

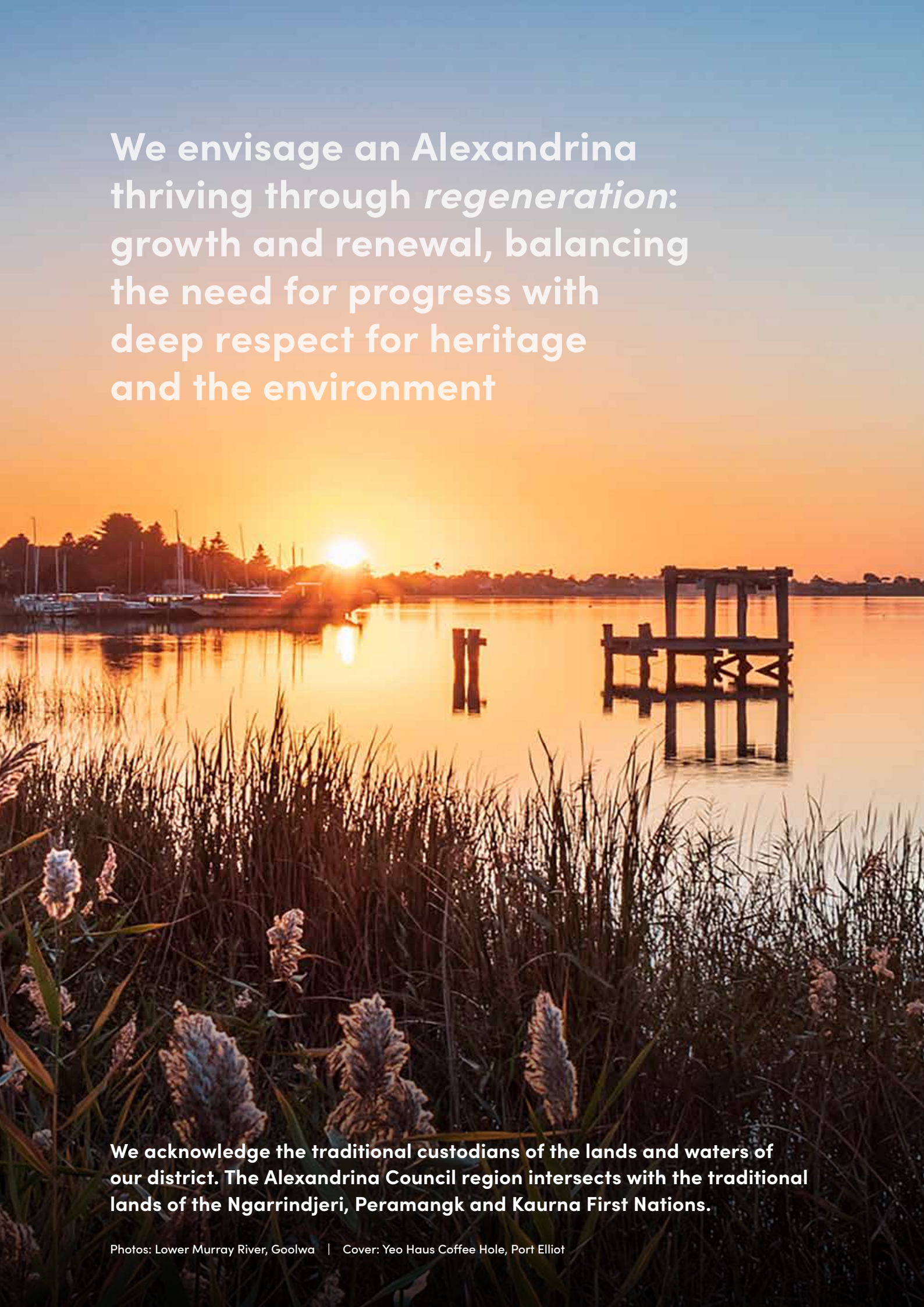


# Economic Development Strategy 2022–2027



Regenerating Alexandrina's Economy



A full-page background image showing a sunset over a body of water. In the foreground, there are tall reeds and some small white flowers. In the middle ground, a wooden pier structure is visible in the water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow across the sky and water. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

We envisage an Alexandrina  
thriving through *regeneration*:  
growth and renewal, balancing  
the need for progress with  
deep respect for heritage  
and the environment

**We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of our district. The Alexandrina Council region intersects with the traditional lands of the Ngarrindjeri, Peramangk and Kurna First Nations.**

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# Our Alexandrina: Liveable, Green, Connected

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**Not far south of Adelaide, South Australia is a landscape with rolling farmland stretching out to meet the waters of the River Murray and Lake Alexandrina to the east and then down to the Southern Ocean. Three First Nations meet in this special place: Ngarrindjeri of the lakes, Peramangk of the hills and Kurna of the plains.**

Alexandrina, connected by waterways, historic train lines and trade routes, is diverse and beautiful. We are a region of stunning landscapes, close-knit communities and a thriving economy.

It is here that Australia's most iconic river spills out into the ocean. The Ngarrindjeri dreaming tells how the Murray (Murrundi), Lower Lakes (Mungkuli) and Coorong (Kurank) were formed and of the dramatic changes in sea level before and after the last ice age.

This is a place of fascinating deep-time geographical and ecological history and remains one of the world's vital ecosystems. Our unique biodiversity includes thousands of species of fish, plants, reptiles, mammals and migratory birds who fly over 11,000km north each year to Siberia, before returning here to rest and feed.





## People and nature, past and present

The people of Alexandrina enjoy a peaceful rural life, with the convenience of the ‘big city’ not too far away – indeed close enough for many to commute to work. Most people live in our two main townships of Strathalbyn and Goolwa, as well as smaller townships including Ashbourne, Clayton Bay, Currency Creek, Finniss, Langhorne Creek, Middleton, Milang, Mount Compass and Port Elliot.

A rich history of river commerce, boating, and life on the water continues to evolve in Alexandrina. Our farmlands, wine country, wilderness and heritage townships are loved by locals and visitors alike. We are one of the state’s primary food production regions, with a thriving arts culture and creative community; and soon to be a leading centre of scientific research as home to the new Australian Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Research Hub.

In many ways our region is a hidden gem. We have escaped overdevelopment. We remain untarnished and original. And while we want to see our region grow, ensuring young families come here and that together we all thrive, we want to do this in a way that preserves and nourishes all the amazing qualities of our environment, heritage and communities.

## It’s about regeneration

We want our histories – Indigenous, industrial, natural and built – to be celebrated and shared. We want to live in productive harmony with our beautiful environment for the benefit of all living things.

This is a time for regeneration; reviving and growing those treasured aspects of Alexandrina which have brought us here today, in a way that retains a strong link with where we started.

‘We have to  
recognise who  
we are and who  
we have been...  
We should also  
recognise who  
we can be.’

NGARRINDJERI COMMUNITY ELDER





# Regenerating Alexandrina

## Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

Recently we formulated A2040, Alexandrina's twenty year strategic vision, and in doing so put our future in the hands of the community. What we heard was a desire for our region to thrive as a liveable, green and connected place for all to enjoy.

Our renewed approach to economic development, in support of A2040, has similarly been inspired by listening to the people and businesses of our region.

Overwhelmingly, our community wants to see healthy and sustainable growth, balancing the need for progress with deep respect for heritage and the environment.

In 2020 we launched Business Alexandrina, a dedicated business program for the region. The new Business Hub in Goolwa, the *Our Local Alexandrina* online platform, the launch of our Innovation Challenge and a dedicated program of events, have each facilitated new relationships and shared ideas.

We have been identifying the right partners to work with to see the region grow, including Regional Development Australia, Rural Business Support, Fleurieu Peninsula Tourism and the South Australian Department of Trade and Investment.

Council has injected new funding into growing our economy with nearly \$100,000 in Economic Development Recovery Grants delivered to help 22 businesses recover from the impact of COVID-19. We have supported a further 20 businesses to access government funding, notably Hotel Elliot which was recently awarded \$500,000 from the South Australian Tourism Commission's Tourism Industry Development Fund.

We are extremely proud to present the *Alexandrina Economic Development Strategy 2022–2027* to guide Council's leadership role in this important and emerging area into the future.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Mayor Keith Parkes



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Glenn Rappensberg  
Chief Executive Officer

This Liveable, Green,  
Connected place is far  
greater than the passage  
of time. It is more than  
the sum of its parts.  
It's the story of our lives.  
It's our story.





# Alexandrina snapshot



**28,000 people** over a diverse **1,827 km<sup>2</sup>** of prime rural land and eleven historic townships.



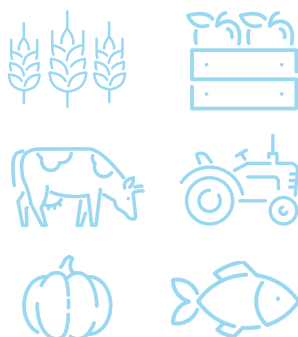
**\$1.06 billion** Gross Regional Product for the year ending June 2020.



**2174** local businesses, **99%** being small businesses.



**7517** local jobs.



**Agribusiness** is our largest industry which includes dairy, beef and sheep farming, broad acre cropping, fruit growing, fishing and viticulture; with opportunity to further value add, from farmyard to table.



**Healthcare** is one of the leading employing industries and will continue to grow, with over-65s expected to make up **33.9%** of the population by 2036.



We have the opportunity to **attract investment**, businesses, jobs and younger families, capitalising on the national pattern of migration to the regions since COVID.

**Tourism** is another key industry. Water-based tourism is long-established in Alexandrina, from boating and fishing on the river to seaside holidays. Our wine regions and historic townships offer further opportunities to grow the visitor economy.



# A community vision for regeneration

**The Economic Development Strategy 2022–2027 has been built by listening carefully to the community.**

A series of Village Innovation Conversations held across our 11 townships have given us a strong idea of how each of our diverse communities wants to move into the future in ways which enhance the unique natural, cultural and economic features of each place.

Further targeted engagement with businesses representing the region's key industries has added to our understanding of what the Alexandrina community wants for its economic future.





**A number of shared aspirations have emerged.**

➤ **We want to make the most of our great location.**

Alexandrina is perfectly located, close to Adelaide but not too close, and offers a great lifestyle in beautiful surroundings. The COVID-19 pandemic is spurring city-dwellers to seek a 'tree and sea change', providing opportunity for Alexandrina to grow.

➤ **We want more people to visit.**

A number of local attractions have the potential to bring more people to the region and grow the visitor economy; from the wineries of Langhorne Creek, the historical and picturesque Strathalbyn, the diverse food bowl of Mount Compass to an invigorated Goolwa Wharf Precinct and Wooden Boat Festival celebrating our maritime history.

➤ **We want renewal that values our heritage.**

The community wants to preserve the character of our townships while attracting more young people to live here through improved job prospects. COVID-19 has transformed where and how people work, increasing the opportunity for people to relocate their business or work from home in our region's beautiful environment.

➤ **We want to expand upon our strengths.**

Agriculture and tourism must continue to be supported as key local industries built upon our region's natural assets. It is also important for the region to diversify. It would benefit Alexandrina to attract higher value-add industries including agribusiness and food manufacturing, professional services and creative industries.

➤ **We want our Council to lead the way.**

The community is looking to Council to be a strong leader in local economic development, working in partnership with businesses and major industries towards a thriving Alexandrina.



Together we want a region that offers people and businesses the opportunity to thrive, attracting new families while protecting and rejuvenating the environment – because we recognise what an incredible asset the Alexandrina environment is.

**We want regeneration.**





# Regenerative Economics

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**Our economic development strategy is built on a concept of regenerative economics: a philosophy of sustainable growth leading the way to a liveable, green and connected Alexandrina.**

What will regenerative economic development look like in Alexandrina?

**Regenerative economics is a new way of thinking, concerned less with growth for growth's sake, and more with building a sustainable economy which purposefully meets the needs of both people and the environment.**

This aligns with groundbreaking economist Kate Raworth's concept of 'doughnut' economics, which is being increasingly used by forward-thinking cities and regions around the world (take a look at [kateraworth.com/doughnut](https://kateraworth.com/doughnut) if you are interested in learning more).

Growth in the region will foreground the importance of our beautiful environment. We will give nature around us all that it needs for sustenance, even as it provides the same for our communities. We'll be aiming for waste-free systems that balance production and consumption, continually revitalising the natural sources of our produce.

We will be acknowledging the intrinsic connection between our local businesses and communities, how they enrich each other, make Alexandrina great, and help us grow.

We are creating a more inclusive, localised, innovative, resilient and agile economy.

## Regeneration as a business model

A number of local businesses have embraced the concept of regeneration and are leading the way. Here are just two examples:



### Nomad Farms

Nomad Farms is a multi-award winning family run farm in the Finnis Valley. The farm produces grass fed beef and hogget (lamb), pasture-raised chickens, and botanically dyed wool of the highest quality.

The regenerative farming practices used by founder Tom Bradman and the Nomad team build rather than deplete the resources on which they depend; a process which considers both ecology and people.

The farm's name describes the movement of animals across the farm which is central to the regenerative effort, mimicking the constant change of natural systems.



### Peninsula Providore

Mel Hollick, owner of Peninsula Providore olive grove, understands that the quality of the natural environment determines the quality of her olive oil.

As the current custodian of the land, Mel aims to leave the grove in better health than when she started.

With a focus on soil health, waste products from the olive mill are turned into compost on site and spread throughout the grove. Sheep keep the grass down.

'It's really important to us to leave it better for the next generation', Mel says.

# A framework for regeneration: Four key action areas in service to a thriving Alexandrina that is Liveable, Green, Connected





# Our strategic framework

The Economic Development Strategy 2022–2027 follows a commissioned review by Lucid Economics of the earlier Alexandrina Economic Development Strategy 2016–2022. This review started in 2019 and has been shaped by the unfolding impacts of COVID-19.

The economic development strategy aligns with and supports A2040, our regional strategic plan. Launched in February 2021, A2040 articulates a strong vision for our community to thrive as Liveable, Green and Connected.

- **Liveable Alexandrina** is defined by distinctive villages, places and spaces, unique natural environments and transport networks that support active lifestyles, employment, vibrant cultures and productive enterprise.
- **Green Alexandrina** is climate-ready, a place where nature is valued and resources are managed sustainably and creatively for a new economy.
- **Connected Alexandrina** is an inclusive, friendly region with strong community spirit, where all people are empowered to achieve their potential and inspired to get involved.

The Economic Development Strategy 2022–2027 aims to bring to life the A2040 vision to thrive by underpinning this vision as an informing strategy.

Specifically, the strategy contributes to the A2040's aims of achieving appropriate growth for the region, responding to a changing climate, community inclusion and environmental innovation.

## ✔ Liveable Alexandrina

### Appropriate growth

- Attracting and retaining younger residents to live, work and play in Alexandrina

## ✔ Green Alexandrina

### Appropriate growth

- Working with industry partners to identify and embed nature-based tourism experiences to secure funding to protect, conserve and enjoy our natural environment

### Climate response

- Reducing Council greenhouse gas emissions and advocating for the uptake of renewable energy

## ✔ Connected Alexandrina

### Appropriate growth

- Partnering on community-led Village Innovation Plans to identify and enhance sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes for Alexandrina

### Community inclusion

- Leveraging Business Alexandrina to increase opportunities to co-design innovative solutions for industry

### Environmental innovation

- Supporting local industry to connect, explore and pilot new initiatives

# Four key action areas

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The economic development strategy is structured around four key action areas:

1. **Leadership and advocacy**
2. **Investment attraction**
3. **Town building**
4. **Business and industry development**

Council has a unique and important role to play for each action area.

Each action area includes a number of priority initiatives. Each priority initiative then has its own set of actions as outlined in the Alexandrina Economic Development Action Plan 2022–2027.



# Thriving Alexandrina

Liveable

Green

Connected

climate response / appropriate growth / community inclusion /  
transport connections / environmental innovation

## Regenerating Alexandrina



### 1. Leadership and advocacy

- Economic infrastructure
- Leadership group
- Local procurement
- Business Friendly Council

**New infrastructure**



### 2. Investment attraction

- Marketing
- Product development

**New businesses**



### 3. Town building

- Placemaking
- Attract new residents

**New residents**



### 4. Business and industry development

- Business support
- Development of key local industries
- Wooden boat sector
- Digital economy

**New jobs**



# Leadership and advocacy



***‘If Council doesn’t lead the development of the local economy, then who will?’.***

## Priority initiatives

### Advocate for economic infrastructure

- Advocate for critical infrastructure including additional mobile phone towers, wireless NBN and freight road upgrades
- Maximise use of Council-owned assets, including divesting surplus land and assets
- Seek funding for tourism infrastructure, including on-water infrastructure, signage; and budget for co-contribution funding
- Expand the free Wi-Fi program as part of key infrastructure upgrades.

### Establish a leadership group

- Re-form an advisory business group that is representative of the region and key industries.

### Increase Council’s local procurement

- Analyse Council’s expenditure to identify opportunities to increase Council’s expenditure locally
- Help businesses understand how to tender for Council work.

### Be a business-friendly Council

- Develop support programs as part of Council’s Small Business Friendly Council (SBFC) status
- Identify three additional initiatives per year for SBFC accreditation.

The Alexandrina community wants Council to lead the economic development of our region, working in partnership with business and industry towards a thriving Alexandrina.

A critical role for Council is to advocate for key economic infrastructure to support local businesses and tourism.

**Over the last 12 months Council has been increasingly active as a leader and advocate for the businesses and communities that make up our local economy.**

We have won significant grant funding for key regional assets, including an expansion of the Goolwa Wharf Precinct, a revitalisation of the Strathalbyn streetscape, development of both Beacon 19 and the Signal Point Experience Centre.

We have gained the status of a Small Business Friendly Council, understanding that we play an important part in the lifecycle of small businesses and in making sure Alexandrina is an attractive place for businesses to grow. We know small business is the backbone of Alexandrina and gives us our vibrant diversity.

Our Local Innovation Program has so far supported four local entrepreneurs with four great ideas, helping them put those ideas into action and grow their businesses.



**Small Business  
Friendly Council**

## Regeneration in action

**In line with our strategy of Regenerating Alexandrina, we are taking a regenerative approach to leadership and advocacy over the coming year:**

- Advocating for new tourism infrastructure in particular seeking funding for nature-based tourism and heritage tourism including the Langhorne Creek Wine Trail
- Activating Council buildings and spaces, including exploring opportunities to designate Council-owned land to 'pop up' business initiatives such as the Chart Room, Goolwa as a pilot
- Developing business leadership through the Alexandrina Sustainable Agribusiness Round Table (ASART), with a focus on regenerative agricultural practices
- Including regenerative practices in Council's procurement processes and delivering procurement workshops in the Business Hub.

**Over the next five years we will:**

- Audit, prioritise and secure economic infrastructure
- Increase funding for tourism infrastructure
- Establish a Regional Business Group
- Support local business in tendering for an increased share of Council work.

## Partnering with Regional Development Australia

We work in close partnership with Regional Development Australia (Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island) to advocate for Alexandrina. The RDA plays a key role as a conduit between councils and the State and Federal governments, and represents seven councils including Alexandrina.

RDA advocates for our infrastructure needs and provides a strategic, targeted response to economic opportunities such as accessing funding for infrastructure.

RDA also provides an advisor in the Business Hub every fortnight, giving direct assistance to our business community.



# Investment attraction



***'If the people come, business will follow'.***

## Priority initiatives

### Market the region to investors and businesses

- Identify gaps in the business mix and target businesses to fill them
- Develop an Alexandrina marketing and destination plan
- Leverage stakeholders and partnerships to attract investment

### Product development

- Support businesses with capability-building, resources and funding to develop their offering
- Build a pipeline of investment projects

Those of us who live and work in Alexandrina know what our region has to offer: beautiful countryside, heritage towns, an abundance of water and a connected community, all within an hour of Adelaide. Alexandrina is worth shouting about!

**One of our most important roles as a Council is to spread the word about our amazing Alexandrina, to attract new investors, businesses, residents and visitors.**

We want to attract more families and young people to the area, helping to balance the ageing population to ensure we foster a sustainable community long term.

More families means more children in schools and greater demand for a wider range of services. This in turn will attract businesses and other organisations to meet increased demand. More businesses will create more jobs, again attracting new residents.

We know people are more likely to move to a region that offers a lifestyle they enjoy. So attracting investment in lifestyle businesses and entertainment in particular will help to attract younger residents.

In recent months we have developed an investment prospectus guide for Goolwa and Hindmarsh Island. We have also been liaising with major investors, including G'Day Group, to support significant investment in the Goolwa Caravan Park.



## Regeneration in action

**To attract investment over the coming year we will be:**

- Identifying services that are required in the region and targeting specific businesses to relocate or expand in the region, giving priority to regenerative businesses
- Marketing the region through Business Alexandrina LinkedIn, promoting our region's unique embrace of regeneration
- Identifying potential investment projects in the region through the Business Alexandrina program, prioritising regenerative projects and businesses
- Working with partners including Fleurieu Peninsula Tourism to promote the region
- Supporting businesses to develop their offering by providing advisory services in the Business Hub with the support of partnerships including South Australia's Department of Trade and Investment.

**Over the next five years we will:**

- Fill two gaps a year in our economy's business mix
- Develop an Alexandrina regional investment prospectus
- Engage with ten new investors per year
- Work with key partnerships and organise a large scale investment attraction event, showcasing what Alexandrina has to offer
- Run a dedicated investment attraction program to develop our projects and business capability.

## Partnering with the Department of Trade and Investment

The Department for Trade and Investment (DTI) plays a key role in driving economic growth in South Australia by attracting new foreign direct investment and increasing local exports into global markets.

DTI is an important partner of ours, unlocking access to export grant programs such as the South Australia Export Accelerator.

They also maintain a network of international offices that can assist our businesses expand into new markets and connect with potential investors.



# Town building



***‘I love it here... It has everything you need and nothing you don’t’.***

## Priority initiatives

### Placemaking

- Contribute to the Village Innovations Program
- Develop and market town brand identities which reflect the unique character of each township
- Undertake placemaking initiatives including connecting Cadell Street with Goolwa Wharf, and High Street with Dawson Street in Strathalbyn
- Offer co-contribution shop front improvement grants

### Attract new residents

- Develop targeted marketing and promotional material

Whether we are talking about Alexandrina’s larger towns of Goolwa or Strathalbyn, or any of our smaller townships, such as Port Elliot, Mount Compass or Langhorne Creek, each place has its own special personality and heritage, expressed in buildings, streetscapes, local industry and community.

Enhancing the unique history and character of each township will help to attract new young families and regenerative growth, but always with a deep respect for history, retaining all the things that make our townships great.

**People want to live, work, play and do business in places they love. The Council can help create and promote a strong sense of place and pride.**

This process has already begun.

You may have already joined in with one of the Village Conversations we have held across Alexandrina. At these inspiring events we heard about the unique needs and dreams of each town.

You may also have started to notice some renewed shop-fronts. We are supporting 15 businesses to improve their street presence through the Alexandrina Economic Development Recovery Grant program.

## Regeneration in action

**Here's where we are headed with regenerating our townships. Over the next year we will be:**

- Mapping the commercial tenant mix and taking note of Council buildings in each town to identify gaps
- Developing the Village Innovation Plans and including targets for urban greening and streetscapes
- Promoting the region's regeneration goals to attract like-minded residents and businesses.

**Over the next five years we will be:**

- Developing main street connections in Goolwa between Cadell Street and the Goolwa Wharf and in Strathalbyn between High Street and Dawson Street
- Developing the Langhorne Creek Wine trail
- Deliver the "Roadmap to Revitalisation Placemaking Strategy - Goolwa Wharf Precinct"
- Delivering the "Ngoppen Ngarrindjeri Ruwe" Cultural Tourism Plan (Walking Ngarrindjeri Land)

## Partnering with business and industry groups

A number of business associations and networks play an important role connecting and supporting Alexandrina's vibrant business community.

Partners working closely with Business Alexandrina in this way include:

- Langhorne Creek Wine and Grape Association
- Strathalbyn Tourism Association
- Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (NAC)
- Alexandrina Arts and Culture Advisory Group





# Business support and industry development



***‘Small businesses are the heart of Alexandrina...  
It’s all about community’.***

## Priority initiatives

### Business support

- Undertake business engagement to identify barriers to business growth
- Support the development of key local industries
- Develop deep understanding of key local industries
- Use available levers for development, including business training and networking events
- Maintain up-to-date economic development information/data

### Support Alexandrina’s wooden boat sector

- Develop a wooden boat industry strategy and SA Wooden Boat Festival digital marketing plan
- Prepare individual wooden boat management plans

### Implement a digital economy strategy

- Implement an Alexandrina ‘shop local’ campaign
- Offer digital marketing training support for local business
- Implement an Alexandrina online marketing campaign
- Deliver digital networking events
- Include ‘digital champions’ and sector representatives in the business leaders group

Alexandrina’s economy is dominated by small business: nearly 99% of businesses have fewer than 20 employees. So each and every operator is important to us.

**Building on the strengths of our major industries – including agriculture, tourism and healthcare – makes sense and will help create jobs.**

Business Alexandrina supports and connects local businesses through digital communications, grants, facilities, training and other services. Over the last year we provided training to more than 350 businesses over 28 events.

Our online platform, Our Local Alexandrina, showcases 80 local producers and suppliers, and supports our important tourism and hospitality industries.

In July 2020 we launched the Economic Development Recovery Grant Fund to support local initiatives that stimulate growth. Nearly \$100,000 has been awarded to 22 businesses to do things like improve their shop-front, develop their digital capability and activate unused space.

At the heart of all this is the Business Hub at 12 Cadell Street, Goolwa. The Hub gives Alexandrina businesses a shared space with access to well-equipped facilities and advisory services including for grant-seeking, financial counselling and industry-specific support.

## Regeneration in action

**To continue supporting our businesses and industries we will be:**

- Conducting workshops to educate local businesses about regenerative business practices
- Undertaking regenerative initiatives for our key industries
- Exploring innovative opportunities for the agriculture sector such as the application of blockchain technology
- Including lowered carbon footprints in our shop local campaign, Our Local Alexandrina.

**Over the next five years we will:**

- Develop a strong, connected and digital-ready business community
- Increase commercial occupancy in our townships
- Develop new nature and heritage tourism ventures and facilitate investment
- Deliver a holistic plan for the wooden boat sector.

## Partnering with the State Government and peak industry bodies

Industry development is undertaken in close collaboration with a number of South Australian Government departments and peak industry bodies who drive growth in our state.

For example, we work closely with Fleurieu Peninsula Tourism and the Tourism Industry Council to grow the local tourism industry.

We also work closely with The Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) which is the State Government's key economic development agency.







# Connect with us

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**Help us bring the Economic Development Strategy 2022–2027 to life: connect with us at Business Alexandrina.**

We would love to hear your thoughts on the economic development strategy or to hear about your business ideas.

Keep an eye on the Business Alexandrina website, **[businessalexandrina.com.au](https://businessalexandrina.com.au)**. Find out what is going on and come along to a workshop or two.

Pop into the **Business Hub** at **12 Cadell Street, Goolwa** and discover how you can use this great work space and connection point.

We are setting out to regenerate Alexandrina. Come with us on this journey.





## Partners

### How to contact us

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