

Q1. Why is Council reviewing the operation of the riverboats now?

Council is reviewing all of its operations to ensure they are financially and operationally sustainable. The riverboats are one of our most significant and valued assets, but they do require ongoing spending by Council on maintenance and operations. They are also heavily reliant on volunteers to maintain and run the riverboats. This review is about finding the best long-term model, so the boats continue to benefit the community and region.

Q2. How much does it currently cost to run the riverboats?

Council currently invests around \$200,000 per year to keep the fleet operating. In return, the vessels generate an estimated \$1.2 million in wider community and economic benefit each year through tourism, business spending, and volunteer contributions. Importantly, the riverboats are supported by a dedicated group of volunteers who generously give over 15,000 hours a year to their restoration, maintenance and operations. Without this contribution, the cost to retain and operate the riverboats would likely be much higher.

Q3. Has Council already made a decision about the future of the riverboats?

No decision has been made. Council is seeking community and stakeholder feedback first. A priority is to ensure that all three vessels remain in the Mid Murray region. Council is keen to explore all options for future operational models.

Q4. What options are being considered?

Options include:

- Council continuing to own and operate the vessels
- Council owning the vessels but leasing operations to another entity
- Outsourcing some or all operations to not-for-profit or private operators
- Retaining vessels as static displays

We want the community's input on which options are most viable and valued.

Q5. Does this mean the boats will stop operating?

No. The heritage riverboats are an important link to Mid Murray's history – and part of Mid Murray's identity as a region. Council is committed to keeping the heritage vessels. The review is about how they can be best operated into the future to ensure they continue to be a highly visible reminder of our heritage, and a drawcard for visitors.

Q6. What about volunteers?

Volunteers have long played an essential role in the restoration, maintenance and operation of our heritage vessels. Over 150 volunteers contributed more than 15,000 hours to working on and with the riverboats in the past year alone. Council values their contribution highly and any future model will need to recognise and support their role.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Review of Maritime Assets and Operations



Q7. How can people have their say?

Through the online survey on Councils [Mid Murray Your Say Page](#) - open until 31 October 2025 and written submissions to postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au. All feedback will be reported back to Council before any decision is made.

Q8. What do I do if I am interested in operating one of Council's vessels?

If you are an individual, business or part of a community organisation that may be interested in leasing part of Council's heritage riverboat fleet, please email postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au to arrange a further discussion.

Please note that Council has not set any terms and conditions at this time except for retaining the vessels within Mid Murray region.

You are also welcome to complete an online survey on Councils [Mid Murray Your Say Page](#) - open until 31 October 2025 and written submissions to postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au

Q9. How will people know the outcome?

Feedback provided through the community consultation will be summarised and presented to the Mid Murray Heritage & Maritime Committee and Council. The outcome will be shared publicly through Council minutes, media releases, Council's Mid Murray Your Say page, and direct updates to stakeholders.