

MEDIA RELEASE

COMMUNITY INVITED TO HAVE SAY ON REVIEW OF MID MURRAY FACILITIES

Mid Murray residents are being encouraged to have their say on the future operations of community facilities in Morgan and Blanchetown.

The Mid Murray Council has reviewed the services offered at the Morgan Public Library, Morgan Activity Centre and Blanchetown Hub, and the community's use of each facility. It's part of an ongoing process that will review all services and programs throughout the Mid Murray district, as the Council works towards improved financial sustainability.

All three facilities have recorded low attendance levels in recent years, and all three require substantial costs to continue operating.

Council has developed a discussion paper for community engagement outlining five options for the future management of the three facilities. They range from maintaining the status quo, to reducing some operating hours, through to closing all three facilities.

Public consultation on the discussion paper runs from 28 March 2024 to 26 April 2024 and residents and ratepayers across the entire Mid Murray district are strongly encouraged to provide feedback. At the conclusion of the consultation period, Council will consider the feedback received to assist in its decision making.

Mid Murray Mayor Simone Bailey said the Council recognises the importance of the facilities and the services they provide to the Morgan and Blanchetown communities.

"Each of these facilities provides convenient access to services such as library borrowing, community programs and activities, along with government services that would otherwise require our residents to travel to larger towns," Mayor Bailey said.

"While these facilities do serve an important role for a very small number of people in our community, the reality is that there is also a significant cost involved in running and maintaining them. Council understands that no-one wants to see their rates rise or their local services cut, but we are in the very challenging position of needing to make significant changes to our operations right across the district to ensure Council's ongoing viability.

"The role of Council's financial sustainability review is to consider which of these services is essential to our community, and whether there are other ways that we can continue to meet those needs, while also reducing costs.

"While this consultation relates to these facilities at Morgan and Blanchetown, Council is applying this review to every facility and every service in every town in our district.

"We need to identify cost savings and make changes across the board. Council and our community need to work together to make difficult decisions about how our money can be best spent in the interests of serving all in our community.

"What Council wants to hear now from the community is what it thinks of these options for the future management of these facilities at Morgan and Blanchetown."

MEDIA CONTACT:

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Options in the discussion paper include:

- **Option 1:** No change – all services and facilities remain operational within an existing budget.
- **Option 2:** Close the Morgan Activity Centre in its current location. Reduce the size of the Morgan Library to a boutique library.
- **Option 3:** Close the Morgan Library on Saturday mornings.
- **Option 4:** Close the Blanchetown Hub and Library.
- **Option 5:** Close all facilities and services, except for Morgan Council Office and services.

Each of the options, apart from Option 1, would deliver annual savings for Council and the community of between \$6,000 and \$97,000.

The discussion paper outlines more detail for each option, including opportunities to shift some services into other Council facilities to reduce costs but ensure that continued access is offered to library services in particular.

“Council is looking at all options to try to find a way to retain library services where we can in some of these smaller areas without the significant overheads of running a physical library space that has a very small attendance of a handful of people each day,” Mayor Bailey said.

“This may look like introducing transport options to access services, developing smaller kiosk libraries, supporting a rollout of Little Libraries across the district including in our shack areas, or co-locating facilities such as the Morgan Activity Centre and library sharing a space.

“All options are on the table, and it’s critical that our community has its say now so that we can hear their ideas before Council makes any decisions.”

For more information, or to read the discussion paper and have your say, visit www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au/council/latest-news/public-consultation-facilities-review

Community engagement sessions

Community engagement sessions on the review will be held at the following times and locations:

Morgan Library - Fourth Street, Morgan

- Tuesday 2 April, 10.30am - 12.00pm
- Monday 8 April, 12.30pm - 2.00pm

Morgan Activity Centre - Cnr Fourth & Eighth Street, Morgan

- Tuesday 2 April, 12.30pm - 2.00pm
- Monday 8 April, 10.30am - 12.00pm

Blanchetown Community Hub - 3 Shaw Street, Blanchetown

- Thursday 4 April, 10.30am - 12.00pm
- Tuesday 9 April, 12.30pm - 2.00pm

- ENDS -

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