



Submission to the Australian Government
Department of Education regarding
Consultation Paper: Implementing
Suburban University Study Hubs 2023

The City of Playford welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Consultation Paper regarding Implementing Suburban University Study Hubs.

The City of Playford is a Local Government body in the outer metropolitan growth area of Northern Adelaide and is at the forefront of residential growth in South Australia. Currently representing over 105,000 residents, this is expected to grow to well over 150,000 by 2041.

We welcome the commitment from the Federal Government to doubling the number of University Study Hubs across Australia and locating up to 14 in outer suburban areas. Implementing hubs in areas without a significant physical university campus and where the percentage of the population with university qualifications is low will undoubtedly improve access and equity for under-represented groups at Australian universities and higher education institutions.

The hubs will provide spaces to support students, including those from low socio-economic backgrounds, First Nations students and people with a disability. This will not only fundamentally change the education possibilities for individuals, but also underpin radical transformation of the social economics of an area to reach parity with other areas of the country.

Local Government Areas are in a prime position to offer valuable insights into their communities, and social infrastructure, along with access to investment ready sites and local business contacts. When introducing study hubs, it is essential to involve the respective councils in early discussions regarding potential locations, planning and design.

City of Playford commissioned a feasibility study, in collaboration with University of Adelaide in 2022, to gain an understanding of the higher education needs of the community and areas of interest to study. The research validated the community's aspirations and a market demand for establishing a university presence in the City of Playford.

In the City of Playford, there are distinct residential areas where a significant portion of the population is heavily and intergenerationally disadvantaged, while other areas are relatively better off. The implementation of a University Study Hub will assist with reducing the socio-economic disparities in the region.

Only 8.4% of people living in the City of Playford have a Bachelor degree or higher, compared to the National average of 26.3%, which is a significant barrier for the community to fully participate in future economic and employment opportunities. The suburb of Elizabeth within the City of Playford has an even lower percentage of people with a Bachelor degree or higher.

Council	% of population with Bachelor degree or higher	National average
City of Playford, South Australia	8.4%	26.3%

Suburb	% of population with Bachelor degree or higher	National average
Elizabeth, South Australia	6.8%	26.3%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021

The City of Playford has a low SIEFA index of 852, which is the lowest level of socio-economic disadvantage among metropolitan councils across Australia, with the national average score sitting at 1001.2. Further only 41 councils in remote regions across Australia have a lower SEIFA score than the City of Playford.

The table below shows SEIFA scores for various LGA areas.

Council	SEIFA by Local Government Area
Woollahra Municipality, NSW *most advantaged LGA in Australia	1176
City of Burnside, SA	1083
City of Onkaparinga, SA	988
Town of Gawler, SA	960
City of Port Adelaide Enfield, SA	953
City of Salisbury, SA	904
The Murray Bridge, SA	891
City of Playford, SA	852
Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yunkunytjatjara, SA	496

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021

Area	SEIFA by area
National average	1001.2
Greater Adelaide	992.0
South Australia	982.0
Elizabeth, South Australia	717.3

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021

The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the City of Playford is 4.2%, which is higher than the national average of 3.2% and double the 1.7% for Greater Adelaide.

% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - City of Playford population	% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - Greater Adelaide	% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples South Australia	% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples National average
4.2%	1.7%	2.4%	3.2%

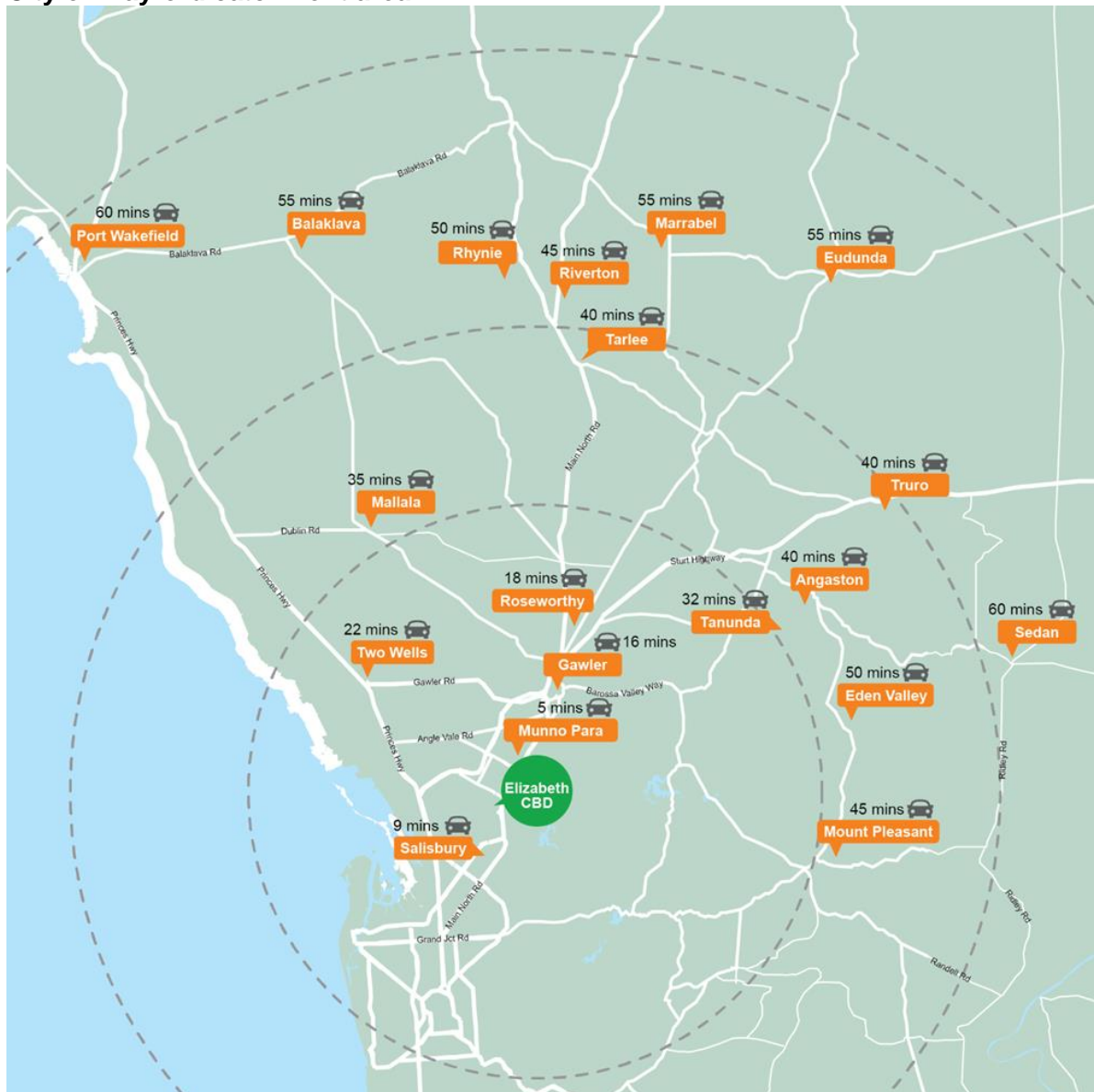
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021

A physical higher education presence is essential for this community to alleviate barriers to tertiary education. The independent feasibility study commissioned by the City of Playford in collaboration with University of Adelaide in 2022 suggests that exposure and access to a University Study Hub close to home will help address barriers to further education that people from the north of Adelaide face. This includes financial issues, limited role models, lack of access to transport, along with distance and stigma associated with coming from the north.

Seeing is believing and having a university presence close to home, at the forefront of young people's minds, makes it more attainable and less daunting. It will open doors to opportunities and foster the belief in pursuing a brighter future.

A thoughtful strategy is necessary when evaluating potential Hub locations. Specifically, designated Regional Centres, such as Elizabeth, South Australia, is a prime location to establish a Hub. Elizabeth, South Australia, holds a unique geographic position in northern Adelaide, serving as a central destination and catchment area drawing from the broader mid-north region of the State.

City of Playford catchment area



The Elizabeth Regional Centre is in close proximity to other essential and student-centric social infrastructure and services, such as Gig City connectivity, public library services, TAFE SA, public transportation, childcare services, food, entertainment, and shopping precincts, this not only enhances the overall appeal of the Hub, but also provides valuable support to the students attending it.

Population growth should play a key role in determining the location for a University Study Hub, and council regions experiencing substantial growth, such as the City of Playford, emerge as the most logical choice. The City of Playford stands out as one of Australia's fastest-growing areas, currently boasting a population of 105,000, with projections indicating an increase to over 150,000 by 2041. This surge in population gives rise to a substantial market demand, presenting a strategic business opportunity for the development of university study hub.

The table below illustrates the population growth between 2016 to 2036 within the potential catchment area for a Hub.

University Study Hub catchment

Council	% Increase	New residents	Total population
City of Playford	44	39,500	132,000
Town of Gawler	60	13,900	37,000
Adelaide Plains	11	1,000	9,900
Light Regional Council	28	4,200	19,300
The Barossa Council	17	4,200	28,400
City of Salisbury	11	15,750	156,100
	Total	78,550	382,700

*Projected populations based on South Australian government population forecasts.

Key success factors

It is important to note that there is not a 'one size fits all' approach to the rollout of Hubs in a Local Government setting. The use of council owned facilities or financial contributions should be assessed on an individual basis for each council and would require Elected Member endorsement. Consideration could be given to flexibility when looking at potential operators and operating models. To ensure the sustainability and the long-term viability and success of the Study Hub delivery it is advisable to contemplate securing operating funding for a duration of 8-10 years.

It is important to gauge the areas of academic interest when considering locations for the study hubs, whilst also aligning to the national skills shortages. The feasibility study commissioned by the City of Playford in collaboration with University of Adelaide in 2022, identified the areas of academic interest being Health and Medical Science, Community Services, Education and Languages, Business and Marketing, and Art and Design. Foundation courses are essential to create small steps and bridge the gap of attainability and confidence.

Partnerships with industry will be important to increase young people's exposure to the job market, build skills and credits, while studying and demystifying what university and employment opportunities are. Connecting with local business, industry mentors, the provision of industry tours, work placements and internships all contribute to gaining workforce exposure and stronger possible job outcomes.

Commitment to the community long term, industry backing job ready graduates, access to funding or scholarships, and supporting diversity and inclusion will be the keys to a University Study Hubs success.

Closing comments

The City of Playford values the opportunity to provide feedback for consideration to the Australian Government Department of Education regarding *Consultation Paper: Implementing Suburban University Study Hubs September 2023*.

The efforts of the Australian Government Department of Education are highly significant in addressing equity by providing additional higher education support. This work lays the groundwork for positive, lasting change for generations to come.

We look forward to further engagement leading to the next stages to establish Suburban University Study Hubs across Australia, and strongly advocate on behalf of the Playford community, urging that serious consideration be given to implementation of a University Study Hub in the suburb of Elizabeth, South Australia.



Mr Sam Green
Chief Executive Officer
City of Playford