

MEDIA RELEASE

Subject: **Council Shifts Focus from New Year's Eve Fireworks to other Event Alternatives**

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Date: **Wednesday 25 October 2023**

At a special Council meeting held on Monday 23 October, Council considered its Event Program (\$100k) for the remainder of 2023/24. Under consideration by the Council was the inclusion or otherwise of a New Year's Eve event including fireworks at an expected cost of up to \$70k.

Following much debate the Council decided not to fund a New Years Eve Program for 2023, but rather invest in:

- Tour Down Under Activation
- Murray Bridge Fringe Street Party
- Murray River Glows (inclusive of fireworks at Sturt Reserve)
- An outer township event to be determined

Heather Barclay, the Chief Executive Officer of the Rural City of Murray Bridge, acknowledged that the decision to forgo the New Year's Eve fireworks might disappoint the community. However, she expressed confidence in the continuation of the successful Murray River Glows event during the winter months, offering a higher return on investment.

Heather stated, "A summer fireworks display is highly weather-dependent and there is a high risk of last-minute cancellations or postponements. In contrast, the inaugural Murray River Glows festival's success in 2023 has given us the confidence to repeat this event in 2024. Since this event is held during the winter, the risks are significantly reduced."

In the wake of the cancellation of the New Year's Eve fireworks in 2022 due to flooding in the area, the Rural City of Murray Bridge introduced the alternative event

"Murray Bridge Glows". This event proved highly successful, featuring a captivating lighting display alongside fireworks, attracting over ten thousand attendees.

It is also important to note that, Council continues to support community events, some of which include fireworks, scheduled for the spring/summer season, such as:

- On 18 November 2023, the Kookaburra Homes Murray Bridge Riverfront Christmas Festival will feature fireworks as part of a free, family-friendly event.
- On 10 December 10 2023 the Murray Bridge Christmas Carols will be held, offering another free, family-friendly event.