

MEDIA RELEASE

Award Winning Village Conversations 30 November 2022

Alexandrina Council's 2021 Village Conversations has been successful in winning the 2022 Planning Institute Australia (PIA) Award for Stakeholder Engagement.

The 2021 Village Conversations won the judges' hearts as it took an innovative and targeted approach to community engagement through the Strategic Plan Consultation process.

As a regional council area, Alexandrina has diverse and unique communities, and each has a proud sense of place and authenticity. In recognising this it was important to approach the consultation with a detailed and varied process to ensure it would appeal to the local communities. The goal was to receive a higher level of participation, with a richer and more considered response.

This award recognises initiatives and outcomes in implementing best practice public engagement that achieves genuine collaborative outcomes that leads to improved built form, planning processes or social outcomes. This award is not about the extent of engagement undertaken but the influence, improvement and capacity building that was achieved through the engagement.

As part of the A2040 Community Strategic Plan 2020-2024, the Village Conversations were designed to disrupt Council's model of engagement to increase community participation in decision-making. The 2021 Village Conversations lay the foundation of each township's Draft Village Innovation Plan to further develop the 'community-led and place-fed' approach for future planning.

"It is exciting for the team to be recognised for their fantastic work with the 2021 Village Conversations as a part of the A2040 strategy. It is important for us to not only hear once from the community but to have the ongoing conversations as we plan for the future of each township. The feedback heard through the 2021 Village Conversations provides the much-needed foundation for future phases", said CEO Nigel Morris.

The Village Conversations approach enables difficult decision making to be shared with the community. It gives the community the space to learn, understand and think about local and regional issues more deeply, share their own personal concerns, explore opposing beliefs and new perspectives and contribute to a richer discussion.