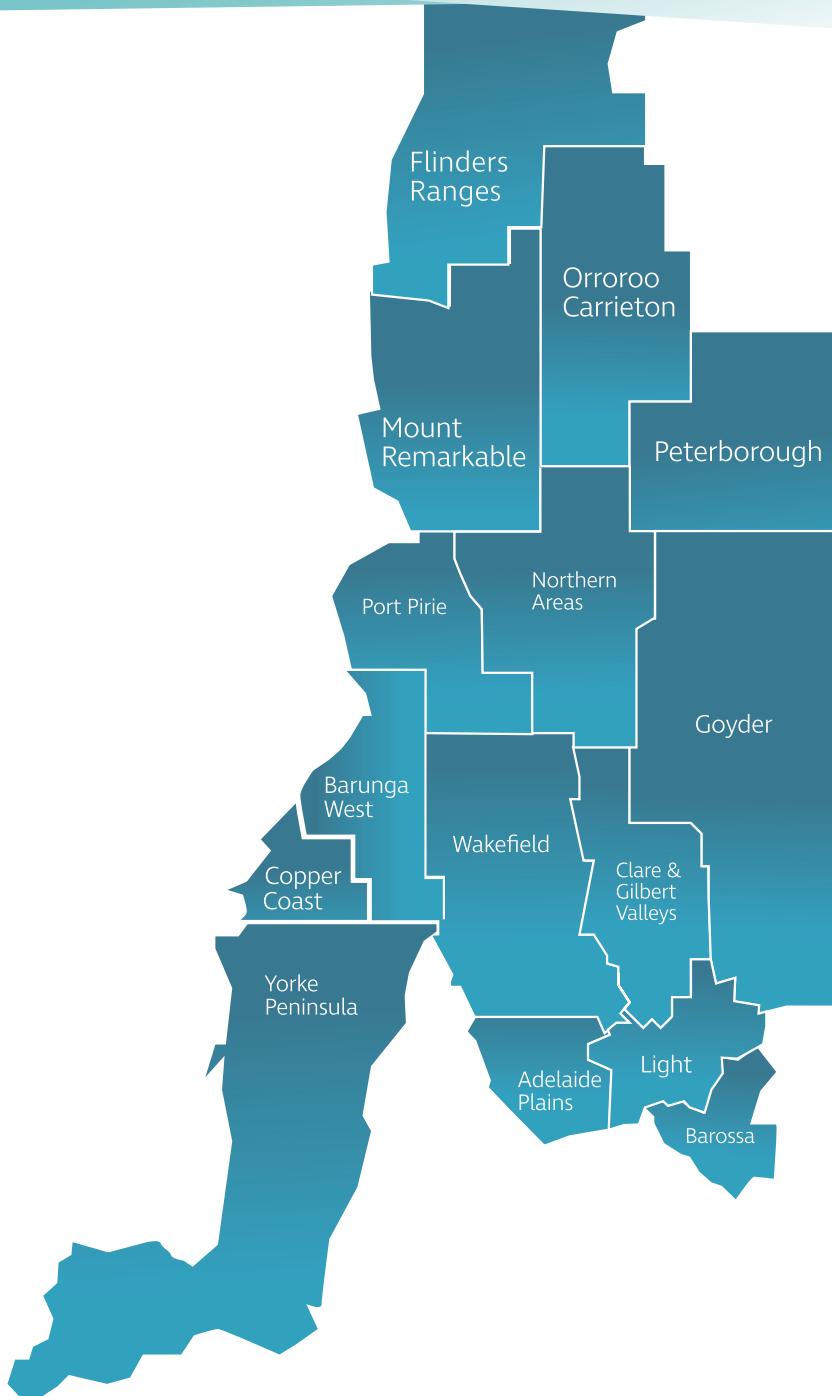




**STATE ELECTION  
PRIORITIES**



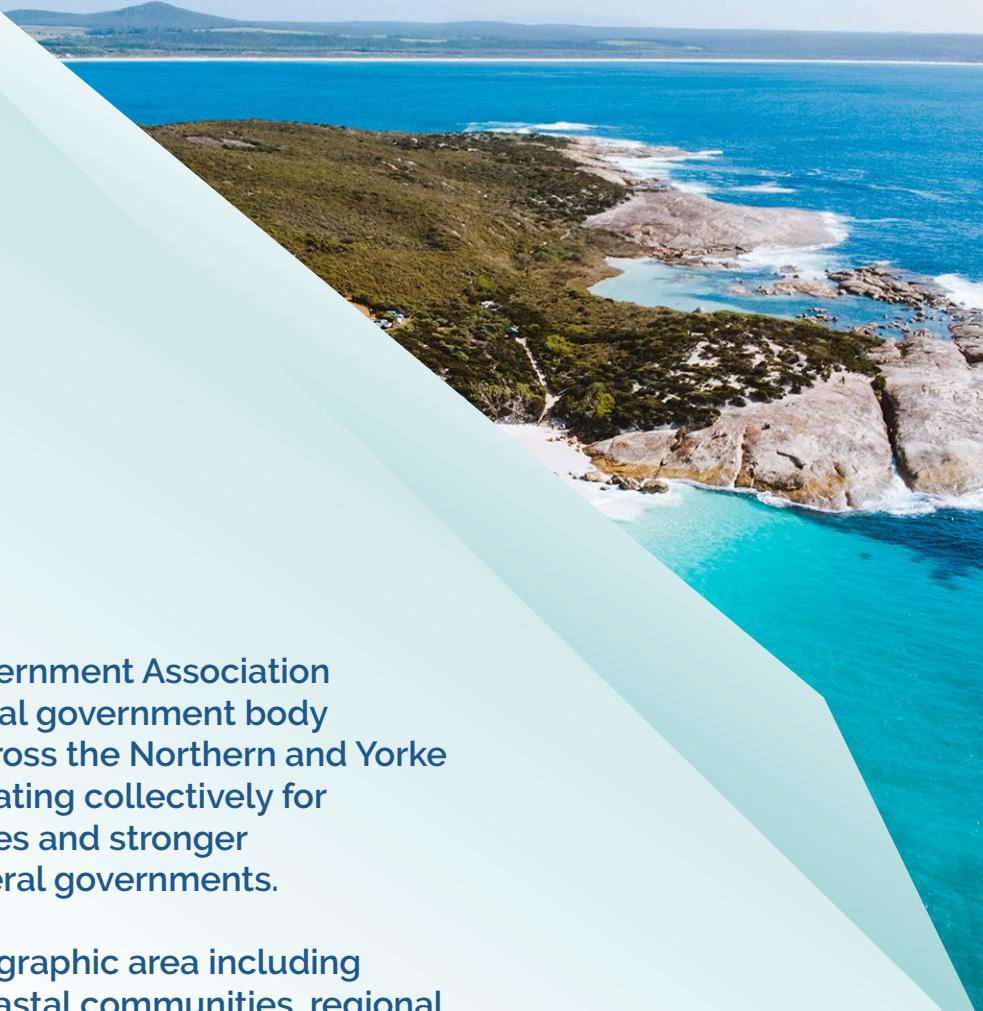
## MEMBER COUNCILS

# ABOUT

The Northern & Yorke Local Government Association (NYLGA) is the peak regional local government body representing fifteen councils across the Northern and Yorke region of South Australia, advocating collectively for sustainable community outcomes and stronger partnerships with state and federal governments.

The region covers a diverse geographic area including rangelands, agriculture land, coastal communities, regional towns and remote localities. The region is comprised of diverse landscapes ranging from agricultural plains to extensive coastline and marine environments.

It supports residents which are spread across small towns, regional centres and rural localities, with economies heavily reliant on agriculture, viticulture, mining, tourism, fishing, and aquaculture.



# INTRODUCTION

In the context of the 2026 South Australian State Election the NYLGA has continued to advocate for regional priorities that are centred around enhancing regional resilience, improving infrastructure, supporting community services, and securing fair and increased investment into the region.

A central focus of the Association's advocacy agenda is to maximise the region's opportunities to benefit from available funding streams and grant programs, particularly through increased access to state and federal funding for local roads and transport infrastructure, recognising that well-maintained and safe transport networks are essential for productivity, connectivity, and community wellbeing.

In addition to physical infrastructure, NYLGA supports advocacy for state government partnership on broader social infrastructure including housing, health, education and childcare solutions, acknowledging that access to these services underpins regional growth and liveability.

The Association also emphasises support for councils in mitigating climate risks and building resilience, including assistance to achieve net-zero targets and adapt to changing environmental conditions.

The Northern and Yorke region needs a strong, practical and enduring partnership with the South Australian Government that recognises the region's contribution to the state economy and the increasing pressures faced by its communities and councils.

Addressing financial pressures on member councils forms another key element of NYLGAs priorities, with advocacy aimed at addressing on-going government increasing of fees and charges, the cost burdens imposed by compliance and regulatory requirements, and the financial constraints faced by local authorities that can inhibit service delivery. In alignment with regional planning frameworks, NYLGA coordinates engagement to ensure state planning instruments reflect the unique needs and growth aspirations of its region, advocating for strategic planning that supports sustainable development.

Underpinning these priorities is NYLGAs commitment to strengthening its influence within the broader Local Government Association network and in state-wide forums, acting as a cohesive regional voice to ensure that the interests and needs of Northern and Yorke communities are represented effectively in state election discourse and policy development.

Through this concerted advocacy approach, NYLGA seeks to secure outcomes from the 2026 State Election that will enhance infrastructure, services, resilience and financial sustainability for its member councils and their communities.





# OUR TOP 7 PRIORITIES



ROADS &  
TRANSPORT



ESSENTIAL  
SERVICES



WATER



CHILDCARE



CLIMATE  
IMPACTS



COST  
SHIFTING



ENGAGEMENT



# WATER

Water connectivity and security, the region needs sustained state investment to improve the reliability, capacity and interconnection of water supply systems across rural and coastal communities.

Many towns face constraints arising from ageing infrastructure, limited redundancy and increasing demand driven by population change, industry growth and climate variability.

The region requires support for upgraded pipelines, improved interconnection between schemes, alternative water sources and long-term water planning that reflects climate change impacts.

Councils also need clearer alignment between state water policy, pricing structures and regional development objectives to ensure water availability does not become a barrier to housing, industry or community sustainability and infrastructure expansion.

**Housing developments in the Wakefield and Copper Coast regions cannot progress due to lack of available mains water connectivity.**

**97% of residents in Quorn do not access tap water due to its poor quality.**



## CHILDCARE

Childcare access remains a critical constraint across the Northern and Yorke region and directly affects workforce participation, economic development and population retention. The region needs state leadership to address the shortage of early childhood education and care places, particularly in smaller towns and remote communities where market-based service provision is not

viable. This includes capital funding for new or expanded facilities, operational support to attract and retain qualified educators, and flexible service models that reflect regional demand patterns.

Without intervention, councils continue to face pressure to fill service gaps despite childcare falling outside their core responsibilities.

**The federal electorate of Grey covers a large geographical area of South Australia and has been identified as one of the most significant 'childcare deserts' in the nation, where the demand for childcare far exceeds availability.**



## ROADS & TRANSPORT

Securing increased and fair state investment in local roads and transport infrastructure across the Northern and Yorke region, recognising the critical role of road networks in freight efficiency, road safety, economic productivity and community connectivity.

At a fundamental level, the region needs fairer and more predictable state investment that reflects the true cost of delivering infrastructure and services across large, dispersed regional areas.

The region requires sustained funding and policy support to address the backlog and ongoing maintenance of local and regional road networks, including greater state contribution to roads of regional significance that carry freight, agricultural production and tourism traffic but remain the responsibility of local government.

Improved coordination between state transport planning and local government asset management is essential to ensure investment decisions are timely, efficient and aligned with regional priorities.

**The Yorke Peninsula Council has 3,890 kms of roads to manage and renew. Crop farming is a key economic activity and this places significant heavy vehicle pressure on Council's road network.**



# CLIMATE IMPACTS

Supporting climate adaptation and resilience for regional communities and councils, including practical assistance to manage climate risks, respond to extreme weather events and progress toward net zero and broader environmental sustainability objectives.

The region needs meaningful state support to build climate resilience and manage environmental risk. This includes funding and technical assistance for adaptation planning, coastal protection, water security, emergency management and climate-resilient infrastructure, as well as realistic pathways and incentives for councils to progress toward net zero in a way that reflects regional circumstances.



**Six coastal councils continue to deal with the impacts of algal bloom, with visitation down and local businesses impacted. The region also continues to deal with the long-term impacts of drought.**



# ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Strengthening state government partnership in the delivery of essential social infrastructure, particularly housing supply, health services, education and early childhood facilities, to support population retention, workforce attraction and regional liveability.

**The number one issue from the community at Country Cabinet meetings last year included access to health services, including GP and hospital services.**

Northern and Yorke also needs state leadership and co-investment in critical social infrastructure, including:

- **Housing**

Including targeted action to increase the supply and affordability of housing

- **Health Services**

Support for regional health services and health workforce attraction

- **Education and Training**

Access to quality education & training

Without this support, councils are left to manage the social and economic consequences of service gaps beyond their legislative remit and financial capacity.



## COST SHIFTING

Addressing the growing financial and regulatory pressures on local government by advocating for cost-shifting reform, fairer fees and charges, and reduced compliance burdens that undermine council financial sustainability and service delivery capacity.

From a governance and financial perspective, Northern and Yorke requires the State Government to address long-standing cost shifting and regulatory burdens imposed on local government. This means reviewing fees, charges and compliance obligations, improving funding indexation, and ensuring new policy initiatives are properly funded and designed in partnership with councils.

**Councils collect the Landscape Levy on behalf of the State Government, which places significant impacts on local government to administer and collect these fees.**



# ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring state planning and regional development frameworks properly reflect the needs, priorities and growth ambitions of Northern and Yorke communities, with meaningful engagement of councils in state policy, planning and investment decisions.



ROADS &  
TRANSPORT



ESSENTIAL  
SERVICES



WATER



CHILDCARE



COST  
SHIFTING

CLIMATE  
IMPACTS



ENGAGEMENT

# CONCLUSION

Beyond water and childcare, the region's top advocacy issues reflect the cumulative impact of service shortfalls, infrastructure backlogs and rising costs.

The Northern and Yorke region needs greater state investment in local and regional roads that underpin freight movement, agricultural productivity and community safety, particularly where roads of regional significance remain the responsibility of local government.

Improved access to affordable and appropriate housing is also critical, with councils seeking state support to unlock land supply, address infrastructure constraints and respond to workforce housing shortages that affect health, education and essential services.

The region also requires stronger state partnership in climate adaptation and emergency management. Increasing exposure to extreme weather, coastal erosion, algal bloom and drought is placing growing pressure on council assets and communities, and there is a need for funding, technical expertise and coordinated planning to build resilience and protect critical infrastructure. Alongside this, councils seek realistic and properly resourced pathways to support emissions reduction and environmental sustainability that acknowledge regional capacity and constraints.

Underlying all these issues is the need for financial sustainability and genuine partnership. The Northern and Yorke region requires the State Government to address cost shifting, regulatory burden and unfunded mandates, and to involve councils early in policy development and service reform.

Stable, predictable funding and aligned state planning frameworks are essential to ensure that regional communities are not disadvantaged by one-size-fits-all policy settings and that local government can continue to play its role as a trusted and effective service partner.

The region needs the State Government to actively involve Northern and Yorke councils in state planning, policy development and regional investment decisions. This includes aligning state planning instruments with regional strategies, respecting local knowledge, and treating local government as a genuine partner in delivering economic development, community wellbeing and sustainable growth across the region.



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**Bridget Ransome**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Northern & Yorke LGA**  
**[ceo@nylga.sa.gov.au](mailto:ceo@nylga.sa.gov.au)**

[nylga.sa.gov.au](http://nylga.sa.gov.au)

[facebook.com/CentralLocalGovernment](https://facebook.com/CentralLocalGovernment)

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