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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **STARCLUB PROGRAM HELPING TO STRENGTHEN MID MURRAY SPORTS CLUBS**

A program that helps grow and sustain strong sport and recreation clubs is delivering results across the Mid Murray Council district.

The award-winning Murraylands STARCLUB program is a partnership between local Councils and the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing which assists quality coaches and officials to work alongside valued club volunteers in a safe and welcoming environment.

The cross-council collaboration between five neighbouring councils has delivered another successful 12 months in the region by helping 13 Mid Murray sporting clubs to develop policies, conduct training and progress through the levels of STARCLUB.

One of the program highlights is the achievement of the Morgan Small Bore Rifle Club and the Mannum Golf Club, both of which have received STARCLUB Recognition – the highest accreditation possible through the program.

Mid Murray Council Mayor Dave Burgess said the initiative was helping strengthen and improve clubs that play an important role in community health, wellbeing and social connection.

“Sporting and recreation clubs are at the heart of our community,” Mayor Burgess says.

“They provide valuable outlets for fun and physical activity for all ages, as well as social connections, all of which contribute significantly to community and individual wellbeing.

“We are proud to be part of the Murraylands STARCLUB program and to see the benefits it’s delivering to these clubs, and we’re also inspired by the work of club leaders, members, officials and volunteers who have actively embraced the program and are working through the levels.”

Clubs across the region are embracing the development program, with a 112% increase in those reaching level four – more than double the 50% target set for 2018/19 by the Murraylands IMPAC Committee.

STARCLUB Murraylands is also delivering significant returns for clubs. Before 2015, about \$300,000 was awarded to local sports and recreation bodies in the wider Murraylands region. Since the implementation of the program in 2015, that figure is now more than \$2 million.

Council’s Community Services Director Amy Loechel said clubs were taking up the opportunity to grow and develop through the program.

“Over the past year we have seen STARCLUB Murraylands connect with many clubs in our area to assist with their continued improvements,” Ms Loechel says.

“In partnership with our region’s Councils, the program has provided grant information sessions and a child safe officer course, as well as connecting with individual clubs at their meetings or assisting with local sporting events.

“The expertise and advice that STARCLUB Murraylands brings to our local clubs is helping our sporting and recreation organisations become more efficient, inclusive, safe and welcoming for members, volunteers and the wider community.”

STARCLUB Murraylands has received further funding until 2021 and Council staff will continue to assist Mid Murray sporting clubs and associations to connect with the program and achieve recognised STARCLUB status.

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