



MEDIA RELEASE

Successful 2023 SA Wooden Boat Festival draws crowds 9 May 2023

The 2023 South Australian Wooden Boat Festival (SAWBF) was a resounding success, drawing over 12,000 attendees to Hindmarsh Island's Alexandrina Cove on the weekend of 29-30 April.

Generous sponsorship from the SA Tourism Commission, Coorong Quays, Alexandrina Cove, and Mitsubishi Motors Victor Harbor, along with the ongoing support of Friends of Oscar W, Armfield Wooden Boat Association, Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club, and Fleurieu Food, made this year's festival possible.

The event was a melting pot of diverse attendees, including locals, visitors, day trippers, and overnight guests, with a significant portion of the crowd choosing to stay overnight to make the most of the festival experience. An overwhelming 74% of attendees expressed their eagerness to return to the festival next year. Many people came in pairs and had a blast, with the event being particularly popular among adults. But hey, the kids had their fun too.

More than 130 boats including yachts, putt putts, large open boats, and paddle steamers were on display, and attendees had the opportunity to explore and admire these beautiful vessels moored at the marina, as well as meet their owners and learn about their rich maritime histories, before watching them all in succession for an awesome end-of-festival Grand Parade.

A fabulous array of exhibitors and vendors showcased local businesses and regional produce including Goolwa Beach Pizza, Port Elliot Coffee, Langhorne Creek wine, and beer.

Those attending the Festival were treated to a range of activities, including face painting, model boat displays, and roving circus demonstrations. Children and adults alike were delighted by the Storm Boy screenings at Centenary Hall.

It was delightful to see so many local residents taking full advantage of the free shuttle bus from Goolwa Wharf to the change of venue this year in Hindmarsh Island's Alexandrina Cove.

One of the festival's highlights was the chance to experience the iconic PS Oscar W, which was moored and cruising from the Goolwa Wharf, providing visitors with an unforgettable experience on the water. Cruising along the scenic river, guests were transported back in time on this beautifully restored paddle steamer.

The festival's Art Trail was also a hit, featuring exhibitions from Fleurieu Artists across several galleries.

Local businesses played a significant role in making the festival a success, with the Food, Wine & Experience Program run in conjunction with the festival to help businesses leverage off the event. Fleurieu Food and Business Alexandrina worked alongside local businesses

to provide support, workshops, and opportunities to showcase the region's amazing produce, art, and maritime culture.

Mayor Parkes commended local businesses for their efforts in showcasing the Fleurieu Peninsula's food, art, culture, and heritage.

Alexandrina Council, Mayor Keith Parkes said "we are thrilled with the turnout this year and the positive feedback we have received. We extend our gratitude to everyone who attended the festival and helped make it such a success. We are so thankful to our Festival Committee, volunteers, and long-term Patron Roly Bartlett for all their hard work and efforts in organising a fantastic festival," he said.

Coorong Quays, Manager Ben Kelsey, commented, "Thank you to Alexandrina Council staff, event staff, the Festival Committee and all the participants who had boats, marquees, and also to those who came and enjoyed this event. The event was a huge success, and it was great to see and hear the buzz around a change of venue," he said.



Photo 1. Mayor Keith Parkes, CEO Nigel Morris, Alexandrina Council and Manager Coorong Quays, Ben Kelsey



Photo 2 - SAWBF 2023 as captured by LeanneG Photography

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