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**Media Release**

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

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## **Murray River Councils Speak up in Canberra**

Mayors and CEOs from six northern Victorian Councils travelled to Canberra recently to advocate on behalf of their communities.

The Murray River Group of Councils spoke up on water, energy, regional economic development and the need for regional investment in tourism, roads, bridges and digital connectivity through a full program of meetings across two days.

Chair of the Murray River Group of Councils, Cr Adrian Weston said that the group successfully delivered key messages across their shared priorities.

"Our key messages included the real economic and social impacts of water recovery in our region, our need for secure and affordable energy, as well as the improvements to freight movement and road safety that would flow from investment in our roads and Murray River crossings" said Cr Weston.

"We discussed with the Energy Minister the huge potential for solar generation in our region and the investment in additional grid capacity required to unlock it.

"We also sought investment in tourism projects including the Ports of the Murray and Murray River Adventure Trail, projects that will grow the visitor economy along our iconic river.

"Throughout, we stressed the need for investment that focuses on economic diversification and initiatives that deliver enduring economic prosperity for our communities. We also reminded Ministers of the importance to our regional and rural communities of Federal funding programs such as the Financial Assistance Grants, Roads to Recovery and the Black Spot Removal program."

The Group also met with the Chair and CEO of the Murray Darling Basin Authority to discuss the impact of the Basin Plan on our northern Victorian communities and contribute to the MDBA's understanding of our region as it develops its social and economic impact analysis.

"I am pleased to say that we received a really positive hearing from Ministers, their staff and from Shadow Ministers as well" said Cr Weston.

"One consistent message from them was how much they appreciate Local Councils working together for their region. We have been working cooperatively for more than ten years now, and we continue to be a strong voice for our vibrant region"

"We are also grateful to our Federal Members Andrew Broad and Damien Drum who helped facilitate the Ministerial meetings and provided great insight into the more complex political aspects of the matters we were seeking to raise with Ministers." Cr Weston said.

The Murray River Group of Councils comprises, Mildura and Swan Hill Rural City Councils and Loddon, Gannawarra, Campaspe and Moira Shires.

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