

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW PLAYGROUND, RIVERFRONT UPGRADES TO REJUVENATE MANNUM'S MARY ANN RESERVE

Mannum's picturesque Mary Ann Reserve, located along the banks of the Murray River, is being made safer and more enjoyable for river users and residents, with the first stage of works now underway at the popular visitor destination.

Riverbank improvements have been made to fix erosion problems, while traffic access and parking are also being upgraded. Planning is also beginning for the first of two new playgrounds, set to be delivered in the new year.

A key component of the Mid Murray Council project was the rebuilding of the riverbank using the latest anti-erosion technology to combat ongoing damage.

Mid Murray Council Director of Infrastructure and Field Services David Hassett thanked locals for their patience during the works, while access restrictions were in place.

"The riverbank work will take time to stabilise, so access to the riverfront has been restricted during this time to protect the anti-erosion system as it settles and river users are being asked not to peg or pierce the riverbank within two metres of the bank's edge to maximise the success of these works," Mr Hassett says

"We know that now that the warm weather is here our community wants to regain access to this popular swimming and water recreation spot, so we will be removing bunting around the riverfront on Friday, 20 December.

"However, we're also hearing concerns about the impact of speed boats and jet skis, particularly close to the no boating zone. To better protect swimmers using that area, we've decided to keep the floating silt curtain in place - both to minimise wave production (to reduce the risk of erosion), and to act as a barrier to keep boats and jet skis out of that area."

Council staff will also step up education and enforcement activities on the riverfront to ensure boat and jet ski users are abiding by the newly-signed zones and speed limit. Signs installed recently now clearly identify the houseboat mooring, boat, jet ski and no boating zones both from the water and land.

"We will also be talking with the Department for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI), which controls the river, about longer term plans to exclude access for power boats and jet skis in the water around the no boating zone to keep this area safe for swimmers, as Council only has control over what happens on the riverbank and not on the river itself," Mr Hassett says.

The state of erosion along the riverbank made the reclamation works a high priority for Stage 1 of the Mary Ann Reserve Masterplan project.

"This spot had been popular with swimmers, especially with children, because the erosion formed a 'beach' style area – unfortunately this was a symptom of serious erosion that, if left untreated, would have worsened over time and could potentially have presented a risk to swimmers," Mr Hassett says.

“By installing the anti-erosion system we’ve been able to smooth out the gradient of the bank and over time as it settles and the grass continues to grow, we’ll have a beautiful, more even grassed slope down to the water’s edge.

“While we can’t recreate a ‘beach’ style swimming area because of the river’s varying gradients and fluctuating riverbed depths (that change frequently), and because of Environment Protection Authority restrictions, we’ve used the best technology available to us to stabilise the bank to prevent future problems and ensure our riverfront remains a picturesque, popular spot for years to come.”

The Mary Ann Reserve Masterplan was developed with substantial community involvement, and public input has continued as the project progresses.

The next major improvement will be the development of two new play spaces, which may include elements of water play ideal for families with young children. The design has been created with input from local residents and families.

Council agreed last month to fast-track the delivery of a new playground, which had originally been planned as a longer-term, three-stage project. The centerpiece of the new play space will be a play structure boat, called the *Mannum*, in a tribute to the town’s rich river heritage, while the playground will also include accessible elements for children with disabilities.

Work could begin on the new facility as early as February 2020.

To find out more about the Mary Ann Reserve Master Plan visit: <https://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au/development/open-space,-recreation-and-public-realm-plan>.

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