

MEDIA RELEASE

COMMUNITY INPUT ENCOURAGED TO SHAPE PLAN FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FACILITIES IN MID MURRAY

Mid Murray residents are being asked to have their say on a proposed plan for the future management of the district's many public buildings and facilities – including an option to sell or remove some assets that are no longer used or present a risk to the community.

The Mid Murray Council has released a *Draft Buildings, Land and Structures Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan* for community feedback. The plan sets out important steps to manage Council's assets such as its offices, community halls, sport and recreation facilities, tourism sites, waste management facilities, works depot, and cemeteries – which are collectively valued at more than \$85.8M.

The plan is critical to assist Council in managing and prioritising the operations, maintenance, renewal and upgrade of its existing assets.

A combination of aging assets requiring replacing, increasing maintenance costs and reduced use of some assets has meant Council's current funding levels cannot continue to provide existing service levels over the medium term. It's estimated Council would need to spend \$40.57M over the next 10 years on asset management – while it's anticipated that available funding for the same period will only be \$31.46M - indicating a funding shortfall of \$9.11M over 10 years for the operations, maintenance and renewals.

Through the plan, the Council has identified some assets ranging from disused sport and recreation facilities to fencing, sheds, toilets, a car park with stair path access that are recommended for sale or removal because they are underutilised and/or a risk to the public.

Other asset management approaches outlined in the plan include:

- Improving efficiency in operating, maintaining, replacing existing and constructing new assets to optimise life cycle costs;
- Making trade-offs between service levels and costs to ensure that the community receives the best return from infrastructure;
- Consulting with the community to ensure that services and costs meet community needs and are affordable;
- Developing partnership with other bodies, where available to provide services; and
- Seeking additional funding from governments and other bodies to better reflect a 'whole of government' funding approach to infrastructure services.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess says the *Draft Buildings, Land and Structures Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan* aims to balance the need for Council to manage its community assets sustainably and efficiently with the importance of providing ongoing community access to the facilities they require.

"With such an extensive number of assets needing significant investment over the coming decade – and with limited long-term resources available to us – Council must take steps to plan for how it will best manage these assets for the benefit of the whole Mid Murray community," Mayor Burgess says.

"Our *Draft Buildings, Land and Structures Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan* combines strategies to protect our assets including increasing the efficiency of our asset maintenance and operations, seeking additional external funding sources, consolidation and developing partnerships to provide services and balancing service levels with costs.

“We are also considering asset sales or disposals, where we have assets that are identified as being of risk to our community or where they are underutilised. If we try to keep and maintain everything we currently own, we run the very real risk that this will be detrimental to some of our other assets – facilities may have to be closed or removed if they can’t be maintained in line with necessary standards or we may have to cut services in other areas to fund these costs.

“It’s essential that our community now has their say on the draft plan to ensure we can incorporate their views into the final version, which will guide our approach to managing and investing in our assets for the next 10 years.”

Consultation on the *Draft Buildings, Land and Structure Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan* is now underway and closes at 12pm on 25 February, 2022. To read the plan and have your say, visit www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au.

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