

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **NEW COMMITTEE TO GIVE MID MURRAY'S ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY A STRONGER VOICE**

A new advisory committee will bring together members of the Mid Murray Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to give them a stronger voice in shaping the district's future.

The Mid Murray Council is establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee to better engage, collaborate and build stronger relationships with the district's Traditional Custodians.

The new group will play a key role in assisting the Council to implement its first *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* to guide cultural awareness, policy development, activities and initiatives that foster reconciliation and recognise the district's significant cultural heritage.

**Expressions of interest are now open for people who want to join the Mid Murray Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee. It's easy to apply – just complete the online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ATSIAdvisoryCommitteeEOI>, pick up a copy from Council's offices or contact the Council on 8569 0100. Expressions of interest close Friday, 1 April.**

The Mid Murray has a proud and rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and continuing culture, with people connected to several Aboriginal Lands in the district including those of the Nganguraku, Ngarrindjeri, Peramangk, Ngaiawang, Ngadjuri and Ngarkat peoples. Council is encouraging people with connections to any of these lands to apply to join the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee's primary focus will be to work with Council to implement its first *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan*, through developing relationships, researching, consulting with community and preparing a draft plan.

The committee's role will also be to:

- advise Council on local key issues, concerns and priorities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community;
- build strong relationships between Council and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community;
- provide feedback on Council policies, programs and services;
- help identify and remove barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to employment, services, programs and facilities; and
- monitor and provide feedback on Council's progress in implementing the *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan*.

Two elected members and five community members will make up the new committee. Prospective community members should meet the following criteria:

- Representatives from the various Traditional Custodian groups (being Ngarrindjeri, Nganguraku, Ngaiawang, Peramangk, Ngadjuri or Ngarkat) or organisations of the Mid Murray Council area; and/or
- members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community; and/or
- Representatives from community organisations, agencies and service providers that have a focus on the provision of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- have a diverse range of interests and expertise;

- demonstrate capacity to consider the direction of cultural opportunities in a fair and equitable manner;
- be able to work as part of a team; and
- be willing to actively work toward reconciliation.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess said the committee would provide essential cultural knowledge, experience and community connections to assist Council to improve services, policies, accessibility and future opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“Our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has strong connections to Country in Mid Murray across six distinct Aboriginal Lands and we want to ensure we are bringing a range of voices to the table in our future engagement and decision-making,” Mayor Burgess says.

“The Mid Murray’s unique cultural history is an important part of our shared heritage and identity as a district. One of SA’s most significant cultural sites dating back 8,000 years is found in our district at Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park – which shows the significance of our Traditional Custodians’ connection to Country here.

“Council wants to improve the ways we acknowledge, value and celebrate our Traditional Custodians. Establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, building stronger relationships with our Traditional Custodians and developing and implementing Council’s first *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* are all important first steps in that process.

“Our hope is that, with input and oversight from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, we can lay the foundation for future action to deliver tangible and meaningful reconciliation outcomes in our district.

“Council also hopes that in establishing this voice we will build stronger connections with our valued Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and that their support will assist us to ensure our programs, services and other initiatives are culturally appropriate and accessible to all.”

For more information about the *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* process visit <https://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au/community/reconciliation>.

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