

Regional South Australia Urban Sustainability Forum



23 June 2023



Taking a Pragmatic Approach to Environmental Sustainability

Early Wins and Opportunities





**Light
goes
Green**

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Chair, LRC Roseworthy Township Expansion Infrastructure Taskforce

Board Member, SA Stormwater Management Authority

Policy / Political Context

- **2014 – Previous adoption of LRC Environmental Sustainability Policy**
 - Evolving nature of LG role in sustainability, and assoc. community expectations
 - Specialised and inter-connected nature of different aspects of environmental sustainability
 - Big successes for LRC:
 - *LED Public Lighting transition,*
 - *Solar installs on facilities*
 - *Integrated Water Resources Management*
 - PRAGMATIC – delivered economic AND environmental benefits
- **2019 - Commenced a review of the Environmental Sustainability Policy**
 - 26 March 2019 - Declaration of a climate emergency (casting vote reqd.)
 - 2018-21 – Much Elected Member engagement in waste management
- **25 June 2019 - established Sustainability Working Party (SWP)**

Sustainability Working Party (SWP)

Section 41 Committee under *LG Act 1999*

- CHAIR: General Manager, Infrastructure & Environment
- Deputy Mayor
- Mayor (ex Officio)
- 3 x Councillors
- 4 x Key staff

PRAGMATIC focus on environmental sustainability & efficiency in Council operations

RECOGNITION of Council as Community Exemplar / Leader

LISTENING PERIOD - invited industry leaders in energy, waste management, biodiversity, water

5 x THEMES emerged: Waste, Climate, Energy, Landscapes, Water

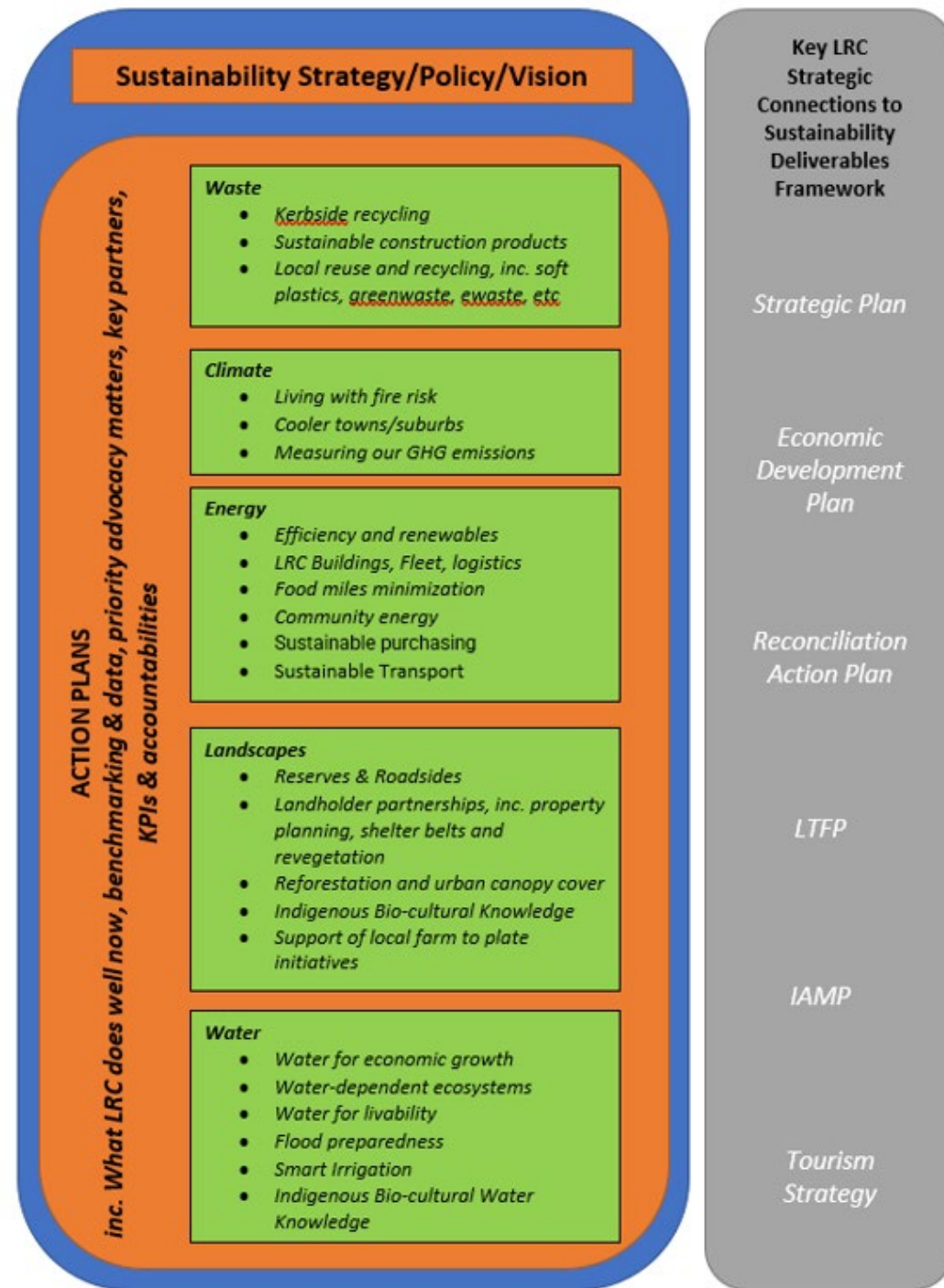
DELIVERABLES FRAMEWORK – SWP expectations developed BEFORE engaging consultants

URPS then engaged - capture info provided by industry leaders and run community consultation



Proposed Deliverables Framework

LRC Sustainability Consultancy

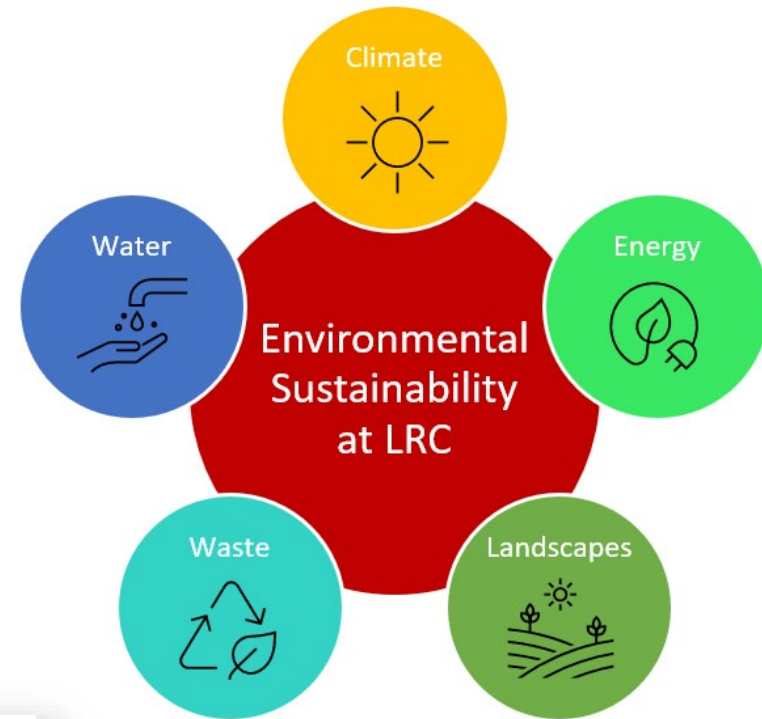




Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan

2022-2027

A thriving, healthy and resilient community working together to protect and restore our environment now and for the future.



Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan

31 May 2022 – Sustainability Working Party (SWP) endorsed Draft ESSAP

- *High quality of responses from Community and Key Stakeholder Groups*
- *High level of support for actions*
- *Broad spectrum of SWP views re Climate Change – found common ground*

28 June 2022 - Adopted as LRC's Environmental Sustainability Policy, Strategy, and Action Plan

- *Not Glossy. Policy is not a destination*
- *PRAGMATIC focus on Sustainability ACTION with co-benefits*
- *Accountabilities per Action*
- *Annual budget – basis for leveraging more \$\$\$ via co-investment*



Some of our Early Wins



Don Helbig Conservation Reserve

1. Council purchase of land for new Conservation Reserve
2. Management via LRC's Community Empowerment Model – Seppeltsfield Road Business Alliance
3. Early engagement with Traditional Owners – aiming for even earlier (RAP development)

Don Helbig Conservation Reserve official opening



Don Helbig and Quenten Agius, Ngadjuri Elder at the new Don Helbig Conservation Reserve entrance sign.

By Ashlea Miller-Pickersgill

Don Helbig Conservation Reserve officially opened on Friday, with a ceremony commemorating Don and all of his hard work conserving this large property.

Don has conserved the seven hectares of land for the past few decades, now handing over the bushland to Light Regional Council, Seppeltsfield Road Biodiversity Group, and the original owners, the Ngadjuri community.

The opening event consisted of a knowledgeable speech by Don himself, sharing

his insight on the many plants discovered on this reserve, many being rare, with all thriving and surviving wonderfully.

"In hindsight, there are a couple of unusual native plants in here and from what I've seen over recent years looking into it, I would say that of all the Leafless Currant bushes, about half of them are in this block of land," Don said.

"Another plan is the *Astroloma humifusum* or the shrub type, is a Native Cranberry.

"I reckon maybe 80 per cent of the population that I know of, is in this block of

land. That's a stand out for me."

In his speech, Don also commented on his interest in revegetation from a young age, from his early days observing the gradual degradation of original bushland where he lived in the Moppa, to his ongoing revegetation efforts on his properties.

Followed by Don's insight, Cathy Wills from the Seppeltsfield Road Biodiversity Group, shared information on the process of naming this reserve, which was kept hidden from Don.

"Roughly six years ago Don was wondering

what the future of the scrub was and put it on the market with an agent to see if he could find a suitable buyer, but none was found," Cathy said.

"Don started coming along to our biodiversity group back in 2019, and there was a lot of conversation about what the future of the block was.

"Unbeknownst to Don we made an approach to Light Regional Council and asked them to purchase the lot."

Don confided in Cathy referring to everyone's actions as "conniving in the background and meddling", as without mentioning anything to Don, the local community was involved, writing to council expressing their desire for this land to be purchased.

This comment during Cathy's speech made everyone laugh, including Don, as he is happy this reserve will be conserved for the foreseeable future and is honoured to have his name attached to a wonderful conservation block.

Following the lighthearted speeches, Quenten Agius, Ngadjuri Elder, started his Welcome to Country smoking ceremony, honouring the return of the land to the Ngadjuri community.

Quenten also blessed the land, thanked Don for his extensive work on preserving Ngadjuri land and welcomed everyone into the reserve through a very emotionally-driven speech and ceremony.

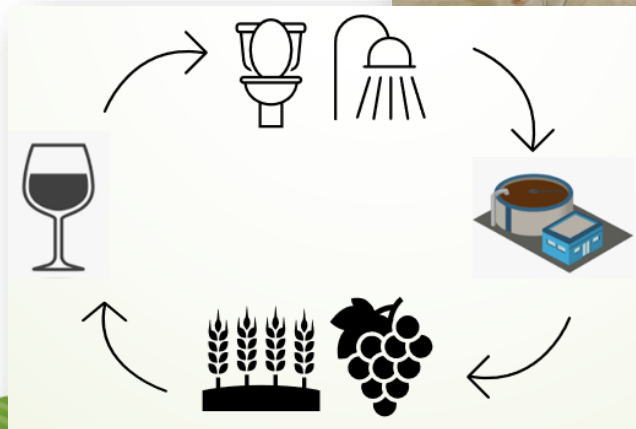
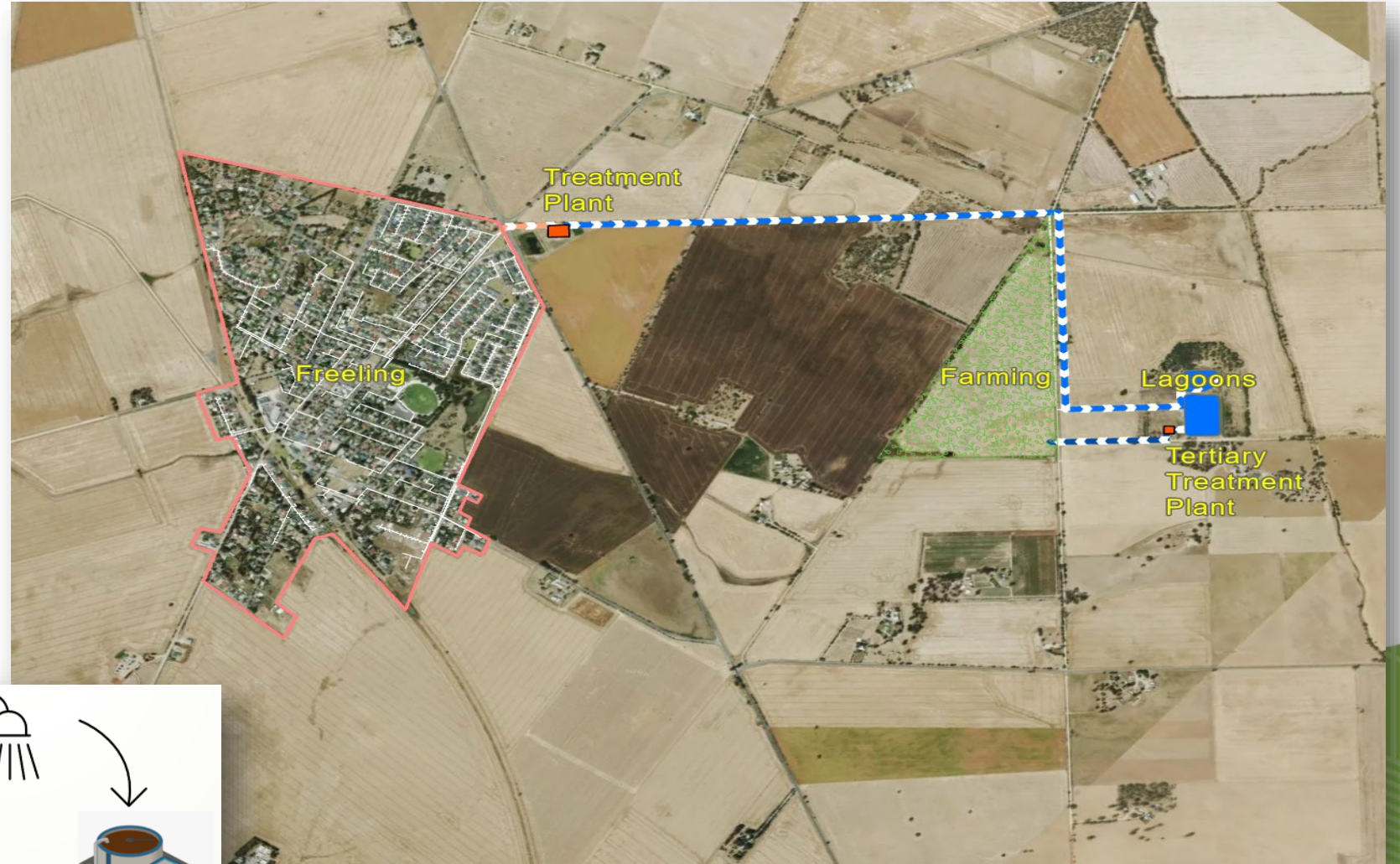
The Don Helbig Conservation Reserve has also been recognised as a heritage site, with its very own Heritage Agreement through the Department for Environment and Water.

Don has played a vital role in the photographic documentation of biodiversity across the Barossa region and beyond, surveying many native conservation areas.

Don has photographic records of approximately 50 locations, with 15,000 - 20,000 documented images.

Freeling CWMS Upgrade

- ✓ \$3.8M upgrade
- ✓ Future proofing - population and economic growth
- ✓ Tertiary Treatment Plant improves water quality
- ✓ Reuse water for town irrigation and agriculture (+ potential shandy with stormwater)
- ✓ Circular economy



Bunyip Water 'Mark 1'

- ✓ Successful wrap-up of \$22M PPP
- ✓ Significantly improved Council's Financial Sustainability
- ✓ Enabled delivery of \$15M Accelerated Road/Footpath Infrastructure Program
- ✓ 1st major climate-resilient water supply to Barossa Valley irrigators
- ✓ Reuse of Bolivar WWTP water – avoided St Vincent Gulf discharge
- ✓ Harvesting urban stormwater generated by Gawler Township – avoided ecological impact
- ✓ Water for Hewett irrigation
- ✓ Circular economy

Seppeltsfield acquires Bunyip Water



Light Regional Council Mayor, Bill O'Brien; Light Regional Council Deputy Mayor, Deane Rohrlach; Randall Wine Group & Seppeltsfield, Executive Chairman and Proprietor, Warren Randall.

After seven winters of successful operational use, Seppeltsfield Winery has acquired Bunyip Water from Light Regional Council and therefore completed an important strategic pillar to waterproof

surplus winter stormwater flows from the Gawler River and pump them north to provide supplementary irrigation to Barossa Valley vineyards and irrigation water for community use on ovals, parks and gardens.

g its bold and strategic of the "Barossa Vines" Managed Scheme, (13 separate Barossa wards covering 2,600 acres) in 11, Seppeltsfield was seeking of these vineyards with an t water supply, that was not n supply from the ailing River

Murray. And so, Bunyip Water was born.

Designed by Hydroplan in collaboration with Seppeltsfield and originally known as the Gawler River Water Re-use Scheme, it was re-named to pay homage to the town of its source, Gawler, established in 1836. The Bunyip Water pipeline project was completed and delivered by South Australian contractors on time and on budget, with the first water harvested from the Gawler River in August, 2016.

Bunyip Water's design effectiveness, efficiency and excellence, Hydroplan was

recognised on an international stage in 2017 for 'Excellence in Irrigation' by the American Society of Irrigation Consultants.

The Light Regional Council, Chief Executive Officer, Mr Brian Carr, said "Water has always been a precious resource in South Australia, being the driest state in the driest inhabited continent on Earth. "With the emergence of climate change upon us, we cannot take for granted that water will always be available from the River Murray, at scale.

"The Bunyip Water scheme was an opportunity for us to develop a bespoke, innovative and sustainable solution with one of Australia's most iconic wine businesses. Key to the success of this was trust, a foundation we immediately found with the team at Seppeltsfield, and evident every step of the way".

Seppeltsfield and the Randall Wine Group, Executive Chairman and Proprietor, Warren Randall, added: "Bunyip Water is a stunning example of the capability and power of a successful PPP, (Public Private Partnership).

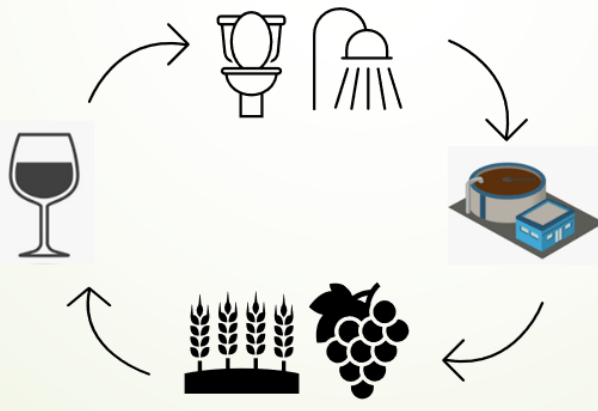
"Many Councils would have been spooked and fearful of such a far reaching and ambitious project, but not the Light Regional Council. For that, I also thank them.

"The surplus winter flows of the Gawler River were being lost to agriculture by simply flowing out into the gulf.

Water in South Australia is such a precious resource and the Barossa Valley is such a significant economic driver for our State.

"Bunyip Water is a large, complex and innovative project which required a comprehensive and cohesive planning approach involving all stakeholders, spearheaded by Hydroplan for on time, on budget and best in class execution.

"Its success should give significant confidence for others to follow the PPP pathway, where Federal, State and Local/Regional governments effectively work in harmony with private enterprise to benefit the local, State and National economies."



Some of our Opportunities



Building Upgrade Finance (BUF)

- ✓ 2021 - LRC signed-up as a BUF Council in
- ✓ 2022 - Sustainable Australia Fund (SAF) and Better Building Finance (BBF) engaged as BUF delivery agents in LRC
- ✓ Delivering sustainability with Co-benefits...
- ✓ BUF seeks to help local businesses:
 - *reduce operating costs*
 - *adapt to climate change*
 - *reduce greenhouse gas emissions*
 - *undertake heritage upgrades*



100% of costs with no deposit required



Long term (10-20 years) low interest rates

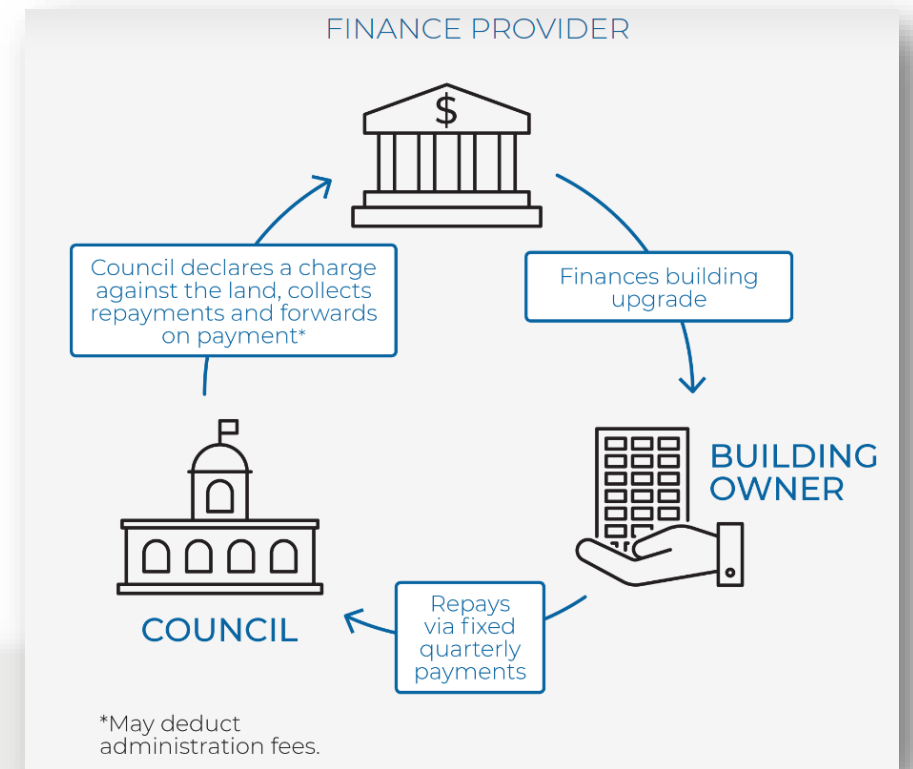


Ability to share costs and benefits with tenants



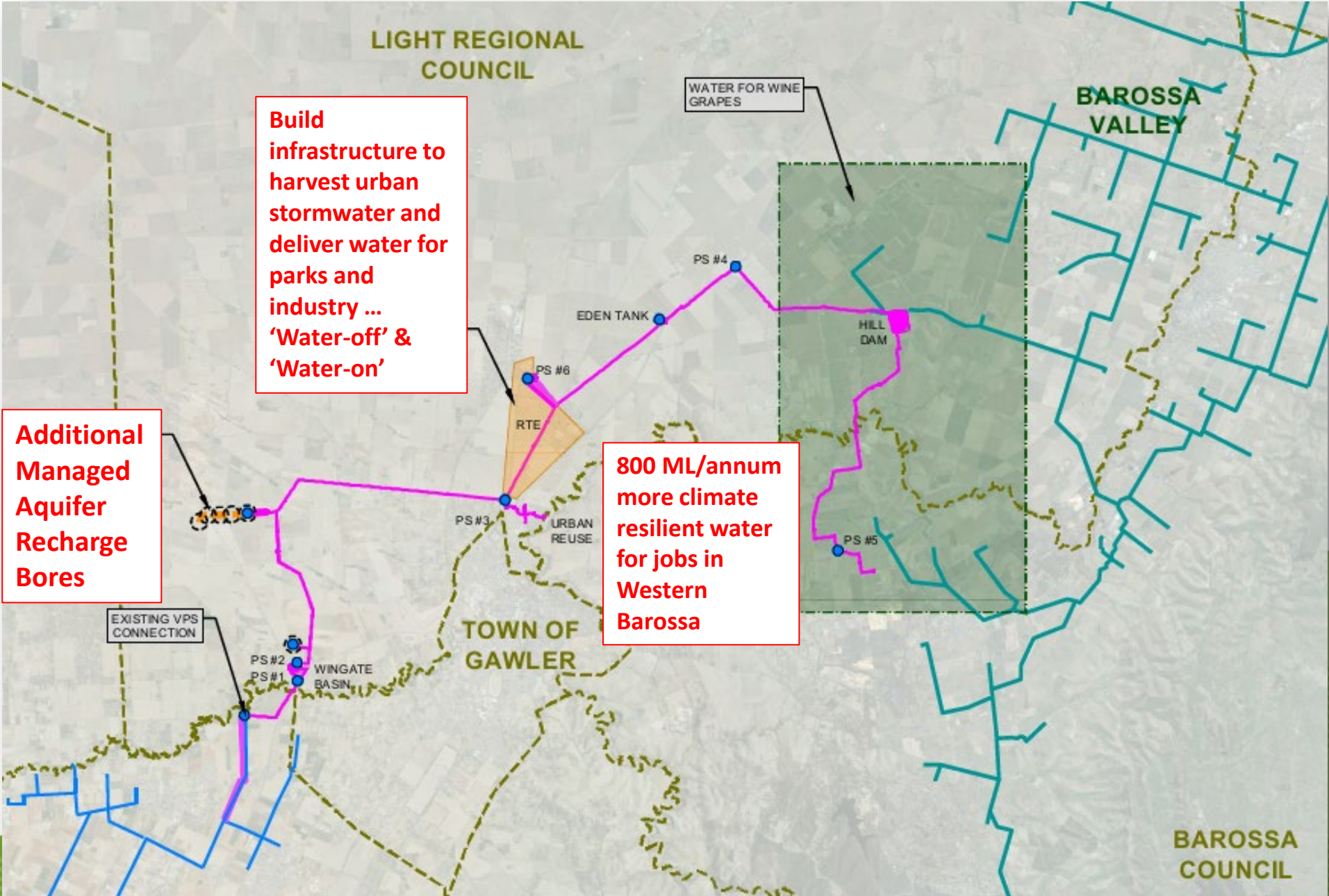
Option to transfer on sale of property

Note: Heritage upgrades are available in SA



Roseworthy Water Scheme

- ✓ \$17M project over several years
- ✓ Bunyip Water 'Mark 2' – 800 ML/annum expansion (initially)
- ✓ Harvests stormwater from RTE – Gawler Belt flood risk no worse
- ✓ Water for RTE greening and cooling + Kingsford Industry + Western Barossa Irrigators
- ✓ Circular economy



Thank you

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**Light
Regional
Council**