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MEDIA RELEASE

Mid Murray Council to Align Library Services Under New Strategic Plan

Mid Murray Council's library services will be aligned and strengthened following the adoption of a Strategic Plan by Council, which will establish a new governance model across all five sites.

Council provides a public library at Morgan, a depot library at Blanchetown and contributes to the joint provision of services for school community libraries at Swan Reach, Cambrai and Mannum.

Morgan and Districts Community Hub Coordinator Lisa Walker says the *2017 Mid Murray Libraries Strategic Plan* will ensure continuity of services across all five Mid Murray library sites, superseding the board of governance model that is over 30 years old.

"The function of libraries has changed dramatically over the years and this plan is about working towards an integrated approach and bringing library services up with the times and also optimising and sharing resources," she says.

"There will also be an increased focus on community users so overall, we can create spaces that benefit the entire community."

Mrs Walker says Council would be aiming to roll out a similar delivery model for each site.

"You should be able to get the same level and continuity of service and programs regardless if you live in Morgan, Mannum, Cambrai, Swan Reach or Blanchetown," she says.

"This is about more people getting more value for the service that these facilities provide."

The plan will also include a rebrand, including a new logo, which Mrs Walker says will help to reinforce that the five libraries are a part of Council services.

"We want to remind the community that this is another aspect of Council services and they can feel they have valuable input into the provision of connected community places and life-long learning facilities," she says.

Council has worked closely with principals and key stakeholders, including Public Library Services and Department for Education and Child Development (DECD), at the three school community library sites, which will undergo funding model changes next year.

Mrs Walker said it would be a "cultural shift" for the stakeholders away from localised school boards, but all were in agreement about the new plan ensuring benefits for both schools and the local community.

Under the new plan, library staff will also continue to undergo training to keep up with current trends in the digital space.

“Council is looking at rolling out additional training within library sites and also to the local community to help with digital literacy, including the Tech Savvy Seniors, and eGov programs,” she says.

Mid Murray Chief Executive Officer Russell Peate says the plan was a vital step forward in Mid Murray Council library services moving with the times.

“Libraries are an essential part of our community and particularly in rural areas, foster social relationships, learning and skill development, and act as vital community spaces,” he says.

“The *2017 Mid Murray Council Strategies Plan* will ensure we work towards an integrated Mid Murray Council library service for the future.”

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