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 has been produced as a national exhibition and has been developed by the volunteers and staff of the Mannum Dock Museum in South Australia. This project has captured the essence and highlights the importance of 19 remarkable women who have played a vital role in shaping our mighty river country as follows:

- **Pearl Wallace** – First Woman River Captain – Wentworth NSW
- **Ruby Hunter** – Aboriginal Singer, Songwriter – Renmark SA
- **Ivy Carr** – Queen of Cuisine on the Murray – Morgan SA
- **Mary Ann Randell** – Murray River Mother – Mannum SA
- **Elizabeth “Bessie” Randell** – A Murray River Love Story – Mannum SA
- **Eliza Arbuckle** – A Murray River Explorer – Morgan SA
- **Jessie Wakefield** – World War One Heroine – Goolwa SA
- **Mary Ann Edwards** – A River Entrepreneur – Murray Bridge SA
- **Pauline Milich** – Mother of 14, Midwife to over 200 more! – Loxton SA
- **Ella Chaffey** – Stories from a River Past – Renmark SA
- **Hattie Schell & Hattie Sexton Schell** - The Two Hatties – Mildura VIC
• Hilda Creager – Professional Fisherwoman – Rufus River - NSW
• Elizabeth Williams – Courage and a Cannon – Dareton NSW
• Jessie Dunstone – Well, I Love it! – Swan Hill VIC
• Margaret Court – Tennis Legend – Albury NSW
• Helen Sutherland – Murray Grey Breeder – Wodonga VIC
• Elyne Mitchell – A Woman of High River Country – Towong VIC
• Essie Nisbet – Over 20,000 River Welcomes – Echuca VIC

“What commenced as a localised exhibition concept for the township of Mannum developed into a major presentation of which we are all extremely proud”, said Executive Officer of the Mannum Dock Museum, Deb Alexander.

“We have certainly made a personal connection with these women through many hours of research, talking to family members, contemplation and astonishment, as we delved deeper into the intriguing lives of these remarkable women from Goolwa to the Snowy Mountains.”

In addition, we have profiled eleven outstanding local ladies who have shaped the township of Mannum and includes:

• Alvena Arnold – Keeping the Home Fires Burning
• Eileen Dunn – What Glass Ceiling. From Nurse to Director of Nursing
• Bella Randell – Courageous & Capable
• Joan Kreiser – Mannum District Council’s first female Councillor
• Brigitte Schache – From Refugee to Highly Decorated Volunteer
• Eileen Ellis – Famous River Pasties
• Lucy Shearer – An Independent River Woman
• Isobelle Campbell – Chosen to Protect. Custodian of the Ngangaraku and Peramangk People
• Carol Greening - A Big River Heart
• Stella Schultz – Mannum’s living treasure
• Murray Darlings Red Hatters – River fun and friendship

The potential of this exhibition is endless and the Mannum Dock Museum hopes to tour this exhibition across the entire Murray Darling Basin in the years to come. “We have already had interest from over 16 venues across 3 States”, said Rob Bowring, Chairman of the Mannum Dock Museum.

“I feel very proud our Museum’s volunteers and staff have produced an exhibition of national quality profiling these outstanding women’s achievements.”

“I believe he Australian Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour is also very interested in securing the exhibition which is the ultimate in recognition for the township of Mannum, the Museum and the Mid Murray Council”, said Dave Burgess, Mayor of the Mid Murray Council.
“The Murray River has so many stories to tell and I feel very proud of the Mannum Dock Museum volunteers for presenting these profiles on a national level.”

The exhibition was officially opened on the 9th April by Jocelyn Brown, daughter of the late Hilda Creager one of the profiled women and was attended by the Hon Ms Annabel Digance MP. Isabelle Campbell, Custodian of the Ngangaruku People captured everyone with her ‘Welcome to Country” and special guest, Archie Roach OAM, partner of the late Ruby Hunter one of the profiled women who delighted the crowd with his presentation of songs of his life on the River and with Ruby.

The Women of the River Country Exhibition will remain in Mannum for the remainder of the year and will then commence its river tour. A booklet has been produced with extended versions of the short profiles depicted in the exhibition and is currently on sale at the Mannum Visitor Information Centre.

The Women of the River Country Exhibition is on show now at the Arnold Gallery at the Mannum Dock Museum with free entry and is open from Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. For further information please contact Jenny Callander on 85692733 or museum@psmarion.com.

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

For media information and interviews please contact Deb Alexander, Executive Officer of the Mannum Dock Museum on 0414857738 or 180degrees@internode.on.net