

PROGRESS REPORT

QUARTER 1 | 2026-2027

Delivering our Annual Business Plan 2026-27 (1 July - 30 September 2026)

THE RURAL CITY OF MURRAY BRIDGE

Cover Image Glows 2026, Diamond Park Murray Bridge
Image Credit: Jacob Jennings Photography



2026 Glows Event
Image Credit: Jacob Jennings Photography

We acknowledge the Ngarrindjeri people as the traditional owners of this land on which we meet and work. We respect and acknowledge their spiritual connection as the custodians of this land and that their cultural heritage beliefs are still important to the living people today.

STRATEGIC PLANNING & REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Council's Strategic Planning Framework sets out how our suite of Strategic Management Plans work together to provide direction, key moves, data and resources to deliver the vision of Thriving Communities. We are committed to tracking and reporting on our progress against this framework.

COMMUNITY PLAN 2016-2032 — 16 YEAR

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028 — 4 YEAR

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2026-2027 — 1 YEAR

WHAT IS THE PROGRESS REPORT?

A progress report is a way for us to keep the community updated on how we're going with the services and projects we've committed to in our Annual Business Plan. It shows a snapshot of what we've achieved so far, what's still in progress, and how all of this is helping us move toward the bigger goals set out in our Community and Strategic Plans.



Murraylands Skills Centre
Image Credit: Jacob Jennings Photography

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

The Rural City of Murray Bridge Community Plan 2016-2032 identifies our community needs, priorities and aspirations.

The Plan covers four themes including Valued Environment, Great People & Lifestyle, Dynamic Economy and Connected Communities. These Community Plan themes define what our Thriving Communities will see and experience.

Services and Projects within this Progress Report are reported on in line with the Community Plan themes:

GREAT PEOPLE AND LIFESTYLE

Where people are friendly, living well and enjoying all the region has to offer.

People thrive when they experience great people and lifestyle.

DYNAMIC ECONOMY

Where people, business and industry are seizing opportunities to learn, earn and grow.

People thrive when they participate in a dynamic economy.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Where people get involved, contribute to, and are supported by the community around them.

People thrive when they belong to connected communities.

VALUED ENVIRONMENT

Well cared for river, green spaces and built and natural environment that people value and love.

People thrive when they spend time in a valued environment.



Brinkley Reuse Centre
Image Credit: Jacob Jennings Photography

GROWTH DIRECTIONS

A central priority of the Strategic Plan 2024–2028 is how Council will proactively prepare for the continued growth of our Rural City. Our region is entering a pivotal period, marked by strong population growth, increasing investment, and a strategic location that positions Murray Bridge as a key contributor to South Australia's future prosperity. Our focus is to establish a coordinated pathway that harnesses this momentum and delivers sustainable economic, social, and environmental outcomes for our community.

Key growth highlights include:

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE MODEL

We continue to work closely with key Government agencies towards a holistic, future ready infrastructure plan for Murray Bridge. During this quarter our focus has been on transport modelling, which involves data-driven simulation of how people and goods will move around the City in the future, taking into account expected population, housing and employment expansion.

PROGRESS TOWARDS NEW HOUSING FOR MURRAY BRIDGE

The eagerly-awaited Gifford Hill development took an important step forward this quarter, with public consultation occurring on a (developer-led) Code Amendment proposal to support the orderly development of a future master planned community as part of the Gifford Hill growth area. Council carefully reviewed the Code Amendment proposal and provided a submission via the public consultation process.

Council also continued working with the SA Government to develop a Basic Infrastructure Scheme that will pave the way for around 1,000 new homes within the western side of Murray Bridge. Infrastructure Schemes are a relatively new approach for growth planning in South Australia – they help ensure public infrastructure is carefully assessed and planned before growth happens.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH STRATEGY

This quarter, Council adopted its Economic Development & Growth Strategy (EDGS) 2026-2030. Whilst the national economy is experiencing challenging trends due to macroeconomic pressures, Murray Bridge is very well positioned to outperform national trends over the coming years due to its surging population and industrial expansion. This key Strategy identifies ways Council can work to harness growth to strengthen the local economy.

Council's role in economic growth spans from direct delivery (e.g. Visitor Information Servicing, events, business support), through facilitation and partnership (e.g. investment attraction, workforce initiatives), to advocacy and policy leadership (e.g. freight corridors, health services, access to tertiary and upskilling educational services). One of the important aspects of the Strategy is its focus on "wellbeing economy", which is based on the idea that economic growth should also improve living standards, social inclusion and environmental resilience.

FINANCIAL POSITION

September 2026 ('000)	September YTD Actual	September YTD Budget	Variance	Annual Budget
Total Income	$12,327	$13,130	($803)	**$53,251**
Total Expenses	$13,066	$13,431	$365	**$52,682**
OPERATING SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)	($739)	($301)	($438)	**$569**

COST PRESSURES

During the first quarter, Council continued to manage the costs of delivering services and maintaining community facilities and infrastructure, including materials, contractors and asset maintenance. The timing of grant funding also affected Council's financial position, with some funding for this financial year received in advance last year. Council will consider these matters, along with projects continuing from the previous year, through its first budget review.



Murraylands Skills Centre
Image Credit: Jacob Jennings Photography

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

Each quarter, this report will feature a different Service Spotlight, highlighting a specific service area within our Council that contributes to our vision of Thriving Communities. These updates aim to share progress, showcase impact, and keep you informed on the work happening across our Rural City.

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

Becoming an Australian citizen is something to celebrate. Citizenship ceremonies mark this important milestone in the lives of new citizens; it is where the Australian citizenship pledge is made and is the final step in the journey to becoming an Australian.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge hosts Citizenship Ceremonies as they are an important service we provide that marks a very special milestone for members of our community.

These ceremonies are an opportunity for people who have chosen to make Australia their home to formally become Australian citizens and celebrate their connection to our community.

On 17 September, Australian Citizenship Day, Council hosted a Citizenship Ceremony where we had the privilege of welcoming 23 new Australian citizens.

It was a wonderful occasion, with new citizens and their families coming together to celebrate this significant moment. Each new citizen brings their own unique story, culture and experiences to our community, and it was lovely to see them take this important step in their Australian journey.

Citizenship ceremonies are a great example of how Council helps create a welcoming and connected community, and we're proud to play a part in celebrating such an important milestone with our residents.



Australian Citizenship Day Citizenship Ceremony 2026
Image Credit: RCMB

GREAT PEOPLE AND LIFESTYLE

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

204
Registered RCMB Volunteers

1,113
Gallery Visitors

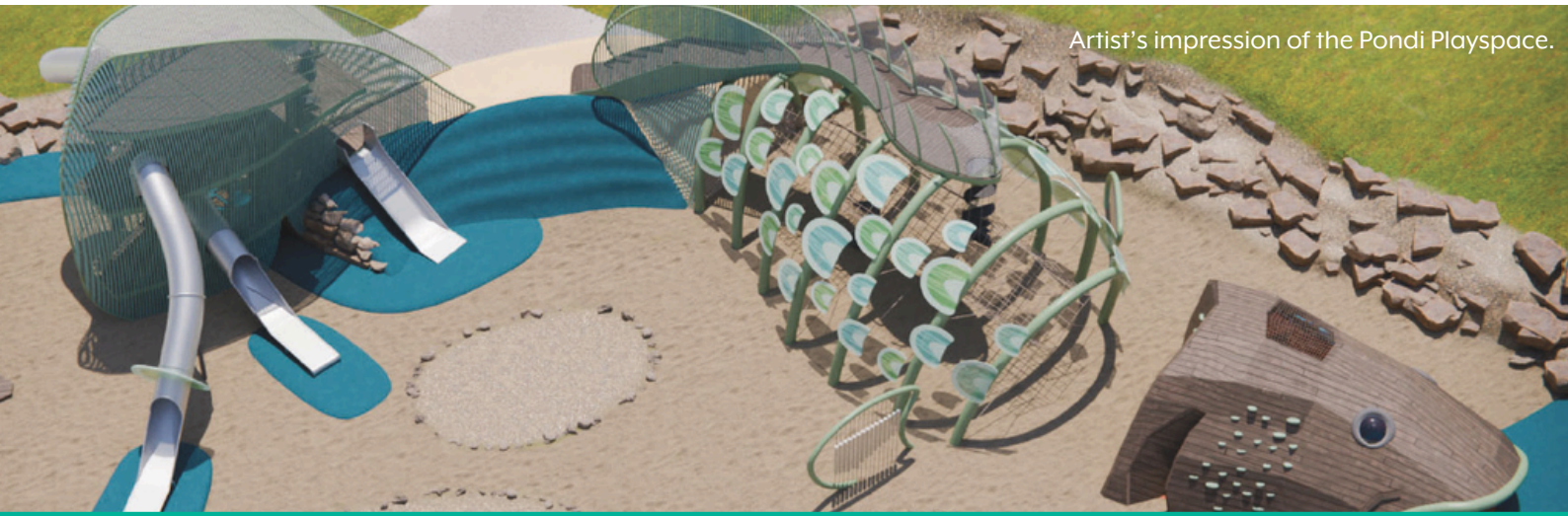
15,106
Library Visitations (Physical)

KEY PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Open Space Directions	The Open Space Directions report has been completed and endorsed by Council.
Basic Infrastructure Scheme (BIS)	Council continue to be a part of the working group with the Growth and Infrastructure Coordination Unit (GICU) of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in obtaining and reviewing the information required to complete the Basic Infrastructure Scheme (BIS).

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Sturt Reserve Play Precinct (Pondi)	Council undertook a project to allow local businesses to submit EOI's to increase visibility to Tier 1 tenderer to work with them on elements of the project. Positively, more than 20 local businesses applied. Following this, the open tender process for Tier 1 operators was completed and tender evaluation started. Preferred supplier to be identified and recommended to Council in October. $8.3M project remains on track for completion in 2028.



Artist's impression of the Pondi Playspace.

DYNAMIC ECONOMY

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1,240
Visitors to the Visitor Information Centre

Economic Development & Growth Strategy
Endorsed by Council

3,000 +
People attended Glows

KEY PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Regional Study Hub Program	There are currently 245 people studying across the Murray River Study Hub, the Kangaroo Island Study Hub and the Fleurieu Study Hub. There has also been a total of 55 new registrations this quarter.
Quick Wins Grants	A total of $5,351 in Quick Wins Grants were distributed in the first quater. Monteith Hall, Brinkley Hall and the Teen Challenege Emergency Relief program were successful in obtaining these grants.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Blackspot - Verdun/Gray Street Intersection Upgrade	Grant application was successful and the draft agreement is being finalised. Works due for completion in June 2028 to meet grant milestones, however construction works programmed for completion by the end of April 2027.
Sealed Road Program	We delivered sealing works on 11 roads during Quarter 1, enhancing the local transport network and improving road accessibility. The roads sealed were Amanda Street, Burdekin Avenue, Frances Street, Humphrey Street, Murray Avenue, Old Princes Highway, Parish Crescent, Pelican Court, South Bokara Road, Verdun Road and Weigall Avenue.



Visitor Information Centre
Image Credit: RCMB

VALUED ENVIRONMENT

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

168
Volunteer Hours Spent Removing Graffiti

1,259
Tonnes of Waste Diverted from Landfill

KEY PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Pomberuk (Hume Reserve) Project	Development approval has been received. Work is now progressing on the required licences with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), along with finalisation of the funding agreement.
Cat Management Engagement	Council Members received a briefing on the proposed Community Engagement Process. The purpose of the engagement is to gather community and stakeholder perspectives to inform future cat management initiatives.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Edwards Square Electronic Sign	The replacement of the electronic sign at Edwards Square has been completed, with the new sign now fully operational and delivering improved digital communication to the community.
Three Lane Cricket Net - Johnstone Park	Council provided funding through its Sport and Recreation Facility Grant program to support the replacement of the three-lane cricket net at Johnstone Park. Works were completed in late August and celebrated with a media event on 10 September with Mayor Wayne Thorley, General Manager Community Development David Waters, the Hon Hilton Gumbys MLC and Imperials Cricket Club President Wayne Gilgen.
BMX Dirt Jump Track	Development Application for the bike park approved with works scheduled to commence on 12 October 2026 and due for completion by end of December 2026.



BMX Dirt Jump Track
Image Credit: RCMB

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1,200,000
Views on our Facebook Page

144
Attendances at the Empowerability Program

KEY PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Implementation and Reporting	To officially launch the Rural City of Murray Bridge Innovate RAP - 2026-2028 two Weaving Workshops were facilitated by Mardawi on Friday 17 July 2026 at the Local Government Centre and the Depot for Council staff. Mardawi - Sister Weavers is a collective of Ngarrindjeri women dedicated to keeping the ancient art of weaving alive while sharing its beauty with future generations. The works produced by each staff member will be woven together by Mardawi to create a larger piece to be displayed at a Council site upon completion.
Regional Public Health Plan	Section 52 Reporting on the Regional Public Health & Wellbeing Plans was compiled for the Murraylands Riverland Local Government Association during Quarter 1. The South Australia State Public Health Plan 2026 (Healthy | Liveable | Connected) officially launched on 21 August 2026. Work required for the new State Plan will commence in 2027.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Project Name	Progress Update
Rehoming of Bertha the Bunyip Project	Following a commitment made during the most recent State Election, Council has received the fully executed grant agreement from the Department for Housing and Urban Development to support the rehoming of Bertha the Bunyip. The grant agreement was received on 28 September 2026, and planning is now underway to construct a new home for Bertha at her current location.



RCMB Staff Weaving Session - Maradwi
Image Credit: RCMB

THE RURAL CITY OF
MURRAY BRIDGE

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Adelaide Road Linear Park
Image Credit: RCMB