

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **NEW MID MURRAY COMPLIANCE OFFICER TO TACKLE RISE IN UNLAWFUL DEVELOPMENT**

The Mid Murray Council will appoint a new Compliance Officer to tackle a rise in illegal development in the district.

The rate of unlawful development has been rising in the area in recent years – with 199 matters currently listed on Council's register.

The new Compliance Officer position was endorsed by Council in May. The full-time role will be in place for at least the next three years and the position will be reviewed annually. It will ensure Council is adequately resourced to identify and respond to development-related compliance issues.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess says the new role will increase Council's focus on development issues, while also freeing up time and resources within the Council's regulatory services unit to target other compliance matters.

"We are concerned at the increasing number of unlawful developments occurring in our district and we want to take steps to reduce this," Mayor Burgess says.

"Our community has also expressed concern about incidents of unapproved developments, and encouraged Council to increase our compliance activities.

"Because of the size and remoteness of our district – and other unique factors including being home to over 2,500 shack sites – there is a possibility that the number is higher than we are currently aware of.

"Unlawful development poses a number of risks such as harm to our environment, including damage to the riverbank and removal of native vegetation, as well as potential danger to our community through unsafe building methods or structures that aren't built to required safety standards.

"Those who don't comply also potentially reduce the quality of development and impact local amenity, and they also fail to pay their fair share of rates for capital improvements, which puts the financial burden on those who respect and comply with regulations."

Council is currently investigating 199 matters of alleged unlawful development, including dwelling additions, sheds, river structures and changes to unauthorised land uses.

The rate of development in the Mid Murray district has also increased, rising by 50% in the past 12 months.

"While we welcome the strong economic growth in our region reflected in the increase in development in our area, this does bring with it some extra challenges," Mayor Burgess says.

"One of those is ensuring that all approved developments are constructed in line with the conditions of approval.

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“Appointing a new Compliance Officer will allow Council to increase its proactive compliance activities, including increasing inspections of approved development applications to make sure they meet those conditions.

“Enhancing our resourcing will also increase Council’s ability to focus on other areas of its regulatory services including rubbish, noise and dust complaints, carparking, dog and cat compliance and land use issues.”

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