

NEWS

Pool sessions needed

By **Joanne Fosdike**

THE move to reduced hours at Murray Bridge's indoor heated pool continues to outrage community members who are angered by claims the reduction would have little impact.

Murray Bridge resident Kathleen Golding said she could not believe claims made by Country Health SA's Riverland Mallee Coorong regional director in last Thursday's Standard stating "attendance at the morning general public session has been variable with less than five people attending on many occasions over the three hours".

"I use the indoor pool three times a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday about 7am or earlier and have never seen that few people there," she said.

"The Health Department's response is garbage.

"They need to get their act together and look after the older people."

Mrs Golding said the community built the pool, located at the Murray Bridge hospital, and paid to use the facility.

"It cost me \$45 for 10 sessions - we don't get the use for nothing," she said.

Murray Bridge physiotherapist Kerrie Thessinger first heard about the changes when she was contacted by The Standard.

She said the change of hours would impact people, many of whom she and other physiotherapists had recommended to use the pool.

"I've hired the pool for many years for patients

requiring hydrotherapy after injury or surgery," she said.

"Many elderly patients utilize the 6.30am start when it is quieter and easier to exercise and patients who work or have children find the weekend more convenient."

Ms Thessinger said closure of the city's outdoor pool during winter months left patients without a medium to continue with their rehabilitation.

Murray Bridge Indoor Heated Pool staff broke the news of reduced hours of operation to public users earlier this month, with morning hours of operation cut and no future weekend sessions from July 1.

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick said he was in the process of writing to Country Health SA Riverland Mallee Coorong regional director Wayne Champion to see if the decision to cut pool hours could be reversed.

"We've had quite a few people lobby us about this," he said.

"It is short-sighted to cut this funding as the indoor pool is an asset to the town."

Mr Pederick said the State Government had chosen to trim the fat from the health budget at the expense of Murray Bridge residents.

"It is one of those budget cut backs that hits locally and of course there is no announcement made," he said.

"The 6.30am to 7.30am time slot at the pool is needed for people who need to access the pool for exercise before work."