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MEDIA RELEASE

Our Local Alexandrina – A vibrant new online platform supporting businesses

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Alexandrina Council this week launched an exciting new online platform, 'Our Local Alexandrina', showcasing the great range of shopping and dining experiences as well as our many producers in the region. Our Local Alexandrina was born from an identified need to assist local business in the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April 2020, Council endorsed the 'Alexandrina Council Business Support Package' which included a range of initiatives utilising the powers Council had at its disposal to support business in times of crisis. The package also outlined potential new programs to collectively promote and increase customers while building the digital capacity and awareness of local businesses.

This included developing a 'shop local' campaign as an immediate action to encourage local community to support businesses who remained open at the time. This comprised of publishing an online list of businesses still open for takeaway food and those who offered delivery services in March, April and May.

Due to social distancing, travel restrictions and forced closures; many businesses suffered a large drop in customers through their doors. This period highlighted the need for, and opportunity, a strong online presence can have to supplement the 'brick and mortar' shop front. Over the recent months many businesses have demonstrated innovative ways to adapt quickly to survive in the rapidly changing circumstances. The need for diversifying sales and service delivery models in an online environment has been proven and Our Local Alexandrina was developed as the virtual 'front door' for shopping and accessing consumer information in the region.

Scoping an 'Alexandrina Business Digital Economy Strategy' was highlighted as an action in the Business Support Package to assist as many businesses in the region get online, embrace emerging opportunities and future proof their business model. The basic 'shop local' campaign list has now evolved to highlight

Our Local Alexandrina as the foundational stage and brand of the aforementioned digital strategy. Our Local Alexandrina collectively represents and overarches individual business's online activities to increase their reach.

Phase one of the project is now complete. This involved developing the site, inviting businesses to submit their information and featuring them on a seamless, mobile responsive platform. The platform will be supported by a mix of online and traditional marketing methods. Almost 50 businesses are now featured with more expected to take up the free opportunity over the coming month.

Future stages are planned to include e-commerce functionality for businesses that do not have it, embedding high quality video content and hosting regular networking events with businesses featured to share early results and learnings.

Glenn Rappensberg, Chief Executive Officer noted that the overall aim is to include the majority of relevant businesses in the region and showcase them in a contemporary and engaging way on a digital medium that is easily accessible.

“COVID-19 has highlighted that businesses without a good online presence or understanding of the digital economy can become quite vulnerable compared to those that do. We aim to build an online business community by supporting local business and directing consumers to a ‘one stop shop’ of all the amazing products and consumer experiences available in the Alexandrina area. This will assist our businesses be more resilient and ensure they are best placed to recover going forward.”

Our Local Alexandrina will simultaneously reinforce the need for local community support for our economy and share the lesser known shopping and dining ‘gems’ locals know with visitors to the region.

Shopping local in a regional context has always been important but the COVID-19 pandemic has elevated the need to ‘support local’ and recognise the role local business plays in the broader community. Be sure to follow Our Local Alexandrina on Instagram and Facebook and sign up at www.ourlocalalexandrina.com.au to receive regular updates on how you can support your local, be alerted to new additions and upcoming specials.