

MEDIA RELEASE

The Telephone Box Restoration Project on High Street, Strathalbyn 12 August 2022

Improvements to the public realm on High Street, Strathalbyn continues as a group of volunteers have recently worked hard on restoring the red iconic telephone box to its former glory.

This heritage telephone box is the last operational heritage red-box payphone in service in South Australia. With its last restoration in the 1980s, this telephone box was in much need of repairs. The volunteer group set out to remove old paint, repair the rotted timber, reinstall an original door, repaint interior and exterior, install new windows and recommission the telephone box back into full operation.

Council was approached for the restoration with the group eager to bring the icon back to life. The materials for the restoration were provided by Council which cost approximately \$1,500. The telephone box is owned by Council with the phone itself being owned by Telstra who were entirely supportive of the restoration.

The project took the group approximately 150 hours to complete, beginning in April and completing it in June 2022. The completed restoration brought to life the iconic red exterior and restored the interior with a sporadic dark green on pale green pattern. History suggests this renowned green pattern was introduced in the original design to deter people from adding graffiti to the interior as many of the markings wouldn't clearly show compared to a solid colour background.

Throughout the project, there were a number of conversations from passers-by about how people still use payphones. It was the general consensus that they still continue to play an important role as they are useful in emergencies, for children without mobile phones and though not often noticed, an important part of our streetscape.

The restored telephone box is now open to the public. This is a fantastic piece of history and will certainly remain a standout feature of High Street, Strathalbyn.



(L-R) Josiah Shepherd, Jace Brand, Allan Pomery, Elyse Johnson, Joyce Zaharuiko, Ruth Johnson, James Leigh, Luke Johnson, Martin Zaharuiko. (Edward Green not pictured in group photo)



Edward Green working on the box interior.



Joyce Zaharuiko applying the interior pattern using a carpet bathmat.



6 year-old James Truyens who was the first person to use the phone box when it reopened.