

MEDIA RELEASE

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COONALPYN HAS STATE'S BEST MAIN STREET



Coonalpyn's main street with Silo Mural by world renowned artist Guido van Helten

It's official. Coonalpyn has South Australia's best regional main street!

The announcement was made on Thursday night at the 2017 Mainstreet South Australia Awards, when the Coorong District Council took home two awards for the Creating Coonalpyn project. They were:

- Best Regional Mainstreet Award; and
- Outstanding Partnerships Award (with Country Arts South Australia).

Over the past 12 months, the Council has set a national benchmark for arts-led community renewal projects.

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This comes after Creating Coonalpyn garnered worldwide attention as renowned artist Guido van Helten transformed Coonalpyn's towering grain silos, making the town one of the most photographed of rural Australia.

The silo mural, alongside five other community-led arts projects installed along the main street, has revitalised the main street of Coonalpyn.

Coorong District Council Mayor Neville Jaensch was delighted to accept the awards on behalf of Council, the Coonalpyn Arts Group, and Country Arts SA.

"We were up against much larger streets and towns like Rundle Mall and Victor Harbor, so we're batting well above our average," he says.

"Community-led arts projects can have such a positive impact on individuals and communities and strengthen their engagement and resilience and this is exactly what's happened in Coonalpyn.

"Awards like this continue to recognise the amazing work of our community, our strong partnership with Country Arts and the innovative thinking of our staff."

Council's Director of Community and Corporate, Nat Traeger is beyond excited about the campaign's success and said the awards were a win not only for Council, but the Coonalpyn Arts Group and the town's residents.

"This is a hard-working group of community members who put passion and a lot of long hours into the projects, all which has led to exceptional outcomes for their district and its people," Ms Traeger says.

"The Creating Coonalpyn project has really set a standard for other rural councils to think outside the square on how they can bring their towns to life.

The Council acknowledges that while this is good news, the announcement comes at a challenging time for the community.

Vincent Cammell, Council's Chief Executive Officer says, "Last week was the closure of the Coonalpyn BP, and we know this has hit the community hard."

"We are continuing to work with local people, businesses and other stakeholders to ensure there is alternative fuel access and ongoing tourism and economic growth opportunities; because awards like this reiterate the town is still well and truly alive."

Ms Traeger adds, "It's attracting growing interest from visitors across the country and we have new events and installations on their way for Coonalpyn – part of our commitment to keep it firmly on the map, and help grow community pride and resilience."

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The two awards are merely the start of an exciting few months for Council, as it waits to see if the popular campaign continues its run of awards success. This week, the project is up for the state's top tourism accolade at the 2017 South Australian Tourism Awards (to be announced on 10 November).

The project has also been announced as a finalist in the 2017 Ruby Awards, beating a record number of entries to be named as a finalist in the 'Community or Regional Impact under \$100,000' category.

The community is encouraged to vote for the Creating Coonalpyn campaign for the Ruby People's Choice Award, by jumping online here: <http://ruby-awards.madeinkatana.com/vote>.

The winners of the 2017 Ruby Awards will be announced on 2 December 2017.

- ENDS -

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