


INNOVATIVE AND PROSPEROUS

2036 ECONOMY STRATEGY





We would like to acknowledge this land is the Traditional Lands for the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country.

We also acknowledge the Kurna people as the Traditional Custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.

Ngadlurlu tampintheta,
ngadlu Kurna yartangka
inparrintheta. Ngadlurlu
parnuku tuwila yartangka
tampintheta.

Ngadlurlu Kurna Miyurna
yaitya yarta mathanya
Wama Tarntanyaku
tampintheta.

Parnuku yailtya, parnuku
tapa purruna yalarra
puru purruna.

*Kurna Translation provided by
Kurna Warra Karrpantheta

INTRODUCTION



This Economy Strategy outlines the City of Unley's commitments over the next 10 years to support a community that is innovative and prosperous. We are a City that provides a unique and vibrant destination which attracts and retains a diverse mix of businesses, industries and opportunities.

The City of Unley is proud to be a community that values local business, innovation, and economic resilience. We are committed to building a strong, inclusive, and future-focused economy that supports quality of life for current and future generations.

Over the years, Council has taken proactive steps to support local businesses, activate thriving precincts, invest strategically in our city's assets, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship. These efforts have strengthened our local economy and reinforced Unley's reputation as a highly desirable place to live, work, visit, do business and invest.

In preparing the Economy Strategy we have considered the changes and challenges we can expect in our City as 2036 approaches, how we can leverage the strengths of our community, and what we will need to do differently to meet our City's long-term goals.

The commitments we make in this Strategy reflect what we have heard from our community – people who share a connection with our City - about what is important to them. These community priorities were gathered from the broad engagement processes undertaken to develop our Community Plan and Four-Year Delivery Plan.

It is important to our community to maintain our position as a highly liveable city with convenient access to amenities, shopping and services. We prioritise being an easy place to do business and attracting investment that supports a strong economy. We heard that our community cherishes the vibrancy, heritage, and character of our City – the things that make us uniquely Unley.

On the following pages you will find commitments and success measures that cumulatively progress the Economy theme goal and objectives in our Community Plan.

By strengthening and promoting a clear and cohesive city brand, delivering an elevated visitor and customer experience, and leveraging Unley's rich community and cultural assets, Council will continue to reinforce Unley's position as a distinctive, high-quality destination.

We cannot achieve our economic ambitions in isolation. Real progress will come through strong collaboration with our community – including residents, local businesses, visitors, property owners, schools, industry, and all levels of government. By working together, we can create an innovative and prosperous Unley that benefits everyone.

On the following pages you will find our 10-year commitments to progressing the Economy goal and objectives in our Community Plan.

This is one of Council's four lead strategies that will guide the decisions we make, the services and facilities we deliver, and how we allocate resources to respond to the needs of our diverse and growing community. Together, these strategies provide a clear roadmap for how we will deliver and measure our vision of **a connected, progressive, and resilient City.**

CITY OF UNLEY

Located on traditional lands of the Kurna people just three kilometres south of Adelaide's CBD, the City of Unley is an inner-urban community known for its high-quality lifestyle and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Our neighbourhoods are characterised by well-laid out leafy green streets, which frame historic homes, open spaces, recreation reserves and community gardens.

Unley's four village style precincts - King William Road, Goodwood Road, Highgate Village and Unley Road, alongside the City's other business precincts and home-based businesses, together act as Unley's economic engine.

Our civic precincts, including our libraries, museum community centres and swimming pool, offer spaces for connection, culture and learning for everyone. Unley's public spaces and streetscapes are designed to be welcoming and accessible for all.

The natural beauty and historic character of our City, along with our strong and flourishing community life make Unley a desirable place to work, invest, do business, visit or call home.

OUR TOP 3 EMPLOYING SECTORS ARE:



OUR TOP 3 BUSINESS TYPES ARE:

Professional Services
Health & Allied Health
Hospitality and Food Services

6,200
GST registered local businesses

22,927
Jobs

5,308

additional people
projected to call Unley
home by 2041

\$982

Median weekly
income

Median
house price is
\$1.66
Million

40,327

Residents

157,000

visitors annually

\$700

Median weekly
rent

14.8%

of employed
residents work
from home





OUR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

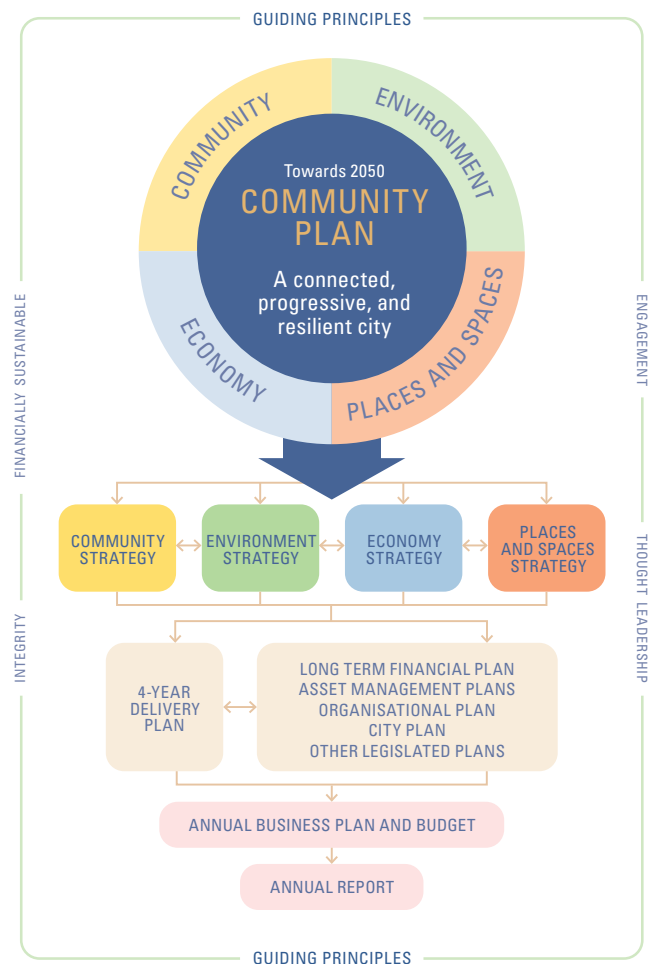
Our Strategic Planning Framework reflects how our organisational strategies and plans support the delivery of our Community Plan 'Towards 2050'.

Our Community Plan sets our strategic direction for the next 25 years, outlining key goals and objectives. It serves as the foundational structure for guiding our detailed strategies and plans.

Our four lead strategies define our strategic priorities for the next 10 years, identifying key opportunities and addressing potential challenges for our City. By providing a clear and cohesive direction, these strategies guide decision-making, resource allocation, and program development, ensuring that our efforts are effectively aligned with the long-term vision and aspirations of our community.

Our 4-Year Delivery Plan translates the Community Plan vision and lead strategies into action, outlining the steps we will take to achieve our objectives in the short to medium term.

Our Strategic Management Framework is supported by a number of theme-based plans that have been developed over the years to provide additional guidance about how we will achieve our goals. These plans will be progressively reviewed, updated or retired throughout the life of this lead strategy.



We will deliver our strategies and plans through prudent financial management, guided by our Long-Term Financial Plan, which will ensure resources are allocated effectively and efficiently. Our Annual Business Plan and Budget will set priorities, activities, and budgets each year to demonstrate how your rates support community services, programs and infrastructure, whilst also being innovative to deliver best community outcomes.

Regular monitoring and reporting against our outcome indicators will be undertaken to keep us accountable, ensuring we meet our commitments and demonstrate the value we deliver to our community.



2 0 3 6

ECONOMY STRATEGY

Innovative and Prosperous

GOAL

Our City is a unique and vibrant destination that attracts and retains a diverse mix of businesses, industries, and opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 We model and enable innovation and entrepreneurship to grow our economy, create jobs and serve our community.
- 2 We generate vibrancy and economic vitality by activating and connecting thriving business precincts and innovation hubs throughout our City.
- 3 We enhance and promote the local characteristics within our City that make us a desirable and exciting place to live, work, visit, invest and do business.
- 4 We create partnerships, collaborate with others, and embrace new ideas to attract investment and enrich our City.
- 5 We drive strong economic, cultural, environmental, and social outcomes through strategic investments in property, technology, facilities, and infrastructure.





Highlights of our ten-year strategy include our commitments to:

- Champion innovation, entrepreneurship and creative enterprise to retain and grow local businesses and jobs.
- Strengthen Unley's business precincts to guide investment, support local spending, enable local services and "Living Locally" outcomes as identified in Planning for Growth.
- Continue to position Unley as a distinctive, high-quality destination through strong city branding, business services, visitor experiences and event attraction.
- Build partnerships and alliances to influence strategic projects and attract investment that benefits the community.
- Continue to ensure business and industry voices meaningfully inform Council priorities, services and decisions.
- Leverage Council property, facilities and assets as catalysts for private investment and community value.
- Apply technology and data to improve decision-making and support economic development.
- Promote long-term growth of the City through commercial and residential investment, balanced with environmental stewardship and valuing Unley's heritage and character.



CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS



Over the next decade, Unley’s economy will continue to evolve in response to strategic growth, new ways of working, and shifting community and business expectations.

These trends present significant opportunities to strengthen local precincts, support innovative and diverse businesses, and enhance Unley’s reputation as a vibrant place to live, work, visit and invest.

By evolving our approach to economic leadership and responding proactively to emerging economic conditions, Council will help create the right environment for sustainable growth, resilient local enterprises, and thriving precincts.

These insights have shaped the commitments in this strategy and will guide how we collaborate with businesses, partners and the community to ensure a coordinated, evidence based and future focused approach to achieving our long-term economic goals.

Economic Pressures

Unley’s economy continues to feel the impacts of rising inflation, interest rates and operational costs, which impact on discretionary spending. Many businesses across the Adelaide region are experiencing difficulties with the economic climate, overheads and rent pressures impacting profitability.

These pressures affect precincts such as Unley Road, King William Road and Goodwood Road, where many independent traders rely heavily on strong local spending.

Continuing uncertainty in global supply chain and Australia’s exposure to international markets creates additional volatility that affects business confidence and service delivery.

Workforce

Like many parts of metropolitan Adelaide, Unley is affected by skills shortages in sectors such as hospitality, health care, trades, and emerging industries.

Local employers report challenges attracting and retaining staff, influenced by housing affordability and competition for talent. Availability of convenient off-peak public transport creates challenges for businesses and industries employing shift workers across the City.

Lack of suitable applicants is most commonly cited as the main recruitment challenge, particularly for small business.



Retail Behaviour	<p>Digital transformation, growth in e-commerce, and increased remote and hybrid work are reshaping how people shop, work, and spend time in local areas.</p> <p>This shift reduces reliance on traditional retail models while increasing demand for experiential retail, hospitality, services, and well-designed public spaces.</p> <p>Business precincts are responding to retail behaviour change by offering diverse experiences, supporting digital capability, and creating vibrant, high-amenity environments that attract foot traffic and encourage local spending.</p>
Demographic Change	<p>Unley’s ageing population, high-income households and growth in apartment living create both economic opportunities and challenges</p> <p>This demographic mix increases demand for health, wellbeing, and personal services, while reinforcing expectations for accessible, green, and walkable neighbourhoods.</p> <p>These trends create economic opportunities but require careful planning to support a diversified service economy and enhance local identity.</p>
Technological Shift	<p>Rapid technological change is influencing how businesses operate and how customers engage with local centres.</p> <p>While some Unley businesses are investing in e-commerce and digital tools, many indicated that they require stronger digital skills, better online visibility and improved systems to remain competitive.</p> <p>Technology and digital tools can be used to strengthen business competitiveness and customer experience. Local governments nationally are using precinct data collection, digital wayfinding and digital support programs to support modern economic activity.</p>
Housing and Land-use Pressures	<p>Housing availability and affordability are major influences on Unley’s economic future. Limited supply, strong demand, and rising prices affect the ability of essential workers to live locally. Market pressures risk displacing small businesses and reducing diversity in local enterprises.</p> <p>Increased density in appropriate locations, high-quality mixed-use developments, and thoughtful built-form planning will be needed to sustain population growth, support local businesses, and maintain neighbourhood character.</p>
Living Locally	<p>The “Living Locally” principles in the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan are shaping how people live, work, shop and access services across metropolitan Adelaide. By encouraging housing, jobs and essential services to be located closer together, these principles support stronger local economies and vibrant neighbourhoods.</p> <p>For Unley, this means greater demand for accessible, diverse business precincts where residents can meet every day needs, work locally and engage with nearby enterprise. It also means a increase in people working from home or operating home based businesses across the City.</p> <p>Embracing Living Locally will help strengthen foot traffic and patronage for local businesses, support workforce participation within the City, and reinforce the importance of connecting business activation with population growth and changing lifestyle preferences over the next 10 years.</p>

Climate Risks

Rising temperatures, heat-island effects, and increasing frequency of extreme weather events will shape economic resilience and the performance of outdoor activity in business precincts.

Transitioning to low-emissions operations, expanding urban greening, and supporting circular economy initiatives are important for long-term economic sustainability.

Community and business expectations for sustainability are rising, but time and costs present significant challenges for many small businesses to participate in local sustainability programs. These programs need to be appropriately scaled and targeted to support increased take-up by local businesses.

Visitor Attraction

Unley has an opportunity to strengthen its position as a destination for high-quality hospitality, accommodation, boutique retail, culture, and events.

However, competition across metropolitan Adelaide means precincts must differentiate themselves through curation, activation, and strong place identity.

Investing in public realm improvements, cultural programming, and partnership with businesses can help attract visitors and increase local spending.

Regulatory Pressures

State Government planning policy, heritage protections, and regulatory processes significantly influence investment, redevelopment, and business evolution in Unley.

Businesses value clarity, consistency, and timely decision-making, and there is ongoing reform at all levels of government to streamline regulation and improve business confidence.

Finding the right balance in regulatory approaches, and improving ease of doing business, is an important focus for many local governments to enable precinct evolution and unlock investment.



FOCUS AREAS



The following chapters outline the five key focus areas that will guide the City of Unley towards its long-term Economy goal.

Each focus area directly aligns with the Economy objectives of the Towards 2050: Community Plan:

- 1 Igniting Innovation
- 2 Thriving Precincts
- 3 Place Advantage
- 4 Collaborative Growth
- 5 Strategic Investments

Each of the focus areas is closely interconnected, and delivering on our other lead strategies – Community, Environment, Places and Spaces – all of which will also play a key role in progressing our Economy objectives. The strategic connections between each focus area have been highlighted.

While we have grouped our 10-year commitments into key focus areas to make the information easier to navigate, they will not be delivered in isolation. Our Strategic Management Framework is planned, implemented, monitored, and reported on as one cohesive and connected set of strategies - reflecting the way our community, services, and priorities are linked in everyday life.



FOCUS AREA 1: IGNITING INNOVATION

To remain a vibrant and competitive City, Unley must actively cultivate an environment where ideas are encouraged, collaboration is the norm and businesses are supported to innovate and grow.

This focus area positions Unley as a visible leader and connector- driving economic growth, championing entrepreneurship and creative enterprise, and linking people, organisations and institutions to accelerate innovation. Through strong leadership, collaboration and proactive business support, Unley will build a thriving, diverse business ecosystem and strengthen its reputation as a City where bold ideas are welcomed and enterprise can flourish.

<p>Our 2050 Objective</p>	<p>We model and enable innovation and entrepreneurship to grow our economy, create jobs and serve our community.</p>
<p>Our 2036 Commitments</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Position Unley as a recognised hub for bold ideas by championing innovation, entrepreneurship and creative enterprise. 1.2 Create programs and networks that bring businesses, entrepreneurs, creatives and institutions together to test ideas, share knowledge, and collaborate. 1.3 Provide proactive services, support and programs that help all types of businesses in Unley to start, grow, and connect.
<p>What Success Looks Like in 2036</p>	<p>Businesses in Unley have access to practical services and opportunities that support innovation, entrepreneurship, collaboration and learning, helping them test ideas, build skills and adapt in a changing economy.</p> <p>Unley is a business-friendly city, provide services and support that make it easier to invest, operate and grow with confidence.</p> <p>Unley provides support to a diverse mix of business and economic activities, strengthening emerging precincts and economic resilience across the City.</p>

Strategic Connections

<p>COMMUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity, Culture & Learning • Civic Participation 	<p>ECONOMY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Igniting Innovation • Thriving Precincts • Local Advantage • Collaborative Growth • Strategic Investment
<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Resilient • Sustainable Waste Management • Partner & Advocate 	<p>PLACES AND SPACES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activated Spaces

FOCUS AREA 2: THRIVING PRECINCTS

Thriving business precincts are essential to Unley’s economic vitality - supporting local jobs, services and everyday economic activity across the City. As population growth and Living Locally principles reshape how people shop, work and spend time, established and emerging precincts must evolve to remain competitive and distinctive.

These commitments focus on strengthening precinct appeal and performance, supporting coordinated development, activation and promotion, and building strong partnerships with businesses, landlords and developers to generate local jobs, local spending and sustained economic activity.

<p>Our 2050 Objective</p>	<p>We generate vibrancy and economic vitality by activating and connecting thriving business precincts and innovation hubs throughout our City.</p>
<p>Our 2036 Commitments</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Strengthen the distinct economic role of each precinct through – place based economic planning, investment attraction, services curation and tailored activation. 2.2 Partner with business, landlords and developers to align investment, business attraction, promotion and activation to improve precinct appeal and economic performance. 2.3 Enable population growth within strategic locations that underpins the long-term sustainability of our business precincts, supporting local jobs and access to everyday services.
<p>What Success Looks Like in 2036</p>	<p>Unley’s established and emerging business precincts are identifiable, vibrant and economically strong.</p> <p>Businesses are confident in their performance and future within the City and feel their day-to-day trading and long-term viability is supported by Council services, investment and promotion.</p> <p>Residents can meet their daily needs locally, with a diverse mix of businesses and services accessible within neighbourhood precincts close to home.</p>

Strategic Connections

COMMUNITY

- Safe & Welcoming
- Active & Connected

ECONOMY

- Igniting Innovation
- **Thriving Precincts**
- Local Advantage
- Collaborative Growth
- Strategic Investment

ENVIRONMENT

- Urban Forest & Biodiversity
- Climate Resilient

PLACES AND SPACES

- Open Space & Recreation
- Activated Spaces
- Local Streets
- Planning for Growth
- Advocacy

FOCUS AREA 3: LOCAL ADVANTAGE

Unley’s distinctive local advantage lies in the combination of its character, lifestyle, location and economic strengths. This focus area is about sharpening how Unley is positioned and chosen as a desirable place to live, work, visit, invest and do business.

By strengthening and promoting a clear city brand, delivering an elevated visitor and customer experience, and leveraging Unley’s community and cultural assets, Council will reinforce Unley’s position as a distinctive, high-quality destination.

<p>Our 2050 Objective</p>	<p>We enhance and promote the local characteristics within our City that make us a desirable and exciting place to live, work, visit, invest and do business.</p>
<p>Our 2036 Commitments</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Strengthen and promote a clear, distinctive city brand that communicates Unley’s unique advantages to residents, visitors, businesses and investors. 3.2 Revitalise and activate our business precincts to provide an elevated visitor and customer experience that reinforces Unley’s brand. 3.3 Leverage Unley’s community, cultural and sporting assets to attract events and experiences that generate increased visitation and support local spending.
<p>What Success Looks Like in 2036</p>	<p>Unley’s business precincts are recognised and valued for their distinct character, with growth and investment reinforcing the City’s identity and individual precinct strengths.</p> <p>Unley attracts a growing range of events, experiences and activities bringing more people into the City and supporting local spending.</p> <p>Visitors and customers consistently have positive experiences in Unley and keep coming back to enjoy our unique offerings.</p>

Strategic Connections

COMMUNITY

- Safe & Welcoming
- History & Identity
- Active & Connected

ECONOMY

- Igniting Innovation
- Thriving Precincts
- **Local Advantage**
- Collaborative Growth
- Strategic Investment

ENVIRONMENT

- Urban Forest & Biodiversity
- Climate Resilient

PLACES AND SPACES

- Open Space & Recreation
- Activated Spaces
- Local Streets
- Advocacy

FOCUS AREA 4: COLLABORATIVE GROWTH

Unley’s future economic success depends on strong partnerships, shared leadership and the ability to influence outcomes beyond Council’s direct control. This focus area recognises Council’s role as a facilitator, advocate and trusted partner, particularly in relation to strategic growth areas such as the redevelopment of the Keswick Barracks. We work with strategic allies and investors to attract opportunity, influence decisions, and shape growth that benefits the community.

By collaborating early, co-creating initiatives and ensuring business voices inform decision-making, Unley will strengthen its influence, attract investment and provide tailored services that support shared, sustainable and locally beneficial economic outcomes.

Our 2050 Objective	We create partnerships, collaborate with others, and embrace new ideas to attract investment and enrich our City.
Our 2036 Commitments	<p>We will:</p> <p>4.1 Act as a proactive facilitator and advocate to shape major projects and investments early so they deliver shared economic and community benefits for Unley.</p> <p>4.2 Build and maintain strong alliances with strategic partners, neighbouring councils and institutions to co-create and advance shared economic and investment opportunities.</p> <p>4.3 Strengthen clear, trusted networks, services and processes to ensure business and industry insights meaningfully inform Council priorities and decision making.</p>
What Success Looks Like in 2036	<p>Unley works effectively with partners to attract and shape investment, with collaborative initiatives delivering shared economic and community benefits for the city.</p> <p>Businesses and industry voices are actively involved in shaping Council priorities, with trusted advisory groups and engagement processes informing decisions and directions.</p> <p>Services, partnerships and collaborations unlock new strategic opportunities that strengthen Unley’s capacity to deliver economic outcomes beyond Council’s direct investment.</p>
Related Plans	Planning for Growth (2025)

Strategic Connections

COMMUNITY

- Civic Participation

ECONOMY

- Local Advantage
- Igniting Innovation
- Thriving Precincts
- **Collaborative Growth**
- Strategic Investment

ENVIRONMENT

- Partner & Advocate

PLACES AND SPACES

- Open Space & Recreation
- Planning for Growth
- Advocacy

FOCUS AREA 5: STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

Strategic investment can play a critical role in shaping Unley’s long-term economic, environmental and community outcomes. This focus area recognises the strategic role of Council-owned property, facilities, technology and infrastructure to catalyse private investment, unlock economic potential and support a vibrant community.

By optimising the use of Council assets, and directing investment to strengthen economic diversity, Council can deliver lasting value for the community while supporting a resilient, high-performing local economy.

Our 2050 Objective	We drive strong economic, cultural, environmental, and social outcomes through strategic investments in property, technology, facilities, and infrastructure.
Our 2036 Commitments	<p>We will:</p> <p>5.1 Pursue strategic investments that anticipate future growth needs to deliver stronger economic and community outcomes, in partnership with private investment.</p> <p>5.2 Optimise the use of Council facilities and assets to unlock economic potential and support economic and community activity.</p> <p>5.3 Use technology and data insights to guide investment decisions, support precinct development, and improve the performance and management of Council’s property assets.</p>
What Success Looks Like in 2036	<p>Council’s investment decisions attract and leverage private investment, supporting a desired mix of businesses and economic activity within identified precincts across Unley.</p> <p>Council assets and facilities are well used and performing strongly, providing valued precinct services and clear community appeal.</p>
Related Plans	Digital Unley Strategy (2018)

Strategic Connections

COMMUNITY

- Active & Connected

ECONOMY

- Igniting Innovation
- Thriving Precincts
- Local Advantage
- Collaborative Growth
- **Strategic Investment**

ENVIRONMENT

- Urban Forest & Biodiversity
- Partner & Advocate

PLACES AND SPACES

- Open Space & Recreation
- Activated Spaces
- Planning for Growth

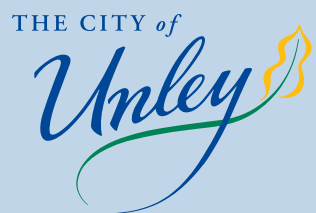
MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE



To ensure we remain accountable and focused on the outcomes that matter most to our community, Council will monitor progress against this set of high-level outcome indicators over the life of this strategy.

Baseline data will be established, and progress will be reported regularly. These outcome indicators will be used to inform Council’s decision-making, priority setting and continuous improvement.

OUTCOME INDICATOR	BASELINE	2036 TARGET	PRIMARY DATA SOURCE	REPORTING FREQUENCY
Businesses report confidence that Unley is a supportive and business-friendly place to operate	Business Survey Baseline (2025)	Maintain or increase % reporting positive business confidence	Local business survey; engagement feedback	Biennial
Business participation in Council engagement, advisory groups and economic development program initiatives	Establish Engagement Baseline (2026)	Increase participation from baseline	Council engagement records; advisory group participation	Annual
Businesses and economic activity across the City	Business Profile Baseline (2025)	Increase from baseline	ABS business counts; local economy profile data	Annual
Number and value of economy focussed partnerships, joint initiatives and external funding secured by Unley	Establish Partnership and Grant Baseline (2026)	Maintain or increase from baseline	Council partnership records; grant data	Annual
Economic activity generated from Council property, facilities and asset investments in primary economic precincts	Establish Asset Performance Baseline (2026)	Increase activity and utilisation from baseline	Asset management system; financial reporting	Annual



CIVIC CENTRE

181 Unley Road
Unley, South Australia 5061

Postal PO Box 1
Unley, South Australia 5061

T (08) 8372 5111

E pobox1@unley.sa.gov.au

W unley.sa.gov.au

