

22 August 2018

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **COUNCIL SUPPORTS MURRAY COD RESTOCK**

The Mid Murray Council has backed a call for funding to ensure the planned release of 200,000 Murray Cod fingerlings into the Murray River goes ahead next year - a move which will rejuvenate local fish stocks.

RecFish SA, the state's peak recreational fishing body, needs State Government funding to continue its Murray Cod Stocking Program into 2019, to ensure sustainable fish stocks along the length of the Murray River. Over the past three years, RecFish SA has already partnered with local communities to release 288,000 Murray Cod into the River. However, the program is under threat due to a lack of funding.

Mid Murray Council will write to the State Government highlighting its support for the continuation of the program and the need for funding to secure the release of the 200,000 fingerlings planned for next year.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess said the project would be a boost for tourism, recreation and the Murray River environment.

"Our Council has the longest stretch of Murray River running through our district (when compared to other Councils). This 220-kilometre stretch of riverfront, makes us the home of fishing along SA's mighty Murray," Mayor Burgess says.

"Fishing is a key recreational pastime for both locals and visitors – it's at the heart of our culture and it's a drawcard for tourists.

"This initiative would be a win for the environment and our local economy. Healthy fish stocks mean a healthy Murray, which safeguards our river environment for enjoyment by fishers for many years to come."

The popularity of the fishing in the region was highlighted at SA's newest fishing contest, the Bowhill Kayak Fishing Competition held in July, which attracted anglers from across the country. The event was so successful that organisers have already set a date for 2019, and registrations from across Australia have started to flow in.

"The fishing culture means a lot to our district, and we're supporting the efforts of RecFish SA to keep it sustainable for the long term," Mayor Burgess says.

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