

## **RESOURCE SHARING A WIN FOR MID MURRAY COUNCIL**

Sharing staff resources with neighbouring councils is helping upskill employees and even increase revenue for the Mid Murray Council.

The Council's Development and Environmental Services team began exploring innovative ways to share resources with nearby councils and SA Government agencies in August 2016.

The aim was to help other regional councils cover staff shortages or employees' leave and share expertise and knowledge with other smaller local government teams. Since then, the approach has been so successful that it has even generated revenue for the department.

Mid Murray Council Director of Development and Environmental Services Jake McVicar said the resource sharing initiative was delivering a range of benefits.

"In addition to helping build professional relationships with our adjoining Councils, this assistance has also created an extra income stream for the department," he says.

Mid Murray Council staff have assisted four other local councils in areas including planning, building and health services. They have also helped other councils implement and operate the new DACO (Dogs and Cats Online) dog and cat management system. Staff are also involved with specialist projects for agencies including the Local Government Association and the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

While some of the roles are voluntary or in-kind, most of the assistance was provided via a fee for service arrangement.

"For our staff, it's provided professional development opportunities in assisting and mentoring on a range of projects," Mr McVicar says. "Some of our staff have even been approached or sought out by other agencies for assistance, which is testament to their professionalism and experience."

With smaller workforces, regional Councils can face challenges when staff take leave or positions become vacant. Sharing resources helps fill those gaps, while also allowing staff to use their skills in new environments, work on different projects or be mentored by other professionals.

"This initiative has proven to be a mutually beneficial arrangement for all involved and we will be looking at other ways to expand on this in the future," Mr McVicar says.

"Council is always focused on efficiency and this is an innovative way in which we have been able to achieve that, while also generating revenue and expanding the professional development of our staff."

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