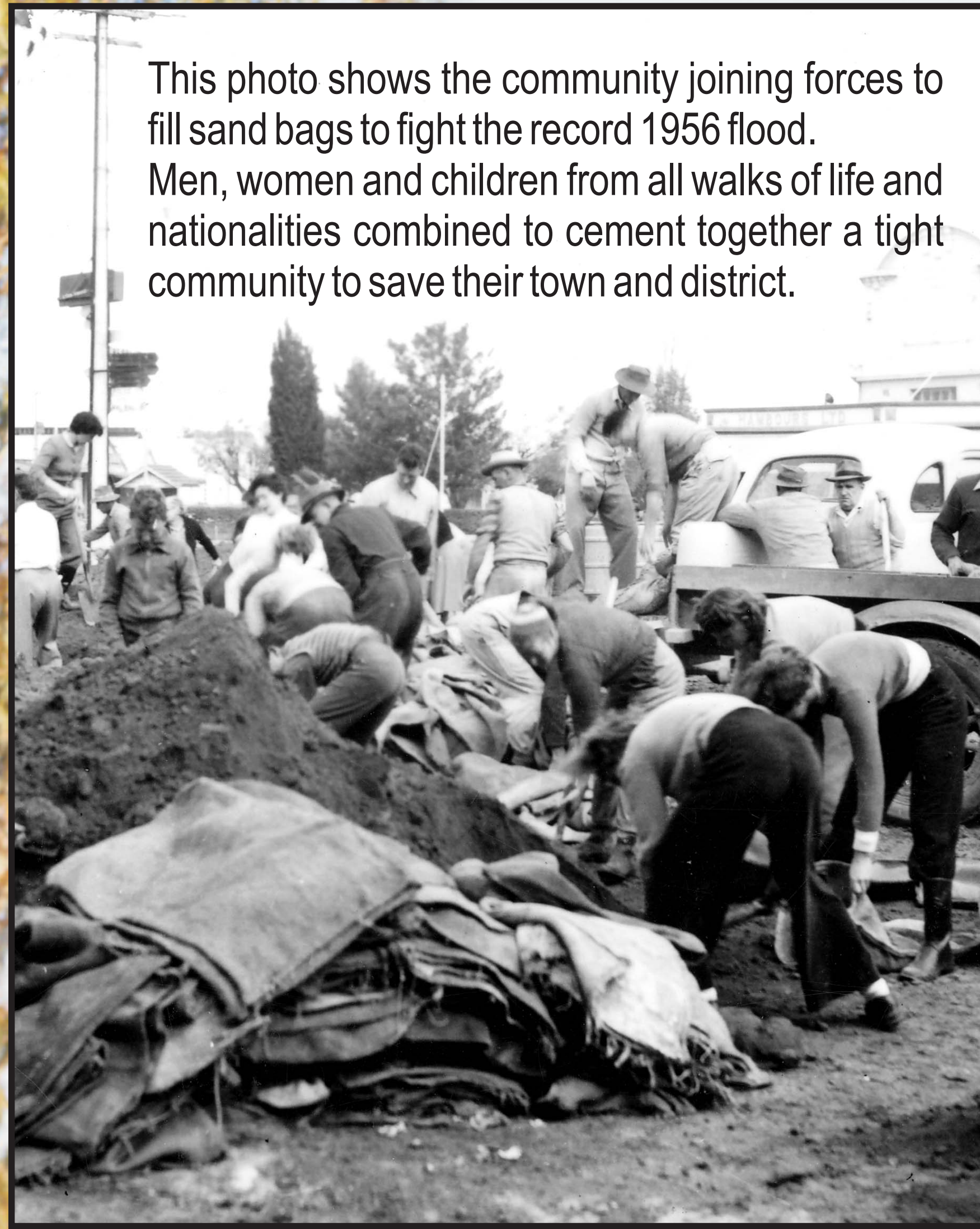


OUR COMMUNITY HISTORY

This photo shows the community joining forces to fill sand bags to fight the record 1956 flood. Men, women and children from all walks of life and nationalities combined to cement together a tight community to save their town and district.



The Renmark Paringa district lies in the traditional lands of the Erawirung people, part of the Meru Language Family. Indigenous families living in the Renmark district in the first two decades of the 20th century included Mitchell, Robinson, Hodgkiss, McKinley, Rainer and Dodd. A much respected local Indigenous character was George Disher who was born at Mypolonga and grew up at Raukkan. He worked in the Renmark and Berri districts during the 1920's to 1940's.

Many local Indigenous people identify as Ngarrindjeri and are descendants of the Ngarrindjeri clans.

In the Murtho district squatters had held occupational licences since the 1840's. The most notable of these was E.M. Bagot whose Ned's Corner station extended to Murtho prior to state boundaries. A remnant of this era is the 1850's stone cottage next to Wilkadene homestead. This was an outstation of Ned's Corner and occupied by stockmen and lastly lived in from 1906 - 1913 by new owners; the Wilkinson family from Cal Lal NSW.

The Chaffey Bros. irrigation scheme of 1887 was significant in the development of the irrigation area of Renmark.

Farming had commenced in the Paringa district during the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries by German settlers. These included members of the Stoeckel, Wilhelm, Behrendt, Schumacher, Gerschwitz, Rover, Schmidt, Hamdorf, Walter, Zeunert, Frahn families and followed by Wilkinson, Bolt, Antoney, Slade, Curtis, Watkins, Hughes, Thompson, Best and others. In the 1950's irrigation on a large scale was introduced by the Heading family at Murtho.

Under a government initiative in 1894, 11 village settlements were set up along the River Murray which included Murtho and Lyrup. Murtho Village closed in 1900 and its 3 remaining families stayed in the Renmark district - Pitt, Birks and Dix.

Greek settlers first arrived in the 1920's and 1930's; Keldoulis and Nemtsas were shopkeepers in Renmark together with fruit workers Logos and Millis. Many more Greek families emigrated in the 1950's and 1960's as did Italian families; several taking up land in the Paringa and Lyrup districts; Albanese, Romeo, DiCerbo, Franchitto, Lippis, Minchella, Sigismondi, and Recchia.

Government sponsored loans to returned servicemen after WW1 saw the development of Block E and Chaffey irrigation areas and again after WW2 the opening of the Cooltong Division of Chaffey.

In recent years Indian, Turkish, Lebanese, Vietnamese and many other nationalities have contributed to the local population.

MURRAY COD *Pondi*

The Murray cod is an indigenous cultural icon and the dreamtime story of this fish and its relationship to the Murray and Darling Rivers only varies slightly as these rivers flow through the landscape of over forty Aboriginal nations in the Murray Darling Basin.

Pondi is the indigenous name generally given to the giant Murray cod which in the dreamtime was being pursued in a stream by the hunter Ngurunderi. This mythical fish swept its powerful tail as it tried to escape the hunter, and in doing so widened the stream into a mighty river with many bends.

Pondi reached the Coorong where it was speared by the hunter who cut it into pieces and returned the pieces to the water where each piece created a new fish species.

