

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO ENHANCE WELLBEING AND PUBLIC HEALTH ACROSS MID MURRAY

Public health and wellbeing will be improved for Mid Murray residents under a new five-year plan to enhance health outcomes across the whole of the Murraylands and Riverland.

Developed by the Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association (MRLGA) for its eight member councils – including Mid Murray Council – the *2020-2025 Murraylands and Riverland Regional Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* sets out how enhanced health outcomes will be delivered across the region over the next five years.

Community consultation on the draft earlier this year showed strong support for the plan's goals in the Mid Murray district, with 96% supporting the initial version. Public feedback was also used to strengthen the plan in specific actions for the Mid Murray district, as well as in areas where the region's councils could work together collaboratively to deliver widespread positive outcomes.

Mid Murray Council endorsed the updated plan this month, moving it a step closer to implementation.

Updated actions for the Mid Murray Council in the latest version of the plan include:

- Supporting the development and implementation of the community-led Mid Murray Our Town Plan;
- Working with internal and external stakeholders to assist in addressing mental health and wellbeing issues in the region; and
- Implementing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

These actions are in addition to several others that include promoting and celebrating Aboriginal culture, increasing sports participation, leveraging existing open spaces for recreation, developing a Community Emergency Plan and supporting health programs in the areas of mosquito management, school immunisations and safe food handling.

Some of the new regional collaborative actions for the Riverland and Murraylands include:

- Providing education, promotion and advocacy to support mental wellbeing and suicide prevention;
- Supporting and advocating for improved transport options;
- Collaborating to improve access and inclusion;
- Collaboration and advocacy to reduce drug and alcohol-related harm;
- Promotion and planning for sport and recreation outcomes; and
- Supporting regional immunisation outcomes.

Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess said the plan will provide a pathway for improved community health both for Mid Murray and the wider district.

"As a regional area, it is clear that Mid Murray faces public health challenges and this plan sets out positive, practical ways in which Council can act as a leader and facilitator to enhance health and wellbeing in our district," Mayor Burgess says.

“Importantly, the plan also recognises that many of the health and wellbeing issues our district experiences are also areas of concern for our neighboring Councils. Challenges such as mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, isolation and access to health care are among those.

“By recognising these commonalities, the plan identifies ways in which we can collaborate and collectively find ways to address these issues – including advocating for additional support, resources and funding as a region where necessary.

“Importantly, we must also recognise that Mid Murray has many positive aspects that we can also draw on to increase public health and wellbeing outcomes.

“Our closely-connected communities, supportive sports clubs, accessible recreation spaces, and expansive areas of natural environment provide plenty of opportunities to increase connection, socialisation, recreation and exercise.”

The plan must now be endorsed by all eight member councils before being presented to the Chief Public Health Officer for final approval.

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