



SPEECH: 17 March 2020
EVENT TITLE: CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY UPDATE
DEPUTY MAYOR CR JOHN MASON

- Good evening everyone.
- As of yesterday, Monday 16 March 2020 Victorian Government Premier Daniel Andrews declared Victoria in *a State of Emergency* for one month due to the COVID-19 or novel coronavirus pandemic.
- Since COVID-19 has arisen, Strathbogie Shire Council Officers have actively monitored advice and updates from the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as the lead agency responsible for responding to the novel coronavirus pandemic.
- We have activated our *Business Continuity Plan* in response to the pandemic declaration. The delivery of essential services to our community is critical, although some services will become more essential than others should this pandemic further evolve.
- Council Officers are amending the *Draft Pandemic Plan* to be reviewed formally next week and, if adopted, this will be implemented immediately. This plan has been posted on the Council website this week for community reference and review.



- In the meantime, Council services will continue to operate and remain open with vigilant measures in place to protect the health and wellbeing of our Staff, Councillors and our community, including:
 - Bin collection will continue as per normal
 - Roads and community infrastructure will be maintained
 - Capital works will continue
 - Building and planning applications will continue to be processed
 - Maternal and Child Health services remain open
 - And more.
- Regular updates will continue to be provided to staff, volunteers, contractors and customers and you will be advised if any changes are required.
- For community updates and information, please visit the Council website www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au. This will be the core source of information relating to Council services and other updates, as well as the Strathbogie Shire Council draft Pandemic Plan.
- Council will continue to review operations as the situation evolves. Currently, Council services continue to operate as per normal business hours.
- Council is proactively encouraging workers to maintain personal hygiene and we are committed to providing a hygienic work environment.
- We encourage everyone in the community to maintain personal hygiene and make responsible choices for the benefit of them, their families and our community.



So, what are we doing differently?

Public meetings:

- Council is also reviewing all public and community meetings planned for the near future. Where possible, these will be postponed or arranged via digital channels, when and if appropriate.

Euroa Cinema:

- The Euroa Community Cinema will be closed until further notice and this will be reviewed in 30 days.

Libraries:

- Libraries in Violet Town, Euroa and Nagambie will remain open, though we have received advice that community programs such as Rhyme and Nursery Time, Craft and Coffee and other similar workshops have been ceased by the Goulburn Valley Library Corporation. The Home Library service has also been suspended until further notice.

Public toilets:

- Our public toilets will remain open.
- Please note that public toilets will be cleaned and maintained as normal, however we are also affected by the national shortage of toilet paper, there may be times when you find the amenities do not have adequate stocks and we may not be able to provide this in the short term.
- We appreciate your understanding in this matter.



Customer service:

- Council highly value our customer interactions and engagement with the community but in the current circumstances we need to protect all parties involved, including the limitation and restriction of in-person contact.
- While Council's Customer Service offices in Euroa and Nagambie will remain open as per normal business hours, we encourage people to try and contact us via phone or email, rather than visiting in person, if possible.
- Payments for rates, animal registrations, permits and other services can be made online or via phone and we strongly suggest doing this to minimise personal interaction, both for public and staff safety.

Council events and events held at council venues:

- Council acknowledges that on Friday, 13 March 2020 Australia's Chief Medical Officer recommended that mass gatherings of more than 500 people should be cancelled from Monday 16 March 2020.
- Council will be following the advice of the Australian Government and DHHS for its own events.
- Council is liaising with event organisers and encourages them to also follow and implement recommended risk mitigation measures as directed by the Australian Government and DHHS.
- Assistance will be provided to re-schedule events and event permits to a suitable future date by the events team who can be reached during business hours on 1800 065 993 or via info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au.



Non-council events:

- Council recommends event organisers follow the recommendations from the Australian Government and DHHS.
- This includes postponing all non-essential meetings and practicing social distancing wherever possible.
- Please contact event organisers directly for any queries related to non-council organised events.
- If you are a ticket-holder for an event that has or will be cancelled from Monday 16 March 2020, we encourage you to check the terms and conditions of purchase, contact the event provider and give the event operator time to process this decision and advise you in due course regarding reschedules and refunds.
- While physical interactions may be limited during this time, we encourage our community to continue to support and connect with each other.
- For ongoing health alerts and information, you may access the most accurate and up-to-date information from the Department of Health and Human Services as a trusted source. Please visit: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au or call 1300 650 172.
- Additionally, please continue to contact your Ward Councillors to discuss Local Government queries via email or mobile numbers as listed on the Council website, or which can be provided by Council's customer service team on 1800 065 993.



- We thank the community for their understanding and co-operation during this unprecedented time. Though many services will continue as per normal, response times may be affected according to work practices, and we ask for your consideration and patience should this be the case.