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# River Murray Flood Community Newsletter

Issue 30: Wednesday, 24 January 2024



RIVER MURRAY FLOOD  
RECOVERY RE-FENCING



## BlazeAid needs your support!

Weekday volunteers needed:

Cooking & food supplies  
Cleaning  
Re-fencing

Visit [www.blazeaid.com.au](http://www.blazeaid.com.au) for  
more information

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## Message from Community Recovery Coordinator Alex Zimmermann

Welcome to the latest edition of the River Murray Flood Community Newsletter, the first edition for 2024. I hope you enjoyed a restful holiday period with family and friends along the river.

This newsletter marks the farewell of Deb Richardson as the Community Development Officer, who finishes in her role this week. Deb has been instrumental in developing relationships along the river, organising community recovery events, and lending an ear and a helping hand to those in need. While Deb's role draws to a close, the friendships she has formed will endure well into the future.

A number of events will be held in the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area (LMRIA) in the coming weeks. A community lunch is being provided for the men of the LMRIA next week in Murray Bridge, while the women of the LMRIA are invited to a morning tea and a check-in session in early February. If you're able to, I encourage you to join in and enjoy some time with your fellow community members. The event details are outlined in this newsletter and on [recovery.sa.gov.au](http://recovery.sa.gov.au).

As you may be aware, BlazeAid has set up a re-fencing camp in Mypolonga and is actively working in the LMRIA to re-establish fencing damaged or destroyed by the flood. This is important work, and BlazeAid is seeking volunteers to aid in its efforts. If you're interested and are able to volunteer, or are a property owner who requires re-fencing, [visit the BlazeAid website for more information](#). Thank you to those who have already volunteered or contributed to the camp. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

For any flood-related queries, please call the State Relief and Recovery Infoline on 1800 302 787, visit [recovery.sa.gov.au](http://recovery.sa.gov.au), visit a [Recovery Centre](#), or contact myself via the details below. I hope you enjoy this newsletter.



**Alex Zimmermann**

Community Recovery Coordinator

[0455 984 411](tel:0455984411)

[alex.zimmermann@sa.gov.au](mailto:alex.zimmermann@sa.gov.au)

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## Farewell from Deb Richardson

Hi folks,

It's time for me to depart. Thank you for trusting me with your stories and sharing a little piece of your community with me. I have learnt much about the river and the role it plays in your lives, and its importance to your work, your recreation and culture. I have admired your tenacity, generosity, frankness, resilience, humour and your compassion for others.

We know that recovery doesn't have a clear finish line, and even if it did everyone's finish line would be different. I like the definition of recovery outlined below, because it reminds me that while we can't go back, there can still be value and joy in life as we find a way forward:

*"Being 'recovered' is being able to lead a life that individuals and communities value living, even if it is different to the life they were leading before."*

[Community Recovery Handbook, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience](#)

I encourage you to continue supporting each other. Speak up when you or someone else is in need or has a great idea and celebrate the wins, even the very small ones.

As you know Alex is still around, as he has been for more than a year now. He is always happy to hear from you. You can continue to contact the Recovery Centre, the State Relief and Recovery Infoline on 1800 302 787, and Wellbeing Officer Shelley Rose. Shelley has been involved in this recovery since April last year and has lived in River Murray communities for 25 years. Please contact her on 0428 130 867.

I wish you well,  
Deb



Outgoing Community Development Officer Deb Richardson. Image: Supplied

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## Update from Wellbeing Officer Shelley Rose

As the river communities surpass the first anniversary of the floods, we reflect on what was, how far we have come, and how communities and neighbours have shown strength they never knew they had. During the peak of the floods, community groups initiated wellbeing social media chats with daily check in's, funny jokes and general wellbeing to ensure no one felt isolated. The importance of healthy mental health habits has been highlighted, and our community is stronger and more resilient because of this.

While the clean-up program collected thousands of tonnes of flood-affected waste and demolished hundreds of impacted properties in 2023, we know the clean-up effort is by no means over. Approximately 250 demolitions and 50 hazard reduction works are scheduled for 2024, and this work will continue.

As each person is at a different stage in their recovery journey, it's important to make sure we be kind to ourselves. Go for a walk or do an activity each day that brings you happiness and enjoyment. Keep those new connections going with community and newfound friends, as this group of local characters have. Pictured below is Wellbeing Officer Shelley Rose with community members who enjoyed a positive catch-up session. An enjoyable day was had by all, sharing stories of the historic flood event and having a laugh or two along the way.

Despite this positive story, we know there are many people still struggling over a year on from the floods, and we are here to help. If you need to speak to a psychologist or practitioner, we have been lucky enough to gain support from Rural Health Connect to support our river communities. Rural Health Connect can provide an over the phone or video one-on-one session at little to no cost. They also can assist with GP mental health care plans, which can be difficult to access in rural areas. An information flyer is attached below. To find out more, either scan the QR code, visit [ruralhealthconnect.com.au](http://ruralhealthconnect.com.au), call 0427 692 377 or email [info@ruralhealthconnect.com.au](mailto:info@ruralhealthconnect.com.au).

Support remains available to you, please don't hesitate to reach out.



Wellbeing Officer Shelley Rose with River Murray community members. Image: Supplied.



## Rural Health Connect - client info

# Speak to a psychologist / practitioner over video or phone call

[ruralhealthconnect.com.au](http://ruralhealthconnect.com.au)

Low cost options and limited number of bulk bill appointments available.

Wide database of psychologists with interest areas including:

- Disaster recovery
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Trauma
- And more.
- LGBTIQ
- PTSD
- Depression
- Grief
- Health
- Child and adolescents
- Stress management
- Relationships
- Addiction
- Neuro-diverse

### Referrals

Please ask your GP to send a referral and your mental health treatment plan to Rural Health Connect via:

**Fax: 07 4573 1100 or email**  
**[referrals@ruralhealthconnect.com.au](mailto:referrals@ruralhealthconnect.com.au)**

For non acute referrals only

We will then contact you to complete registration & book in for an appointment.

**Regular referrers:** please contact us if you would like a login to our platform for easy referring.

We are here to help. Please contact us on **0427 692 377** or **[info@ruralhealthconnect.com.au](mailto:info@ruralhealthconnect.com.au)**.

*Rural Health Connect is a social enterprise committed to improving access to mental health services in the bush.*

[ruralhealthconnect.com.au](http://ruralhealthconnect.com.au)  
212 Quay St, Rockhampton 4700

*By rural people, for rural people*

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## Men of the LMRIA Community Lunch

The men of the LMRIA are invited to have a break and chew the fat at the Swanport Hotel in Murray Bridge, with lunch provided.

Come down and have an afternoon of fun with your local community. The lunch will be held on Wednesday 31 January, from midday.

For more information and to RSVP, contact Shelley Rose at [srose@mid-murray.sa.gov.au](mailto:srose@mid-murray.sa.gov.au)

**Wednesday, 31 January 2024**

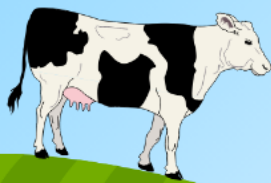
**Swanport Hotel  
3166 Jervois Road, Murray Bridge**

# **MEN OF THE LMRIA LUNCH**

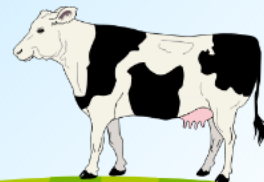
Men of the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Areas are invited to have a break and chew the fat.  
Lunch provided.

**From midday**

**RSVP: Shelley Rose at [srose@mid-murray.sa.gov.au](mailto:srose@mid-murray.sa.gov.au)**



For more information visit  
[recovery.sa.gov.au](http://recovery.sa.gov.au)



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**Women of the LMRIA event**

The Women of the LMRIA are invited to a morning tea and a start of the year “check in”.

**When:** Tuesday, 6 February, from 9:30am to 11:30am.

**Where:** Monteith Hall, 238 Bells Road, Monteith.

To RSVP and for more information, contact Alexandra Westlake of Long Flat at [womenofthelmria@gmail.com](mailto:womenofthelmria@gmail.com).



# WOMEN OF THE LMRIA

## COMMUNITY : TOGETHER

*a purposefully curated community event for the women of the  
Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Areas*

## WELCOME TO 2024

**JOIN US FOR MORNING TEA & A START THE YEAR ‘CHECK IN’  
YOU, YOUR FARM & YOUR FUTURE**

**Also, come along to thank Deb Richardson as this will be her  
last session with Women of the LMRIA**

**TUESDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY**

**9.30 - 11.30AM**

**MONTEITH HALL**

**238 BELLS ROAD, MONTEITH**

**CHILDREN & NEWCOMERS WELCOME**

**RSVP & MORE INFORMATION TO ALEXANDRA WESTLAKE  
[womenofthelmria@gmail.com](mailto:womenofthelmria@gmail.com)**

This Project is being delivered in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regions.  
It is jointly funded by the South Australian and Australian Governments under the  
National Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.



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## BlazeAid re-fencing camp

Flood recovery re-fencing work along the Lower Murray is underway thanks to the generous work of BlazeAid volunteers, who have set up camp at the Mypolonga Combined Sports Club.

Property owners in the LMRIA region who had fences damaged or destroyed by flood waters are encouraged to contact Andy O'Donohue on 0477 488 841 to organise works. Please get your enquiries in as soon as possible to help with deployment scheduling and to ensure you don't miss out.

BlazeAid is also seeking volunteers to help with a range of duties including re-fencing, cooking, and cleaning. If you're interested, please contact Sue Jackson on 0409 979 111 or John Tuckwell on 0438 269 554. More information is available on the [BlazeAid website](#).



Volunteer Cliff in the BlazeAid workshop last week. Cliff's role is to keep the equipment functional, charged, sharp, and ready for use so the teams can get the

fences up. Much of the equipment was generously donated. Image: Deb Richardson



Andy works with farmers to determine their needs and organise the BlazeAid work teams. Image: Deb Richardson



Several generous donations have been made to assist BlazeAid's flood recovery work, including a pallet of water from one of Amazon Australia's Disaster Relief Hubs. Image: Deb Richardson

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## Launch of new 'Empowering Rural Women in Business' program

A new 'Empowering Rural Women in Business for Sustainable Development' program will commence on Wednesday January 31, at St Martins Hall in Mannum.

Led by 'SheFarmer' founder and fourth generation farmer Rachel Titley, this program is tailored to support flood-affected rural women in business in the Murrayland's region.

Scheduled every Wednesday during school terms from 9:00am to 12:00pm, the program's core objectives revolve around strengthening the resilience of agriculture-dependent communities facing challenges from changing climates

and seasonal variations.

The program seeks to bring about positive change through engaging weekly workshops with an expert team that will cover topics including financial literacy, technology and connectivity, market dynamics, marketing strategies, wealth management, tax management, and overall leadership and wellbeing encompassing health, happiness, and relationships.

The weekly sessions, developed in collaboration with community leaders, aim to enhance social capital and community capabilities by fostering meaningful conversations to empower and educate.

The program aspires to cultivate stronger connections, and contribute to improved wellbeing, security, and resilience post-flood within the Murraylands' agricultural community.

This initiative is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State of South Australia under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. To register your attendance, and for more information, contact Rachel Titley at [shefarmer@outlook.com](mailto:shefarmer@outlook.com)

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2024 WEEKLY

# Empowering Rural Women in Business

9am-12pm (During Term One)  
Commencing Wednesday 31 January  
St Martin's Hall, 80 Cliff Road, Mannum

CONNECTING OUR REGION FOR A  
RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State of South Australia under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

# Empowering Rural Women in Business



## **Term One Schedule**

January 31 - Leveraging Your Life  
February 7 - Let's Talk Tech  
February 14 - Habit Overhaul  
February 21 - Community  
February 28 - Vision & Mission  
March 6 - Marketing & Socials  
March 13 - Alignment & Connections  
March 20 - Money Money Money  
March 27 - Inclusive Leadership  
April 3 - Leadership Panel

*Morning Tea Provided*

*Registrations on the day or via [shefarmer@outlook.com](mailto:shefarmer@outlook.com)*



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## **Garden restoration work continues**

Volunteers from Habitat for Humanity SA have resumed work this month restoring flood-affected gardens along the Lower Murray.

Seven property owners were assisted last year, with removal of debris and damaged vegetation, restoration of garden beds and paths, as well as replanting and rolling out new turf.

Habitat for Humanity's involvement in the region is supported by grants from Foundation SA, the RAA, and the Commonwealth and State Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Primary property owners looking for assistance can enquire through the Murray Bridge Recovery Centre.



Habitat for Humanity volunteers continue to support flood-affected communities.  
Image: Supplied.

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## **New \$8m on-farm water rebate**

A new round of the On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme has opened with a further \$8m available, jointly funded by the South Australian and Australian Governments.

Initially launched to support drought affected primary producers, the scheme has been expanded to include those impacted by natural disasters which have occurred after 1 January 2022 and is now available to all council areas across the state.

In particular, the scheme will now be available to primary producers affected by the River Murray floods.

Previously, this fund had only been available to drought affected council areas. This round of the scheme may be of assistance to livestock and horticulture producers impacted by the River Murray floods to support repair and replacement of infrastructure damaged by natural disaster, while continuing to support building the resilience of primary producers to drought.

Eligible primary producers can claim up to 25% of the cost of approved critical infrastructure, capped at \$25,000. There is an opportunity to apply for rebates for both drought and flood. Producers are encouraged to seek advice about

their particular circumstance with contacts provided below.

Applications close on 30 April 2024, or when all funds are allocated.

For more information on the On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme and to submit your application [visit the PIRSA website](#), email [PIRSA.Recovery@sa.gov.au](mailto:PIRSA.Recovery@sa.gov.au), or call the PIRSA Recovery Hotline on [1800 931 314](tel:1800931314).

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## Support for Mid Murray tourism operators

River Murray tourism businesses significantly impacted by the flood will receive a combined \$315,000 boost from the State Government to support recovery.

Grants from \$5,000 to \$50,000 will be allocated to 14 tourism businesses throughout low-lying River Murray regions as part of the South Australian Tourism Commission's Mid Murray River Tourism Business Support Program.

The \$315,000 in grants will assist tourism businesses in the Riverland and Murray River, Lakes & Coorong regions with critical recovery projects such as marketing, infrastructure replacement, powerhead installation, landscaping, cleaning, and equipment replacement.

The project development will help increase the overall value of tourism products available in South Australia's Murray River regions and support the future longevity of the businesses.

The 14 businesses receiving grants are:

- Blanchetown Caravan Park
- Cobdogla Station Caravan Park
- Foxtale Hire Services
- Frankie & Calla
- Freedom Boat Hire
- Griffens Marina Blanchetown
- Mannum Oldwares & Curios
- Morgan Riverside Caravan Park
- Juggle House Experiences
- Kingston On Murray Caravan Park
- Rivergum Cruises
- River Shack Rentals
- Swan Reach River Retreat
- Wow Houseboats

The \$315,000 Mid Murray River Tourism Business Support Program is part of the \$500,000 Mid Murray Tourism Recovery Fund – a commitment from the State Government announced in February 2023 to provide recovery assistance to significantly impacted businesses along the low-lying regions of the Murray

River.

The Mid Murray Tourism Recovery Fund also included support for councils to support new and emerging events and dedicated marketing support for impacted tourism businesses.

It is part of the \$4.6 million river recovery plan, which also includes the 'Rise Up for our River' marketing campaign and the River Revival Voucher program.

A third round of the River Revival Voucher program launching next month will help continue recovery beyond the traditional peak summer period, with travel through until June. The voucher program has already injected \$10.7 million into the Riverland and Murray River, Lakes & Coorong regions.

Prior to the 2022-23 flooding event, tourism in the two regions was worth a combined \$436 million. In the year to June 2023, it is now worth a combined \$562 million.

For more information and to enter the ballot for the next round of River Revival Vouchers when it opens on 19 February 2024, visit [southaustralia.com/voucher](https://southaustralia.com/voucher).



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**Riverland & Murraylands mental health support**





Fact Sheet

## Riverland and Murraylands mental health support

When a disaster happens, it is common to feel stress and grief. Some people will recover without formal help, and others might need some extra support to help get things back on track.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed and struggling to cope, reach out to local services that can provide mental health and wellbeing support – they're here to help.

View the [Riverlands and Murraylands mental health support fact sheet](#).

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## Changes to River Murray Flood Recovery Centres

A reminder of recent changes to the River Murray Flood Recovery Centres.

On Thursday, 21 December 2023 at 4:30pm, the Mannum Recovery Centre closed permanently. The community continues to be supported from the Murray Bridge Recovery Centre, with Recovery Officers conducting outreach visits as required.

Due to recent heavy rains, the Berri Housing SA Regional Office and Recovery Centre has been impacted by flooding and is closed for further assessment. For Recovery Centre related queries, customers are advised to reach out to the Murray Bridge Recovery Centre for any requests or support. Alternatively, contact the State Relief and Recovery Infoline on 1800 302 787.

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## Visit a Recovery Centre



## Berri

**Temporarily closed due to flooding**

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Housing SA office

[29 Vaughan Terrace, Berri](#)

## Murray Bridge

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

[28 Bridge Street, Murray Bridge](#)

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## PIRSA's flood recovery update



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Department of Primary Industries  
and Regions

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### Flood recovery update

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[Levee recovery and dewatering update](#)

[Predicted water levels](#)

[Meter readings](#)

[Grants closing](#)

[River Murray flood impacts survey](#)

[LMRIA Recovery Subcommittee update](#)

[Structural assessments for flood-affected properties](#)

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) continues to provide regular updates through its flood recovery update web page.

The web page provides important information on flood recovery activities undertaken by PIRSA and the Department of Environment and Water (DEW), including the dewatering progress and levee assessment and stabilisation. Key flood recovery contacts are also provided.

[Click here](#) for more information and to view the latest updates.

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# News from the Department for Environment and Water



Government of South Australia  
Department for Environment  
and Water

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## River Murray news

The Department for Environment and Water's (DEW) website will help keep you updated on the latest environmental projects, opportunities and events for industry and community in the River Murray area.

To read more, [click here](#).

DEW has also updated its web page with information regarding the LMRIA levee banks. For more information, [click here](#).

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## Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine (JEV) still available

★ ★ ★ ★ AT HOME OR ON HOLIDAY ★ ★ ★ ★

# ★ FIGHT *the* BITE ★

**PROTECT YOURSELF** *against* **DISEASE-CARRYING MOSQUITOES**

★ COVER UP. REPEL. ELIMINATE. ★


**WEAR LONG, LOOSE FITTING CLOTHING.**

**USE INSECT REPELLENT.**

**ELIMINATE THE WATER THEY BREED IN.**

Mosquitoes spread serious and potentially even deadly diseases when they bite. For more important information on how you can Fight the Bite, contact your local council or visit [sahealth.sa.gov.au/FightTheBite](http://sahealth.sa.gov.au/FightTheBite)



Government of South Australia  
SA Health

For more information, including eligibility requirements and where to access a vaccine, [click here](#).

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**Flood recovery health fact sheets**



[Home](#) > [Public health](#) > Flood - staying safe and healthy

## Staying safe and healthy during and after a flood

During and after a flood, there are increased risks to health and safety. The main health risks while in flood-impacted areas include:

### On this page

[Avoid contact with floodwater](#)

[Cleaning up after a flood](#)

[Protect against disease as floodwaters recede](#)

[Watch out for snakes, spiders and other pests](#)

SA Health has developed a series of fact sheets to assist flood-affected communities recover from the River Murray flood event. These fact sheets cover a range of topics including managing flies after flooding, dealing with mould and snake bite first aid advice.

For more information and to view these fact sheets [click here](#).

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## Keep informed



Government of South Australia

### Helping flood-affected River Murray communities recover

 **1800 302 787**  
State Relief and Recovery Infoline

 **sa.gov.au/floods**  
Latest recovery information, financial assistance and support

**For clean-up information and assistance, call the State Relief and Recovery Infoline on 1800 302 787**



Recovery can be complicated so we are frequently updating our website to ensure you remain up to date.

Visit [recovery.sa.gov.au](https://recovery.sa.gov.au) for information on the River Murray flood recovery.

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## Tell us what you think

Please use the link below to let us know what you would like to see in upcoming newsletters.

[Provide your feedback](#)

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## Missed a newsletter?

Missed a previous edition of the recovery newsletter? Catch up on all the recovery news.

Please share this newsletter with anyone interested in the River Murray flood recovery.

[See previous editions](#)

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[Sign up for future newsletters](#)

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 [Share this newsletter](#)

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