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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Mid Murray Council to put in Expression of Interest for Old Mannum Institute**

Mid Murray Council will put in an expression of interest for the Mannum Institute, prior to the owners approaching a real estate agent to list the premises for sale.

Built in 1882, the grand old building was a vital community hub for over a century, a place where Council meetings, court hearings and musical performances were held, before becoming a picture theatre.

In recent years, the building was sold into private hands and the owners have now called for expressions of interest from interested parties associated with local community groups, committees and Council.

Mid Murray Council Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Russell Peate says Council will put in an expression of interest and request an inspection before going any further.

“We are interested to see what the interior of the building currently looks like and what work might need to be done before we go any further,” he says.

“It’s an iconic building which holds many memories for the people of Mannum and Council is definitely interested in seeing what can be done to return it into the hands of the community.”

The idea of the Institute first came about in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a group of prominent townspeople were determined to “erect a building of some prominence for community use”, as local papers reported.

In a show of community spirit, many residents contributed funds to the project, in what was essentially an early form of crowd-funding, long before the term was coined.

Upon its opening in 1882, the building was declared “an institute worthy of the town of Mannum” and contained multiple features for community use, including a stage, a grand staircase and dancefloor made entirely from kauri pine.

Over the following century, the building played multiple roles, hosted major community events and became a hub for the town’s residents over multiple generations.

In 1956, when swelling floodwaters ravaged riverside towns in South Australia, the Institute was forced to close down when waters rose to a peak in Mannum’s Main Street, significantly damaging many buildings.

In recent years, the premises have been vacant and the Mannum History Group has been researching with assistance from Council, the submission of an application for State Heritage listing.

More than 130 years after it was built, Mr Peate says the Institute holds significant historical value to the riverside town.

“The Institute has played a starring role in the town of Mannum for more than a century and holds a significant amount of the town’s history within its walls,” he says.

“Council would like nothing more than to see the Institute restored to its former glory and full of people once more,” Mr Peate said.



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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Mid Murray Council Chief Executive Officer Russell Peate | P: 0438 691 600 | E: [postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au](mailto:postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au)