

12.3 Blue Tree Project - Mannum Lookout

Reporting Officer: Chief Executive Officer, Ben Scales

Report Authoriser: Chief Executive Officer, Ben Scales

Attachments: 1. Letter of Request - Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network [↓](#)

REPORT OBJECTIVE

To seek Council's position on a request by Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network to paint a small dead tree at the Mannum Lookout, in Crawford Crescent, blue as part of the *Blue Tree Project*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2022, Council approved a request by Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network to erect a memorial at the Mannum Crawford Crescent lookout to define an area where those who have lived experience of suicide can seek solace.

In keeping with this theme and to further raise awareness of mental health, a request has been received from the Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network for Council to support a proposal to paint a small dead tree at the Mannum Lookout on Crawford Crescent blue as part of the *Blue Tree Project*. Although these trees are designed to be seen as a symbol of hope, for many they are associated with suicide and grief.

While the request is for a blue painted tree and not a seat or memorial, it is felt that the *Cemeteries & Memorials Policy* should guide Council's decision making whether to agree to the request and allow the painted tree. Council's *Cemeteries & Memorials Policy* generally does not support memorial seats and any request is subject to Council approval.

Considering the Cultural and Historic significance of this area, along with the expectation of unhindered views from the Lookout it is recommended that the public be consulted to consider their opinions before committing to this project.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. **The Report be received.**
2. **Public Consultation be undertaken in accordance with Council's *Public Consultation Policy* on the proposal for Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network to paint a small dead tree at the Mannum Lookout, with a further report being brought back to Council once consultation is complete.**

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT, FINANCIALS & IMPLICATIONS

**Mid Murray Council
Strategic Plan 2020
– 24**

Theme

2. Our Community

	Strategic Goal 2.3. The health, wellbeing and resilience of our community is enhanced Key Activity 2.3.1. Improve community mental health, wellbeing and resilience			
2023/24 Budget allocation	Nil.			
2023/24 Budget variation/impact (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report			
Proposed Future Budget Impact (LTFP)	Not as a result of this report.			
Risk Assessment	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
Legislative Reference	Not applicable.			
Policy	Cemeteries & Memorials Policy Public Consultation Policy			
Consultation	Public Consultation of the proposal will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Consultation Policy.			
Communication of decision	Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network will be informed of Council's decision. Subject to Council's decision, a further report will be brought to Council after consultation is undertaken.			

DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

At its meeting held 9 August 2022, Council consented to the Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network erecting a memorial in the bark area, adjacent to the already existing table and chair seating area (with no alteration or addition to the outdoor furniture already at this location), at the Crawford Crescent lookout, Mannum, with the following motion passed:

11.1.6 Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network (MMSPN) – reflection area

Memorial – Mannum Crawford Crescent lookout

Moved Cr MacGregor Seconded Cr Brokenshire

21372/1 That:

1. The Report be received.

2. Approval be granted to Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network to erect a memorial in the bark area adjacent to the table and chair combination seating area at the Mannum Crawford Crescent lookout, as depicted in (Attachment 2, Item 11.1.6 Council Meeting 9 August 2022), and in accordance with Council's Cemeteries & Memorials Policy, subject to the cost of supplying and erecting the Memorial and plaque being borne by the MMSPN.

3. Subject to a Section 221 of the Local Government Act 1999 – Alteration to alter A public Road application being lodged and approved for the memorial.

4. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to liaise with Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network to approve the exact location of the memorial and final plaque wording.

CARRIED

In May 2023 Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network held a dedication at the Mannum Lookout of the new stone Reflection Site for Suicide Loss and Suicidal Ideation.

In keeping with this theme, and to further raise awareness that it is “OK to not be OK” and break down the stigma surrounding mental health, Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network have requested to paint a small dead tree (pictured below) at the Mannum Lookout on Crawford Crescent as part of the *Blue Tree Project* (**Attachment 1**). Although these trees are designed to be seen as a symbol of hope, for many they are associated with suicide and grief.



Tree location

The painted tree would also have the *Blue Tree Project* signage attached to it (example below). In place of Pernod Ricard it would read Caring Connected Communities – Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network and the Mid Murray Council.



While the request is for a blue painted tree and not a seat or memorial, it is felt that the *Cemeteries & Memorials Policy* should guide Council's decision making whether to agree to the request and allow the painted tree.

As outlined in Council's *Cemetery and Memorial Policy*, with over 180 parks, reserves and other areas of public open space that often hold a special significance for those that live near them, use them or have involvement in their management or maintenance, Council receives many requests for the placement of commemorative plaques, seats and memorials in public open space.

Council's *Cemeteries & Memorials Policy* generally does not support memorial seats and any request is subject to Council approval. When considering these requests, Council needs balance the desire to commemorate events or individuals, the ongoing enjoyment of natural, uncluttered open areas.

As an open space, Mannum Lookout is an area that is enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year with those visiting enjoying the unhindered vista of the surrounds. This, and the perception people may have of a blue tree being in their view while enjoying the natural surrounds of the lookout should also be a consideration.

Mannum Lookout (along with all river lookouts) also hold significant Cultural and Historic meaning to the Traditional Custodians of this land.

In line with this *Cemetery and Memorial Policy*, all costs associated with the painting and maintenance of this tree would be borne by Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network.

Considering the Cultural and Historic significance of this site along with the expectation of unhindered views from the Lookout it is recommended that the public be consulted to consider their opinions before committing to this project.

Blue Tree Project

The [Blue Tree Project](#) began in Western Australia and encourages people to choose a dead tree that needs a "blue lease on life" and paint it in memory of a friend who lost their life to depression or had battled the illness.

The blue tree is used as a symbol to encourage conversations to hopefully assist in saving lives, with the trees visual reminders to check in on loved ones and mates who might be struggling.

The trees are registered, mapped and locations identified on the project's website.

CONCLUSION

With consideration to the Policy and other stakeholders, it is recommended that Council refer the proposal for Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network to paint a small dead tree at the Mannum Lookout be circulated for Public Consultation and ask that a further report be brought back to Council after the Public Consultation period is complete.



Caring Connected Communities
Mid-Murray Suicide Prevention Network Inc.



Wellbeing SA

Supported by



17/11/22

Dear Mayor Bailey and CEO Ben Scales,

In May 2023 Caring Connected Communities - Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network held the dedication at the Crawford Crescent Reserve at Mannum of the new stone Reflection Site for Suicide Loss and Suicidal Ideation.

In keeping with this theme and in looking to raise awareness that it is OK to not be OK and to break down the stigma surrounding mental health we would like permission to join the Blue Trees Project, <https://www.bluetreeproject.com.au/> by painting a small dead tree in the Crawford Crescent reserve precinct in the official Blue Tree colour. Trees are registered and mapped with the project on the official website.

The tree is not very big and I have included pictures for your perusal.





Please also find an example of the Blue Trees signage we would use for the project. In place of Pernod Ricard's it would read Caring Connected Communities – Mid Murray Suicide Prevention Network and the Mid Murray Council. The CCC-MMSPN is concurrently funding a blue tree on private property at Sedan.



Looking forward to your earliest reply.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Davies".

Catherine Davies

Secretary,

Mid-Murray Suicide Prevention Network