

Expression of Interest

2026

Mildura Station
Homestead

Project Brief



Mildura Rural City Council

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1. About Council

Mildura Rural City Council is in the north-west of Victoria and covers an incredible 22,082 square kilometres (almost 10 percent of the state of Victoria) with a population of approximately 60,000. The local landscape boasts vegetation unique to the Mallee, while also being famous for broad acre grain properties, fresh fruit production and vibrant and welcoming townships.

The municipality shares borders with both New South Wales and South Australia, making it a regional service centre for all three states.

The jewel in the municipality's crown is its connection to the mighty Murray River, which winds its way through much of the region. It's a focal point for visitors and those who call the region home.

Key industries include dryland farming, irrigated horticulture (almonds, table grapes, wine grapes, dried grapes, citrus, vegetables and olives), tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

Our region is renowned as an arts destination, a drawcard for major events and for its many and varied tourism offerings.

We have a rich cultural history that dates back more than 40,000 years, and we respect the deep and continuing connection Traditional Owners have to the land and water.

We understand the incredible opportunities that exist to use arts, events, tourism and culture to not just improve wellbeing and social connectedness but continue to build and grow the local economy.

Our community is deeply engaged in arts and culture, and we acknowledge that arts, culture, events and tourism help make our towns attractive places to live work and invest.

We are committed to showcasing our region's character, diversity and creative identity, while celebrating our First Nations history and the many wonderful locations and landscapes that make this region so unique.

2. Council's Vision

We are a liveable, people-friendly community.

3. Purpose of EOI

Mildura Rural City Council seeks Expressions of Interest for Mildura Station Homestead precinct for use, redevelopment or utilisation of one or both of the following assets:

1. 'Elstead' house

Proposals are sought for the following

- the restoration of the dwelling
- the restoration of the dwelling with the proposal of use/occupancy
- the removal and relocation of the dwelling.

The restoration of Elstead at Mildura Station Homestead would need to be in keeping with heritage qualities for the late nineteenth century Victorian period, which is the era of the dwelling, and architectural design complementing the Mildura Station Homestead precinct.

2. 'The Cottage'

- Proposal outlining the intended use and occupancy of The Cottage, or other designated spaces within the precinct.

Importantly to note, this is a two-stage procurement process, comprising an initial Expression of Interest (Stage 1), followed by an invitation to shortlisted respondents to submit a Formal Proposal (Stage 2).

4. Scope

Elstead

Elstead currently occupies a corner of the Cureton Avenue site within the Mildura Station Homestead precinct. Constructed in 1894, it is one of Mildura's earliest surviving dwellings and a rare example of late-nineteenth-century Victorian timber architecture.

Originally located at 339 Deakin Avenue, the building served as a residence for more than 50 years before being transferred to the Minister for Education in 1947 for use as a girls' hostel for the former Mildura High School.

In 1974, it was allocated to MADEC as an adult education facility. Mildura Rural City Council acquired the house in 2011 and relocated it to its present position.

The dwelling is a Victorian style, timber construction with projecting bay, gable roofs clad with corrugated steel. Eaves are detailed with decorative brackets; weatherboards are rusticated style and their distinctive brick chimneys.

There are four main rooms with skillion additions to the rear and a verandah on three sides. The interior is lined with Murray Pine boards.



Summary of Condition

A structural condition assessment was undertaken on Elstead in March 2025. The building structure is in overall poor condition with most components requiring replacement. The roof, stumps and footings were replaced in 2011 and are in good condition.

In its current location, the two transported segments have rotated from each other which has likely been caused by soil movement from seasonal moisture fluctuations. The building is not connected to water and there is no sewer close to the site which would require further investigation depending on the proposed use. A new power supply to the building would also be required and the electrical wiring within the building is unlikely to meet current standards. There is no safe access to the building as it is elevated with no stairs or ramps.

More information can be provided on request.



The Cottage

Built in 1984, The Cottage is centrally located on the site, currently is ideal for small private functions and meetings with a small kitchenette area, offering a tranquil setting overlooking the Murray River.

The walls are boasting with references to Mildura's past with historical items and furniture including a large board table and chairs from the former First Mildura Irrigation Trust established in 1896 which was donated by Lower Murray Water.

Outdoor BBQ location nearby.

Summary of Condition

The Cottage is in good overall structural condition, with no major defects identified. The primary maintenance item relates to the roof, where loose fixings and flashing require attention to prevent potential water ingress. The absence of roof void access limits the ability to fully assess the roof structure and should be addressed to allow future inspections. Internal elements, including flooring, ceilings, skirting, and architraves, are in good condition, with only minor non-structural issues such as ceiling gaps requiring sealing.

The verandah structure is stable, although the cantilevered beam configuration should be monitored over time due to unsupported joins. A localised uneven concrete area presents a minor trip hazard and should be rectified. Door widths may not meet current accessibility standards and should be reviewed if compliance is required depending on the intended use of the building.

More information can be provided on request.



Cottage – Mildura Station Homestead (external view)



Cottage – Internal view



Cottage – Kitchenette – Internal View

Ownership and Tenure

The land is government-owned and will not be transferred. All arrangements will be via lease or licence only. Council will consider market rent as the default; peppercorn may be entertained where public/community benefits demonstrably exceed the foregone rent. Lease term is open, subject to the proposal's capital investment, public value, and statutory constraints.

Exclusive use can apply to Elstead and/or other buildings, but not to the entire precinct (shared, multi-use).

All works and use for Commercial purposes must be restricted to the existing footprint of the building.

5. Mildura Station Homestead Background



The Mildura Station Homestead precinct is located at 278 Cureton Avenue, Mildura. Established in the 1980s, the precinct occupies a site adjacent to the original 1847 homestead location on the Murray River. The current Homestead is a reconstruction of the original dwelling and includes several relocated rural buildings, agricultural equipment, and heritage displays.

The land forms part of the pastoral lease originally established by the Jamieson Brothers in 1847. The precinct holds significant cultural and historical value for Mildura due to its proximity to the Chaffey family gravesites and the Rio Vista Historic House, forming a key element in interpreting the development of the region.

The precinct was formally opened in 1985 and reflects the heritage reconstruction practices common in Australia at that time, including the relocation and consolidation of buildings to create a representative historic collection. The site includes mature native and exotic plantings, an olive grove listed on Council's Significant Tree Register, a rose garden, and native garden beds. The southern section presents as cultivated parkland, while the northeastern section reflects the operational characteristics of a nineteenth-century homestead.

All buildings within the precinct have been purpose-built or reconstructed to replicate early homestead architecture consistent with the 1850s Mildura Station. The Homestead Garden played a foundational role in the selection of Mildura as the site for the Chaffey Brothers' irrigation colony, established under Indenture with the Victorian Government in 1887.

The original homestead was demolished in 1923, and its historical significance led to a reconstruction initiative during the 1970s. With support from Mildura City Council, a dedicated Building Committee delivered the current cottage, woolshed, and landscaped grounds. The Old Mildura Station Homestead opened to the public on 21 November 1984.

Located approximately 200 metres downstream is the Mildura Homestead Cemetery, which contains the graves of early settlers and members of the Chaffey family.

The precinct was originally managed by a Committee of Management responsible for site development and heritage collections. Currently, Council's Arts, Culture and Venues Branch oversee operational management and venue services, with other Council departments providing maintenance and facility support. The precinct comprises six buildings, constructed in both brick and timber, each serving as a heritage display space or hireable venue.

The Mildura Woodturners and Woodworkers club occupies one of the buildings and provides a public-facing retail outlet for locally produced handcrafted items.

6. Council Contact

All questions in relation to this Expression of Interest are encouraged to be made to **Antonette Zema, Manager Arts, Culture and Venues** on (03) 5018 8330 or email antonette.zema@mildura.vic.gov.au

7. Evaluation Criteria

All Expression of Interest submissions will be evaluated in accordance with the conditions detailed in this brief and based on the information provided in each Expression of Interest submitted by a Respondent.

The most suitable Respondents will be shortlisted and may be required to clarify their EOI, make a presentation or demonstrate the proposal, product or solution submitted.

Criterion	Weight	What we expect to see
Concept & Heritage Approach	30%	Clear adaptive-reuse concept; conservation methodology aligned to Victorian-era character; access compliance; staging plan; reference projects.
Commercial Model / Affordability	25%	Proponent-funded first; heritage grants second; Council co-investment last. Indicative budget; rent proposal (market preferred, justify peppercorn if sought); requested term.
Capability & Track Record	15%	Heritage experience; team CVs; licences; referees.
Community & Social Outcomes	15%	Activation hours, public accessibility, programming; integration with existing users; skills/training outcomes.
Local Economic Participation	10%	Local supply chain, regional jobs, First Nations participation where relevant.
Environment & Sustainability	5%	Reuse/low-embodied carbon materials; lightweight services strategies compatible with heritage fabric.

8. EOI Response

Respondents are invited to provide detailed information on solutions that they can offer to Council. The EOI submission should, as a minimum, include the following:

- **Submission deadline 4pm, Monday 27 July 2026**
- Outline of the proposal – no more than two pages
- Respondents shall clearly identify responses provided to the criteria within their submissions. Each of the criteria has been assigned a weighting to assist with the assessment process. Submissions will be assessed against all criteria and an overall weighted 'score' determined by the Evaluation Team.

Council encourages innovative and creative responses.

The precinct operates as a shared, multi-use space; exclusive use of the entire precinct is not permitted.

The restoration of Elstead at Mildura Station Homestead would need to be in keeping with the heritage qualities the late nineteenth century – Victorian period to which is the era of the dwelling, and architectural design complement the Mildura Station Homestead precinct.

9. Evaluation Process

This is a two-stage procurement process, comprising an initial Expression of Interest (Stage 1), followed by an invitation to shortlisted respondents to submit a Formal Proposal (Stage 2).

All Expression of Interests submissions will be assessed in accord with Council's criteria and ranked according to perceived quality differences between the Expression of Interest proposals.

The preliminary evaluation panel will consist of (subject to any declared conflicts of interest that result in withdrawal of one or more of the panel members)

- General Manager Strategy and Growth
- Manager Arts, Culture and Venues
- Manager Facilities and Assets

The estimated timelines for Expression of Interests process are

- Advertising – four weeks
- Shortlisting – two weeks after the closing date
- Clarifications and Finalising Recommendation for financial approval – two weeks after shortlisting is completed
- Outcomes of Expression of Interest and Invitation to submit a Formal Proposal – four weeks.

Total of approximately 12 weeks.

Note that these dates are indicative only and are subject to change.

10. Other information

Council encourages innovative and creative responses to the EOI, but it should always form part of a conforming tender.

11. Establishment of a Contract

No contract or obligation will arise as a result of the Respondent submitting an EOI submission.

12. References

Reference documents including Mildura Rural City Council Community Vision and Council Plan, can be found on Council's website

<https://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Council/Policies-plans-and-strategies/Council-Plans-Strategies>