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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW PROTECTION MEASURES ROLLING OUT ACROSS MID MURRAY TO COMBAT CORONAVIRUS

Additional protection measures are being enacted across the Mid Murray district in response to the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Mid Murray Council is taking extra steps to reduce the spread of the virus, including working with organisers to cancel or postpone local events, stepping up cleaning and hygiene measures in public places and using alternative meeting arrangements to reduce face-to-face contact.

Mid Murray Council Chief Executive Officer Ben Scales said the Council's senior staff were implementing plans across the Council and its facilities in line with the latest advice from State and Federal Governments to ensure the health and well-being of its staff and the community, as well as the continuity of essential services.

"This pandemic situation is unprecedented in Australia, and Council is responding by implementing measures to limit the spread of this virus and protect our community," he says.

"It is critical we do all we can to ensure the safety of our ratepayers, residents and staff at this time."

Measures enacted by the Council include:

- **Extra cleaning and hygiene measures** – All Council facilities will undergo more regular, thorough cleaning, while staff will maintain social distancing and increased hygiene in line with recommendations by the Federal Government and health authorities. Extra sanitising measures will also be implemented in Council offices and facilities for visitors, such as hand cleaning and social distancing.
- **Closing some public toilets** – Shutting some public toilets in areas where there are multiple facilities to combat ongoing theft of toilet paper, soap and other hygiene supplies, and to allow cleaners to conduct more regular cleaning of remaining public toilets.
- **Mannum Leisure Centre management measures** – Continuing operation of the 24-7 gym, with more frequent and rigorous cleaning practices in place. Users are encouraged to stay away if they are unwell. The Over 55 exercise class will continue to run. Senior and Junior Basketball competition has been cancelled, but users participating in other sports that hire the facility will need to check with organisers about future plans or cancellations (stay up to date on Facebook).
- **Libraries remain open** – Libraries will continue to operate, with hygiene measures in place for visitors. Library users are urged to stay away if they are feeling unwell.
- **Mannum and Cambrai swimming pools to remain open** – The pools will remain open until the close of the season on 31 March, in line with advice from health authorities that there is no increased risk to the public.
- **Flexible workplace protocol** – Council staff will be given the opportunity, where possible and practicable, to work remotely. Council will maintain a core level of staffing at each site to ensure operations continue to run efficiently.
- **Cancellation or postponement of non-essential meetings** – All non-essential face to face meetings will be cancelled or postponed. Staff instead will use phone or video meeting and conferencing alternatives where possible. Essential meetings will require increased hygiene

measures including observing social distancing. The next monthly Council meeting is scheduled for 21 April and at this stage will go ahead with extra hygiene and precautionary measures in place.

- **Community event cancellations** – Several community events have been cancelled or postponed to minimise the spread of the virus, including Anzac Day commemorations in Mannum, Swan Reach and Morgan (stay up to date on Facebook).
- **Online or phone services and payments** – Council is encouraging ratepayers and residents who need to access a service, have an enquiry or pay a bill - to do so online, over the phone or by email. Council requests that anyone who is feeling unwell does NOT attend its facilities in person, and even for those that are feeling well should follow hygiene and social distancing protocols.
- **Visitor Information Centres remain open** – Council’s visitor centres continue to operate at this stage, but it is encouraging people with inquiries to check online for information first, or contact them by phone where possible.
- **Volunteer safety** – With over 300 volunteers, many of who are within vulnerable groups, Council is mindful of the safety and wellbeing of all who assist in its programs, facilities and services. It has communicated with volunteer groups to provide them the flexibility of choosing whether or not they attend and participate in their roles at this time.

The Council is continuing to assess its approach and measures in response to the latest advice from the State and Federal Government, and relevant Government health agencies.

“While there may be anxiety within the community about the current situation, we want to assure the community that Council is doing everything in our power to maintain a ‘business as usual’ approach to continuing our services – without risking public health and safety,” Mr Scales says.

“We are encouraging our residents to also play their part – observe stricter personal hygiene and social distancing, stay away from public places if you’re unwell, be respectful to our staff and others working under stressful conditions and look out for the vulnerable members of your community.

“It’s frustrating and disappointing that we’ve seen the theft of basics like toilet paper and soap from our facilities, and we’d like locals to report any similar behaviour. These people are acting selfishly and putting the wider community at increased risk. We cannot maintain high public health standards if we don’t have the basic cleaning and hygiene items accessible to all.”

Anyone entering Australia from overseas or showing symptoms must observe the Australia Government’s self-isolation requirements (www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert).

The community can also remain up to date on the latest advice, including best-practice personal hygiene to reduce the risk of catching the virus, through SA Health’s website:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+topics/health+topics+a+-+z/COVID+2019>.

Given the rapidly changing situation, Council will continue to update the community on any changes to services via our website, Facebook page, noticeboards, through local media and over the phone in response to caller inquiries.

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