

MEDIA RELEASE

LIFEGUARD SHORTAGE MAY KEEP MID MURRAY POOLS CLOSED THIS SUMMER

An urgent recruitment push is under way to secure lifeguards for Mid Murray's pools, with fears the facilities may not be able to open this season, or may open for a shorter period, unless more staff are found soon.

The Mid Murray Council has advertised three times since 13 September 2021 for lifeguards – with only one quality application received. It requires five lifeguards in order to be able to open both the Mannum and Cambrai pools this summer.

The lifeguard roles are often filled by local young people, but a recent legislative change has raised the minimum age for lifeguards from 16 to 18. This change has meant at least one previous lifeguard is no longer able to continue employment in the role.

In addition to traditional recruitment methods, Council staff have contacted local schools, advertised on local community Facebook pages and asked extensively among their local contacts – but to no avail.

Both pools are planned to open for their usual season from 1 December 2021 through to 31 March 2022, with hours of operation from 3:30-7:30pm, seven days a week (on days when the temperature is above 25C only, and closed Christmas Day and Boxing Day). Council requires a minimum of two lifeguards at each pool and one to go between the facilities. If it can't find enough staff, Council may need to consider closing one of the pools and reducing the length of the season.

Successful candidates don't need to have lifeguard experience – the Council will provide lifeguard training and assist candidates to gain the required qualifications for the positions. Those looking to apply just need to be motivated, have a high level of customer service skills, be responsible, able to work independently and be flexible and willing to be rostered for shift work over a seven-day roster.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess said Council was actively trying to fill the roles to ensure the community could retain access to both pools this summer.

"Our staff have made a substantial effort to recruit lifeguards, but this has been particularly difficult this season with the change to the minimum age requirement," Mayor Burgess says.

"These roles are usually a great opportunity for casual summer work, which is often ideal for our young people. However, it also means that lifeguards from previous seasons have often moved onto more longer-term or permanent careers and are no longer available.

"Our pools are an important place for our community to get together and socialise, to enjoy active, family-friendly fun and to keep fit and healthy, while also learning important water safety skills. We don't want our pools to close this summer – or to have to operate on a restricted schedule – so we're really hoping our community can help us find lifeguards to fill these spots.

“If you’re looking for a rewarding job this summer – or if you know someone who might be the right fit – please contact one of our offices as soon as possible. The sooner we fill these roles, the sooner we can give our community certainty that they can enjoy our pool facilities this summer.”

For more information, or to apply, visit <https://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au/council/employment/pool-lifeguards-and-operators-mannum-and-cambrai>.

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