

## MEDIA STATEMENT

# MORGAN BOAT RAMP TO REMAIN OPEN FOR SUMMER

Further upgrades to improve the gradient of the Morgan Boat Ramp and install new pontoons will be carried out after the peak summer season to minimise disruption to river users.

The pontoons are the next major step in the Mid Murray Council's upgrading of the popular Murray River facility. However, due to a number of delays associated with the delivery of the project, including the time taken to receive some State Government approvals for parts of the project, the work was unable to be undertaken as early as Council had hoped.

While the necessary approvals have now been received, the Council has chosen to push back the pontoon and pylon installation until February 2020 at the earliest.

Mayor Dave Burgess said this would ensure access remained open to the boat ramp at the busiest time of year.

"The Morgan Boat Ramp is one of our most popular river access points and it is critical for Council and the community that we are able to maintain that access over the summer period," he says.

"Council remains committed to completing the Morgan Boat Ramp upgrade and delaying the installation of the pontoons will mean it occurs at a quieter time to ensure we're not limiting river users' access when demand is at its highest.

"We want to ensure that Morgan continues to enjoy a vibrant peak season, with both locals and visitors able to experience the recreation opportunities the magnificent Murray River provides."

The project will be modified to include single pontoon units either side of the ramp, which will reduce the costs associated with the pylon installation by about \$40,000. The remaining pontoon units that will no longer be required for the revised scope of the Morgan project may be stored for future river projects at other sites, or sold to further reduce project costs.

Following community feedback about the gradient of the ramp, Council has also committed to remediation works to the ramp itself. Improvements to the ramp are estimated to cost between \$70,000 and \$100,000, depending on the scope of works required.

The decision comes after extensive investigations, including an independent inspection by a marine engineering expert, who found the ramp functions well despite its varying gradients and does not require reconstruction.

“While we have assurances from our engineering expert that the ramp is fully-functional as it is, Council has listened to community concerns about the gradient and we believe it’s best that we undertake the further upgrading to deliver improved accessibility,” Mayor Burgess says.

Council recognises the project has taken longer than anticipated, due to a range of factors including design changes, challenges with the ramp installation, delays to the manufacture of the pontoons, required modifications to the pontoons, staff changes and a lengthy State Government approvals process.

“Unfortunately, there have been a number of issues that have compounded to cause delays to this project – including several that were outside the control of Council,” Mayor Burgess says.

“Despite that, we will continue to work towards the completion of the upgrade and look forward to delivering an improved boat ramp facility for Morgan.”

The Morgan Boat Ramp upgrade is one of several major river projects the Council has under construction or has recently completed, including the installation of a variable height adjustable pontoon at Mannum, the Mannum Wharf refurbishment, Darling Wharf rebuild, Hermanns Landing reconstruction and pontoon and the Swan Reach Deep River Mooring project.

“Council has successfully delivered a number of major river projects and, while the delays on the Morgan Boat Ramp are regrettable, it’s important to remember this is only one project that’s part of a bigger picture program of significant works which will substantially enhance our region’s river recreation facilities,” Mayor Burgess says.

Council will continue to update the community on the project’s progress and ensure there is advance notice of any future works or required boat ramp closures to complete the project.

For regular project updates follow the Mid Murray Council on Facebook, or visit our website [www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au](http://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au).

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