

MEDIA RELEASE



Subject: **Murray Bridge Swimming Centre makes a splash with strong growth and community impact**

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Date: 20 July 2026

The Murray Bridge Swimming Centre has continued its strong growth, recording more than 50,000 visits during the 2025-26 season and reinforcing its place as one of the region's most valued community wellbeing assets.

The Centre welcomed **50,360 visits** throughout the season, an increase of **11.4%** on the previous year and continuing a strong upward trend in participation and community use. This is also a 35% increase from 2022-23 (35,000 visits) highlighting the growing role the facility plays in supporting active, healthy and connected lifestyles across the Rural City of Murray Bridge.

Mayor Wayne Thorley said the Swimming Centre was far more than a swimming pool.

"The Murray Bridge Swimming Centre is a community gathering place that brings people together, supports healthy lifestyles and helps people of all ages stay active and connected," Mayor Thorley said.

"We're incredibly proud to see participation continuing to grow. More people are using the facility than ever before, whether it's learning vital water safety skills, improving their fitness, spending time with family and friends, or simply enjoying being active in a welcoming environment.

"We're committed to keeping the entry and participation costs low, while our investment in the facility is consistent each year. Our programs are set up to offer something for everyone in our community and I'm pleased to say that it's paying off, because the numbers tell a clear story that we're supporting our residents to live healthy, active and fulfilling lives."

The season saw strong participation across the Centre's programs, with **1,670 swimming lessons delivered** and **962 attendances at the new, and very popular aqua aerobics sessions**, demonstrating increasing demand for accessible health and fitness opportunities.

It also benefited from significant Council investment during the year, including refurbishment of the popular waterpark mushroom feature, slides and access stairs, and installation of a new main pool heater to improve the experience for users.

General Manager Infrastructure and Environment Thuyen Vi-Alternetti said Council's ongoing investment reflected its commitment to community wellbeing.

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"This success doesn't happen by accident. It's a reflection of the dedication, professionalism and passion of the team who operate the Murray Bridge Swimming Centre every day. From delivering swimming lessons and fitness programs to maintaining the facility and creating a welcoming environment, their commitment has helped make the Centre a place where people feel encouraged to be active, connected and involved in their community," Ms Vi-Alternetti said.

"Every swimming lesson helps improve water safety. Every aqua aerobics class supports physical and mental wellbeing. Every visit creates opportunities for recreation, fitness and social connection. Those benefits ripple right across our community."

"This is why we continue to invest in the Swimming Centre, its facilities and its programs. This upcoming season is no different as we deliver critical energy efficiency renewal works, including \$288,000 for new pool covers, filtration and heating system improvements."

Council is planning for an even bigger 2026-27 season, with the expansion of its swimming lesson program through the addition of a second instructor. The change will increase lesson capacity, reduce wait times and create opportunities to introduce new offerings, including *Adult Learn to Swim* and private lessons.

The Centre is also preparing to host the *2027 State Country Swimming Championships* in January 2027, expected to attract around **1500 athletes, officials, volunteers and spectators** to the city and generate an economic boost along the way.

Mayor Thorley said this event would further showcase Murray Bridge as a destination for sport, recreation and community participation.

"Hosting an event of this scale is a fantastic opportunity to showcase our facilities and our attractions to visitors from across South Australia," he said.

"The Murray Bridge Swimming Centre is a unique and highly valued community asset, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead as we continue to grow participation, strengthen wellbeing outcomes and create great experiences for our community."

The 2026-2027 Swim Season has been set to start on Saturday, 31 October 2026 and close on Monday, 29 March 2027.

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