

Open Space and Public Realm Policy



Policy Number	POL-OPENREALMV1
File Number	3/POL/OPENREALM/2
Responsible Officer	Director – Development and Community Services
Adopted	17 March 2026
Last reviewed at Council Meeting	17 March 2026
Minute Number	C03-26/008
Due date of next Review	17 March 2030

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to guide the planning, development, and management of open spaces and public realms, ensuring they are accessible, sustainable, and enhance community wellbeing.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Open Space** means land that is publicly accessible and primarily set aside for recreation, environmental protection, or community use. This includes parks, reserves, natural areas, sports fields, and green corridors.
- 2.2 **Public Realm** means all spaces, both outdoors and sometimes indoors, that are open and accessible to everyone. This includes streets, plazas, town squares, footpaths, and other areas where people can gather, move, and interact.

3. Scope

- 3.1 Open spaces and public realms are essential components of vibrant, liveable communities. They contribute to residents' wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and community cohesion.
- 3.2 This Policy sets out the guiding principles for the planning, development, management, and enhancement of open spaces and public realms under Council ownership or care and control.

4. Policy

4.1 Accessibility and Inclusivity

- 4.1.1 Ensure that all open spaces and public realms are accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds
- 4.1.2 Design spaces to be welcoming, safe, and inclusive, removing physical and social barriers wherever possible.

4.2 Quality and Functionality

- 4.2.1 Provide high-quality open spaces that offer diverse opportunities for recreation, relaxation, social interaction, and cultural expression.
- 4.2.2 Spaces should be flexible to accommodate a wide range of activities and community needs.

4.3 Environmental Sustainability

- 4.3.1 Promote sustainable design, construction, and management practices in all open spaces and public realms.
- 4.3.2 Protect and enhance biodiversity, prioritise native vegetation, and incorporate water-sensitive urban design and climate resilience measures.

4.4 Community Engagement

- 4.4.1 Engage meaningfully with the community throughout the planning, design, and management process.
- 4.4.2 Encourage active participation and stewardship, recognising local knowledge and values in decision-making.

4.5 Connectivity and Integration

- 4.5.1 Develop open spaces and public realms that are well-connected to surrounding neighbourhoods, transport networks, and other community facilities.
- 4.5.2 Support active transport options such as walking and cycling, and create linkages that enhance movement and accessibility.

4.6 Safety and Amenity

- 4.6.1 Design and manage spaces to promote safety, comfort, and amenity for all users.
- 4.6.2 Incorporate appropriate lighting, sightlines, and maintenance regimes, and foster positive social behaviour through well-considered layouts and programming.

4.7 Heritage and Identity

- 4.7.1 Respect and celebrate the unique history, culture, and identity of the local area through the design and management of open spaces and public realms.
- 4.7.2 Protect significant heritage features and incorporate local stories, art, and landscape elements.

4.8 Health and Wellbeing

- 4.8.1 Recognise the important role that open spaces and public realms play in supporting physical, mental, and social wellbeing.
- 4.8.2 Encourage active lifestyles, social connection, and opportunities for relaxation and stress relief.

4.9 Equity and Distribution

- 4.9.1 Strive for fair and equitable distribution of open spaces and public realms across the community, ensuring all residents have reasonable access to quality spaces regardless of location or socioeconomic status.

4.10 Adaptability and Innovation

- 4.10.1 Embrace innovation and adaptability in the face of changing community needs, demographic trends, and environmental challenges.
- 4.10.2 Monitor emerging best practices and technologies to continuously improve open space and public realm provision.

4.11 Community Land

- 4.11.1 All open space under Council ownership will be classified as Community Land, and is subject to a Community Land Management Plan that outlines the ongoing management and maintenance of the open space.
- 4.11.2 A Community Land Register, maintained by Council, is available to the public.

5. Implementation

The Council will integrate these principles into all relevant planning instruments, development assessments, capital works, and ongoing management programs.

6. Policy Responsibility

The Director – Development and Community Services is responsible for ensuring the proper operation of this Policy.

7. Availability/Accessibility

- 7.1 This Policy and Council's [Fees & Charges Register](#) are available to be downloaded free of charge from Council's website: www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au.
- 7.2 This Policy is available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours. Hard copies, for a fee in accordance with Council's schedule of Fees and Charges, can be provided upon request.

8. Legislative Framework / Other References

- 8.1 [Local Government Act 1999](#)
- 8.2 [Community Land Management Plans](#)
- 8.3 [Service Provision Policy](#)
- 8.4 [Open Space Contributions Policy](#)

9. Document History

This Policy shall be reviewed at least every four (4) years or more frequently if legislation or Council requires.

Version	Adopted	Minute	Description of Change
1	17 March 2026	C03-26/008	Adopted