

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW BLANCHETOWN, SWAN REACH PLAYGROUNDS PROVING A HIT FOR MID MURRAY FAMILIES

Two newly upgraded playgrounds have already proven popular for Mid Murray families and visitors alike over the school holidays.

The new facilities located at the repurposed old Blanchetown Oval and at Swan Reach's Len White Reserve have been priority recreational projects for the Mid Murray Council – although their delivery was delayed by the recent River Murray flood.

The **new nature playground at Blanchetown** has attracted lots of attention since its recent opening, with locals and visitors testing out the exciting new area.

The timing couldn't have been better, with the playground's completion marking the first stage of the Mid Murray Council's Blanchetown rejuvenation project and coinciding with the community's flood recovery get together. The works were funded by a \$450,000 grant through the Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program.

Other future stages of the rejuvenation being designed include the creation of an entrance statement and Egerton Street plantings from West Terrace to Meade Street and the Primary School access of Merivale Street.

Mid Murray Council Mayor Simone Bailey says the playground enhances the attraction and usability of the complex.

"The nature playground has provided families and kids a safe space to play, explore nature, and have fun and the community feedback has been extremely positive," Mayor Bailey said.

"It's been fantastic to see the difference that's already being made in that area, with increased activity and vibrancy. Activating our reserve areas is a balance that Council will strategically manage, and this project is delivering on the enhancements for a more vibrant, Blanchetown. We expect it will be a popular destination for families over the coming peak spring and summer period."

Concept plans for the playground were created in consultation with the Blanchetown Primary School students and the Blanchetown District Hall Inc and Community Committee.

The playground consists of a climbing frame with rope nets and rock-climbing wall, basket swing, seesaw, slide, balancing logs and stones, sensory and more. It connects to an existing BBQ shelter, which once repaired from flood damage, will make for an ideal space for people to gather.

A third-party funding partnership with the Blanchetown-based poultry farm AAM/Riverlands Free Range Poultry has further improved the recreational area, with the extra funding going towards a flying fox.

"The input from the community has been invaluable, helping to create a playground and nature space that meets the needs of our community," Mayor Bailey said.

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“New partnerships have been made, and it’s been pleasing to have so many different community groups and businesses getting involved.”

Earlier plans to include Community Wastewater Management System water reuse at the top oval precinct will not be going ahead, after costings exceeded the budget allocation. Council has instead reallocated funding to Egerton Street and entrance upgrades.

Swan Reach’s new Len White Reserve playground and toilets are open for action, making a significant revitalisation of the popular reserve.

Work had been suspended due to the flood, with more riverbank reclamation work set to continue as the current water levels recede.

Council delivered the project, with financial support from the Federal Government *Building Better Regions Fund – Infrastructure Projects Stream* (\$224,970), the Federal Government’s *Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program Phase 2* (\$110,00), and the State Government’s *Open Space and Places for People Grant Funding Program* (\$44,310). The new pathways are being provided as links to the Murray Coorong Trail under the *Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Fund*.

Mayor Bailey said the project has enriched the scenic Swan Reach riverfront precinct and provided upgraded facilities for both residents and tourists.

“Council has collaborated with the Swan Reach community to develop and now implement the blueprint for these enhancements, aligning with the *Swan Reach Riverfront and Len White Reserve Masterplan*,” Mayor Bailey said.

“Despite encountering certain obstacles, such as material shortages and then the flood event, we are thrilled to announce that the playground and toilets are up and running before the upcoming summer peak season.”

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Len White Reserve, Swan Reach



Old Blanchetown Oval, Blanchetown