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MEDIA RELEASE

Drought Community Funding secured in Alexandrina

14 November 2019

The Alexandrina Community's drought resilience has been bolstered by Council's eligibility for \$1million in the Federal Government's Drought Community Programme – Extension.

In August 2018, the Australian Government announced the program which is designed to support communities affected by drought. The initial announcement didn't include Alexandrina, however, during the recent election campaign, the Australian Government committed to extending the funding to support a further fourteen drought-affected regions, including Alexandrina, which was substantially impacted by the Millennium Drought.

Alexandrina Council is eligible to attain the full \$1million allocation, subject to completing a series of agreed projects before 30 June 2020. In securing the funding, Council proposed three shovel-ready projects which can be completed within the funding deadline, and meet the stringent eligibility criteria set in the funding guidelines.

The three key initiatives which have been approved for funding are an Alexandrina Business Enterprise Centre based in Goolwa, Clayton Bay Foreshore public realm improvements and the renewal of irrigation infrastructure in reserves around the district.

The aim of the Alexandrina Business Enterprise Centre is to establish a hub for existing, new and emerging business across the region to strengthen economic support opportunities, networking and guidance. The project is consistent with Council's Economic Development Strategy to foster collaboration, networking and enhancement of local businesses.

The Clayton Bay Foreshore Public Realm Improvement Project will see improvements supporting the demand for quality public spaces that encourage tourism and boost economic activity in Clayton Bay. These improvements were extensively consulted on as part of the Clayton Bay Foreshore Master Plan.

The renewal of irrigation infrastructure will be implemented at various sites across the region and involves replacing existing redundant irrigation hardware to increase water efficiency, and help safeguard public and open spaces from the impacts of climate change, rising temperatures and drought. Investing in efficient, water saving irrigation networks will help maintain valued green spaces in our urban environment. Irrigated green spaces have been shown to reduce ground and air temperatures and offer pleasant outdoor areas that appeal to

locals and visitors alike and offer respite from extreme summer weather.

Mayor Keith Parkes is grateful that Council can direct significant attention to drought-related initiatives through the attainment of Federal funding.

“Alexandrina Council has advocated for the plight of the River Murray and drought stricken areas for many years, having gone through the Millennium Drought first-hand and seen our communities at the mercy of its ongoing and long-lasting effects.

“We are grateful that the Australian Government has recognised our region as one which is in need of financial assistance in recovering from, and future-proofing our communities from the devastating effects of drought.

“As well as implementing the initiatives outlined in our funding submission, we continue to collectively push for full and timely implementation of the Murray Darling Plan, understanding that water flows at our end of the river system are vital to not only flush salt to the sea and maintain our Lower Lakes and Coorong ecology, but also to support our agricultural, fishing, wine and tourism industries along the way,” he said.