

MEDIA RELEASE

BUSHFIRE FUNDING FOR SAFER MID MURRAY ROADS

Mid Murray roads located in sections of the district which were hit by the Cudlee Creek Bushfire will be upgraded to improve access for local residents.

An area in the Mid Murray Council's south-west was burnt during the Cudlee Creek bushfire in late December, impacting farms and properties in the area.

Council received a \$225,000 grant from the Federal Government in February to assist with local bushfire recovery efforts – but expenditure of the grant was deferred until Council could consult directly with affected residents and landowners.

People impacted told Council that:

- Local roads in the area have been affected due to access from large water trucks,
- Road surfaces were a key risk factor in residents evacuating during the bushfire, and
- Tree removal and clean-up is required along the road corridor.

In response to residents' feedback, Council has agreed to allocate \$40,000 of the grant to tree removal and clean up along the affected roads.

The remaining \$185,000 will be spent on road sheeting works in the impacted area including Harrogate, Gladigau, Herrmanns and Pym Roads. Extra upgrades will be undertaken on sections of Harrogate and Herrmanns Roads outside the fire affected area, at a cost of \$97,500 from Council's Road Renewal Funds totaling all works to the value of a \$322,500 investment.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess said the road works and tree removal were practical ways the Council could improve safety in the area.

"Since December, Council staff have been working closely with those who live in the bushfire impacted part of our district to provide ongoing support," Mayor Burgess says.

"Upgrading the roads in their area will improve accessibility as they recover and rebuild, and give them peace of mind and increased safety heading into the next fire danger season.

"While our region was not as badly impacted as some of our neighbours, it's important to recognise that some of our residents were affected and are still recovering from this disaster. Council is committed to continuing to do what it can to support them through that process.

"The clean up of fallen and fire-affected trees from roadsides, and improving road surfaces, will go some way to assisting them in this challenging time."

The Cudlee Creek bushfire affected an estimated 18 properties in the Mid Murray Council district. During and immediately after the bushfire crisis, Council's Infrastructure and Field Services staff provided 256 hours of on-ground assistance including providing fire breaks, tree removal, road clearance and carting water for both the CFS and affected residents.

In the months following, Council staff have continued to meet with and assist residents and landowners, including helping them to access financial assistance programs and other support services.

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