

29 April 2021

MEDIA RELEASE



COUNCIL INCREASES SUPPORT TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE SOUTHERN MALLEE HERITAGE

Two Southern Mallee heritage groups have been given a boost, thanks to new agreements with the Council, which will cut their costs and ensure their work of preserving local history continues.

Southern Mallee District Council has agreed to support the volunteer-run Mallee Tourist and Heritage Centre in Pinnaroo and the Lameroo and District Archive Building (run by the Lameroo and District Historical Society) under new agreements that will provide annual funding of \$4000 each to assist with ongoing costs.

Southern Mallee District Council Mayor Jeff Nickolls said the groups play an important role in recording, preserving and sharing the district's rich history.

"The services provided by volunteers at both the Mallee Tourist and Heritage Centre and the Lameroo and District Archive Building are highly valued by our community," Mr Nickolls says.

"Not only are they custodians for our local heritage, but they also promote our district to visitors – and they provide places of connection for the volunteers and our broader community.

It has been a challenge for both groups to meet the rising costs of insurance, utility bills, administration, advertising, materials and equipment."

While Council has, in the past, provided some support for these groups, formalising it through the new memoranda of understanding will give them greater confidence in their ability to cover operational costs. This will, in turn, allow the groups to focus their efforts on service provision, increasing visitation and investing their income into collections, facility improvements and equipment.

The Mallee Tourist and Heritage Centre in Pinnaroo draws visitors with its displays of traditional letterpress printing, old machinery, a dryland farming exhibit and an extensive grain collection. The Lameroo and District Heritage Society runs the Lameroo and District Archive Building, as well as managing a local museum, Pine Grove machinery display and the historic Byrne Cottage.

"These facilities are culturally significant to our district, and there are also opportunities to increase the role they play, especially in attracting visitors," Mr Nickolls says.

"Council recognises that the Mallee Tourist and Heritage Centre in particular has the potential to encourage and drive increased economic development locally.

"This agreement between these groups and Council will ease some of their financial pressures to ensure they can focus on continuing with their important work, and exploring new ways to grow their collections, facilities and visitation."

The agreements have been developed in consultation with the two groups. Council has also agreed to establish formal five-year leases for properties used by the groups, for a nominal \$1 per year rental.

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