

**Office of the Commissioner for Kangaroo Island  
MEDIA RELEASE**

**4 YEARS ON  
June 2019**

As I enter the final year of my 5 year contract as Commissioner for Kangaroo Island, I think it is important for us to reflect on the past 4 years and consider achievements, and also to turn our minds to those matters that are outstanding or need ongoing work.

Since my appointment, my Office has directly facilitated over \$3M of investment into the Island. This investment has seen funding and in kind support:

- for capacity building programs for local businesses through partnering with my Office and the Kangaroo Island Council in the first instance, and more recently with the KI Industry & Brand Alliance, as the lead for all industry associations on the Island. Federal Government funding has also been secured for various programs and activities;
- for sponsorships for various activities ranging from assisting the local radio station with air conditioning to supporting the Tourism KI/KI Food & Wine Association Awards and the production of a video recording the ANZAC day ceremony and reunion concert for the Parndana Progress Association – Parndana Museum and transport costs for the KI Race Day;
- for research into issues such as the impact of feral pigs, models for visitor information servicing, tourism and hospitality training, support for demonstration sites for various agricultural trials and benchmarking data to support local farmers; and
- contributions towards projects undertaken by industry associations like ensuring our tourism operators were ‘Qantas ready’, supporting the arts exhibitions at the new airport, promoting KI beverages on the mainland and assisting the Kingscote Progress Association consider the value (or not) of a KI “passport”.

We have responded to more than 150 requests for assistance in the 2018/19 financial year – up tremendously from when we first started. We have a good ‘hit rate’ too in getting issues on the table and resolved. All up, since inception, my Office has dealt with hundreds of requests for assistance.

We have connected people to Consumer Affairs, Department of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure, Department of Environment & Water, the Small Business Commissioner, Liquor Licensing, Native Vegetation Council, SA Water, SA Power Networks - the list goes on. We have assisted at a Federal level with information on gaining visas, including significant investor visas and understanding the interaction of state and federal planning roles and grant funding opportunities.

Our work in promoting KI beverages on the mainland, initially with funding support from PIRSA, resulted in 36 listings in metropolitan wine bars, hotels and restaurants. This was a hard nut to crack as competition among wine makers is fierce in this space. The project is now complete with individual businesses taking their own steps to continue the engagement process.

In a recent discussion with The Islander it is clear that the South Australian market has a strong representation of the quality and potential of KI as a wine region. Great support has been offered again from the Stamford Hotel, and a number of upcoming dinners and promotions are planned. The wines continue to be well received in a tight and conservative market. With a number of new venues listing the wines in the coming months, in addition to the planned events, The Islander will continue to have a growing and respected presence in the SA wholesale trade.

Following a meeting with the Student Committee of KICE to discuss their wish for a meeting place, we assisted Junction to secure funding for an upgrade of their Kingscote Centre to be the location for young people to meet. Work has commenced with a spring target for opening. All work is being undertaken in liaison with young people and issues such as opening hours, furniture, decorating, support and other relevant matters are being discussed.

Challenges still lay ahead of us in terms of government decision making processes that reflect community engagement, timelines and developments that align with the image of the Island. The new Planning Code will provide a great opportunity for Islanders to interact with government about what they want for the future. There is still work needed to continue to support government and community service providers addressing issues such as assisting victims of domestic violence, those facing drug and alcohol issues, couch surfing by our young and support for our ageing population.

A major ongoing issue for the Island is the provision of suitable housing for our young, our workers and those ageing in our community. Opportunities have been identified to support community initiatives with governments and to better utilise government housing stock. There is much work needed to be done to secure affordable housing for the future and the Housing Management Plan adopted under my Act will assist with this work.

Congratulations to the memberships of Tourism KI and KI Food & Wine Associations and Business KI and KI Industry Brand Alliance for the recent merger decisions. 4 groups going to 2 will ensure ongoing membership services and sharing of resources. These groups were supported by BBRF funding and my Office to work through the issues.

I recently attended the Regional Strategy consultations and met with the Panel formed by the Government. This Strategy will be important for the future engagement and development of regional communities and I look forward to seeing the final outcome of the state-wide consultations.

One of the biggest challenges of my role and that of my Office is to satisfy everyone – it's just not possible – and often our job is one of connecting people with resources or assistance - not making decisions. Unsurprisingly the community of KI, like most communities, have within it differing views about what works to achieve environmental, social and economic outcomes that are best. The important issue for me is that conversations are occurring and issues are being raised.

I thank the KI community, industry and community-based associations, businesses, past advisory board members, the past and present Council and the many government people that I am interacting with for their support and willingness to raise issues and seek solutions via my Office.

The final year of this role brings with it responsibilities to leave things we have started in a good shape and facilitate discussions and commitments about what might occur post this time. Part of the transition has involved discussions with the Department for Trade, Tourism and Investment (DTTI) regarding partnering with us to align our goals and objectives for growth.

This year will see budget constraints and have us use our small resources, conscious of what we can achieve and what we can't. Partnerships and collaboration will be a feature of the way forward.

Jen and I will be conducting regional update workshops in Kingscote, Parndana, American River and Penneshaw the first week of July to hear from the community, industry associations, and those that have been through (or are completing) the local KI Leadership Program. The workshops will focus on what's been achieved, unfinished business, reasonable expectations for the final 12 months of my role, the adjusted role for Jen supporting myself and also working with DTTI on mutually beneficial outcomes. There will also be updates from other key government agencies that we are working with on the Island.

Kingscote Evening Session – Monday 1 July, 5:30pm – 8pm (sausage sizzle) for a 6pm start at the Kingscote Football Clubrooms

Parndana Evening Session – Tuesday 2 July, 5:30pm – 8pm (sausage sizzle) for 6pm start at the Parndana Football Clubrooms

American River Day Session – Tuesday 2 July, 12pm – 2.30pm (sausage sizzle) at the American River Community Hall

Penneshaw Day Session – Wednesday 3 July, 10am – 12.30pm (light lunch) at the Penneshaw Football Clubrooms

Register via <https://commissionerforkiregionalupdateworkshopseries.eventbrite.com.au>

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of Cate Stanford (currently on contract with DEW in Adelaide addressing climate change issues) and Jen Trethewey. Jen has been with me from the establishment of the office and who will see some substantial changes to her role in supporting the KI community as we work through the ensuing 12 months.

Finally, I look forward to meeting with many of you during the July workshops.

Wendy Campana