

MEETING DETAILS

Date	Tuesday 12 May 2026
Time	9:00am to 10:30am
Location	Barossa Regional University Campus, Beckwith Park, Chateau Beckwith, Level 1
Chair	Kellie Thomas
Members present	Kellie Thomas (Chair), Natalie Mudge (Barossa Council), Daniel Eggleton, Katrin Lohner, Brittany Perry (Lutheran Care)
Apologies	Renae Porcelli, Janelle Holberton, Taylah Fabrici

WHAT WE DISCUSSED

Mental health and sporting club engagement

The group identified mental health access as a pressing priority for adults in the Barossa, consistent with frontline data from employment services showing it is the single biggest barrier for local jobseekers. The group is exploring collaborations which can deliver mental health workshops to sporting clubs, as a practical early win. Sporting clubs were identified as a trusted, informal channel to reach adults, particularly men, who are least likely to seek formal support.

Transport as a structural barrier

Transport continued to emerge as a cross-cutting issue affecting adults across the region. Members shared lived experience of the gap: the Barossa is too close to Adelaide to attract major transport funding, yet too far for residents without a car to access health, employment, and community services. The group noted the current regional transport and workforce participation project led by Workforce Australia as an opportunity to feed into systemic change. Two members are actively involved in that project and will report back.

Men's wellbeing and community engagement

The group discussed the underrepresentation of men in community decision-making and services across the region. Members noted that men report feeling they would not be heard in formal committee settings, and that isolation among men is a growing concern. The wine industry downturn was raised as a compounding factor, with the anticipated lowest grape crush in 35 years creating economic stress for growers and producers.

Volunteering and community infrastructure

The group discussed the decline of traditional volunteer organisations across the region, including service clubs and progress associations. Remaining members are predominantly in older age brackets, with younger cohorts unable to commit due to work and family demands. The group noted this as a longer-term risk to community resilience and civic participation and flagged it for the parking lot for future planning.

Adults Think Tank planning

Early scoping began for an Adults Think Tank, a community forum modelled on the Early Years Conference Day, designed to bring a broader group of adults and partners together to identify priorities and co-design solutions. The timing has been revised to approximately October 2026 to allow sufficient time for partner circle development and meaningful co-design. The partner circle was identified as critical to making the forum representative and effective.

NEXT STEPS

- Three initial action areas were agreed for development into a Community Action Plan: mental health and sporting club engagement, Adults Think Tank planning, and input into Community Directory Version 2.
- The Adults Think Tank will be scoped for approximately October 2026, with the partner circle central to its design and representation.
- Members will contribute data from their organisations to a shared data file on Teams to build the evidence base for the group's action planning.