

MEDIA RELEASE

Subject: **Paint the Bridge REaD – Mascot Launch**

Contact: **GM Community Development, Kristen Manson**

08 8539 1140/ k.manson@murraybridge.sa.gov.au

Date: **Monday 29 May 2023**

The Paint the Bridge REaD program is thrilled to announce the launch of its mascot at a Reading Day Event in June.

The Murray Bridge community nurtured the Egg by reading, rhyming and singing over the past few months. The program's mascot will hatch during the event on Saturday 3 June at 10.30am at the [Murray Bridge Performing Arts and Function Centre \(Town Hall\)](#).

In addition to the mascot's debut, the event will feature a special guest appearance by Australia's beloved children's singer/songwriter, Peter Combe and a variety of fun activities including a roving magician, face painting, music, BBQ and reading opportunities.

Paint the Bridge REaD was one of a dozen projects to receive a Local Government Early Childhood Community Innovation grant to deliver local and community-led programs, in response to local needs identified through the Australian Government Australian Early Development Census.

The project encourages communities to read, talk, sing and play with children from birth to help develop the skills necessary for reading and writing.

The network brought together the Council, Murray Bridge Library, the Tinyeri Children's Centre Safer Family Services, Murray Bridge Community Centre and ac.care Communities for Children Murraylands to encourage literacy within the community.

The Executive Director of the Paint the Town REaD Program, Barbie Bates said, "More than 20% of Australian children arrive at school without the skills necessary to make the most of their education.

Paint the Bridge REaD has helped increase the amount of reading undertaken by families with children 0-5 years, improving the chances that these kids have during their schooling years and the years beyond."

Local Government Association President Dean Johnson said the Paint the Bridge REaD was another success of the Local Government Early Childhood Community Innovation grants program.

"We've been delighted to be part of this grants program which is helping deliver local and community-led programs to reduce childhood development gaps," President Johnson said.

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“Libraries are a big part of communities and this project is helping children from an early age discover the wonders of reading – developing their imagination, language and critical thinking, which we know encourages them to be lifelong learners as they grow.”

For information about the program, contact Lee Prestwood, Community Safety, Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer at L.Prestwood@murraybridge.sa.gov.au, or visit the Paint the Bridge REaD webpage [here](#).

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