

Discover Aldinga – Family-focused foodies flock south amid infrastructure expansion

Duplication of Main South Road and Victor Harbor Road is well underway, a \$685 million project of the Fleurieu Connections Alliance, funded by state and federal government, that includes upgrades to improve pedestrian and cyclist accessibility of the picturesque Coast to Vines cycling trail.

This move comes in the nick of time, say Aldinga residents, who have faced growing traffic congestion as the seaside town, long a seasonal tourist destination, increasingly attracts year-round tourist traffic from families fleeing city bustle in favour of the south's more laidback communities.

With Aldinga named TicSA's Top Tourism Town of 2023, this trend looks likely to continue.

Substituting a key roundabout for traffic lights has already eased traffic concerns in Aldinga Bay.

The enchanting region of Aldinga is located on the Fleurieu Peninsula and includes the historic township of Aldinga as well as Port Willunga, Aldinga Beach and Silver Sands, each favoured holiday destinations for the families of Adelaide and beyond.

A leisurely one hour drive from Adelaide, Aldinga is situated along the scenic coastal Route 31, and being home to some of the state's only drive on beaches, offers families a convenient escape from city living simply by packing up the car and hitting the road.

Foodies too flock to such establishments as the iconic Star of Greece restaurant, and Tasting Australia rising star Trinh Richards' highly awarded South-East Asian offering, The Little Rickshaw.

Local business owner, Jojo Krause, owner of Aldinga community hub Goodness Coffee Co. is optimistic about the shifting climate of business and tourism in the region. "We've definitely noticed swelling tourist numbers, and last year it was encouraging to see this continuing through the winter months more than ever...Positioned adjacent to South Road as we are, we also collect trade from those travelling further along the Fleurieu coast as well. It's great to see people recognising the wealth of dining and affordable accommodation options that are an easy drive from the CBD."

Main South Road also provides arterial access to tourist destinations further south, including Victor Harbor and Port Elliot.

Since Aldinga Bay was first settled in the 1840s it's attracted visitors seeking waterfront holiday homes at Port Willunga.

More modest budgets gravitate to the well-situated local caravan parks or the region's many boutique guesthouses and B&Bs.

The region provides a strong offering for families seeking to recharge, while also being fully engaged in nature.

The history and culture of the local indigenous people, the Kaurna Nation, is a key feature of Aldinga, and the area contains many sites of significant cultural importance.

A major drawcard for families carting tents, eskies and surfcraft, Silver Sands Beach and Aldinga Beach are two of only a few beaches in Australia where cars can conveniently drive-on, while multiple beaches in the Aldinga Bay region offer an underwater playground brimming with marine life and a rare reef formation.

For the ultimate family adventure day, kids and adults alike can hire stand-up paddleboards from any of the multiple businesses conveniently dotted along the coast, such as Port Willunga's SUP Down South.

Followed up with a handmade gelato from Sweet Life Gelateria on the way home, it doesn't get any better.

Aldinga has also proven popular with sea changers, drawn by the awe-inspiring coastline and natural beauty of the region's conservation parks.

Respect for the picturesque environs is baked into the local community culture, with a number of grassroots community groups working together to preserve the natural environment.

Volunteer-led organisation Outback Clean-ups Australia, is one group whose members can be found keeping beaches and waterways pristine throughout the year.

Similar initiatives by local businesses show that community conscience is alive and well in Aldinga Bay.

Business owners Elise Riannen and Braden Murphy of the Here's to Strength Wellness Hub recently coordinated a community clean-up day amongst their practitioners and café customers. "Our natural attractions are what keep tourists flocking South, and yield the endless bounties of produce that have helped put the Fleurieu squarely on the culinary map... Giving back to nature isn't just good karma, it's good business, as it means our tourists can experience Aldinga for all of its beauty, leaving feeling calm, collected and empowered!" says Elise.

Aldinga is also the home of the Aldinga Arts and Eco Village, a community of some 300 people built around a shared commitment to the arts, permaculture and sustainability.

The local food and wine scene is world class, focusing on natural and sustainable means of production, including many certified Organic and Bio Dynamic farms, market gardens, wineries, orchards and dairies.

A stone's throw from the McLaren Vale wine region and the celebrated Willunga Farmers' markets, it's easy to see how Aldinga has planted itself so firmly on the map for both inter- and intra-state holiday makers.