

## **BLANCHETOWN HUB TO OPEN TWO DAYS PER WEEK FOLLOWING COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

The Mid Murray Council has announced a change in the opening hours of the Blanchetown Community Hub, moving to two days a week from 21 July. This change will help balance ongoing community needs, while also supporting Council's goals to create budget efficiencies and savings across all areas of business.

The hub, managed by Council staff, offers a welcoming space for locals and visitors to connect with various resources, information and services - including Council programs, public library, visitor information outlet and a Centrelink access point.

Previously open for four hours each weekday, access hours were reduced down to four hours on only one day per week during April to June this year (as a result of COVID-19 restrictions). Council has also undertaken a review of the past three years of the hub's operations, during which it identified that reducing hours on a permanent basis had the potential for significant cost savings, while still being able to service the community.

**Now, after significant community consultation, a preference from local people and Council has been adopted, whereby the hub will remain open for two days per week.**

From 21 July 2020, the Blanchetown Hub will be open during the following hours:

- Tuesdays, 10am to 2pm
- Thursdays, 10am to 2pm

Mayor Dave Burgess said the two opening days would provide sufficient access for locals and visitors needing to use the facility.

"We always need to be cognisant of our responsibility to manage Council budgets effectively, and unfortunately this does mean looking at ways to reduce costs where possible," Mayor Burgess says.

"We acknowledge that the Blanchetown Hub is a vital space for the local community, but reducing opening hours will lead to significant savings."

"During COVID-19, hours were reduced due to lack of demand, and we have not seen a significant growth since. Following public consultation, we have made the decision to continue to operate the Hub, but with revised opening hours to factor in the appropriate demand."

The public consultation on changes to opening hours ran from 15 May to 10 June, and was communicated via public notices in the Murray Pioneer, a letter mailout to 220 local residents, flyers across local businesses in Blanchetown and individual phone calls to key community groups. On analysing responses, Council made the decision to reduce opening hours to two days a week for four hours, providing an annual saving of almost \$26,000.

Council will continue to monitor usage over the next 12 months to ensure delivery meets demand and will consider amending opening hours if required.

- ENDS -

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Director, Community Services Amy Loechel

P: [postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au](mailto:postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au) | P: (08) 8569 0100