

Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy

Submissions Summary Report

March 2026

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Introduction

On 4 February 2026 Council publicly notified the Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy and invited submissions (See **Appendices 1 – 3**).

Three submissions were received at the close of the engagement period.

Council prepares a Submissions Summary Report. Council's summary essentially lists the main points made by each submitter, and what outcome they seek from Council's decisions. All non-confidential submissions are available in **Appendix 4**.

Where amendments have been sought by a submitter, red underlined text has been used to indicate recommended additions to the provision and red strikethrough to indicate recommendations for the removal of the proposed text.

It should be noted that the Response and Action columns are draft recommendations presented to Council as part of the decision-making process. Consequently, Council may resolve to accept them with or without amendments in the final document.

Privacy

Please note that only the name and location of each submitter is detailed in the report. All personal details in the original submission contained in the appendices are redacted to maintain privacy.

Any commentary that is considered defamatory or inappropriate have been redacted.

Submission Summary and Response

Open Space and Public Realm Policy

Rachel Paues, Big Bend

Submission#/Point #	Provision	Submission Point Summary	Decision Sought	Response	Action
1.1	General	Boat Launch Facility: The boat ramp at Big Bend is unsafe and inadequate; needs extension, sealing, and upgrade to prevent vehicle/trailer damage. Poor condition forces use of distant ramps at Swan Reach and Nildottie.	Local infrastructure needs to be repaired.	Noted, comments are outside the scope and intent of the Policy. Comments referred to Infrastructure and Field Services Department for information.	No amendment.
1.2	General	Access Road Condition: Access road is deteriorating due to traffic and weather; current grading is insufficient. More frequent and higher-quality maintenance is needed to prevent vehicle damage.	Local infrastructure needs to be repaired.	As per 1.1 above.	No amendment.
1.3	General	Public Amenity, Environmental Degradation, and Fire Safety: Free camping area lacks toilets, bins, and waste facilities, causing sanitation and environmental issues.	Better amenities to be installed in free camping space at Big Bend.	As per 1.1 above.	No amendment.

		Dense vegetation and unmanaged campfires create significant bushfire risk, worsened by single road access.			
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Open Space Contributions Policy

Chris Carter, Swan Reach

Submission#/Point #	Provision	Submission Point Summary	Decision Sought	Response	Action
2.1	General	Rural Councils often have abundant open space, so requiring land (12.5%) can create a maintenance liability rather than a benefit.	Ensure policy does not create maintenance liabilities for the ongoing operations of Council.	Noted, the existing Policy includes flexibility in allowing for a financial contribution in lieu of land contribution.	No amendment.
2.2	General	Policy should allow Council discretion/negotiation so contributions don't discourage development where land values are lower.	Consider flexibility in the policy to allow negotiation between Council and developers.	Noted, the Policy is considered to allow for adequate negotiation opportunities for both parties, reflecting the Section 198(1) of the <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i> .	No amendment.

Open Space and Public Realm Policy

Kitty Schiansky and Tony Farrell, Black Hill

Submission#/Point #	Provision	Submission Point Summary	Decision Sought	Response	Action
3.1	General	Submission provides personal background and context to submission, and raises a number of general matters not specific to the Policy.	Nil	Noted.	No amendment.
3.2	General	Comments alleging the neglect of public realm assets (e.g. damaged seating, lack of maintenance oversight).	Improvement in maintenance and management of assets within public spaces.	Noted. All assets managed in accordance with current Asset Management Plans and budget allocation.	No amendment.
3.3	4.1 to 4.11	Concerns that Council's focus on growth and development is undermining community values, heritage, environmental sustainability, and equitable access to open space and public realm areas.	Consideration of intensity of growth and development.	Disagree, intent of Policy is to guide provision of open space and public realm as planning for growth and development is implemented through various means including land use and infrastructure planning.	No amendment.

3.4	General	Concerns about the ongoing mismanagement of John S Christian Reserve, including fire risk, illegal camping, vandalism, wood theft, lack of signage, and failure to implement the adopted management plan.	Council focus on John S Christian Reserve and improvement of management of the site.	Noted, comments referred to both Regulatory Services and Infrastructure and Field Services Departments for information. All open space reserves managed in accordance with current service levels, and budget allocations.	No amendment.
3.5	General	Concerns raised about environmental protection and safety in other areas, including illegal motorbike use on road reserves.	Council to act on the impact that motorbike riding is having on the community and impact of tourist attractors.	Noted, Policy not intended to address illegal matters.	No amendment.
3.6	General	Status and protection of Hermann J Gass Bird Sanctuary.	Would like to see Sanctuary officially gazetted.	Noted, sanctuaries are a less common method of setting aside land for conservation. Council to explore if Minister declared the land to be a sanctuary pursuant to the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972</i> .	No amendment.
3.7	General	Prioritisation of tourist infrastructure (e.g. carparks without shade) over community amenity.	Accommodate shading within the car park at Mannum Green.	Noted, site developed in accordance with planning approval.	No amendment.
3.8	General	Call for Council to declare a Climate Emergency, more proactive sustainability and resilience planning.	Council to declare a climate emergency and increase focus on environmental issues.	Noted, Council has identified climate change as an action pending available budget and resources.	No amendment.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Public Notice



Mid Murray Council resolved to endorse the following two draft Policies and is seeking community feedback:

Open Space and Public Realm Policy

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

Open Space Contributions Policy

The Policy seeks to determine the open space requirements associated with Development Applications for land divisions.

Consultation begins on Wednesday 4 February 2026.

Where to obtain copies

A copy of the draft Policies are available for inspection on Council's Your Say www.engagement.mid-murray.sa.gov.au or at Council Offices located at Mannum, Cambrai, Morgan or Blanchetown.

How to provide feedback

Written submissions are invited on the draft Policies and can be received through the following means:

- Mid Murray Your Say feedback form www.engagement.mid-murray.sa.gov.au;
- Letter addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Mid Murray Council, PO Box 28, Mannum SA 5238; or
- Email postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au.

Submissions will be received until 5pm Friday 27 February 2026.

For more information, contact Executive Assistant – Development and Community Services, Melissa Marschall on 8569 0100.

Ben Scales
Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 2 – Social Media Posts

Posts published on 4, 16 and 23 February 2026

Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy

Council has released the draft Open Space and Public Realm Policy and the draft Open Space Contributions Policy and is seeking feedback from the community.

The draft Policies are designed to ensure open spaces and public realms are accessible, sustainable, and contribute positively to the health, wellbeing, and lifestyle of the community.

The draft Policies align with the Mid Murray Council Strategic Plan, supporting goals such as vibrant townships, active lifestyles, and the preservation of natural assets.

The Open Space and Public Realm Policy establish processes for the planning and management of open spaces and public realms under the care and control of Council.

The Open Space Contributions Policy provides clear requirements for developers regarding open space provision in land divisions in accordance with the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.

These Policies set a framework for future open space investment and management.

To view the proposed Policies and provide feedback, please visit Council's Your Say page at <https://engagement.mid-murray.sa.gov.au/>



Appendix 3 – Email to Subscribers

From: MMC Communications
Sent: Thursday, 5 February 2026 3:08 PM
Subject: Public Consultation - Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy

Dear Mid Murray Council subscriber,

Council is currently seeking community feedback on the following:

Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy

Council recently resolved to endorse the draft *Open Space and Public Realm Policy* and *Open Space Contributions Policy*.

The draft Policies are designed to ensure open spaces and public realms are accessible, sustainable, and contribute positively to the health, wellbeing, and lifestyle of the community.

The draft Policies align with the Mid Murray Council Strategic Plan, supporting goals such as vibrant townships, active lifestyles, and the preservation of natural assets.

The *Open Space and Public Realm Policy* establish processes for the planning and management of open spaces and public realms under the care and control of Council.

The *Open Space Contributions Policy* provides clear requirements for developers regarding open space provision in land divisions in accordance with the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

These Policies set a framework for future open space investment and management.

Consultation begins on Wednesday 4 February 2026 and closes 5pm Friday 27 February 2026.

For more information and to view the proposed Policies please visit Council's [Your Say](#).

Where to obtain copies

A copy of the proposed Policies are available on Council's [Your Say](#) or at Council Offices located at Mannum, Cambrai, Morgan or Blanchetown.

How to provide feedback

Written submissions are invited on the draft Policies and can be received through the following means:

- Mid Murray Your Say feedback form;
- Letter addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Mid Murray Council, PO Box 28, Mannum SA 5238; or
- Email postbox@mid-murray.sa.gov.au.

Submissions will be received until 5pm Friday 27 February 2026.

[Click here](#) to unsubscribe.

Mid Murray Council

Appendix 4 – Submissions

Mid Murray Your Say

Feedback Form – Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy Results

Feb 04, 2026 - Feb 05, 2026

Project: Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy

Form: Feedback Form – Open Space and Public Realm Policy and Open Space Contributions Policy

Tool Type: Form

Activity ID: 44

Exported: 2026-03-02 10:01:59

Exported By: NDavis

Filter By: No filters applied.

Q1 First and Last Name

Short Text Rachel Paues

Q2 Email

Email

Q3 Suburb

Short Text Big Bend

Q4 Open Space and Public Realm Policy

Long Text

1. Boat Launch Facility (Boat Ramp)

The existing boat ramp at Big Bend is inadequate, hazardous, and urgently requires a comprehensive upgrade. This issue is particularly frustrating as our community contributes substantial rates, and we understand that Council funds were previously allocated for this upgrade but have not been utilised.

Specific concerns regarding the boat ramp include:

- Ramp Extension: The ramp requires extension both into the water and further up the bank/hillside.
- Safety Hazard: The unsealed gravel embankment leading to the current concrete ramp poses a severe safety risk, causing vehicles to slide uncontrollably when reversing, which is extremely dangerous, especially given the concurrent use of the area by campers and fishers.
- Vehicle Damage: In our personal experience, the current ramp design has caused significant damage to boat trailers. The ramp ends abruptly, causing trailers to drop off the concrete edge, resulting in the A-frame striking and scraping the concrete.
- Inconvenience: The damaged state of the ramp forces residents to utilise alternative, distant ramps at Swan Reach or Nildottie, creating unnecessary travel and inconvenience when retrieving the boat to return it to the Big Bend property.

2. Access Road Condition

The public access road leading to the Big Bend properties and public campsite is currently in a state that requires more frequent and substantive maintenance. While periodic grading occurs, the combined effects of recent heavy rain and continually escalating traffic flow, particularly from large caravans utilising the free camping areas, have rendered the road condition highly detrimental. The road poses a persistent risk of vehicle damage, including substantial stone chipping to cars and boat trailers, and even damage to boats themselves, despite traveling at reduced speeds. Given this is a public thoroughfare experiencing high usage, the frequency and quality of grading must be dramatically increased.

3. Public Amenity, Environmental Degradation, and Fire Safety

Our beautiful location is promoted for its "dark sky" status and offers free camping. However, this promotion has not been supported by the necessary infrastructure, leading to significant environmental and safety hazards:

- Lack of Facilities: There is a complete absence of public amenities, including bins, toilets and waste disposal facilities, in the free camping area.
- Environmental Health Risk: The lack of facilities has resulted in pervasive environmental degradation, including the unsightly and unsanitary presence of copious amounts of toilet paper and human fecal matter throughout the surrounding bushland.
- Fire Safety Hazard: The post-flood regrowth in the camping area is dense. This, combined with instances of improperly extinguished campfires, presents an enormous and unacceptable fire risk. With only a single access road serving the Big Bend properties, a bushfire in this area would create a potentially inescapable situation for residents and a catastrophic threat to our homes.

Q5 Open Space Contributions Policy

Long Text

Response No:
2

Contribution ID: 785

Member ID:

Date Submitted: Feb 04, 2026, 03:02 PM

Q1 First and Last Name

Short Text Chris Carter

Q2 Email

Email

Q3 Suburb

Short Text Swan Reach

Q4 Open Space and Public Realm Policy

Long Text

Q5 Open Space Contributions Policy

Long Text

Historically, open space contribution is more relevant to metropolitan Councils, where "open space" is at a premium. With rural Councils, often Open Space is in abundance. If a Developer provides a reserve (12.5% of area), it can become a liability for Council rather than an asset. With the land value component being lower in the Country, it is often in the Developers interest to provide the reserve land rather than pay a contribution to the open space fund. There should be some consideration for negotiation by Council for a mutually beneficial outcome. The policy should allow some discretion. Teh payment should not be an inhibiting factor discouraging orderly Development.

SUBMISSION TO OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC REALM CONSULTATION 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views and opinions in this matter. After reading the Purpose, Definitions and Scope of this policy we understand that Open Space is primarily set aside for community use meaning residents and ratepayers and the public realm is open to all including visitors and tourists.

Firstly, some background.

I, Kitty Schiansky, grew up in [REDACTED] in the 60's and 70's and am familiar with the history of the town having attended the [REDACTED] that evolved into a Primary School as the new High School was built, and in later life worked at the [REDACTED] during its transition when the Primary School closed. I grew up with school concerts and movies shown in the Mannum Institute. We swam in the public swimming pools at the Mannum Recreation Grounds (commonly known as the Rec and now named Maryanne Reserve) that were demolished to expand the car park for the Riverboat tourism. This area was originally set aside by the Shearer brothers for the use and recreation of the Mannum community. The riverbank area between the rowing club and the bowling club was scrub, willows and a series of little wooden jetties. Our community Open Space was taken over by the Public Realm.

I remember a busy and thriving small town where everyone knew each other and stopped in the Main Street for a chat. It was intergenerational the older folk new us as someone's son or daughter. We knew the older folk as Mr or Mrs so and so. The Shearer factory ran day and night shifts, and the main street foundry was operational.

It was safe to swim across the river, and it was clean enough to open your eyes under the water and look for freshwater mussels under the jetty. Turtles were plentiful and you had to dodge them on the Purnong Road. There were no jet skis, the most common boat was a tinnie, and skis were made of wood.

The local kids were allowed to open the wooden gates of the punt (ferry) when there was only 1 in operation. The Marion lay in the drydock and we would pay 5 cents to go aboard during Summer and jump off the top deck into the river. There was a petrol bowser on the river at the back of the car dealer that was next door. There were 3 car dealerships and 3 petrol refuelling bowzers in the main street.

The top floor of the Post Office housed the Telephone exchange where you knew the ladies who would plug you through when you rang and asked to speak with anyone. Phones had 3 numbers and were in your house or in a phone box. We had a renowned soft drink manufacturer. There were 3 butchers, a fruit and veg shop, 3 banks, the current hardware store was a four mill with Eudunda Farmers and an Emporium that sold almost anything. You could book up things at the shops and all the kids stayed out playing until the sun set. All the children and many adults rode bikes and the milk got delivered every morning in a billy can. The Newsagent sold firecrackers on Guy Fawkes night and every year there was a street party on Christmas Eve when the owner of the newsagent would be dressed as Santa and driven down the main street in the back of his old Holden ute. It would stop in front of the Post Office, and he would hand out bags of lollies to all the kids. As the years went by, you were always assured to catch up with old friends when they came home for the Christmas Party.

Businesses were mainly family owner operators. 2 or 3 generations worked there. They worked to make a living not make huge profits.

The council had 1 gardener, and he kept the town looking beautiful. I could go on.

Mannum was a tight and thriving community. Life was simple and relatively safe. The sense of security and community was strong... At least for straight white folk. We had 4 distinct seasons whereas now we have the words Sprinter and Sprummer bandied about. The hottest on record, the wettest on record are phrases that are becoming normalised

Sure, not everything was perfect... boys would get the cane or a chalk duster thrown at them by teachers, women and children were relegated to the ladies lounge in public drinking houses (which were closed on Sundays unless you were a bonafide traveller). Driving at night meant a grill and windscreen full of squashed bugs but at least the number of bugs meant that the ecosystem was healthy.

Now simple river shacks are replaced by McMansions, and parking in the main street is getting harder with the size of gas guzzling utes, caravans and boats taking up space and blocking lines of sight if you have to turn onto a road.

I write all this down as council's guiding principles for the planning, development, management, and enhancement of open spaces and public realms are documented as

- Accessibility and Inclusivity
- Quality and Functionality
- Environmental Sustainability
- Community Engagement
- Connectivity and Integration
- Safety and Amenity
- Heritage and Identity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Equity and Distribution
- Adaptability and Innovation
- Community Land

It is my belief that council's priority is for perpetual growth and development and that comes at the expense of most of your guiding principles above. The word sustainable is used frequently in council/business plans but the actions of council are fundamentally unsustainable and lead to the demise of community values in favour of profit driven enterprises with poorly paid, menial jobs that are apparently due to disappear with automation and AI. Now there are promised jobs in the production of military arms components. I sure hope that our once bustling and proud agricultural machinery factory isn't converted to such.

I now live at [REDACTED] with my partner Tony. We have purchased properties not to profit from, but to protect. 2 are heritage listed for their unique vegetation, (1 having exceptional mallee wetland of the Marne running through it). Another is a historic cottage that was in danger of falling into ruin.

As such we contribute substantially to MMC via our rates.

I am a member of the Landscape Boards Marne Saunders Reference Group and the council's Strategic Growth and Economic Activation Committee. We also organise community and arts events and volunteer with Landcare.

We also contribute the wider community by volunteering our time and energy.

In 2011 we helped establish the committee to get the council to purchase the original area school site in Mannum. We had big ideas and solutions to establish an amazing open space and public realm site. Unfortunately, the council only purchased the main school building and enough space for the men's shed and car parking with the rest of the area becoming wall to wall unsustainable housing. The committee and many residents and ratepayers were keen on developing it as a green, intergenerational, community space. It was another lost opportunity.

As we live off grid with power and water in a drying climate, we head to Mannum regularly to use the laundromat. I want to acknowledge the good work of Henry who rents the council premises that house this business. Because council was saying it had no money, he had to repair the filthy and dilapidated interior and refurbish it personally. I know that locals and visitors alike utilise these facilities and appreciate the new surrounds. Ratepayers, residents & tourists, homeless and affluent alike utilise the laundromat and as such I believe it falls within council's Public Realm.

The beautiful black granite seat opposite the laundromat was broken for many months before being repaired by council. Unfortunately has been repaired very poorly and is extremely uncomfortable to sit on. Perhaps it was made so the homeless can't sleep on it as is the norm for some councils these days. We put it to council, that council staff would have been using the blower vac in the area for months while the seat was broken and also emptying the bin which is only a couple of steps away from it but it was obviously not reported or considered important enough to fix until I mentioned randomly it at a SGEAC meeting.
Public Realm issue.

Two of our properties abut John S Christian Reserve which, under council's definition is Open Space but treated as Public Realm. As residents and ratepayers, we have had many years of ongoing problems with the mis management of this reserve, located on the Marne River, and home to rare species of vegetation and a haven for wildlife. For years people having been harvesting firewood from the reserve and since covid it has become a popular camping spot especially with homeless folk as it is free.

Of course, when people camp, they like to have a fire no matter the weather conditions. Since 2018 I have documented 4 fires at Christian Reserve, all started by campers. The last one was from a homeless regular who had a comfort fire and thought he'd put it out before he left. 2 days later after burning in roots underground it found its way to a tree and a grass fire erupted (see photo below). Our bush heritage block where we live is on the hill directly behind the fire, that if not for a neighbour passing by would have gone unnoticed for hours.

The fires are attended by volunteers who give up their time and put their lives at risk to protect the community and property.

For the council to not manage this risk is unacceptable!

Might I add that still up on council's tourism website, is a photo of a happy family next to the river with a campfire at the base of a river red gum. I have mentioned this shockingly ignorant promotional image at a SGEAC meeting, but it is still there.



Campers also like to explore the area and regularly trespass onto our private properties looking around. The historic cottage we purchased to protect, was vandalised and had all its windows smashed even though the previous owner had many private property signs up. We had a friend park her van on our house block as a mental health place of peace and respite. That van was vandalised and had to be taken to the wreckers (see photos). We have a caravan that had its windows smashed, had wood and artifacts stolen from our ruins and confronted people who have just wanted to go for a walk and not cared about fencing. I have previously made complaints to council and contacted the police plus have investigated purchasing council land to protect our sanctuary, but nothing has happened. I also approached Landcare about a plan to work with community members and council to rehabilitate and protect the reserve but due to the transfer of a crucial council staff member and the potential burden on Landcare, the plan did not progress. About a year ago I reported wood theft to council who sent out a field officer who told me council would be putting up some signage within a few weeks but were stuck on the wording and deciding which budget would pay for it. There is still no sign. Surely educating tourists should come out of the tourism budget....?



The management plan for Christian Reserve was adopted in 2007. It is a good and comprehensive plan, but the area has not had any attention except for the council to occasionally mow. Also, I'm sure the long drop toilet would not be allowed for a private dwelling in a watercourse area so why is it allowed at the reserve? Waterless compost toilets used frequently by councils, are a good option in remote areas.

I have many photos of fires, litter, vandalism, damage done by vehicles and wood theft to support our concerns regarding Christian Reserve at Black Hill.

I put it to council that for years some space has been severely neglected while other spaces have had a large focus. Council's own management plan for John S Christian Reserve has been overlooked, and the amenity and wellbeing of the local community been ignored. I have brought this issue up with several staff and councillors over the years and apart from verbal support there has been no action.

I am unsure whether road reserves qualify for open space or public realm, but I believe they are the domain/responsibility of council. Many times, I have contacted the police or Mid Murray Council about motorbikes on road reserves. I even stopped once to talk to a group of riders who were just about to set off on their roadside ride but copped a lot of verbal abuse and threats. Never again! We hear the bikes from our house piercing the quiet. Still the tracks are used regularly. There are established roadside tracks on both sides of the river.

I believe that this issue covers matters of Environmental Sustainability, Community Engagement, Safety and Amenity, Heritage and Identity, Health and Wellbeing, Equity and Distribution and need attention to deal with this illegal practice. I know that in the past, signage has been put up along these tracks to remind users not to indulge in this environment wrecking behaviour.

Another point of concern for us is the Gass Bird Sanctuary at Mannum. A couple of years ago I noticed a speed boat in the sanctuary and reported it to council. I was told that it is not an official Sanctuary even though the council tourism website espouses it as a world-famous bird sanctuary. We would like to see it gazetted officially. Concerns also come from driving past and seeing dogs off leash exploring the rushes that are protection for the birds. Also allowing fishing in a bird sanctuary is not appropriate as fishing line and tackle is a killer for birds. Fishers have more options about where to fish but a sanctuary should be a SANCTUARY. I see this as an Open Space issue.

We also take issue with council's request to developers that the carpark at Mannum Green not include shading to make accessible for RVs and associated caravans and boat trailers. Basically, denying shade and shelter to the community in favour of tourists. Surely the large parking area could have been designed or can be retrofitted to accommodate us all.

We would like to end this submission with a plea for Mid Murray Council to declare a Climate Emergency, and with the wider community, develop projects and strategies to enhance resilience and protect the people and natural environment of the region. There are grave ramifications for all of council's assets including Open Space and Public Realm matters if nothing is done. For example, are emergency areas of last resort a Public Realm issue?

Immediate action needs to be taken for different sectors with so many reports, recommendations, and much work already done to guide council in developing its own Climate Plan. That's a committee that I'd like to be on!

More than happy to discuss any of these issues further.
We appreciate council's commitment to public consultation and trust this submission will be viewed respectfully and appropriately actioned.

Yours sincerely

Kitty Schiansky and Tony Farrell