



Discussion Paper

Facilities Review -

Morgan Library, Morgan Activity Centre
and Blanchetown Hub

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Service Review

Mid Murray Council is currently considering the future of the Morgan Library, Morgan Activity Centre and the Blanchetown Community Hub. Consideration is being given to alternative delivery options and whether these facilities remain a core service. The Council is keen to hear the community's views about the future service delivery of the Morgan Library, Morgan Activity Centre and the Blanchetown Hub.

Due to the substantial cost of providing these services to the community, Council is considering several alternatives, including rationalisation options. The input from the local community on these options is essential to informing the Council when it makes its decision regarding the future provision of services to the community.

Morgan Library

The Morgan Library is housed within the Morgan and Districts Community Hub, alongside the Morgan Council office, the opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm and Saturday 9am – 11am.

Libraries are welcoming, safe and accessible places for all. They are people places for meeting, sharing ideas and learning as well as places of quiet contemplation and study. Libraries not only connect people with knowledge but with each other and with their communities.

The primary purpose of libraries is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups, based around education and personal development opportunities.

Morgan Library Data –

Saturday morning visits

2022/23	Average Saturday Attendance	2023/24	Average Saturday Attendance
July	3.4	July	2.6
August	6	August	3.75
September	7	September	3
October	5	October	4
November	5.25	November	2.25
December	4.5	December	3
January	3	January	4
February	3.25	February	4
March	4.25		
April	4		
May	3.75		
June	3.5		
Total Average Saturday Attendance	4.40	Total Average Saturday Attendance	3.32

This data indicates that on average the library had 2.2 patrons per hour for 2022/23 and 1.66 patrons per hour for 2023/24 on Saturday mornings.

Weekday visits

Month	Library Visitors	Average per weekday
July 2023	211	10.04
August 2023	210	9.13
September 2023	158	7.52
October 2023	218	10.38
November 2023	176	8
December 2023	147	9.18

This data indicates that on average the library has 9 visits per weekday.

This current data shows that the regular Saturday morning patrons predominately use the library for returns and borrowing. The library on a Saturday is not currently being used as a connection or meeting space.

The regular Saturday morning patrons also frequent the library during weekday opening hours, therefore, highlighting that the need for an after-hours service is not a priority.

Morgan Activity Centre

The Morgan Activity Centre (MAC) is owned and operated by Council, the opening hours are Monday to Friday from 10am-2pm.

The MAC was originally funded through the Federal and State Government 'Home and Community Care' (HACC) funding package to provide comprehensive, coordinated and integrated support to the aged community. In 2013/14, HACC funding was withdrawn and Council continued to fund the operations of the MAC.

The MAC is a welcoming location facilitating activities, crafts, information sessions and events. The centre is staffed by volunteers and provides a friendly social setting for community, tourists and visitors of all ages and backgrounds. The facility offers a nutritious light lunch daily and is a bookable venue.

In addition, the MAC is home to other services including the Country Fire Service and the Meals on Wheels vehicle is housed within the building.

The following data shows MAC daily statistics over a six-month timeframe:

Month	MAC patrons	Average per day
July 2023	200	9.52
August 2023	184	8
September 2023	134	7.05
October 2023	162	9
November 2023	179	8.13
December 2023	89	7.41

This data indicates that on average the MAC has 8.18 patrons per day with regular persons re-visiting. This daily rate is also partially inflated due to two regular monthly events which attract higher attendance.

Blanchetown Community Hub

The Blanchetown Community Hub is located in Shaw Street in the building adjoining the Blanchetown District Hall.

The Hub incorporates a Council office, Library, Visitor Information Outlet, public internet and Centrelink Access Point.

The Blanchetown Hub is open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am – 2pm. The Hub provides a welcoming atmosphere which allows the community and visitors to connect with various resources and local information.

The table below shows the Blanchetown Hub daily statistics over a six-month timeframe.

Month	Blanchetown visitors	Average per day
July 2023	29	4.14
August 2023	78	7.8
September 2023	54	6.75
October 2023	47	5.875
November 2023	62	6.2
December 2023	24	3.4

This data indicates that on average the Blanchetown Hub has 5.74 visits per day.

Staffing and Financial Implications

Council employs three part-time staff, 2.2 full-time equivalent, across the Morgan and Blanchetown facilities and services. Between the three staff they coordinate the Morgan Council office (incorporating all Council related services, rates, cemeteries, dogs, standpipes, Centrelink Access etc.), Morgan Library (book returns and borrowing, ordering stock, weeding, community programs), Morgan Activity Centre (volunteer coordination and management, coordinating programs and activities) and the Blanchetown Hub (Council related services, Library, Centrelink Access).

Using the 2022/23 financial year as a guide, the table below indicates expenses and income to Council across these facilities:

	Wage Expenses	Operating Expenses	Income
Morgan Library	76,391	10,106	17,001
Morgan Hub	107,946	9,974	9,489
Morgan Activity Centre		19,114	2,420
Blanchetown Hub	27,265	9,918	9,331
Total 2022/23	211,602	49,112	38,241

When reviewing the sustainability of Council facilities, all financial implications need to be considered, including depreciation of building assets and future planned works.

Alternative Delivery Options

To enable Council to consider what services and programs are both financially sustainable and valued by the community, options are provided below for consideration:

Option 1

- Do nothing. All services and facilities remain operational within existing budget.

Option 2

- Close the Morgan Activity Centre in its current location.
- Reduce the Morgan Library size to a Boutique Library.

Potential savings:

- Approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000 in MAC running costs per year, plus depreciation of \$36,682, if building was to be sold.
- It is estimated that Council staff currently spend approximately 936 hours per year (excluding Saturday mornings) on library services at a cost equivalent of approximately \$41,700, therefore, reduced service would be a percentage of this.
- Potential sale or re-purpose of Morgan Activity Centre building.
- Employee time saving in both MAC & Library to be re-purposed into other areas of Council.

Considerations:

- Statistics show low usage for the current services.
- Incorporate the Morgan Activity Centre and Boutique Morgan Library into the one space in the current Morgan Library.
- Services combined within the one space could increase usage across both services.
- Develop a Kiosk library instead of current or Boutique option.
- Utilise space for other potential Council services.
- Develop 'Little Libraries' throughout the region including shack areas.

Option 3

- Close the Morgan Library on Saturday Mornings.

Potential Savings:

- Approximately \$6,000 per year.

Consideration:

- Statistics show low demand and usage of this service.
- Current Saturday morning patrons also utilise service on weekdays.
- Develop 'Little Libraries' throughout the region including shack areas.

Option 4

- Close the Blanchetown Hub and Library

Potential Savings:

- Approximately \$30,000 per year.

Considerations:

- Statistics show low demand and usage of this service.
- Centrelink Access Point could be taken over by Blanchetown Hub Committee or service ceased.
- Bookable bus service could be coordinated by Morgan office and staffed by volunteers to transport Blanchetown residents to Morgan once a week/fortnight/month (dependent on demand) to visit library, MAC and use Centrelink Access Point service.
- Develop a Kiosk library in Blanchetown.
- Develop 'Little Libraries' throughout the region including shack areas.

Option 5

- Close all facilities and services, except for Morgan Council Office and services.

Potential Savings:

- MAC - Approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000 running costs, plus depreciation of \$36,682, if building was to be sold.
- It is estimated that Council staff currently spend approximately 936 hours per year (excluding Saturday mornings) on library services at a cost equivalent of approximately \$41,700.
- Saturday morning Morgan Library - Approximately \$6,000 per year.
- Blanchetown Hub - Approximately \$30,000 per year.
- Total savings approximately \$92,700-\$97,700

Considerations:

- Statistics show low demand and usage of these services.
- Utilise space for other potential Council services.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement on these facilities will begin on Thursday 28 March until Friday 26 April. Council Administration will be engaging directly with the community throughout this time to determine what services and programs are valued at the Morgan Library, Morgan Activity Centre and the Blanchetown Hub.

Please visit our website for consultation dates and to access our feedback survey - <https://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au/community/public-consultation>

Written submissions are also encouraged, please email direct to - community@mid-murray.sa.gov.au or please phone 8569 0100 for other enquiries.

To read the full Facilities Review – Morgan Public Library, Morgan Activity Centre and Blanchetown Community Hub report, please visit our website - [Council Meeting Agendas & Minutes | Mid Murray Council \(mid-murray.sa.gov.au\)](#)

Council Agenda – 19 March 2024, Item 13 – Sustainability Reports.