



# Alexandrina 2040

Liveable. Green. Connected.

Our plan to thrive  
2020-2040



**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.**

# Foreword

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**We are delighted to share our community's vision for the next 20 years. This narrative and its supporting 4 year and 10 year plans present a comprehensive vision and action plan for every one of our residents, businesses, community organisations and our many partners and collaborators.**

As part of the Alexandrina 2040 process, we have fully embraced the philosophy to 'think globally and act locally'. This helped us to be ambitious about the future and, importantly, to plan proactively. A 'futures thinking' mindset has helped us to raise our sights beyond the horizon; beyond the next 12 months and beyond the next term of Council, to consider the decades ahead.

Alexandrina's future will be influenced not only by today's challenges, but by major social, environmental, technological and economic trends, including some particular to our state and nation. Global trends include:

- increasing demand for water, food and scarce natural resources
- the imperative for the world to take action in addressing ecological degradation
- a shift in global economic power from the US and Europe to China and India
- later retirement and rising health costs in developed countries with ageing populations
- digital technology continuing to transform the way we deliver products, access services, work and interact with each other
- rising consumer expectation of on-demand, personalised services that meet unique needs and wants, with a focus on experiences.

At the same time we work to accommodate these fast-growing influences, local governments around the world are declaring their support for the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Adopted in 2015 by Australia and almost 200 other nations, these 17 'global goals' are a declaration for governments and communities to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.

Purposeful alignment with many of these goals in the next decade will help us focus on the big picture and enable us to pay attention to the important things we need to achieve day to day, and week to week. With everyone working together, we'll each have our part of a story in 2040 that reveals a liveable, green and ever more connected community than the Alexandrina of today.

Alexandrina is a collaborator. Over the next 20 years, we will pursue advocacy and partnerships to progress our community's vision, including seeking funding and good policy from State and Federal Governments.

A2040 is a call to action for Alexandrina Council. There is only so much we can do alone; as a local government organisation we are best placed to advocate for and support a future defined by rewarding partnerships and proactive approaches to growth for our economy and communities.

**Together we plan to thrive.**

Mayor Keith Parkes  
Glenn Rappensberg CEO





**What we call Alexandrina  
is a great deal more  
than the sum of its parts.  
Every town, every pocket  
of the region is unique.  
Every place and every  
person has a story to tell.**



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**This story is told through eleven villages and the many places in between. It's in the scrub, paddocks, beaches and dunes. Our story is on the ocean winds and deep in our fertile soils. It's in, under and on the waters of the ocean; in our wetlands, streams and in the Angas, Bremer and Finniss rivers, sinuous siblings for the River Murray and the Coorong, where the waters meet.**

**Alexandrina 2040 – our story as a community  
– will be told for generations to come.**

People in this region have told these stories for more than 40,000 years, back before an ice age when we were connected to what we now call Kangaroo Island. You may have heard the Ngarrindjeri tale of Murrunduri, the great River Murray, with its creation by Ngurunderi who chased Pondi, the giant cod. Ngurunderi created the Lower Murray, the Coorong and our southern coasts and islands. Mount Compass is where many ancient paths and trade routes intercept. Aboriginal people have connected here, moving from nearby Nangkita (place of Grubs in the trees) on the ancient route to Currency Creek and the Finniss, then on to Lake Alexandrina.

We have to recognise  
who we are and who  
we have been as a nation.  
We should also recognise  
who we can be.

**RAUKKAN COMMUNITY ELDER**

Our story has been told by millions of people across millennia and each day brings a fresh chorus of voices to our collected history. These stories recall a time that lives in our land and waters, one that's carved in timber, hewn in stone and forged in steel. Today, in this digital era, Alexandrina's story is shared across screens in our homes, at work and on the devices that accompany us almost everywhere.

Each one of our stories lives with the wildlife and wild places; with the animals of our farms and the beloved companions in our homes. Our farms and vineyards have grown to bring so much from the paddock to fill the plates and glasses of neighbours and friends, old and new. Langhorne Creek's reputation as one of the world's leading wine regions continues to grow. We are close enough to major ports to export Alexandrina's sought-after produce, from both land and waters, especially to our neighbours in Asia.

We can see the enduring attraction of the inland towns of Mount Compass and Currency Creek and the charms of places like Port Elliot for families and tourists alike; the mix of historic streets and buildings, lifestyle businesses and so many things to do in one of the most walkable and creative coastal villages in South Australia. ➤

The stately buildings and curios of Strathalbyn, one of South Australia's oldest towns, remain as vital testament to our strength and character through two centuries of war, depression, drought and plagues.

Every year, we share Alexandrina with visitors from around the world, from across Australia and from just down the road. Most linger and many return to satisfy curiosity piqued by their first experience, ready for a new surprise. It's easy to welcome people back and just as easy to see why it's hard for them to say goodbye. Increasing numbers of visitors decide they're ready to make Alexandrina home for the rest of their days.

There is so much to admire about the people and places of Alexandrina. It is also true that much of what we love needs us now, more than ever before, to care for and support this region and its future generations. This is our challenge for the years ahead as we work together for the Alexandrina of 2040.

The smell of the sea  
and river. The history  
in the present day,  
in the crafting of  
historic vessels, true  
to our nature.

GOOLWA LOCAL



The 'Oscar W', Goolwa





# Realism and optimism

**Our climate is changing before our eyes, with increasing degrees of ferocity. The devastating fires of late 2019 are only part of this picture. In 2020, a health pandemic has disrupted our ways of life and for many, our ways to make a living. Both crises have brought undeniable hardship that will test our resilience for many years.**

Cracks have opened, exposing gaps in the way we do things, vulnerabilities in our relationships and with the way we earn, spend and save money. The crises have shown us the fragility of life, nature and notably our own physical and mental wellbeing.

For our region, the crises have also revealed our strengths, the advantages of our unique and connected communities. We've been able to see, some of us for the first time, that we have so much of the 'good life' here – local produce, nature on every doorstep, good-natured sporting rivalries, art, cultural experiences and businesses and community organisations with impressive spirit and ingenuity.

Here we have been able to celebrate the lifestyle and open air as we work from home with our 'knowledge economy' making the leap to digital, something epitomised by the Business Alexandrina Hub in Goolwa, launched in 2020.

**Through difficult times, we've celebrated the courage of those keeping us safe, and shown compassion for those who have found a lifeline in our communities. Our ethos of kindness has kept us connected.**

Let's be realistic  
about the  
challenges, but  
optimistic about the  
opportunities.

MAYOR OF ALEXANDRINA

In 2020, we have opened our arms to our fellow South Australians, we have also opened our wallets to support local enterprises. In many ways, Alexandrina has been at its best.

In creating Alexandrina 2040, our vision for the next twenty years, we have listened to the passionate communities, Council staff and leaders of the region. We've explored some exciting possibilities for the decades ahead. More than 1800 people have had their say.

Today, some 27,000 people call Alexandrina home, with this number expected to reach 40,000 in the next twenty years. Our region is already one of the day-trip capitals of South Australia with many visitors joining us in the warmer months. While we have natural and agricultural riches that compare to anywhere in the nation, tourists are a vital part of our future. They have also added their voices to our story.





# Alexandrina in 2040: liveable, green and connected

**It's natural to be proud of every bit of what we call Alexandrina. It's also natural to be concerned about what will change with 'progress'. Let's imagine we are in the Alexandrina of 2040. We're thriving because we stayed true to our aspirations to be the most liveable, green and connected community we could be.**

There is plenty that is familiar in this future. Alexandrina's villages and rural areas retain their unique identity, heritage and charm. Good planning; active spaces, including playspaces, ovals and parks; and accessible, low-emissions transport bring people together to celebrate, connect and enjoy all that Alexandrina has to offer.

Many more people are commuting to jobs, events and community spaces within our region. This growth defined our district as jobs were created, including what still feels new in secondary and tertiary education, arts and culture, digital enterprise, regenerative agriculture and nature-based tourism.

We can see different faces, enterprises and influences in the Alexandrina of 2040, adding even more character and delight to our reputation for hospitality.

**It's a place that's easy and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities.**

Generations of families that have shaped Alexandrina's agriculture and agribusiness continue to be vital partners in growing our regional economy. Our elder Alexandrians lead the way, especially those from our First Nations communities, benefiting from the philosophy of 'equity in partnership', as it's described by the Ngarrindjeri.

It feels like we have been able to close a time loop, linking our past to a future that feels authentic and exciting in equal measure.



## **Appropriate Growth**

Well managed development relies on the best available social and physical infrastructure and services.

Appropriate growth supports residents, farmers, businesses, community organisations and the many visitors central to job creation and our economic destiny.

For the Peramangk,  
Mount Compass  
is two hours' walk  
from Kuitpo; the  
same distance from  
Willunga for the  
Kurna; and the  
same again for the  
Ngarrindjeri from  
Hindmarsh River.

**KAURNA-PERAMANGK ELDER**







# Embracing nature and new energy

**Every year since 2000 has been warmer than the hottest years last century. In Alexandrina during this time, days hotter than 35°C increased by nearly a third, while rainfall decreased by five percent.**

In 2040 it is even hotter and drier. Things are projected to worsen, long before they get better, with emissions heating our planet and bringing more fires, flooding, erosion, drought and storm events than ever before. In many Australian cities, the urban heat island effect is having a dramatic impact on our most vulnerable people. Fortunately, Alexandrina is now one of the first local government areas in the nation to emit less carbon than we capture and store in our natural systems (not everyone believed we could be 'carbon negative'). Our strong advocacy for fair use of water in the Murray-Darling system has ensured the Murray Mouth, Coorong and lakes Alexandrina and Albert have retained their status as wetlands of international significance. These places continue to be cooling refuges for native fish, plants and the waterfowl and migratory waders that still attract bird-lovers from all over the world.

**We committed to act in 2019. Alexandrina was one of the councils to declare a Climate Emergency. We worked hard to transform our approach to power generation and use, including the energy required to support our way of life.**



Blues Restaurant, Middleton

In 2020, most of our emissions came from electricity generation, transport, street lighting and agriculture. In the 2020s and 2030s, the acceleration in use of renewable energy, electric and hydrogen-power for cars and buses made a difference. It's now also so natural to 'telecommute', with video conferencing the main medium of engagement for our knowledge economy. Our work to integrate cycling, walking and other forms of active transport has turned our fortunes around and had a measurable influence on the way we feel in body and mind. The leadership of Alexandrina's many farming communities are often heard in conversations about the future of regenerative agriculture and how it has benefited our communities through carbon storage and increased productivity.



## Communities re-energised

In 2040, a bird's-eye view of Alexandrina now reveals three times the number of photovoltaic panels glinting in the sunlight than two decades ago. We have benefitted from exploring biofuel, hydrogen and waste-to-energy projects near our world-class population centres.

Renewable energy generation feeds into electricity microgrids and the national network. Virtual solar power plants and batteries at hundreds of households dramatically reduce energy costs and stabilise power infrastructure; they have even empowered residents with solar and batteries to share energy with neighbours or others in need.

Responsive energy systems connect electrified transport to charging stations. The updated fleet of Council vehicles have driven this renewal and catalysed opportunities for the shuttle buses and emission-free transport that so many people dreamt about years ago. It's now quite literally a buzz to have scooters and e-bikes, buggies and other mobility vehicles traversing our renowned network of well-maintained trails and footpaths. ➤



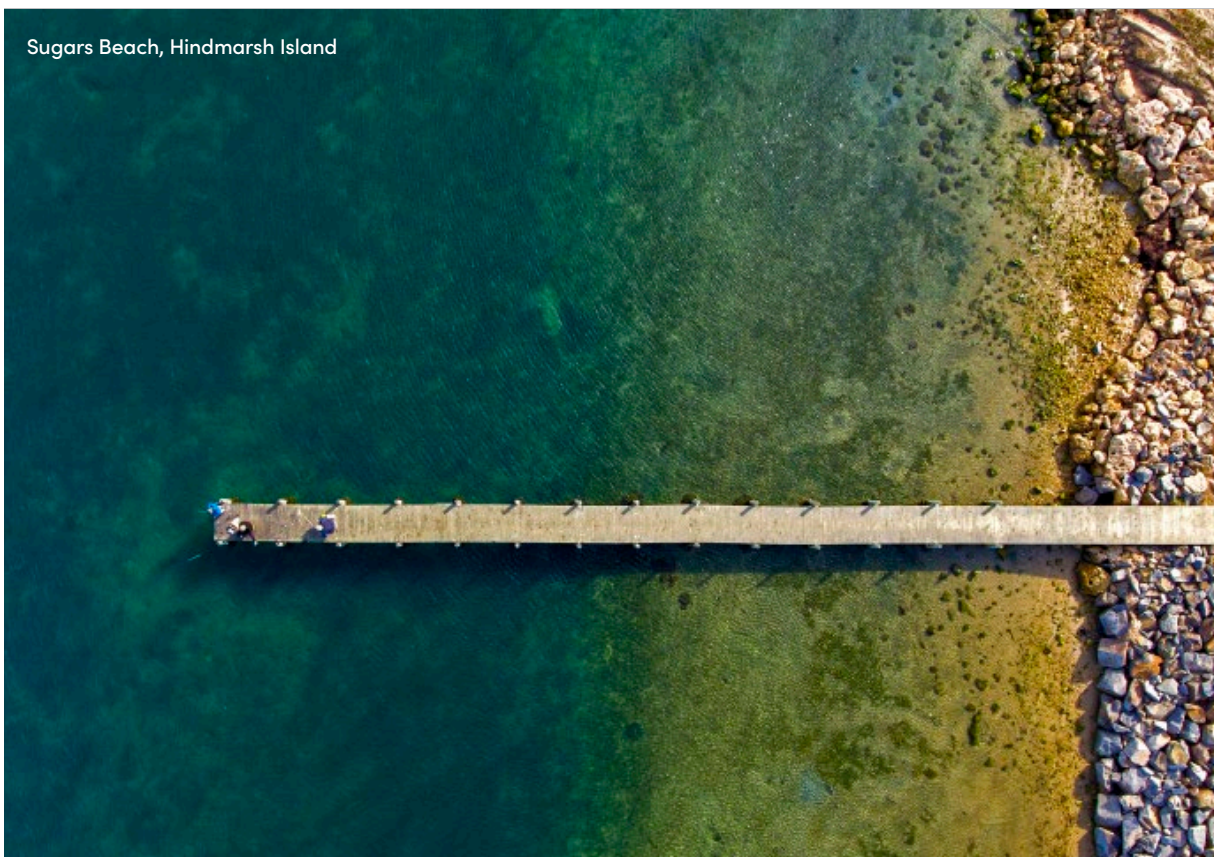
## Climate Response

Climate Change is the issue of greatest concern to the people of Alexandrina. Increasingly frequent adverse events, the fragility of our ecosystems and the security of our water supplies led to our Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

In 20 years, what will be important to me is a walkable, liveable, vibrant and accessible environment and community. We will be responding to climate change and its effects.

GOOLWA LOCAL

Sugars Beach, Hindmarsh Island





Waterbird, Lake Alexandrina

### Greener towns and developments

In 2020, we encouraged the development and construction of low-footprint, water-sensitive dwellings, green back yards and community gardens and verges. Now we can see a mix of housing options in our population centres that was almost non-existent twenty years ago. For every new development we plumbed in world-class stormwater and wastewater systems, networked to wetlands that are recreational and community gathering points. Every home is digitally connected and much more future focused than we ever imagined. The streets of every town, from Port Elliot in the west, to Langhorne Creek in the east and Woodchester in the north, benefit from shady trees and enjoy the cooling effect of parks, verges, gardens and buildings covered in greenery.

In 2040, we all acknowledge that our natural areas have been vital in our changing climate. We took the responsibility to preserve and improve the native vegetation in our district that is a vital refuge for native animals, including numerous species that were at real risk of extinction. Our dunes and beaches are home to so many of the creatures that delight locals and visitors young and old. They also provide us with vital protection as sea levels continue to rise. The wetlands and lakes about Clayton Bay and Milang continue to cool breezes that revive plains, valleys and parklands across the region.

We are now also more responsive to the unique weather patterns of our inland towns and places and considered this in our planning and programs, including festivals and other recreational events and competitions in places like Mount Compass and Currency Creek that also celebrate their connection to our natural world.

### The circular economy goes on

In partnership with other councils on the Fleurieu, waste volumes to landfill have been dramatically reduced. We increased our recycling, continuing the improvements we saw in the early 2020s. We moved away from wasteful behaviours and our recycling now happens much closer to home. We have China and other nations to thank for this; it was their refusal to process hard-to-recycle materials in 2019 that jump-started our circular economy.



Single-use plastics have been banned in South Australia for almost twenty years, though we needed a local revolution in our own ways of life to phase out non-compostable plastics. Some of our villages have brought what we now call 'resource' management to a single street or premises and now proudly operate upcycling facilities and social enterprises run by local volunteers and employees. Shops in our main streets sell these products and replenish the virtuous spending cycle with in-store resource collection points.

Local governments across South Australia signed up to a 'buy it back' program for recycled products twenty years ago. This provided Alexandrina with the chance to take the lead. Strong community support for better waste storage, processing, reuse and recycling brought people together. This collaborative enterprise brought industry, community organisations and local government together, transforming waste into new products, including materials for making roads, pathways, or seats; mulch and compost for farming and gardens; and even some of the waste-to-energy projects that showed such early promise.

It is hard to remember when we didn't have our blossoming network of community gardens, orchards and shared farming plots. These bustling wellbeing hubs nourish close relationships between neighbours, even as our population grows. This has improved our social interaction and vitally cut down on the transport and packaging associated with many commercially available foods, especially when it comes to fruit, vegetables and herbs (which we now also support with revolutionary approaches to sustainable packaging and transport).



#### Environmental Innovation

It is clear that we can go well beyond the management of waste, water and energy and extend to circular resource systems, regenerative farming, aquaculture and nature-based recreation and ecotourism.

I love connection to the local Indigenous people and celebration of art and community connection.

GOOLWA LOCAL



The Goolwa Health Hub, Goolwa

# Celebrating our people and places

**Everyone loves the rural feel and friendliness of Alexandrina, so back in 2020 it was important we were serious about the potential impacts of growth. Being able to live, learn and work locally is important for so many in our community, regardless of age or location.**

The world continues to change at such a dramatic pace, so it is also clear that we need to keep modernising. We will continue to do more to develop, promote and support local learning and business opportunities. This is a never-ending and always-rewarding process, one we recognised long enough ago to plan for change.

## **Planning towns, protecting nature**

Population growth presented opportunities to expand our open space and infrastructure network in ways that added value to our existing communities. Our world-class village innovation plans were powered by local pride and gave us the confidence to make and back big decisions when it mattered. We listened when our communities told us how much the buildings, streets and industries of the past meant for the character of our future. This builds on the legacy of Cittaslow Goolwa and other community-led initiatives to preserve and celebrate our towns and hinterlands.

We sensibly consolidated growth in our township centres, including programs to activate underused and empty commercial and community spaces. While areas beyond the fringes of Adelaide have lost much of their best agricultural land to urban development, we safeguarded our farming land with a focus on the growing demand on food production.

Everyone's friendly.  
If you get hurt at the  
skate park, you've  
got someone who  
cares for you...

**MT COMPASS LOCAL**



## **Community Inclusion**

Bringing generations and communities together, welcoming visitors into our region and embracing diversity will support our growing population, stimulate spending and attract investment. Success in community inclusion will be defined by events and gatherings in our villages, beaches, open spaces, community centres and other social hubs.





The Greenman Inn, Ashbourne

We still enjoy and appreciate farmland and wilderness between our special towns and it's clear we made the right decision to retain and enhance these buffers. This is a point of difference on the Peninsula.

### Opportunities for young and old

For many people, Alexandrina is a lifestyle choice. This was as true for our older locals in the 2020s, as it is for the many who call this region home today. We are still the Council of choice for quality places to grow older and we're finding a balance with imaginative approaches across the generations.

In 2040 there are excellent prospects for young people in both our townships and rural areas. We have enjoyed great improvements in recent years, thanks in large measure to investment partnerships in education and research, pathways for employment in care and social services and an expansion of festivals, events and creative initiatives. These efforts have built on the natural advantages of Alexandrina and attracted new people to our region. Young people are better off than twenty years ago, when one in six of our 16-year-olds didn't go to high school and far too many young people needed access to mental health services (much more than in metropolitan Adelaide).

Cultural shifts can take generations to realise, but the signs of this change can be seen everywhere. Our rural centres and towns are known by their given and Aboriginal names. Each place is now more culturally and ethnically diverse than back in 2020, with much more in common with the cities and nations that many of our newer residents once called home.

Thanks to everything activated by A2040, we have met many of the community needs highlighted in the 2020s.

We enjoy better aged care and more flexible independent living opportunities supported by increased health and medical services and facilities. Our more comprehensive community transport options, and social, retail and recreation services and facilities for families have sustained the community through the many years of hard work. This is a place where our elders are at the heart of our social and economic success.

Over the 2020s and 2030s, Alexandrina presented a compelling option for tertiary education providers and research organisations. They delivered on the exciting potential to partner strategically and we have become home to centres of excellence in Indigenous culture, health, wetland ecology, climate research, regenerative agriculture and ecotourism. We also really love our high schools in Goolwa, Mount Compass and Strathalbyn, with so many graduates setting up shop across Alexandrina, often partnering with older volunteers on exciting start-ups and social enterprises. ➤



Ngarrindjeri smoking ceremony, Goolwa

### Vibrant places for lively lifestyles

As well as the extraordinary growth in employment associated with our older community, we found ways to attract younger families and meet demand for places to create and socialise together. Youth forums certainly helped show us how to value and care for our wild and tamed natural places – the surf and turf essential to the active lifestyles that so many of us love.

Feedback 20 years ago also identified that greater intergenerational connection could arise through central community precincts and embracing a vibrant calendar of cultural, artistic and historical celebrations, sporting events and tournaments, markets and festivals.

Our traditional acknowledgment and respect for the custodians whose ancestral lands we call Alexandrina flourished through the 2020s and 30s. It's easy now to recognise the celebration of First Nations' culture and enterprise in our places, events and language. This is a source of pride for all and a talking point for visitors and neighbours alike.

In 2040, we still connect with our heritage in farming dairy and beef cattle, sheep, horses, alpacas, crops, bees, grapes and all of the associated products and our exciting partnerships in Indigenous cuisine have brought so much more to this, including several native plant nurseries.





## Going places

Twenty years ago, anyone entering our district through the gateway township of Mount Compass, or the south coast, hills or Murraylands will have understood our heavy reliance on cars and our road networks.

With the hundreds of thousands of visitors we welcome each year, it's little wonder so many in the community asked not only for well-maintained roads, but also other options for commuting, freight haulage and a far better community transport network, including shuttles and a variety of driverless vehicles. It was important that we responded to these needs.

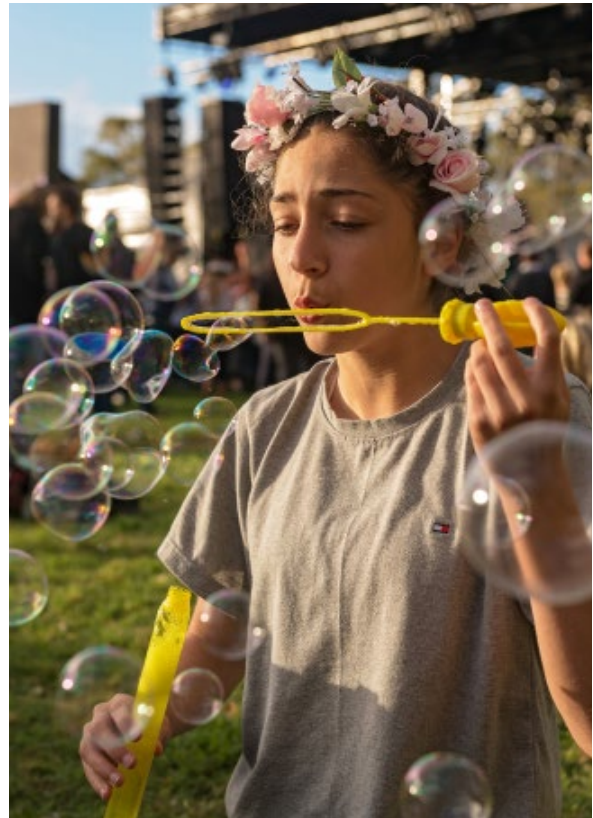
Reliable, affordable options to get around are a basic necessity, not only to shop or go to work or school, but to ensure that everybody, regardless of physical ability, has the opportunity to get out to see other people, or perhaps, like so many tourists who visit, to get away from it all. We had only one percent of Alexandrina locals using public transport back in 2020; now 10 times that number jump on e-buses that ply familiar routes that are also a major drawcard for backpackers and other visitors. Thanks to our passionate advocacy and work with federal and state governments, rail connection to Adelaide has never been busier.

The smarter ways to collect and map data about the movement of people and vehicles across the district that we adopted and applied these last 20 years intelligently informed the way we plan and maintain roads, paths and verges. The internet of things – sensors linked with the technology and skills to interpret what we detect – helped Alexandrina and other government infrastructure investments go much further, so much faster.

We have always been comfortable balancing the old with the new – wooden boats, steam-powered trains and paddle steamers, the wharfs and boardwalks of our waterways are all still special Alexandrina attractions. With imagination, we blended the past with a much more mobile future. Goolwa Airport realised its promise and the visionary runway expansion brought greater numbers of innovators and visitors here in a post-pandemic world. It has also helped enormously with our exports of high-value perishable products, including wild-caught and aquaculture produce.

We need to encourage intergenerational connection and support for those that need it.

STRATHALBYN LOCAL



South Australian Tourism Commission

Handpicked Festival, Langhorne Creek



### Transport Connections

Our community needs a high-quality road, water, rail and trail network that is safe, well maintained and supportive of healthy lifestyles and environmental sustainability. Better transport connections within the region and with major centres and cities like Mount Barker and Adelaide requires focused advocacy, planning and investment.





# What we achieved together

**In 2040, Alexandrina's natural places have absorbed many of the shocks and cumulative challenges of our hotter, drier climate. These systems and community-driven projects continue to support our collective commitment to sustainable living.**

Somehow our villages seem even more themselves than 20 years ago, embracing identity and storytelling through grassroots innovation, art and placemaking. They are more accessible and when things do go wrong; matters are resolved more swiftly than many of us remember.

Our co-investment in social and health care services, including educational and medical facilities and linkages with faster, more efficient telecommunications technology has proven to be fundamental to the prosperity of the district. We celebrate excellence in intergenerational innovation and opportunity for our young people, now attracting them from Adelaide and other regional centres here and across state borders. Our design of services, technology and places for the people with the greatest need has turned out, unsurprisingly, to benefit everyone.

Our creative townships and places reward curiosity; they brim with the opportunity to learn, work and enjoy life. The regional economy supports our way of life because we made sure we were ready for healthy, managed growth that

The Cockle Train runs through my back yard. I love imagining that my future grandchildren could hear its whistle as they paddle in the shallows of Horseshoe Bay.

PORT ELLIOT LOCAL

balanced the necessity for progress, with deep respect for heritage. Our shared determination to strive and thrive got us this far. Now as we look from 2040, we see this is our community's vision brought to life.

**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.**









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