

MID MURRAY Our Town

inclusion - connection - wellbeing

Our Vision is localised action to support sustainable positive mental health and wellbeing in our region.

**Mid Murray Our
Town acknowledges
the Traditional
Custodians, who are
the First Nations
Peoples of Australia,**

for they are and always
have been the custodians
of the lands and waters
where we live, work and
play. We pay respect to
Elders past, present, and
emerging and strive to
learn from their
knowledge and wisdom.
We celebrate the
important role that the
First Nations Peoples
continue to play within
our communities today.





Our Insights:

**Community
connection is vital.**

**Newer community
members are facing
tough times.**

**Young people are vital
for our future
wellbeing &
sustainability.**

**Mental health is
invisible in our region
until it hits crisis.**



Our 2024 Leadership Team...



Elouise Stalenberg- *Community Connector*



John Robertson- *Swan Reach Area School
Principal*



Jess Leigh- *Youth Connector*



Amie Johnson- *Town Lead*



Joke Wenske- *Community Garden Connector*

**In 2024 Mid
Murray Our Town
has...**

**Observed key ripples of
activation within our
communities**

**Funded 5 community led
projects through Micro
granting**

**Engaged a Youth
Connector and
Started a Youth
Wellbeing Hub**

**Partnered with 25
community groups and
two schools**

**Delivered 11 community
connection & wellbeing
events/ projects**

**Supported or funded 14
events/ projects
planned and delivered
by the community**

**Engaged a Community
Garden Connector and
began the process of
partnering on a
community garden**

**Continued to
Increase access
to community
sport
opportunities**

**Partnered with
the Paul Ramsey
Foundation for
long term impact**

**Supported additional
community driven
activities, outside of
the focus towns**

**Partnered on
Swan Reach's
first ever xmas
pageant**

**Had two staff members
train to become
licenced, so we can
provide upskilling
opportunities to our
communities in Mental
Health First Aid**

**Within the Our
Town network
advocated for
change for
regional
communities**

**Funded 3
mindfulness
workshops- 2 for
workplaces and 1
for young people**

**Stepped away from our
formal partnership with Mid
Murray Council to ensure
community priority remains
the focus of MMOT**

Mid Murray Our Town Impact in 2024

**Our impact can be
understood as contributing
to
Six key areas:**

These key impact areas are underpinned by prevention principles of community empowerment and connection, bolstered by building the capability of community members and reducing stigma around mental health.

**Building trust and
strengthening
community
connections**

**Creating space
for
conversations
about mental
health and
wellbeing**

**Advocating at
State and
National levels
to influence
regional
Mental Health
policy**

**Growing a
team of
community
champions
that support
the work of
MMOT**

**Activating and
supporting our
community to
bring their ideas to
life**

**Creating ripples
of activation
into
communities
outside the
initial towns**



Building trust & strengthening community connections

This year at Net Set Go, we had a young person who enjoys watching, but has never been confident enough to play, volunteer to fill in on the court! - Community Member



"Womens' Wisdom and Wellbeing"

In 2024 Mid Murray Our Town delivered 11 connection and wellbeing events.

Connecting a diverse range of people from various towns, ages and backgrounds.

People attending these events were from across the region, leading to many instances of cross-town connection.

We continue to work towards increasing opportunities of access to sport.

Community sport is an invaluable space to promote both physical and mental wellbeing while connecting with others. Many things we supported in the past, like net set go and yoga classes are still running.

This year we also assisted the Blanchetown community to join an ongoing local 8 ball competition.



Pool Competition

Growing a team of community champions who support the work of Mid Murray Our Town

"We're already planning next years MMOT Christmas pageant and talking about how it can travel between the four MMOT focus towns!"

- Progress Member



"Xmas Pageant"

People are coming up with creative ways to support community wellbeing and reaching out to MMOT for support to make them happen.



"Community garden Consultation"

As time goes on we are noticing more and more people becoming community champions and implementing change for community. These partnerships are enabling us to organically grow our reach and impact over time.



"Youth Hub"

This year we partnered with over 25 community groups and two schools.

Activating and supporting our community to bring their ideas to life

Our community wellbeing micro-granting initiative is one way that we are putting power back into the hands of community, allowing community to choose what they think will benefit their community the most.

We are so proud that a group of young people applied for their own grant to deliver a connection event themselves. This is young people bringing their ideas to life!!

This year we supported 14 activities/ events that were planned and implemented by community for community!



"Festival Reach Out"



"Floatilla"



"Xmas Pageant"

"Since the start, MMOT's been working towards activation within our communities, and the fact that in 2024 the community delivered more connection events than we did, shows we are heading in the right direction!" - Town Lead



Creating space for conversations about mental health and wellbeing

While all of the events we facilitated by MMOT have are centred on connection and wellbeing, we have ensured that there has been plenty of opportunity to upskill our community to support themselves and others

This is helping our community gain the skills they need to support themselves and others while raising awareness and reducing stigma.

"Community First Aid Training"



"Kids Mindfulness Workshop"



Of these events some focussed on the following specific cohorts: youth, men and farmers.

This ensures the information presented is relevant to the audience and helps community feel more comfortable talking about wellbeing and mental health with peers.

"Men's Mental Health Dinner"

"Find a team mate and ask are you ok?"

- Men's football Coach (after attending the mental health dinner)

Our Men's mental health dinner had 30 participants and received great feedback!

This is a fantastic outcome as many men have told us they don't feel comfortable engaging in conversations about wellbeing and mental health.



Creating ripples of activation into communities, outside the focus towns

Communities outside the MMOT focus towns are reaching in, looking for ways they can bring their communities together to support mental health and wellbeing” -Core Leadership Team

We also encouraged ripples of activation outside of our focus towns, by funding and supporting additional community driven initiatives in other towns across the region.

Communities arranged things like art workshops, information sessions, and guest speakers on mental health.

This shows us that people from other towns are observing the things that MMOT and the focus towns community members are doing, and starting to look for ways to support their own communities.



Bowhill post flood pizza night celebration.





What our team have been doing in the background for community!



Our Connectors and Town Lead have completed a combined 215 hours of training to improve our skills to support community wellbeing.

Had over 40 meetings with community groups



Explored multiple opportunities to raise awareness of the important work MMOT and our community are doing to advocate for long term sustainable funding.



Spent over 500 hours talking to community members. Had nearly 5000 engagements from community members



As a network with other OT communities, we are fighting hard to advocate at State and National levels to influence regional Mental Health policy and funding systems.



Participated in about 60 meetings with our schools to improve youth wellbeing opportunities.





**These activities are
laying the
groundwork for our
future goals of
upskilling members
of our community to
support each other's
wellbeing.**

Everything we are doing with community is leading the way to a strongly connected, mentally healthy and resilient community!

Key Learnings from 2024

Things we're seeing:

1. **Community Ownership:**
 - Transitioning initiatives to community-led models results in increased engagement and sustainability.
 - Accessible micro-funding and simplified grant processes enable grassroots action.
 2. **Value of Trust and Presence:**
 - Being present over time has built trust, encouraging more community participation.
 3. **Mentally Healthy Practices:**
 - Team modeling vulnerability and self-care ripples into community attitudes and practices.
 4. **Importance of Regional Connectivity:**
 - Shared initiatives foster inter-town relationships and mutual support.
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- Increased visibility and engagement both in person and on social media, particularly with men and young people.
 - Evidence of intergenerational and cross-community connections growing organically.
 - Community-led initiatives like the garden, youth hub, and sports becoming self-sustaining.
 - Cross-regional participation in events, spreading activation beyond the core towns.
 - External towns reaching in for support with their own community activation.





What our community are saying about MMOT...

"Connecting with community is what gets us through the hard times" Community member

"Moving away from Council was a great decision it will allow MMOT to thrive, without the red tape!" Community member

"Haven't seen our community this connected in years" Community member

"I've witnessed firsthand the invaluable connections and opportunities MMOT has created for our youth and broader community" Community member

"The positive ripple effects of the MMOT initiatives has been profound, enriching lives and fostering stronger ties within our region. MMOT's contribution is truly priceless, and our community is deeply grateful for the ongoing support" Community member

"MMOT has been transformative for the lives of community members in our region"

Community member

"Thanks to the support of the Fay Fuller Foundation and Mid Murray Our Town, we've proved that our community is still vibrant, eager for connection, and committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its members"

Community member

"I've Noted tangible shifts in school and family mental health conversations due to Our Town involvement" School Principal

"I took so many things away from the mindfulness workshop and felt so eager to implement some of the skills learned both within our workplace but also for my own home life" Workplace participant

"The microgrant gave the shack owners and permanent residents a chance to connect. Everyone worked together to create a great day" Shack owner

Where to from here, our plans for 2025 and beyond...

Sustainability

Community-Led Initiatives:

Continue to empower local champions and groups to lead projects.

Raise awareness

Team capability building

Expand impact:
Explore ways to connect with underrepresented areas and cohorts.

Network and partnerships

Spark activation

Team and organisational growth:

Maintain mentally healthy team practices to sustain capacity and focus.

Celebrate successes and ensure time is allocated for strategic planning and relationship building.

Grow our team to increase impact.

Keep capturing our ways of working to share learnings with other communities and funders.

Building inclusion

Spread the ripples

Future invitations and messaging:

Center community activation and ownership in messaging for impact sharing and funding proposals.
Encourage more community members to bring their ideas forward with confidence.

Normalise MH conversations

Funding:

Secure sustainable funding-emphasising untied funds for flexibility and innovation.

Training / education:

Continue providing upskilling opportunities for community to increase their skills in supporting their own and others wellbeing.

Power in community's hands

Deepen trust

*Connect!
Connect!
Connect!*

Advocacy:
Continue advocating for changes to mental health systems and funding processes at local, state and federal levels.

What might that look like...

Sustaining Community-Led Initiatives:

Continue encouraging, listening to and supporting community's ideas.

*Community Wellbeing
Microgranting*

Expand impact:

Creatively seek out underrepresented areas and cohorts to improve connections and engagement with MMOT.

Team and organisational growth:

Support staff wellbeing as a priority.

Take the time to ensure we look at the big picture and connect meaningfully to build trust.

As funding permits engage more connectors.

Build a picture of how we are doing this work, so that others who are interested can learn and grow.

MH First aid training

Future invitations and messaging:

Involve community in evaluation and share successes and stories to show true impacts and activation.

Continue building trust to increase community confidence in sharing their ideas for community wellbeing.

Funding:

Keep working towards funding that allows MMOT to focus on our community's priorities not a funders predetermined outcomes.

*Peer to peer MH
training for young
people*

Training / education:

Provide free MH first aid training to anyone who wants it.

Continue offering other opportunities for communities to upskill.

Community Garden

Youth Wellbeing Hub

Advocacy:

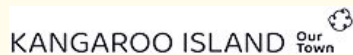
Elevate community voice, share what works and what doesn't; to those with the power to make positive change for regional communities.

Kids Wellbeing camp

Community sport

- **WALKER FLAT**





**Bowhill
Progress
Association**

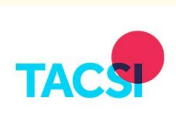


**Blanchetown
Hall
Committee**

**Swan Reach
Progress
Association**

**Nildottie
Progress
Association**

Clear Horizon



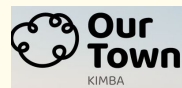
Our Partners



**Walker Flat
Progress
Association**



**Nildottie
Tennis Club**



MID MURRAY Our Town



inclusion - connection - wellbeing

Want to get involved?

Contact us: midmurrayourtown@outlook.com

Keep up to date via Facebook: [@midmurrayourtown](https://www.facebook.com/midmurrayourtown)

Check us out on the Our Town Website: www.ourtownsa.com.au/town/mid-murray