

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **BIG PLANS FOR A BRIGHT MID MURRAY FUTURE**

Expanding the Mid Murray region's economy, growing the local tourism industry and reducing our impact on the environment are at the heart of an ambitious plan for a bigger and brighter future for the Mid Murray region.

The Mid Murray Council has unveiled its proposed strategic direction for the next four years in its draft *Our Plan 2020-24*. The updated version of the plan follows community consultation in June on the Council's broader vision for the district – and it now includes the key activities Council proposes to help achieve its strategic goals.

The five key themes for the region's future – *Our Lifestyle, Our Business, Our Community, Our Growth* and *Our Environment* – have been broken down into focus areas and goals. The second version of the plan now adds the detail, with specific activities and measures to monitor Council's long-term success.

Some of the key activities proposed include:

- Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy, along with initiatives to attract new businesses, skilled workers and regional investment;
- Continue to pursue opportunities to increase Council's efficiency and financial sustainability;
- Create an inclusive community that is welcoming, supportive, engaged and vibrant;
- Advocate key stakeholders for critical infrastructure that supports local and regional industries;
- Grow the region's population by 10%;
- Support local businesses and industries to grow and be sustainable;
- Create a Climate Adaptation Plan and put in place energy efficient measures to help Council become more environmentally sustainable;
- Develop and implement a Tourism Strategy, as well as support regional tourism operators to grow their capacity;
- Create an Indigenous Cultural Heritage Preservation Plan and foster strong relationships and partnerships between Council and traditional land owners;
- Implement best practice water management strategies across the district including reducing the reliance on River Murray water and investing in stormwater harvesting and recycling water in major towns; and
- Identify strategic locations for the expansion of local shack areas to facilitate sustainable growth.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess said the Council now needed to hear whether the community supports the key activities proposed.

"We are grateful for the input provided by our community during Stage 1 of consultation on *Our Plan 2020-24* - but now it's more important than ever that people have their say on how they want Mid Murray to develop and grow.

"The initial draft set out our hopes and aspirations for the district – now we're getting down to the detail by deciding on the actions we'll need to take to achieve those goals.

“The key activities proposed in the draft plan will become the focus of Council’s projects, services and budget over the coming four years, so it is critical that our community supports what we’re planning.

“The draft plan reflects a number of important areas for our district, from supporting continued economic growth and prosperity, to further developing our tourism industry to put Mid Murray on the map and create new business and job opportunities.

“We are also focusing on responsible environmental management and sustainability by recognising the need to reduce our impact on our local environment, cut our dependency on the River Murray for water and adapt to a changing climate so that our region continues to thrive.

“As well, we recognise that our connected community is one of our greatest strengths and we have set out a number of ways in which we plan to continue to build stronger, more resilient local communities to continue to create positive wellbeing outcomes for our residents.”

Mid Murray Chief Executive Officer Ben Scales said the new version of *Our Plan 2020-24* also sets out ways the Council can improve its own operations to continue its drive towards increased sustainability and efficiency.

“We are committed to maximising business efficiency to ensure our ratepayers are getting the best value for money, as well as the most appropriate level of services,” Mr Scales says.

“This focus continues to underpin our future planning, with several key activities proposed to ensure our business model and long-term operations are sustainable including being more efficient and innovative in how we do business, and pursuing more external funding opportunities.

“The community has already told us that it supports our long-term goals set out in *Our Plan 2020-24*, but now we need them to tell us whether they believe the key activities we’ve outlined are the best way forward towards achieving those goals.

“This second stage of consultation is critically important because it’s the final chance for Mid Murray residents and ratepayers to decide the direction their district will take over the next four years. We believe that the actions in this plan will put Mid Murray on the path towards a brighter future, with stronger economic prosperity, opportunities for growth, a responsible approach to environmental issues and increased community development and wellbeing.”

Stage 2 of consultation on *Our Plan 2020-24* begins on September 14 and runs until October 9.

Community workshops will be held at Mannum, Cambrai and Morgan, with a meeting also to be held in Adelaide to allow holiday home owners to attend and have input into the plan.

For information, or to have your say through one of our online surveys, visit [www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au](http://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au).

Community feedback will be used to create a final draft plan, which will then be presented to the Council for its consideration and endorsement in November 2020.

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Mid Murray Council Chief Executive Officer Ben Scales  
P: (08) 8569 0100 | E: [postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au](mailto:postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au)