MEDIA RELEASE

5th May 2017

REMARKABLE RIVER WOMEN ON SHOW AT OLIVEWOOD, Renmark

The Murray Darling Basin stretches across four States in Australia and is home to the country’s three longest rivers, the Murray, the Darling and the Murrumbidgee.

Every river has a story and these ever changing landscapes are, and have been, a lifeline to so many.

Our mighty rivers offer a rich heritage that meanders through our lives and evokes imagery, smells and sounds that connect with you always.

From significant Aboriginal beginnings, paddle steamer trade routes, to a place, which has developed its own culture, it is now a myriad of natural destinations like no other. As far as records date back, many river stories have evolved and been recorded as to the men who played a major role in development with the contribution of women often overlooked.

The Women of the River Country exhibition developed by the volunteers and staff of the Mannum Dock Museum in South Australia has been produced as a national touring exhibition across 3 States and 16 venues.

This exhibition is supported by the Visions regional touring program, an Australian Government program aiming to improve access to cultural material for all Australians.

Rob Bowring OAM, Chairman of the Mannum Dock Museum said that he was so proud to have been involved in such an important project highlighting the amazing and sometimes untold achievements of women across the Murray Darling Basin.

“This project has captured the essence and highlights the importance of many remarkable women who have played a vital role in shaping our mighty river country.

“The exhibition showcases the stories of 19 unique women from the mid 1800s to present day. From early pioneers, to an internationally acclaimed sporting icon, to a world class musician, all of whom have connections with our magnificent riverscape.”

The Women of the River Country exhibition includes:
• Pearl Wallace (Wentworth NSW and all the Murray/Darling) - First Woman River Captain
• Ruby Hunter (Paringa SA) – Aboriginal Singer, Songwriter
• Ivy Carr (Morgan SA) – Queen of Cuisine on the Murray
• Mary Ann Randell (Mannum SA) – Murray River Mother
• Elizabeth “Bessie” Randell (Mannum SA) – A Murray River Love Story
• Eliza Arbuckle (Morgan SA) – A Murray River Explorer
• Jessie Wakefield (Goolwa SA) – World War One Heroine
• Mary Ann Edwards (Murray Bridge SA) – A River Entrepreneur
• Pauline Milich (Loxton SA) – Mother of 14, Midwife to over 80 more!
• Ella Chaffey (Renmark SA) – Stories from a River Past
• Hattie Schell & Hattie Sexton Schell (Mildura VIC) - The Two Hatties
• Hilda Creager (Rufus River NSW) – Professional Fisherwoman
• Elizabeth Williams (Dareton NSW) – Courage and a Cannon
• Jessie Dunstone (Swan Hill, VIC) – Well, I Love it!
• Margaret Court (Albury, NSW) – Tennis Legend
• Helen Sutherland (Wodonga VIC) – Murray Grey Breeder
• Elyne Mitchell (Towong VIC) – A Woman of High River Country
• Essie Nesbitt (Echuca VIC) – Over 20,000 River Welcomes

What commenced as a localised exhibition concept for the township of Mannum developed into a major presentation said Mayor Dave Burgess of the Mid Murray Council, Mannum, South Australia.

“We are extremely pleased to now see this unique exhibition travel across 3 States with the assistance of Visions Australia and the support of many participating venues along the Murray River and beyond”.

“To have this exhibition come to life in so many of the towns associated with the women profiled, is testimony to the dedicated passion and talents of the team of curators at the Mannum Dock Museum who ensured this truly exceptional exhibition will be enjoyed by many of whom played a role in its development.”

The Mannum Dock Museum’s research team made a personal connection with these women through many hours of investigation, research and talking to family members, creating contemplation and astonishment, as they delved deeper into the intriguing lives of these Women of the River Country.

Each participating venue across the Murray Darling Basin has an opportunity to celebrate their own remarkable women as an extension of the core exhibition and visitors will see eleven women who have played a role in the development of Renmark and surrounds over the years and includes:

• Rebecca Richards, (Indigenous Youth - Rhodes Scholar), Berri
• June Plush (Environment) Winkie
• Lorraine Marter, (Arts) Renmark
• Johnny Gurr, (Historian) Renmark
• Sister Elaine Balfour-Ogilvy (Nurse WW2) Renmark
• Yvonne Koolmatrie (Arts – Indigenous weaver) Berri
• Mary Whillas (Community Service) Renmark
• Selwa Rasheed (Community Service and Business Woman) Renmark
The exhibition was officially launched at Olivewood Historic Homestead at Renmark in the Riverland last Sunday. Olivewood Co-ordinator and Historian, Heather Everingham said the numbers of visitors were in excess of 100 - who attended the WOTRC launch at Renmark exceeded my expectations and there was a great buzz of a community re-connecting.

“Several visitors were former Riverlanders who thoroughly enjoyed catching up with familiar faces. It was pleasing to see members of Ruby Hunter’s family and other indigenous Riverlanders with connections to Yvonne Koolmatrie and Rebecca Richards”.

“The afternoon was one of sharing stories, renewing friendships and excitement generated by a first-class exhibition with the added inclusion of local women who are being celebrated for their diverse talents and community contributions”.

The Women of the River Country Exhibition will be on show at Olivewood Homestead, Twenty First Street, Renmark until the 21st June 2017 and will continue on its journey along the Murray River and beyond until 2018.

Opening times - Thursday to Monday 10am - 4pm. Tuesday and Wednesday by appointment. $7 adult, conc. $5, student $3 and family $15.

The Women of the River Country Exhibition will take you on a river journey of intrigue, discovery, amazement and admiration and you too will make some everlasting river friends!

For further information please contact Heather Everingham on 8595 5420 or Olivewood Homestead on 8586 6175.

For most of history, Anonymous was a woman.”
— Virginia Woolf

For media interviews or information on the development of the Women of the River Country Exhibition contact Deb Alexander, Executive Officer, Mannum Dock Museum on 0414857738 or museum@psmarion.com.