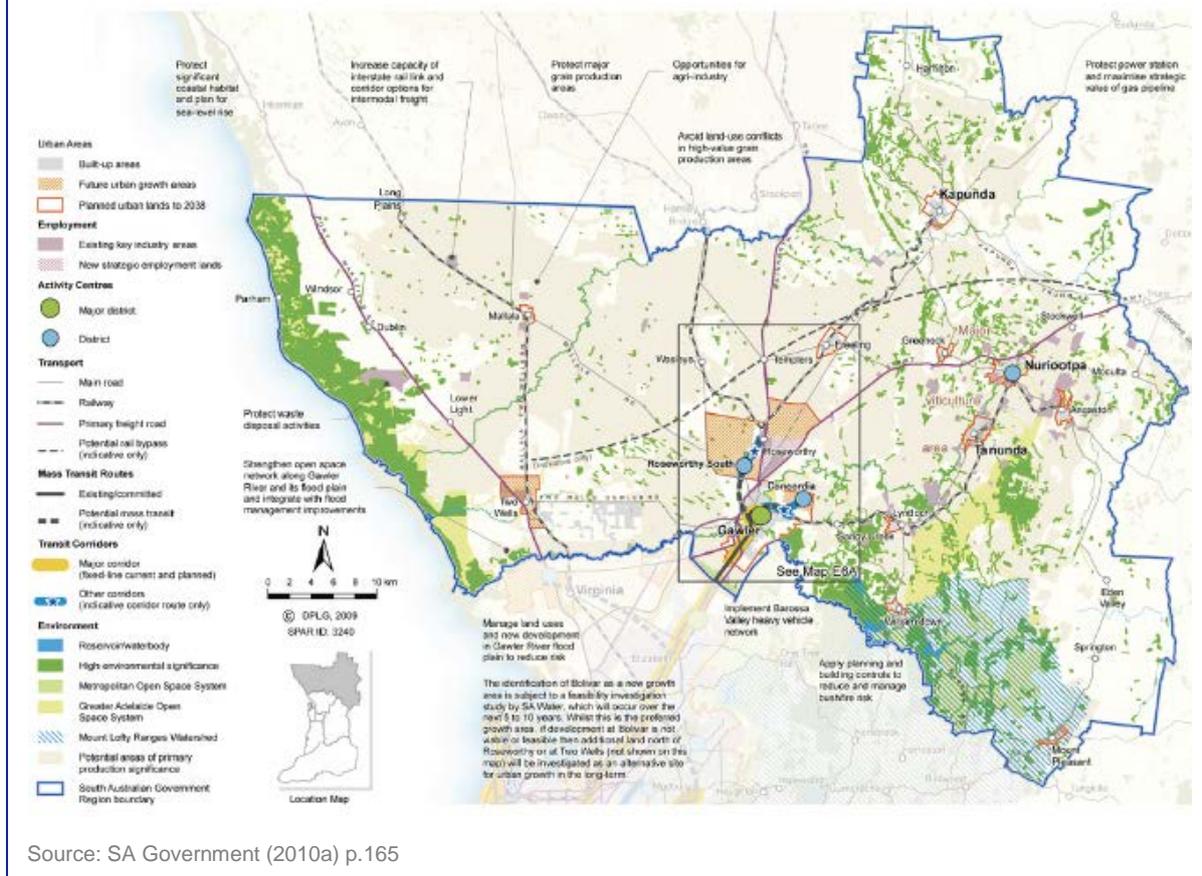
Source: SA Government (2010a) p.165

Two thirds of the Region's population is concentrated in the southern LGAs of Barossa and Gawler (see Table 1). The mainly rural Light and Mallala LGAs to the north and west are lightly populated.

Table 1: Regional population, 2011

Barossa	22,169
Gawler	20,536
Light	13,783
Mallala	8,343
Total	64,831

Source: ABS (2006, 2011)

According to RDA Barossa, the performance of the Region's economy is relatively strong, and there it is a strong contributor to exports from regional SA. Tourism contributes some $185 million to the region, though this is modest compared to the $660 million generated by the

Barossa wine industry which supports some 5,000 jobs (RDA Barossa, 2014: p.15).

Transport connections to the Region have improved in recent years. The Northern Expressway linking to the Gawler bypass opened in 2010. In September 2015 Government announced funding of some $1 billion for the Northern Connector to better link the Expressway to Adelaide.

These transport links are likely to support the further urban expansion of Gawler and Roseworthy, and boost tourism to the Barossa wine region. However, they may lead to the growth in commuting, and more investment in holiday homes.

Intra-regional transport links are poor, a point made consistently during the research interviews. Public transport is limited, especially east-west, and investment in rail

infrastructure needed though unlikely to happen except a link to Roseworthy.

Urban planning issues

The Barossa Region is a classic 'peri-urban' area forming the interface between the city and the countryside. These tend to be areas where there is a clash between the use of land for agricultural and housing uses.

Peri-urban areas often see a change in the existing community due to the arrival of new residents. Some new arrivals may commute to employment in the metropolis, unlike traditional residents employed locally.

There may also be a growth in the Barossa Region of 'tree change' property owners. Dating from the late 1960s, this is the migration of households from metropolitan areas to rural communities - and coastal locations in the case of 'sea change' (Burnley & Murphy, 2004).

Although retirees are a large part of lifestyle migrants, they are not the only component. Many new residents moving from the city areas are younger than for Australia as a whole, and much younger than the local population. Typically they move for reasons of lifestyle and living costs.

Researchers have developed a typology of five different types of movers, based largely on distance from metropolitan centres (Gurran et al., 2005). Due to proximity to Adelaide, the Barossa Region is best characterised as 'tree change commuter' zone using the Gurran typology.

With the baby boomer generation approaching retirement, the rate of lifestyle migration is likely to rise further. This will place further pressure on the availability and affordability of regional properties. Lifestyle migrants typically have capital to buy in their sea/tree change locations,

pushing up local house prices. Future generations of lower income existing residents may be unable to afford to buy in the same area.

Lifestyle migration can be hard to identify without undertaking large-scale surveys. The interviews undertaken for this Report did not identify it as being a major issue in the Barossa Region. However, this may change in the future as Adelaide's arterial transport links improve and house prices rise.

As shown in Table 2, the level of housing occupation (i.e. occupied properties as a proportion of all dwellings) is higher in the Barossa Region than across the State. This would be one way to identify lifestyle migration. However, there has been a fall in occupation levels in in Barossa and Gawler LGAs between 2006 and 2001.

Table 2: Housing occupation, 2006 and 2011

	2006	2011
Barossa	91.1 %	90.6 %
Gawler	94.9 %	92.4 %
Light	92.2 %	92.7 %
Mallala	90.4 %	90.6 %
SA	89.7 %	88.1 %

Source: ABS (2006, 2011)

1.3 Population and economic profile

The Barossa Region has a modest population, but is experiencing one of the fastest growth rates in the State. Over the decade to the last census, population rose by 19%, ahead of SA's average growth of 10%. As noted in Section 1.4 of this Report, the high level of growth is likely to continue.

From Table 3, families with children are a higher proportion of the population of all the

Region's LGAs than the State average. This is particularly the case in rural areas.

Table 3: Household composition, 2011

	Families	Lone person	Group
Barossa	74.1%	23.9%	2.0%
Gawler	69.5%	28.1%	2.4%
Light	80.0%	18.3%	1.7%
Mallala	77.7%	19.9%	2.5%
SA	68.2%	27.9%	3.6%

Source: ABS (2011)

The age distribution of the resident population is shown in Table 4. There is a higher proportion of younger people in all LGAs, and the proportion of older people is generally at or below State averages. Hence the age profile in the Region is more characteristic of urban Australia than rural or regional areas.

Table 4: Population by age, 2011

	aged 0-14	aged 65 +
Barossa	19.9%	16.7%
Gawler	18.2%	18.1%
Light	22.6%	11.3%
Mallala	20.5%	10.7%
SA	17.8%	16.2%

Source: ABS (2011)

The higher proportion of younger people places pressure on education facilities, Despite expansion of Adelaide University's campus at Roseworthy, local tertiary education facilities are limited and the region has a lower than average level of people with further qualifications.

Regional incomes

Table 5 shows that household incomes in the Barossa region are generally above the State average, particularly in Light LGA. The exception is the Town of Gawler.

Table 5: Household weekly income, 2006-11

	2006	2011	Change
Barossa	$1,008	$1,125	+ 11.6 %
Gawler	$834	$960	+ 15.1 %
Light	$1,071	$1,274	+ 18.9 %
Mallala	$977	$1,167	+ 19.5 %
SA	$887	$1,044	+ 17.7 %

Source: ABS (2006, 2011)

Across SA, median weekly household income rose by 17.7% between 2006 and 2011. Incomes in the more rural areas of Light and Mallala LGAs increased by a higher rate, though the rate of increase was noticeably lower than the State average in Barossa and Gawler LGAs.

Table 6 illustrates the extent of low and high income households in the region based on incomes below $300 (low) and incomes over $3,000 (high). It confirms the favourable positioning of Light LGA where there are fewer low income and more high income households as well as the highest median income in the Barossa region (as shown in Table 5).

Table 6: Low and high incomes, 2011

	< $600 per week	> $3,000 per week
Barossa	24.9 %	6.4 %
Gawler	30.0 %	5.2 %
Light	19.9 %	7.4 %
Mallala	21.8 %	5.6 %
SA	27.7 %	7.3 %

Source: ABS (2011)

Gawler LGA has the highest proportion of low income households in the Barossa region, as well as the lowest share of higher income households.

Regional employment

The mix of industries of employment in the Barossa Region partly explains the income patterns. From Table 7, agricultural activities including farming, fruit growing and wine production are important employment sources. Often jobs in these sectors are modestly remunerated, and seasonal.

Table 7: Top employment areas, 2011

Barossa	Beverage manufacture (12.9%) School education (5.3%) Fruit and nut tree growing (3.8%)
Gawler	School education (5.7%) Cafes, restaurants (4.0%) Supermarkets (3.4%)
Light	School education (4.9%) Beverage manufacture (4.9%) Sheep, beef, grain (4.4%)
Mallala	Road freight (5.8%) Sheep, beef, cattle (3.8%) Supermarkets (3.0%)

Source: ABS (2011)

There are also variations in occupational mix, with larger numbers of (typically higher paid) professionals and managers in Light and Barossa LGAs. All Barossa Region LGAs have a higher proportion of labourers and trades people than the SA average.

Table 8: Occupation sample, 2011

	Managers and Professionals	Labourers	Trades, Technical operatives, Drivers
Barossa	15.1 %	16.9 %	15.3 %
Gawler	9.9 %	12.8 %	16.4 %
Light	16.6 %	13.5 %	16.1 %
Mallala	14.7 %	15.0 %	17.1 %
SA	12.6 %	11.1 %	14.1 %

Source: ABS (2011). Selected occupations only

SA unemployment averaged 5.7% in 2011, as shown in Table 9, with Gawler and Mallala LGAs around this level. By contrast, unemployment was noticeably lower in Light LGA, and especially in Barossa LGA.

Table 9: Unemployment, 2011

Barossa	3.6 %
Gawler	5.8 %
Light	5.0 %
Mallala	5.7 %
SA	5.7 %

Source: ABS (2011)

1.4 Regional planning and population growth

State Government's 30 year plan for Greater Adelaide was issued in 2010, updated in 2011, and is currently being updated again. According to the website, and in contrast to the 2010 plan, 'the focus of future growth will be away from urban sprawl to protect our food growing areas and natural landscapes' (www.dpti.sa.gov.au/planning).

The updated Plan is likely to focus on housing infill in existing areas, and set a stronger urban growth boundary. This could have a significant impact on the Barossa Region, though it will be interesting to see where the growth boundary is drawn. It is likely Gawler and areas to the south of the Region will be designated for population and housing growth.

Greater Adelaide plan, 2010

According to State Government, the Barossa Region will grow rapidly over the next three decades. As shown in Table 10, the Region is set to be by far the fastest growing across the whole of Greater Adelaide.

The 2010 Plan placed a focus on growth within 'corridors', i.e. areas with high quality road and rail connections. In the Barossa Region the corridors were between the city and Gawler, and then to Roseworthy, Concordia and Gawler East.

Table 10: Population projections

	30 year growth	% change from 2011	Area
Barossa	110,000	161%	Peri-urban
Fleurieu	22,000	46%	Peri-urban
Northern Adelaide	169,000	45%	Urban
Adelaide Hills	29,000	41%	Peri-urban
Western Adelaide	83,000	37%	Urban
Eastern Adelaide	65,000	30%	Urban
Southern Adelaide	82,000	23%	Urban

Source: SA Government (2010a; 2010b)

As shown in Table 11, within the Barossa Region, just under 70% of population growth was to be in the 'corridors', essentially in the areas around Gawler. This was to be based on 'fringe growth' (greenfield) not 'infill' housing development.

The remainder of the region's growth would be away from the 'corridors', including a significant population increase at Two Wells ('fringe growth') and lesser growth at Nuriootpa, Tanunda and Kapunda ('townships'). An indicative 'mass transit' route was suggested from Two Wells, passing north of Gawler and Nuriootpa to Truro.

Table 11: Barossa in the 30 year plan

	Housing	Population
Within corridors		
Infill	+ 0	+ 0
Fringe growth	+ 30,500	+ 74,400
Outside corridors		
Infill	+ 0	+ 0
Fringe growth	+ 7,400	+ 14,800
Townships	+ 8,500	+20,800
Affordable housing	+ 6,950	

Source: SA Government (2010a) p.164

The growth of population in the Region was reduced by 29,000 people in the 30 year plan as a result of public consultation in 2008 and 2009. However, the projected rate of growth remains significant and is a controversial local issue.

The Greater Adelaide plan is high level, and lacks detail. For example, there is no definition of 'affordable housing' (6,950 dwellings proposed for the study area) so it is unclear if these will be houses for rent or purchase. It is also not clear where the 38,500 additional jobs will come from.

Regional coordination

The Adelaide 30 year plan promised 'regional implementation strategies' to coordinate delivery by linking the work of State Government agencies and local government. These strategies have not been produced.

There is no regional body charged with delivering the 30 year plan in the Barossa Region. RDA Barossa has a strong local presence, though a narrow focus on supporting economic development and jobs growth. RDA plays no direct role in land use planning, housing and community issues.

State Government has shown a commitment to the Region by holding a 'Country Cabinet' in the Barossa in October 2015. This allowed local stakeholders to raise issues, though is not part of a longer-term approach to better coordinate regional activity.

Local government

Some Australian councils have been proactive in addressing housing affordability and social issues. Housing actions including establishing and supporting community housing providers, inclusionary zoning to raise developer contributions, direct property ownership and innovative planning policies promoting smaller lots and cheaper building approaches.

The housing affordability and social policies of the councils in the study area are summarised in Table 12. Generally the councils are of modest size in terms of population, and have limited resources.

Hence there is a limit to their activities in helping support and coordinate support for disadvantaged residents.

Despite the hard work of particular individuals (a point highlighted during stakeholder interviews), the four councils only have modest plans helping promote good social outcomes. There is also a general lack of specific policies that support the delivery of affordable housing.

The interviews highlighted certain areas in which the Barossa Region councils cooperate, and the coordinating work of BDHA and now Junction Australia. However, coordination in the Region tends to be on specific issues, and not always limited to the area covered by the 4 councils in the Barossa Region.

Table 12: Council strategies

Area	Strategies
Barossa	• Strategy Directions Report, adopted 2014 • Aims to protect rural/wine growing character of the area • Proposal to update affordable housing planning approach • Some focus on social issues, community planning etc.
Gawler	• Development Plan adopted 2015 based on state template, little specific housing input • Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the areas to avoid over-concentration • Aims for sustainable growth of town and retaining a distinctive identity from suburban Adelaide
Light	• Well-developed social plan with identified target groups
Mallala	• Development Plan adopted 2014 based on state template, no specific housing/social input • Limited mention of social and community planning

Source: Barossa Council (2013), Gawler Council (2010), Gawler Council (2015), Light Council (2006), Mallala Council (2014)

1.5   Section conclusions

The Barossa Region shows many positive features in terms of economic activity and quality of life. RDA Barossa act as a fulcrum for local coordination, with a particular focus on promoting economic development and tourism.

There are, however, signs that the Region will change significantly over the next three decades. State planners have earmarked the Region for a particularly fast population growth. The south of the Barossa Region around Gawler and Roseworthy will become part of outer-suburban Adelaide, and peri-urban development will spread to Light and Mallala LGAs.

It is not clear that infrastructure provision will match the likely rate of population growth. There needs to be significant investment in transport infrastructure, particularly buses and rail. In addition greater focus will be needed on expanding social and community infrastructure to retain the Region's liveability.

State planners need to make detailed provision to support the delivery of sufficient affordable, diverse, well-located and accessible housing. There also needs to be planning for high quality jobs to ensure the Region is sustainable and not just a dormitory suburb for Adelaide.

The Barossa Region is diverse, split between predominantly urban and rural areas. To ensure greater social and economic coordination, further administrative structures will be needed beyond the solid work of RDA Barossa. In particular the 4 councils will need to work collaboratively and be funded sufficiently so they can build capacity and skills.

2 Housing in the Barossa Region

This section reviews the housing types and markets in the Barossa Region, with a focus on the provision of affordable housing for low and moderate income residents.

2.1 Existing housing stock

The Region has a traditional housing stock, dominated by detached houses (see Table 13). This housing form is most prevalent in the largely rural Light and Mallala LGAs, though figures are also well above State averages in Gawler and Barossa LGAs.

A greater mix of housing types exists in Gawler LGA, though it remains a low density housing area. There are a number of units in Barossa LGA, geared around the holiday and retirement markets.

Table 13: Dwelling structure, 2011

	Separate house	Semi, row or terraced	Unit or apartment
Barossa	92.1 %	3.9 %	3.2 %
Gawler	85.3 %	10.4 %	2.9 %
Light	97.7 %	1.1 %	1.0 %
Mallala	97.9 %	0.5 %	0.8 %
SA	79.9 %	10.7 %	8.9 %

Source: ABS (2011). Excludes 'other dwelling' category so totals do not sum 100%

Table 14 shows the bedroom configuration of properties in the Barossa region. In general the Region's homes have 3 or more bedrooms, particularly in Light and Mallala LGAs where there are substantial numbers of 4 or more bedroom houses.

As with dwelling structure, the greatest diversity in terms of bedroom configuration is in Gawler LGA where the mix mirrors closely the average for the State. Smaller and hence more affordable properties are scarce in other parts of the Barossa Region.

Table 14: Bedroom numbers, 2011

	0, 1	2	3	4+
Barossa	3.1 %	14.4 %	51.5 %	29.7 %
Gawler	3.9 %	17.6 %	52.2 %	24.4 %
Light	2.0 %	9.5 %	45.5 %	42.0 %
Mallala	2.4 %	9.7 %	49.6 %	36.9 %
SA	3.8 %	19.6 %	53.1 %	21.8 %

Source: ABS (2011). Excludes responses where the number of bedrooms has not been stated

Table 15 indicates the average household size has remained largely steady between 2006 and 2011. Away from Gawler, the largest town in the area, the average household is larger than the State average. Light and Mallala LGAs have corresponding larger average household sizes and (from Table 14) more bedrooms to accommodate.

Table 15: Household size, 2006-2011

	2006	2011
Barossa	2.5	2.5
Gawler	2.4	2.4
Light	2.8	2.8
Mallala	2.8	2.7
SA	2.4	2.4

Source: ABS (2011)

Tenure mix

The mix of different housing tenures is given in Table 16. Levels of home ownership, including households paying a mortgage, are higher across the entire Barossa Region than for SA as a whole.

Ownership levels are particularly high in Mallala (77.6%), Light (84.5%) and Barossa (77.9%) LGAs.

Gawler LGA is the only area with a similar housing mix to SA. All other Barossa Region LGAs have a low level of private rental, and an even lower level of social rental housing (covering public and community housing).

Table 16: Housing tenure mix, 2011

	Social housing	Private rental	Owner occupation
Barossa	2.3 %	19.8 %	77.9 %
Gawler	7.7 %	22.1 %	70.2 %
Light	0.9 %	14.5 %	84.5 %
Mallala	0.2 %	13.4 %	86.3 %
Region total	3.6 %	18.8 %	77.6 %
SA	8.0 %	22.5 %	69.5 %

Source: ABS (2011)

The Barossa Region housing stock therefore lacks diversity in terms of tenure, dwelling structure and bedroom configuration. In the private sales and rental market there is a low supply of smaller, affordable properties that are suited to single people, including older people.

2.2   Regional housing costs

The trends since 2003 in house values in the Barossa Region are shown in Table 17. All four LGAs have lower sales prices than the state average, though Light Regional Council is closest to state levels. As will be noted later in this Report, relative differences in regional incomes need to be taken into account in assessing housing affordability.

Despite relatively modest sales prices, there has been a significant increase in regional property values between 2003 and 2012. The annual increases in Mallala (9.6%) and Light (8.8%) LGAs are much higher than the State

average increase (6.3%). In the case of Mallala, the rapid rate of increase is from a low base, and the LGA continues to have the lowest sales prices within the Barossa region.

Table 17: Dwelling prices, 2003-2012

	Jun 2003	Jun 2012	Annual change
Barossa	$205,000	$316,000	+ 5.6 %
Gawler	$185,500	$295,000	+ 6.0 %
Light	$174,000	$342,500	+ 8.8 %
Mallala	$120,000	$250,000	+ 9.6 %
SA	$211,500	$346,000	+ 6.3 %

Source: Valuer Generals Office

Housing affordability

'Housing affordability' is measured as the relationship between household income and household expenditure on housing costs. It can apply to all households, whether they are purchasing a property via a mortgage or renting from a landlord.

Around one in six Australian households pay over 30% of income on housing costs, and are defined as being in 'stress'. Of households in the lowest 40% of income bands, over a quarter are in housing stress. The lowest income households are concentrated in the private rental sector, where many residents face housing stress.

Housing stress increased from the early 1990s across Australia, mainly as housing prices increased much faster than wages (Yates & Milligan, 2007). As a result, entry to home ownership has become difficult or impossible for many households, and shortages of affordably priced rental accommodation are a major issue.

Measured by comparing average income to average house purchase prices, Australia is less affordable than most countries including the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand (Demographia, 2015).

Three of the ten most unaffordable cities in the survey are in Australia, with Greater Adelaide ranking number 41 in terms of affordability in the world with median house prices 6.4 times incomes (classed as 'severely unaffordable').

Although there are a number of reasons why housing affordability is such a major issue in Australia, the most important is the imbalance between the demand for and supply of housing.

Within this general relationship, there are particular issues relating to sub-markets. For example, there may be imbalances between supply and demand for certain types of properties, or tenure types, and in specific locations. Often smaller, cheaper properties are in greater demand.

Regional affordability

As shown in Table 17 above, house sales prices have been rising in the Barossa Region at or beyond average rates or the State. This has had an impact on the level of rents charged in the private sector.

Table 18 shows the proportion of private rental properties that are affordable to low income households, defined as those earning up to 80% of median income. In all 4 LGAs in the Barossa Region, and in both 2007 and 2012, rental affordability was lower than the State average

Table 18: Rental affordability, 2007-2012

	2007	2012
Barossa	50.9 %	44.7 %
Gawler	50.0 %	37.0 %
Light	54.5 %	48.1 %
Mallala	55.5 %	45.1 %
SA	60.3 %	48.1 %

Source: Renewal SA (2013)

Rental affordability has fallen between 2007 and 2012 in all 4 LGAs in the Region,

though most rapidly in Gawler LGA. Some two thirds of lower income renters in Gawler are unable to rent affordably, compared to an average one half of renters across SA.

Housing stress

Housing stress is a specific measure of the extent to which lower income households face unaffordable housing costs (rent or mortgage payments). The usual benchmark is that households should not pay more than 30% of their gross income for housing.

Table 19 show the proportion of low and moderate income households who rent from private landlords that are in housing stress in 2011. With the exception of Gawler LGA, rental stress levels are lower in the Barossa Region than across SA. Rental housing stress is a major issue for very low income households, less so for moderate incomes.

Table 19: Rental housing stress, 2011

	Very Low Incomes	Low Incomes	Moderate Incomes
Barossa	15.7 %	12.6 %	8.8 %
Gawler	20.2 %	18.4 %	14.0 %
Light	15.1 %	10.9 %	7.6 %
Mallala	14.6 %	9.5 %	6.0 %
SA	17.7 %	15.8 %	12.6 %

Source: Renewal SA (2013). Income bands are in a range compared to median: 'Very low' (<50%); 'Low' (50%-80%) and 'Moderate' (80-120%)

Proportions of home purchasers in housing stress are shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20: Purchase housing stress, 2011

	Very Low Incomes	Low Incomes	Moderate Incomes
Barossa	8.5 %	9.3 %	11.1 %
Gawler	7.9 %	8.5 %	10.8 %
Light	14.5 %	15.3 %	16.4 %
Mallala	17.7 %	17.8 %	19.5 %
SA	7.4 %	8.3 %	10.2 %

Source: Renewal SA (2013)

By contrast to the figures in Table 19 for people in rental stress, Table 20 shows that the levels of housing stress for home purchasers in the Barossa region are higher than averages for the State. Mallala LGA has the highest levels of housing stress in the Barossa Region.

2.3   Social housing

In Section 2.1, Table 16 highlighted the high levels of home ownership in the Barossa Region. Of the section of the regional population who rent, most rent from private sector landlords. Social housing tenure is well below State levels, except in Gawler LGA where it is just below average.

In the predominantly rural areas of Mallala and Light LGAs, social housing is at negligible levels. Social housing is also scarce in Barossa LGA at under half the national proportion of around 4.5%

Table 21 shows the split of social housing between public and not-for-profit landlords. The Barossa region has a higher proportion of community housing than the SA average, mainly due to higher numbers in Gawler and Barossa LGAs. Community housing is scarce in both Light and Mallala LGAs.

Table 21: Social housing mix, 2012

	Public housing	Community housing	% community
Barossa	141	51	36.2 %
Gawler	543	77	14.2 %
Light	40	4	10.0 %
Mallala	7	0	0 %
Region total	731	132	18.1 %
SA	43,700	5,080	11.6 %

Source: Renewal SA (2013)

Many of the region's community housing properties are managed by Junction Australia from their office in Nuriootpa. This follows their merger in 2014 with BDHA. Other homes are managed by a variety of not-for-profit organisations - particularly Cornerstone Housing (formerly Lutheran Community Housing Support Unit).

Public housing renewal

During the last two decades public housing in many countries, including Australia, has become 'residualised'. This is where limited stock is increasingly allocated to tenants with multiple and complex needs.

As rents are income-based, the revenue of the SA Housing Trust has been under substantial pressure. Over recent years the Trust has sold a significant number of social housing homes to private buyers.

Community housing providers are in a better position to maintain and at times expand their social housing. This is due to their ability to access additional funding by adjusting rents for Commonwealth Rent Assistance. In addition community housing providers can raise bank debt.

Housing SA has historically run the social housing system in a conservative way, especially compared to other States, and there has been only a modest growth in community housing. This, however, is starting to change. Two stock transfers from public to community housing took place in October 2015 including 600 homes at Mitchell Park to Junction Australia.

Late in 2014 all social housing assets, and stewardship of the community housing sector, was transferred from Housing SA to Renewal SA. The agency has been tasked with renewing 4,500 pre-1968 public housing homes within a 10 kilometre radius of Adelaide CBD by 2020, and all pre-1968 homes before 2030.

The current focus of Renewal SA is on locations in the inner and middle ring suburbs around Adelaide where land values are higher. This is in part to meet their 2020 target, however it also makes funding easier as social housing renewal is to be paid for through higher residential densities generating sales to private purchasers.

2.4   Section conclusions

The Barossa Region currently has reasonable levels of housing affordability compared to capital cities across Australia. However, there are signs that the trend is not positive as house prices and rents rise faster than household incomes.

Access to affordable housing remains challenging for certain groups, specifically very low income households. There are also increasing challenges for moderate income households to access home ownership. Housing affordability is falling, and as a result more people are in housing stress through paying an unsustainable amount of their income on housing costs.

The fast rate of population growth in the Region over the next 30 years coupled with a lack of support for new social and affordable housing could lead to rapidly increasing housing affordability issues. This will challenge the sustainability of many of the local industries such as wine production and farming which rely on a pool of modestly paid locally-based employees.

The Region has very low levels of social housing other than in Gawler, increasing the reliance of lower income households on private landlords. There are few smaller properties in the Barossa Region, and limited housing diversity. Left to market forces, new-build properties are likely to

cater for wealthier households, tree-change migrants and property investors.

With a young population, there will be an increase over the next decade in new household formation. Many in lower income jobs will struggle to find local affordable housing and may therefore increase the drain of human capital as young adults move from the Region to Adelaide.

There are no current Commonwealth or State funding opportunities to increase the supply of social and affordable housing. Therefore, as the total housing stock in the Region increases over the next three decades, the proportion of social and affordable housing will continue to fall.

Although there is a need for social housing renewal, especially in areas such as Gawler with relatively concentrated pockets of social housing, current approaches by Renewal SA are unlikely to focus on peri-urban areas such as the Barossa Region. This could be addressed by a call to action from regional stakeholders.

3 Social Disadvantage in the Barossa

This final Section considers issues facing higher needs groups in the Barossa Region. The research interviews identified a variety of social and community issues that are less easily captured through standard data analysis, and therefore often less the focus of Government intervention.

3.1 Measuring disadvantage

A widely-used measure of social disadvantage is the ABS *SEIFA (Socio Economic Index for Areas)* data. The index measures relative disadvantage based on income, educational attainment, housing quality, unemployment and other factors.

The lower the SEIFA score, the greater the disadvantage in the area relative to all areas in Australia. A SEIFA score of 1 (coloured red) shows an area is in the 10% most disadvantaged areas in the country, with a SEIFA score of 10 (coloured yellow) indicates the top 10% advantaged areas.

As shown in Figure 3, Barossa LGA (SEIFA 8) and Light LGA (SEIFA 9) have low levels of social disadvantage, and Mallala LGA (SEIFA 6) and Gawler LGA (SEIFA 6) are middling disadvantaged. By contrast, neighbouring Playford LGA containing

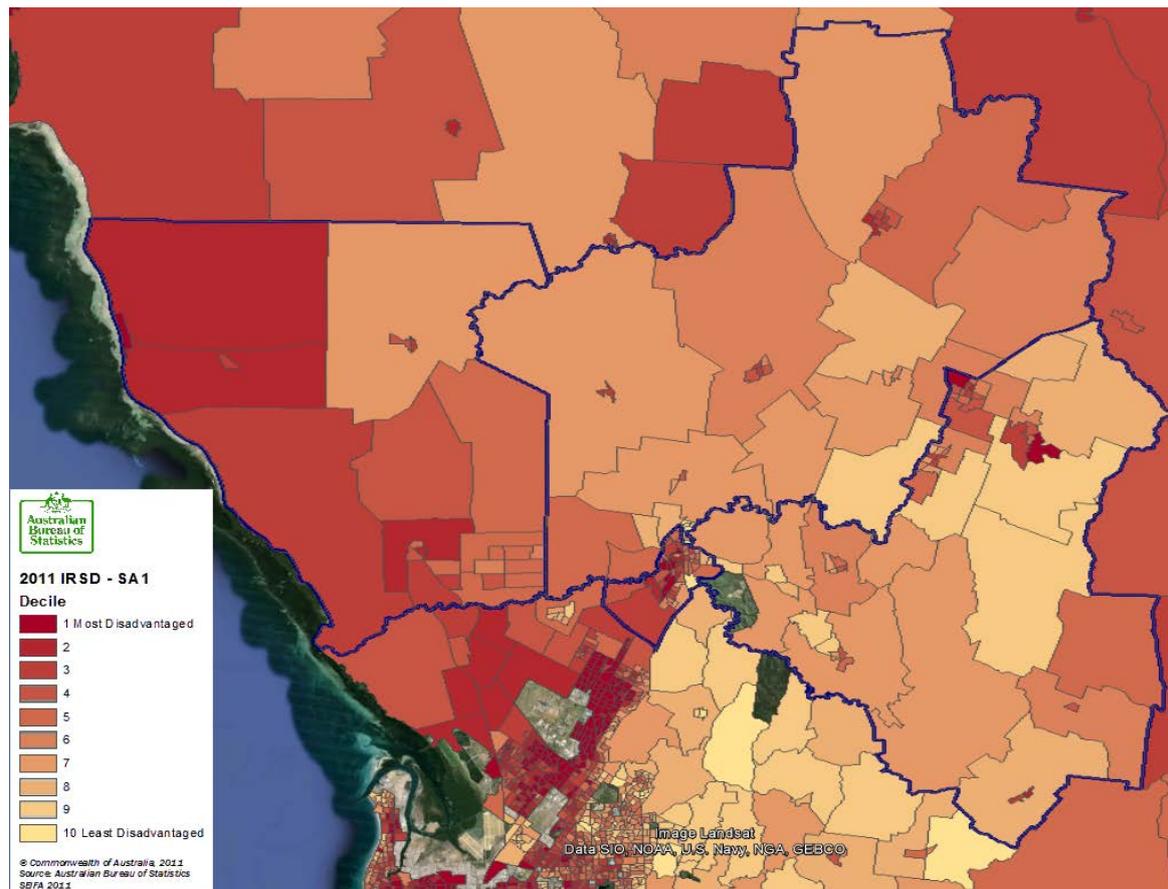Figure 3: Social disadvantage - LGA level
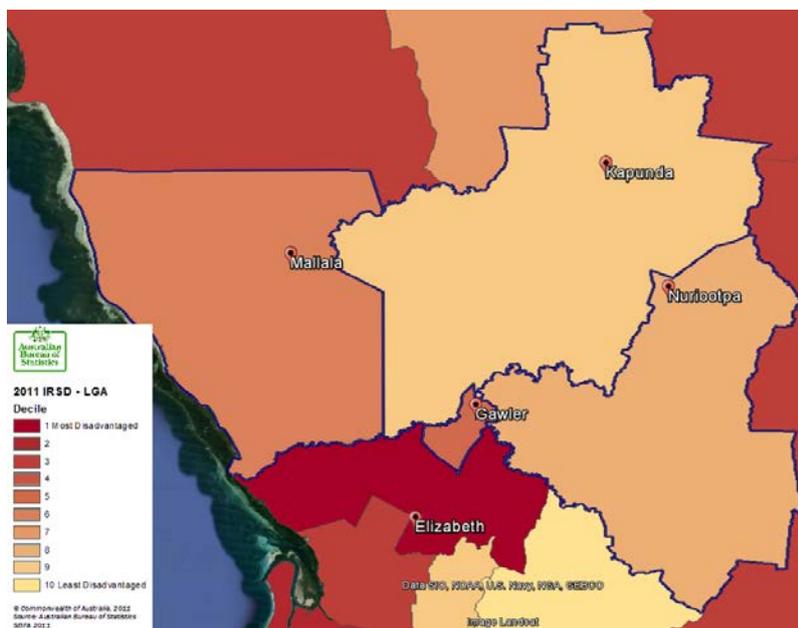
Source: ABS (2011), SEIFA data at LGA level, mapped using Google Earth

towns such as Elizabeth is highly disadvantaged with a SEIFA score of 1.

Reviewing SEIFA scores at LGA level can provide a misleading picture, especially in areas such as the Barossa Region where there are relatively large disparities between very prosperous and highly disadvantaged areas. Therefore Figures 4 and 5 use SEIFA scores based on the smallest areas used by ABS (SA1).

Figure 4 shows SEIFA scores using SA1 (neighbourhood) data. The Barossa Region has a larger than expected number of pockets of disadvantage, especially in some parts of medium sized towns. There are also some rural areas, for example in Mallala LGA, showing high levels of disadvantage (SEIFA score 1, 2 and 3).

Figure 4: Social disadvantage - local level, Barossa Region

2011 IRSD - SA1
Decile

1 Most Disadvantaged
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10 Least Disadvantaged

© Commonwealth of Australia 2011
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics
SEIFA 2011

Source: ABS (2011), SEIFA data at SA1 level, mapped using Google Earth

Figure 5 highlights two districts. The first, Nuriootpa - the heart of the Barossa wine district - has two neighbourhoods with very high disadvantage (SEIFA 1). In the second, Gawler has a large number of disadvantaged areas and appears to form a continuum of social disadvantage running down to Playford and Elizabeth.

Perceptions of disadvantage

The research interviews highlighted that many policymakers see the Barossa Region as prosperous and not an area of disadvantage. In part this is due to the association with the wine industry. It may therefore be politically risky to invest in social and community support in the Barossa Region, compared to investing in higher profile areas such as Elizabeth.

One interviewee noted 'no politician dare go to the Barossa'. Another said 'perceptions of wealth are a disadvantage for our region'.

Interviewees also suggested some leaders in the Barossa Region choose to not publicise the challenges faced by certain local residents and the pockets of disadvantage. This might be to preserve a positive perception of the Barossa and not discourage investment or tourism.

Disadvantage drivers and issues

The Barossa Region is characterised by smaller towns and villages with poor public transport links. Lower income groups living in areas of high social disadvantage may not be able to easily and affordably travel to areas where there are jobs.

Figure 5: Social disadvantage - specific localities
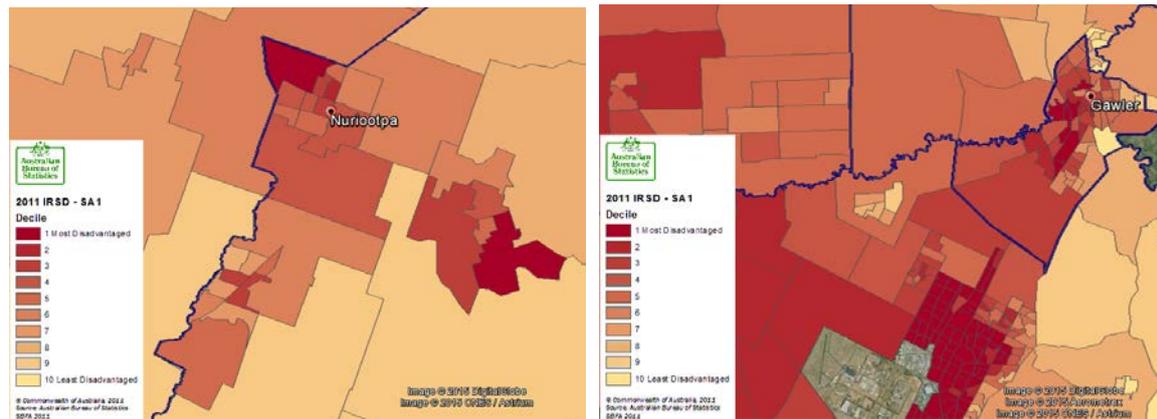
Source: ABS (2011), SEIFA data at SA1 level, mapped using Google Earth

The rapid recent population increases in the Region are likely to have challenged existing social support both in terms of demand for service, as well as the variety and complexity of services needed. A barrier for delivering outreach health care services in the Region, especially for older people, is the geographic spread of clients requiring care, and the time and cost of travelling to reach them.

Population and economic changes in the Region have also helped create a two-tier community. Older, wealthier residents have a longstanding connection to place – though there is a growing underclass who lack access to lower paid unskilled work. Newer arrivals either find it hard to break into property ownership, or are wealthier than many existing locals.

The issue of social disadvantage is particularly important to providers such as Junction Australia. Due to the residualisation of social housing, most new applicants have complex needs rather than simply being in a low income group. This provides challenges to both Housing SA and community housing providers.

Junction Australia has procedures to assist tenants with complex needs, through their own staff, often working in partnership with

local and regional not-for-profit social service providers. This has led to strong networks of support being built in the region, helping build community cohesion.

3.2   Addressing social need

This section is largely based on detailed feedback received during the research interviews. Relatively few reports and surveys have addressed social and community needs in the Barossa Region. Further research work is needed on the 'social' side to balance the 'economic' work of RDA Barossa.

Geographical issues

Research interviewees noted that for a number of areas such as homelessness support, domestic violence support and youth work a number of the support providers were not based locally. Often clients would be directed to service organisations based in Elizabeth or Adelaide.

This suggests that although the Barossa Region is an administrative region for State Government planning purposes, it does not work this way in terms of service delivery.

Some boundaries, such as for Medicare Local, do not take into account the Barossa

Region which encompasses both peri-urban and rural locations. This is also true for domestic violence services which are based in Elizabeth, hence local people seeking help will need to travel from the Barossa Region to obtain support or wait for support to come to them.

Interviewees often regarded the 4 local Barossa Region councils as insular, though generally saw evidence that coordination was increasing. However, the level of cooperation differs according to the outlooks of Mayors, Councillors and community development staff. There were no comprehensive memoranda of understanding, and coordination tended to be around specific issues - youth issues (and the Youth Bus) a positive example.

Service providers who have a base in the Barossa Region generally choose to locate in Gawler. Clients seeking help may therefore need to travel from outlying rural and regional areas, and this can be a challenge as public transport options are limited and costs relatively high.

Coordination

The research interviews provided many examples of good local networks connecting service agencies and local councils. However, they form a complex and at times overlapping web.

Sometimes the networks function within specific geographies, not the whole Region, or cover wider areas such as Mid North Community Youth Services. Networks tend to cover single client groups, which may limit their impact on inter-connected issues.

There is no regional coordination or networks around housing and homelessness. In areas such as the Northern Rivers in NSW such groups have

been shown to be effective (refer to www.northernrivershousingforum.org).

Junction Australia's Barossa team are well integrated into the local service networks, and service providers have traditionally been closely involved in helping form BDHA, and providing input on allocations.

Homeless people

Census data for 2011 is included in Table 22. The areas used for census analysis are 'SA2', rather than the more familiar LGAs. These are areas in the Region ranging in population size from 3,104 (Mallala SA2) to 17,625 (Gawler South SA2).

The area with the highest numbers of homeless people is Gawler South which, as shown in Figure 5, is an area of high social disadvantage. Other areas have modest numbers of homeless people, and this includes remote and rural areas.

The average homelessness rate in SA was 376 per 100,000 population in 2011. Across the Barossa Region, the homelessness rate was below the State average. However, one of the highest rates of homelessness was in the heart of the wine producing district: Barossa-Angaston SA2 area.

Table 22: Homelessness, 2011

SA2 region	no.	rate
Barossa - Angaston	17	287
Gawler South	47	267
Mallala	7	226
Light	11	136
Tanunda	6	136
Lyndoch	4	70
Nuriootpa	4	67
Gawler North	5	57
SA	6,003	376

Source: ABS (2011). Rate is per 100,000 population

Research interviewees commented on the lack of organisations in the Region that could provide direct services for homeless people. There is a major lack of local facilities, and often clients are advised to present at services outside the Region.

Young people

With a higher than average proportion of young people in the Region, various issues have emerged. A number of young people with skills and qualifications advance their fortunes by moving out of the area. Several of those that remain are low skilled, and less likely to enter the local labour market.

It was noted that there was high youth unemployment, and under-employment. Some of the lower paid entry-level jobs had been taken by people commuting into the Barossa Region, and there were examples of 'labour gangs' of lower paid workers in certain agricultural sectors.

Many of the homeless in the region are young people who are 'couch surfing'. This is an unsecure form of housing, and most likely significantly under-reported in the census data. There are few secure affordable housing options available in the Region.

Other groups

Issues facing **older residents** are currently less prominent in the Region than those for young people. To date, the ageing of the population has had only a modest impact in the Barossa Region compared to much of regional Australia. This position is likely to change over the next decades.

Ageing populations in regional areas face problems with lack of public transport, problems in connecting with community, limited health care facilities and isolation. Local infrastructure of this type is limited in

the Region, and may struggle to keep pace with both rapid growth in residents and an ageing and more dependent population.

There a number of people in the Barossa Region with a **disability**. Barossa Enterprises is an excellent example of a leading-edge approach to employment and community integration.

Interviewees noted that transport remains as big a problem for people with a disability, as it does with other higher needs groups. Similarly people with disability find barriers to entering the private rental market, a challenge shared by a number of young people and people exiting homelessness.

Mention was made of **domestic violence** in the Region, and it is thought to be a major problem. Interviewees thought there was a particular problem in getting people to talk about the issues, perhaps due to the conservative country attitudes and preference by some community leaders for the matter to be kept low profile so as not to tarnish the Barossa's image.

The Region was said to also face largely hidden issues around drug and **alcohol abuse**. Interviewees noted that these were not just youth problems - there were growing issues with wealthier alcoholics.

One interviewee commented 'people have a huge sense of pride: they don't want to be seen asking for help'.

Connecting the issues - of people facing homelessness, vulnerable young people, people with disabilities and women escaping domestic violence - is a lack of crisis accommodation in the Region. This reinforces the strong connection between social and housing issues in the Barossa.

It would also benefit higher needs groups for there to be a larger supply of affordable

rental housing managed by the not-for-profit sector. Responsible landlords would be more welcoming of prospective tenants with diverse and challenged backgrounds. Unfortunately the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) delivered few new properties in the region.

3.3   Ways forward

The research interviews consistently indicated greater coordination was needed in the Barossa Region. In part this is to address the delivery of several support services from outside the Region.

It was suggested by some interviewees that there was too limited a level of cooperation between the four councils. While there is shared support for economic development, shown through collaboration with RDA Barossa, this was less evident in work on social services and affordable housing.

Role of Junction Australia

Junction Australia is a mid-sized, well-resourced not-for-profit organisation providing a diversified range of social housing and community support in SA. However, it only has finite resources and therefore cannot alone provide solutions to the Region's issues.

Their current presence in the Region is through the social housing run by Junction Australia and inherited from the merger with BDHA. At the moment no community services are delivered by Junction Australia in the Region, and contracts in areas such as domestic violence are delivered by other service provider organisations.

Junction Australia showed that it is possible to build their presence in a new region through their approach in Kangaroo Island. Initially a small service contract was won

and a staff member employed. The employee built strong local networks, then bid for and won further and larger service contracts.

BDHA has had a strong foothold in the Barossa Region for decades, and staff are already closely linked to local councils and service agencies. This legacy has been inherited by Junction Australia, along with a regional office in Nuriootpa.

Junction Australia's housing team has a track record in placemaking and acting as a 'community anchor' in areas where they operate. The 'anchor' role is where Junction Australia help coordinate networks and liaise with other service providers to help sustain tenancies and allow tenants to strengthen training, education and access to employment.

This Report can be used by Junction Australia to help identify where the greatest housing and service support needs are in the Barossa Region. This will enable their finite resources to be carefully targeted.

Housing opportunities for Junction Australia include:

- Approaching Renewal SA for a regional stock transfer of public housing. This would allow better coordination of social housing.

  NB: It was noted by an interviewee that Housing SA faced problems in the Region with social lettings.

- Stock transfer would open-up opportunities for addressing problem and concentrated social housing area, especially in Gawler.

- As a major social landlord in the area, the Nuriootpa office could be expanded, allowing more decision making to take place in the Region. It

would also be possible to support Regional level tenant participation.

- Additional cashflows received as a result of stock transfer would enable speedier renewal of pre-1968 homes, helping meet Government targets.

  NB: interviewees noted the poor condition of much of the social housing in the Region.

- Junction Australia could play a role in ensuring delivery of affordable housing for rent in the new housing developments that are proposed in the growth corridors around Gawler and Roseworthy.

- Given the location of existing social housing, and the plans for delivery of new affordable housing in growth corridors, over time it might be appropriate for the Junction Australia office to be in Gawler not Nuriootpa.

For the community services team at Junction Australia, the most pressing issues in the Barossa Region are probably centred on youth and domestic violence. These are both areas of considerable expertise of Junction Australia staff. The organisation also has an excellent reputation in the State for community development.

3.4   Section conclusions

Despite the general perceptions about the prosperity and success of the Barossa Region - held by both policy makers and many residents - there are a number of deep, intractable issues. These centre around social and community challenges, with many having a housing dimension.

The Region has pockets of severe social disadvantage, in country towns as well as

some rural areas. Gawler has the greatest concentration of challenges, and shares several characteristics with areas such as Elizabeth where the issues are higher profile and greater intervention undertaken.

In terms of employment, housing and employment there are becoming two Barossas, and the gaps between the two spheres are increasing. The rapid growth in population and housing predicted over the next three decades will widen the divide. Work is therefore needed on building community cohesion as well as addressing specific social challenges.

There are a number of highly effective networks in the Region, though overall they are fragmented and would benefit from greater coordination. Councils are working together more, though there is room for a more systematic, planned and coordinated approach across social and housing issues.

Junction Australia is well placed to assist, with a proven track record in delivering better community outcomes. However, at best the organisation will be just one part of a broader coalition pushing for change.

Appendix: Workshops and interviews

Mallala workshop

- Lynette Seccafien. Community Development Officer - aged, District Council Mallala.

- Janine Harding. Community Development Officer - youth, District Council Mallala.

- Lorinda Bayley. Community Development Officer, Light Regional Council.

- Marcus Strudwicke. Community and council elected member, District Council Mallala.

- Holly Cowan. Community Development Officer, Wakefield Regional Council.

- Sharon Ashford. Case manager, United Care Wesley - Clare.

- Kellie Grzywacz. Case manager. Disabilities SA - Clare.

Nuriootpa workshop

- Gary Vogt. CEO, Carerslink.

- Sue Day. Manager Community Services - Disabilities, Barossa Enterprises.

- Kym Staples. Case manager - Nuriootpa Office, Youth services, Centacare Barossa.

- Margaret O'Brien. Emergency Relief Coordinator, Lutheran Community Care.

- Edy Saint deWinter. Mental Health Clinician Barossa Valley and Mid North Primary Health Network.

- Yvonne Cloke. Executive Officer Youth Focus, Barossa Lower North Futures.

- John Low. Volunteer Project Officer, Kapunda Uniting Care.

- Leeann Kruger. Coordinator Emergency Relief Peachey Road Elizabeth.

- Pete Grant. Partners in Recovery, Country and Outback Health.

Mount Pleasant workshop

- Di Anderson. Chair of Mount Pleasant Main Street and Hall Committee.

- Jo Thomas. Director - Corporate and Community Services, Barossa Council.

- Debra Anderson. HACC Coordinator, Barossa Council.

- Kirsty Age. Manager Community Culture, Barossa Council.

Other interviews

- Anne Moroney. CEO, RDA Barossa.

- Dean Galanos. Regional Coordinator – Barossa, Junction Australia.

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