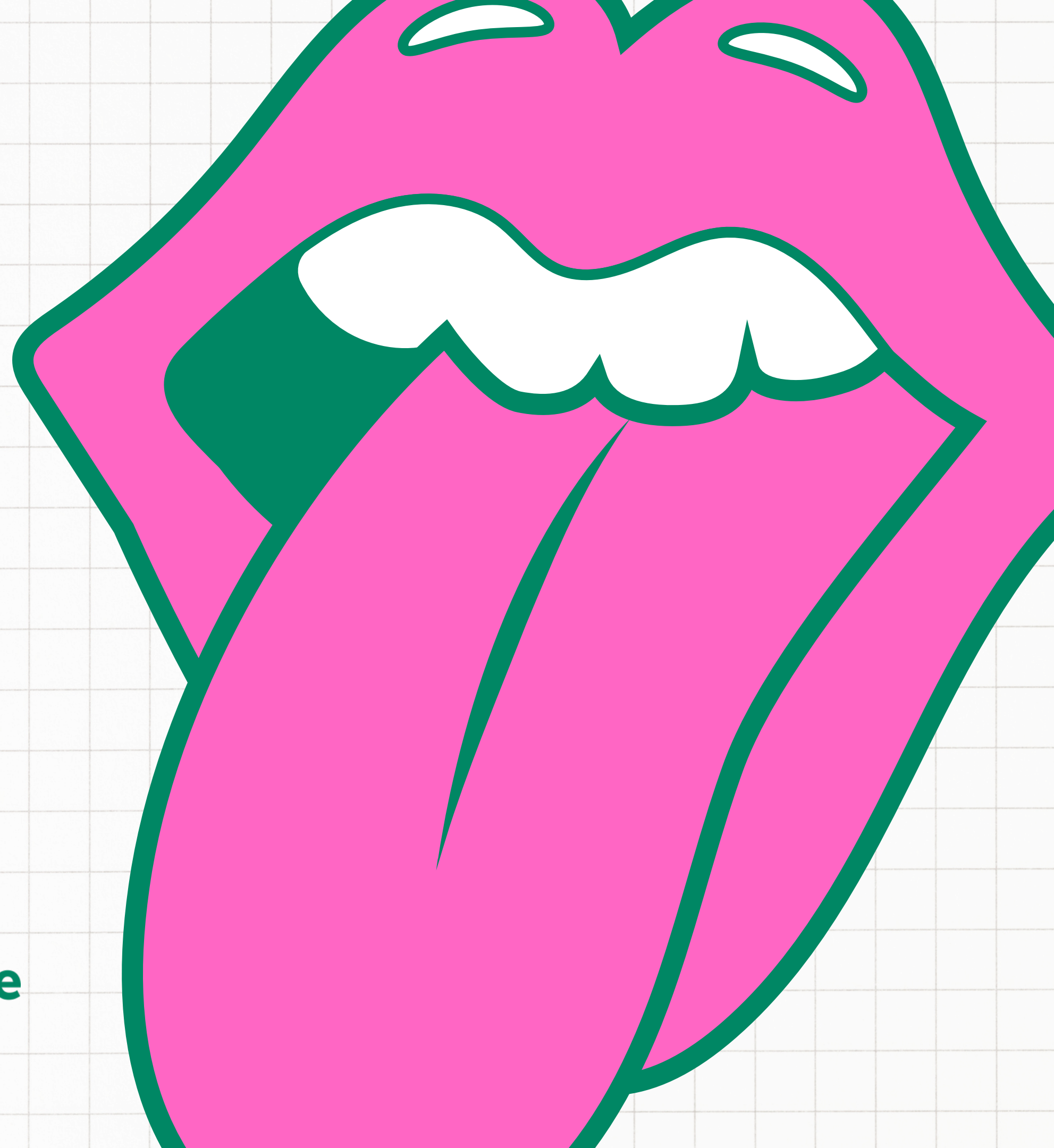


# The Power of Us?

Becky Hirst FRSA

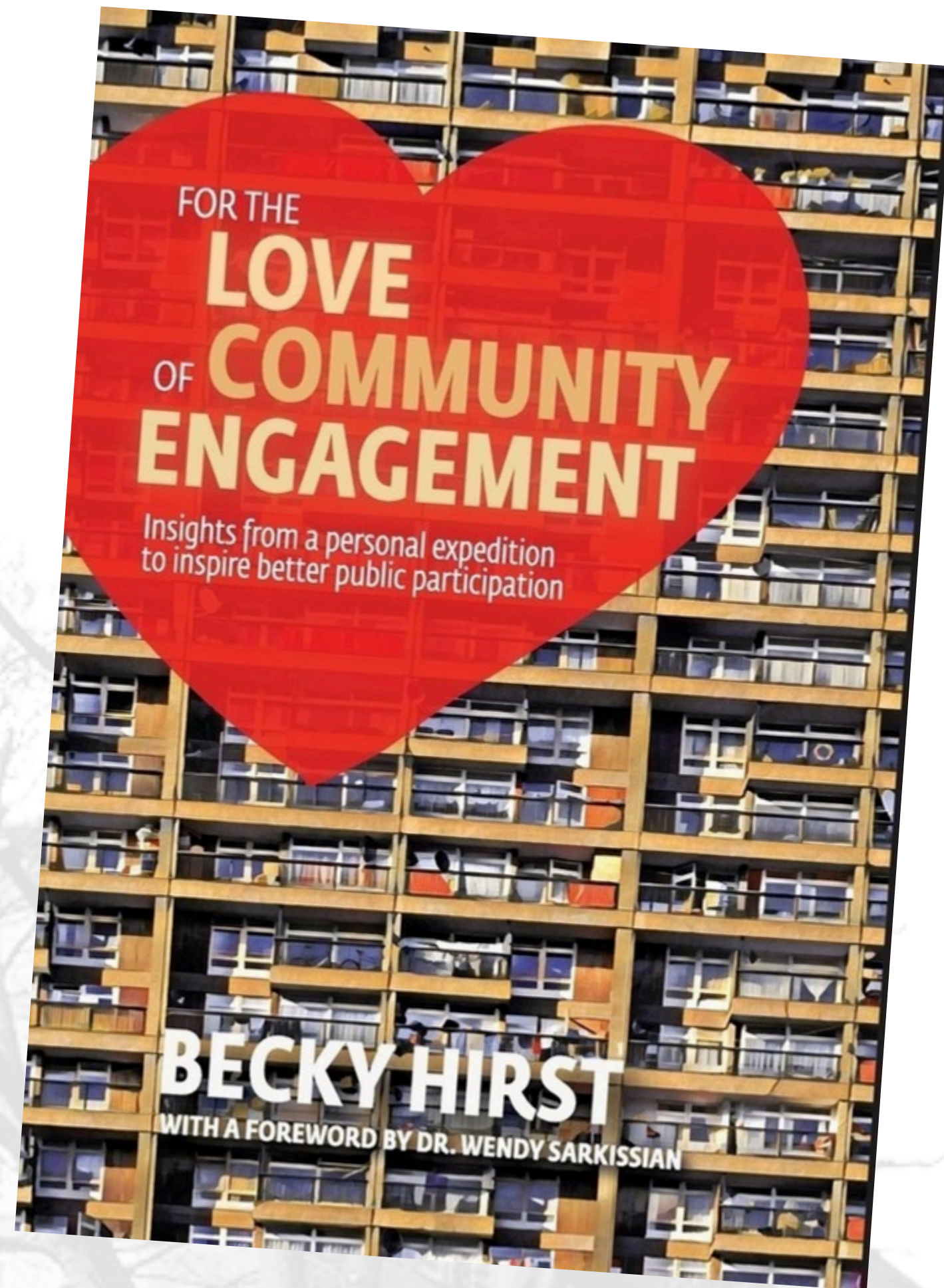






COMMUNITY  
IS  
EVERYTHING





Becky Hirst



@theoriginalbeckyhirst



HeyEngage by Becky Hirst



@heyengage.world

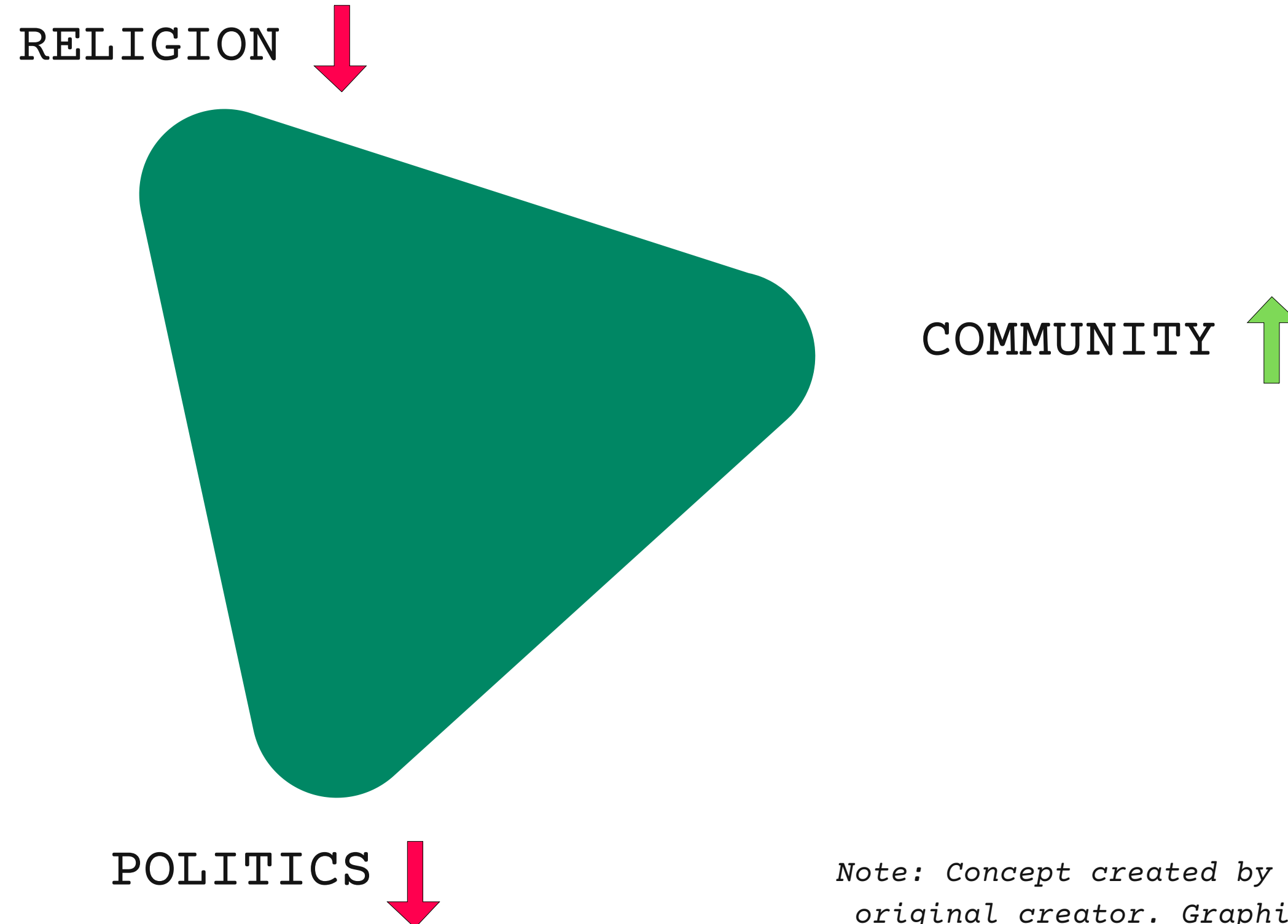




COMMUNITY  
IS  
EVERYTHING



# The Social Triangle™



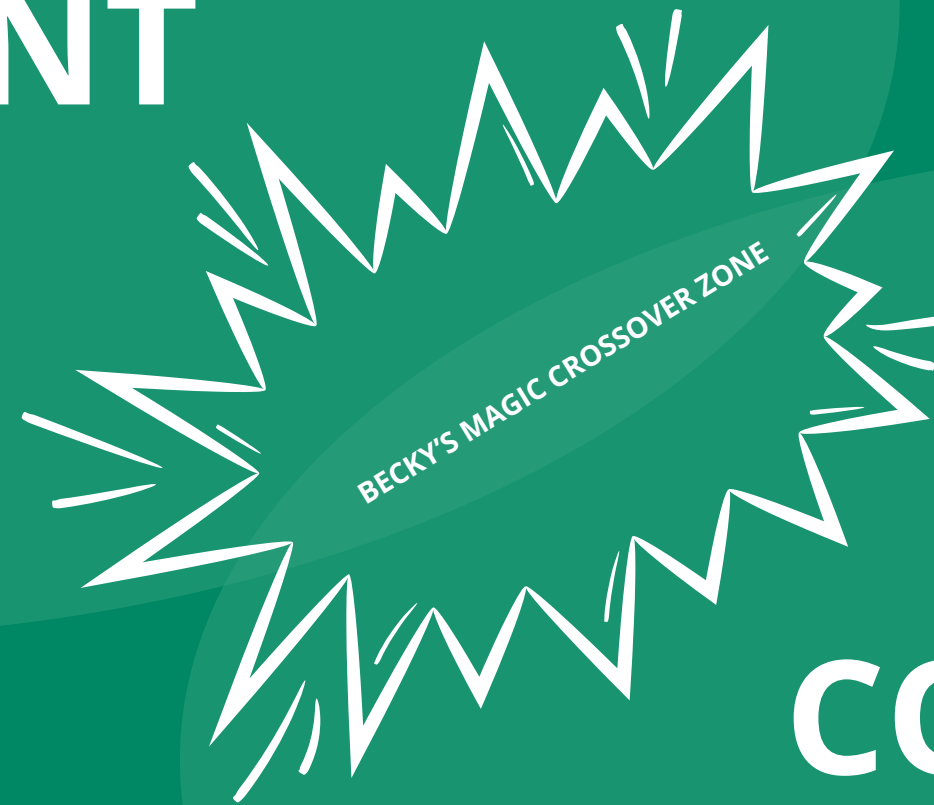
*Note: Concept created by Kylie Cochrane. Graphic not by original creator. Graphic representation developed by Becky Hirst for the purpose of this presentation.*



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP  
COMMUNITY ACTIVISM  
COMMUNITY BUILDING



**COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**



BECKY'S MAGIC CROSSOVER ZONE

**COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**





# COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

COMMUNITIES OF  
PEOPLE WHO SHARE  
THE SAME INTEREST  
OR PASSION

PROFESSIONAL

PERI-URBAN

# COMMUNITY OF PLACE

COMMUNITIES OF PEOPLE  
BROUGHT TOGETHER BY  
GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES.

LOCAL

URBAN

# COMMUNITY OF ACTION

COMMUNITIES OF  
PEOPLE TRYING TO  
BRING ABOUT CHANGE.

ONLINE

RURAL

# COMMUNITY OF CIRCUMSTANCE

PEOPLE BROUGHT TOGETHER  
BY EXTERNAL  
EVENTS/SITUATIONS.

REMOTE

GLOBAL

## TYPES OF COMMUNITY





***‘Community’ is all around us)***



# **SIGNS OF COMMUNITY**















PLEASE DO NOT  
STICK POSTERS  
ON THE  
OUTSIDE OF THIS  
BOARD WITH SELLOTAPE!!

**US**  
UPSTAGERS PRESENTS  
A Geoff Bamber comedy

# Flat S



Upton St Leonards Village  
Thurs 31<sup>st</sup> July / Fri 1<sup>st</sup> & Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug  
Bar 6.45pm • Curtain 7.30pm

Tickets: £12  
Go to [www.ticketsource.co.uk/theupstagers](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/theupstagers)  
...plus some limited availability at the door!



# FOUND DOG



Found 6/1/17  
Taken to Morris County Dog Shelter  
Where:

Rescue: grey and white male pit mix with  
green harness and no tags, no chip



Bacon, potato + leek soup 15.7.24  
inc. cream

chicken noodle soup 15.7.24

chicken noodle soup 15.7.24









PICK UP YOUR DOG SHIT 😊

THIS IS A SHARP



**IF  
“COMMUNITY”  
WAS A VERB...**



**You community**

**I community**



**We all community together!**



**THE POWER OF US...**

**What even is  
'Collective Potential'?!**



# “Collective”

*adjective*

done by people acting as a group.

"a collective protest"

*noun*

noun: collective; plural noun: collectives

A herd of cows.  
A gang of robbers.  
A band of musicians.  
A kindle of kittens.  
A litter of puppies.  
A herd of cattle.  
A nest of rumours.  
A bed of clams.  
Or...



A group  
of people



**Together,  
we can do  
more**



# **WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE SA ALGAL BLOOM CRISIS?**

**“The Power of Us?”**







A BIG THREAT TO OUR COLLECTIVE POTENTIAL...

# LEADERSHIP ARRROGANCE



**Late February 2025**

Scientists detected unusual nutrient levels and minor algal patches near the Coorong, hinting at early signs of a bloom.

**Early March 2025**

The algal bloom expanded significantly near the Coorong, leading scientists to formally alert the South Australian government.

**Late April to Early May 2025**

The bloom spread to Kangaroo Island and metropolitan Adelaide beaches. Community theories, like the desalination plant and foreign ship rumours, started circulating widely.

**Early May 2025:**

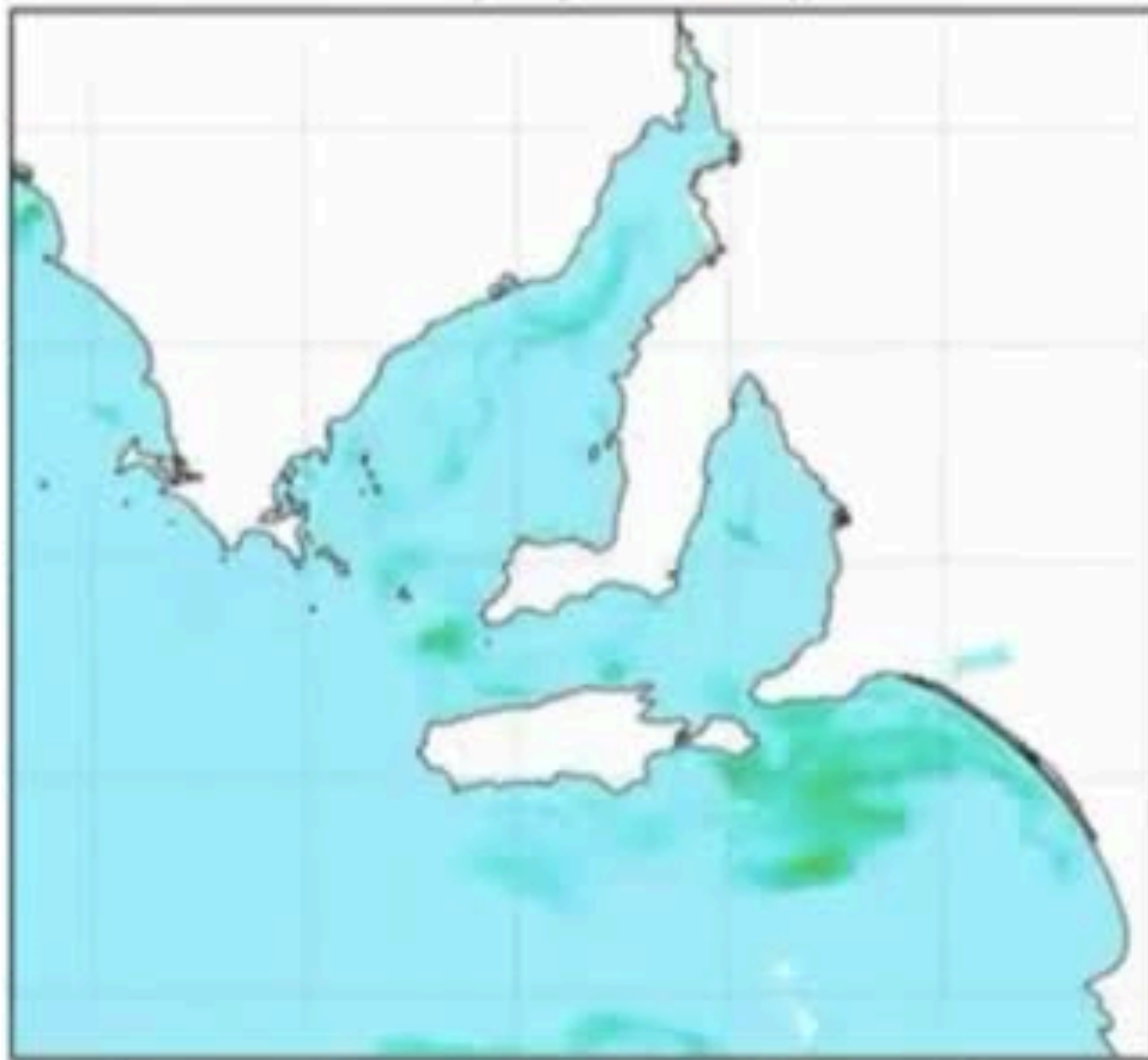
The South Australian government made its first public announcement about the algal bloom, informing and advising the public.

**Mid-May 2025:**

A shark attack occurred at Port Noarlunga on May 15, and a large shark was spotted in the Aldinga shallows earlier that spring, adding to public concern.

**Late May 2025:**


The federal Environment Minister visited South Australia and pledged federal support for dealing with the crisis.











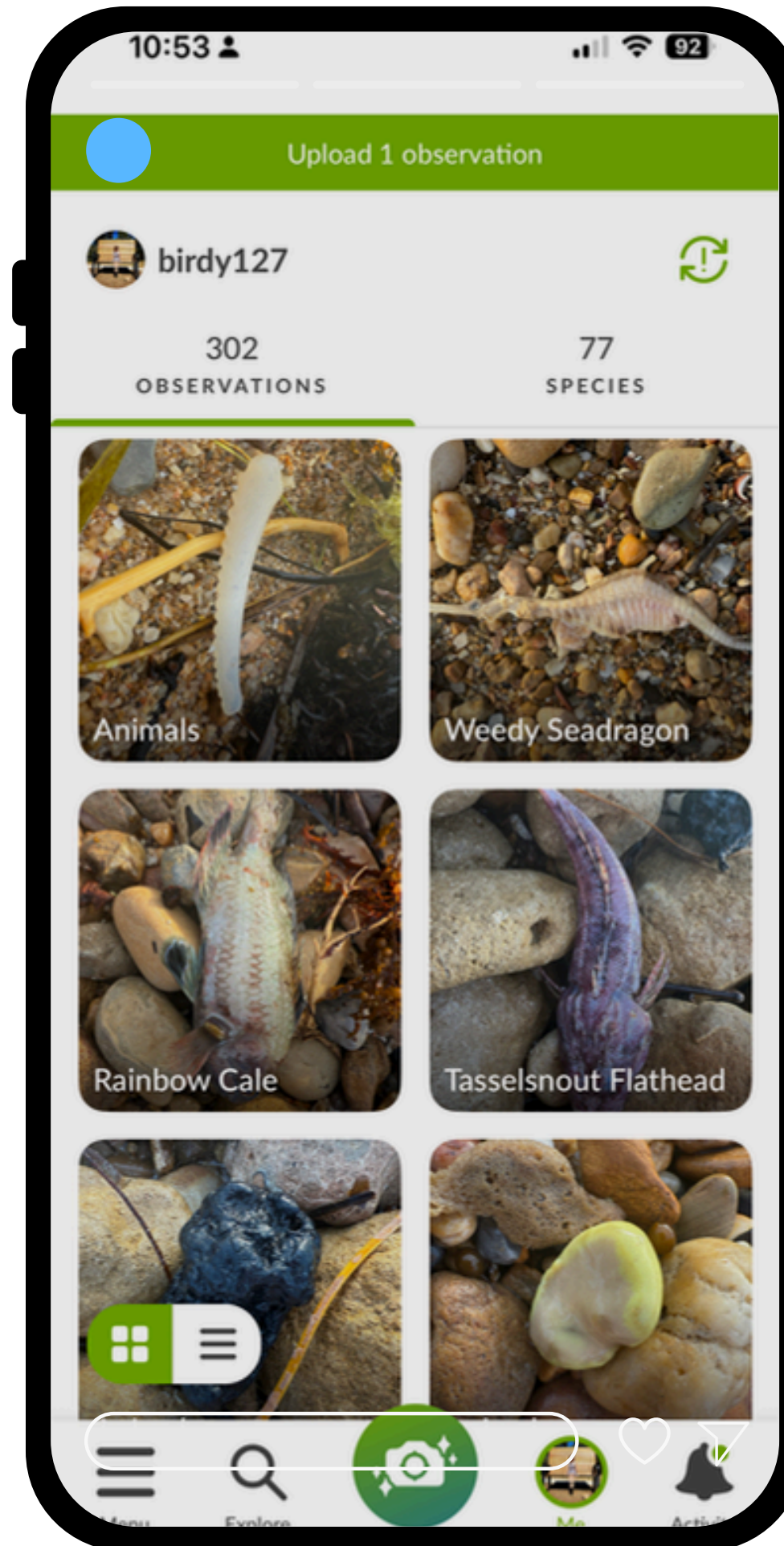
**When our political leaders believe they already hold all the answers, community engagement becomes a box-ticking exercise instead of a very valuable pathway to insight.**



## South Australians urged to contribute as citizen scientists amid algal bloom 'devastation'

South Australians are being urged to upload pictures of any dead marine life they encounter.

South Australians logged over 12,000 observations on iNaturalist, documenting 430 marine species and contributing to a major citizen science effort.





# What was missing?

- **Timely information**
- **Trustworthy information**
- **A sense of urgency**
- **And a active role for the community (beyond logging what they saw on iNaturalist)**







**HEY SOUTH  
AUSTRALIA**







**August-September 2025**

The South Australian government held public information sessions in Adelaide and coastal towns to update and advise the community.













# Observations

- **Bewilderment and losing hope**
- **Loss of community optimism**
- **Overwhelm**
- **Direct connection between community and scientists**
- **The power of us - in causing destruction**



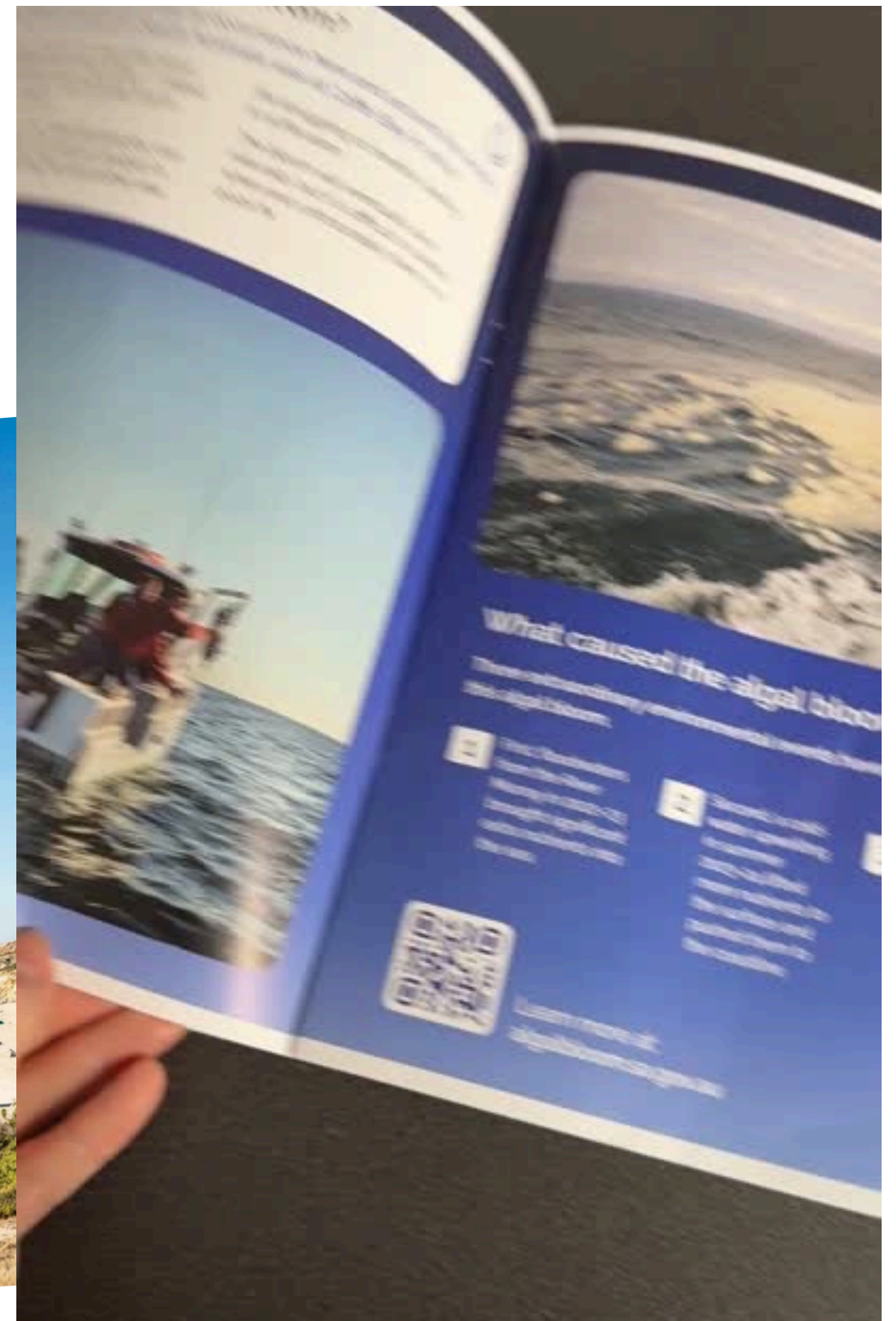
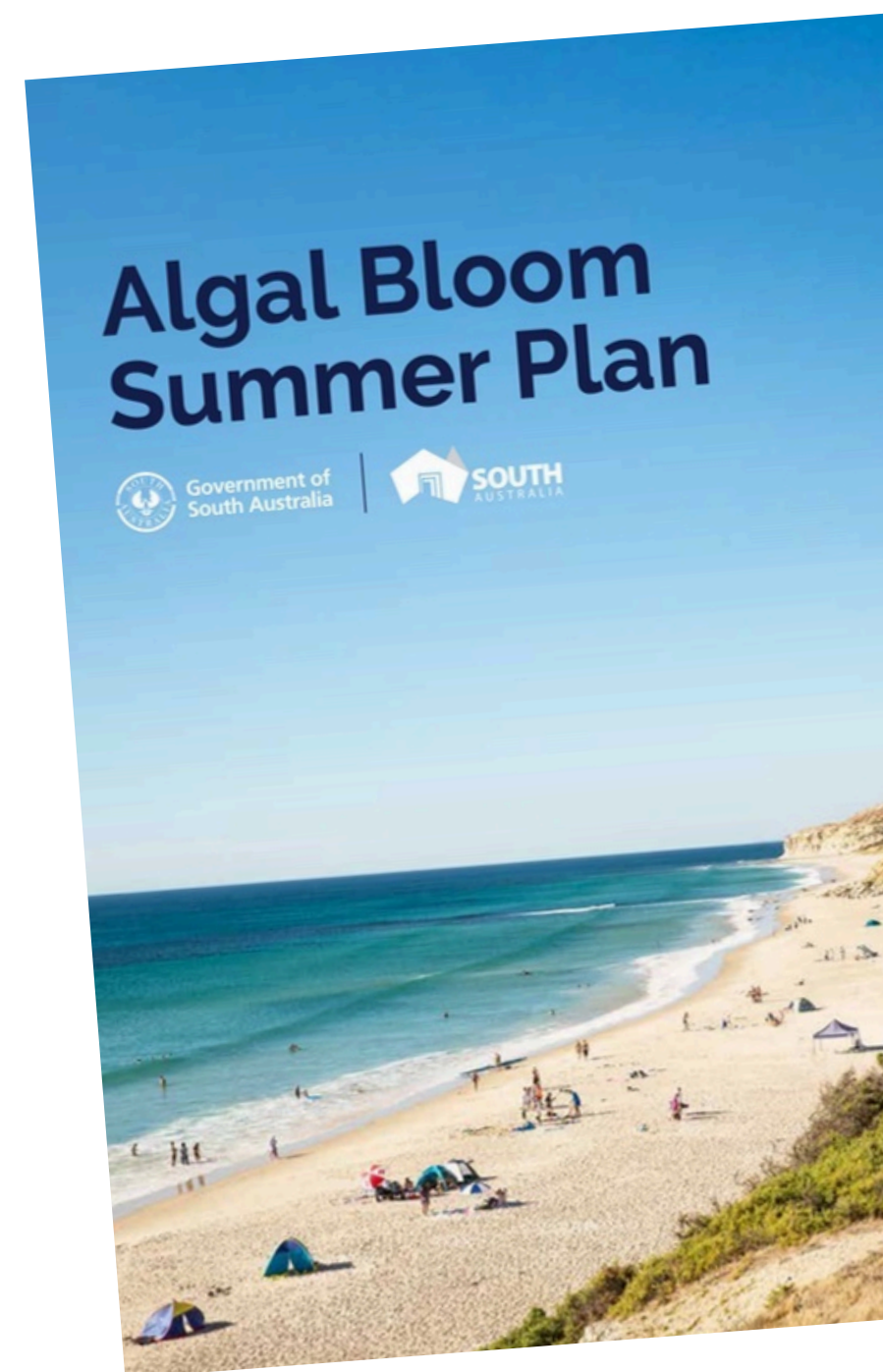


**October 2025**

The government announced its "Summer Plan," a \$102.5 million initiative focusing on environmental restoration, support for coastal communities, and beach safety measures.

AND

12-page full colour brochure distributed widely across SA coastal communities...





WHO THE PREMIER THINKS HE IS



WHO THE PREMIER THINKS  
THE COMMUNITY ARE





I've just come down to the beach





and I think this is a really



**THE POWER OF US**



# Advancing science and protecting our environment

South Australia has some of the most beautiful and unique marine environments in the world. The State and Federal governments are investing more than \$37 million to protect our environment for the long term and support vital research to monitor and understand algal blooms.

## Investing in our natural environment

\$20.6m

### Large-scale shellfish reef restoration

Constructing new limestone native shellfish reefs along the coast. When placed in our gulfs, these reefs create an environment where native oysters can grow into a natural reef.

### Seagrass and blue carbon restoration

Undertaking seagrass and coastal wetland restoration in the Gulf St Vincent and Coorong. Seagrass helps filter excess nutrients from the water and supports bacteria that naturally limit algal growth improving overall water quality.

### Community shellfish reef restoration

Using recycled oyster shells to create additional community shellfish reefs – bringing the total number to 25 projects around the state.



### Threatened and vulnerable marine species breeding

A targeted breeding, conservation and fish stocking program for vulnerable and threatened species impacted by the algal bloom.



# **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS A LEADERSHIP MINDSET**

**IT IS NOT JUST SOMETHING  
TO TICK OFF A TO DO LIST**



LET'S STOP PUTTING

POLITICIANS  
ON  
PEDESTALS



**WE ARE ALL EXPERTS OF OUR  
OWN LIVED EXPERIENCE**

**(AS ARE THE PEOPLE, GROUPS &  
COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH)**



**“HAVE YOUR SAY”**



# IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

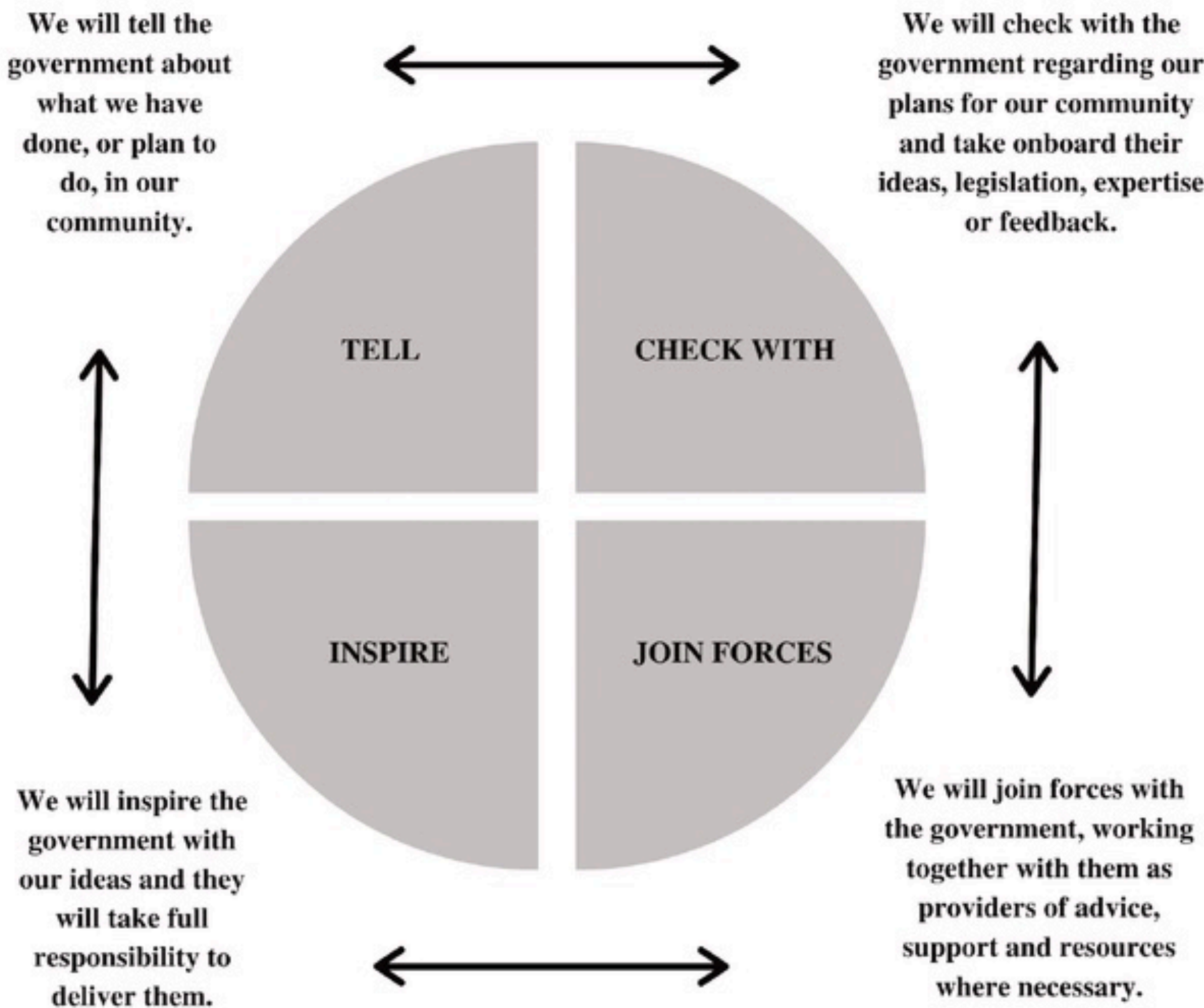
INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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# A Circle of Public-Initiated Participation:

What if the community became the decision makers?

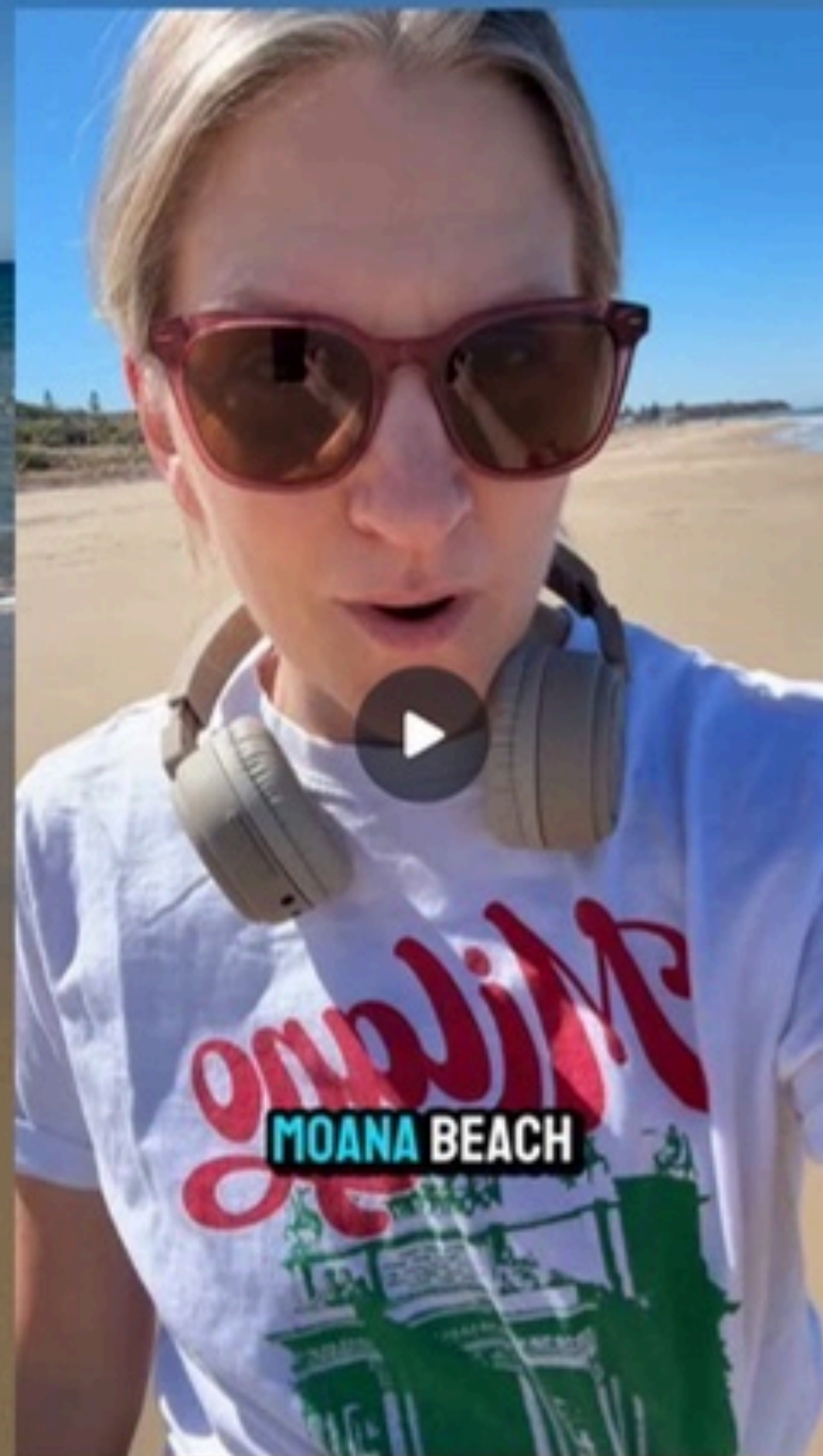
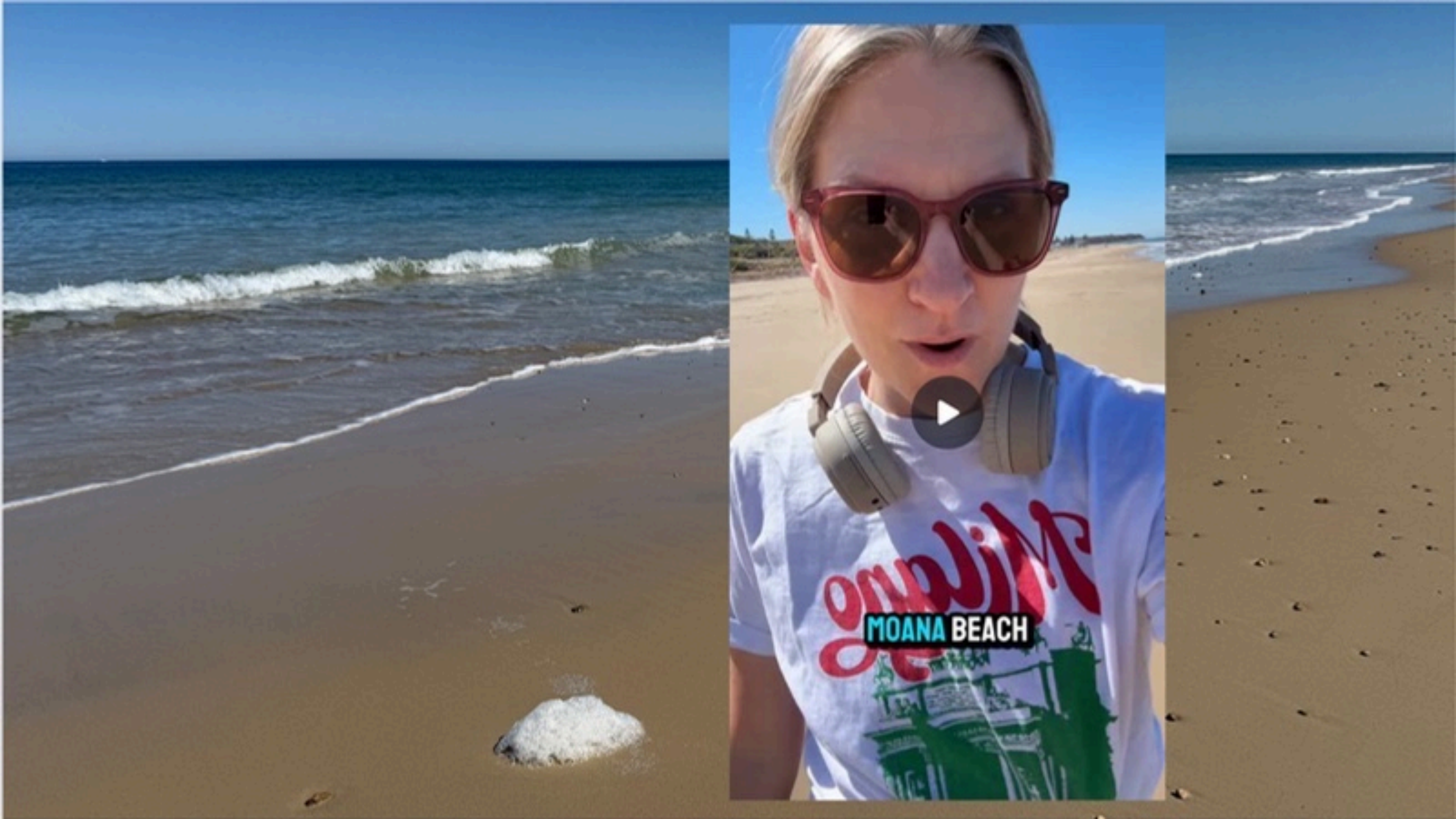


*All parts of the circle are equally weighted acknowledging that sometimes communities take the lead in making decisions; sometimes there is joint decision-making; and sometimes government is empowered by communities to make the final decisions.*

## CIRCLE OF PUBLIC-INITIATED PARTICIPATION (PIP)

*For the Love of Community Engagement,  
Becky Hirst, 2021*











# **THE POWER OF US...**

- **How we vote**
- **How we influence each other**
- **How we communicate with each other**
- **How we interact with the world around us**
- **How we speak up for those/things that can't**
- **How we get involved in identifying solutions**
- **How we get involved in implementing solutions**



**WE, THE COMMUNITY,  
HOLD *ALL* THE POWER**

***(and don't let anyone tell you otherwise)***