

# Administrators' Message



It has been another busy week as we all adjust to the current Stay at Home provisions in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. By staying at home unless it is for buying essentials, exercise, medical care and caregiving, or work and education we are all doing our part to ensure that we reduce the spread of the virus.

We all have the responsibility to act in order to keep everyone safe. This will change how we all usually interact, which will require some sacrifice from everyone while we work through this together. Since it is not appropriate to congregate in groups or have friends or family who do not usually live with us visit, it is important for us all to stay socially connected under the current circumstances.

We have heard of many wonderful acts of kindness happening across our communities as people support each other during this uncertainty. We have seen teddy bears being placed in windows to surprise children out on walks, contact-free deliveries of supplies and notes of kindness being given between neighbours, particularly those who are completely isolated or elderly. These acts highlight the strength of South Gippsland's community spirit and we hope to see it continue.

One note on staying home, there has been some concern regarding those who may be fortunate enough to own multiple properties – such as a holiday home – and what the provisions mean for them. The Department of Health and Human Services has advised that they may travel between their properties but the Stay at Home provisions apply at either home. People should not be travelling to the area if they do not have a residence here – this will help our local health services that aren't prepared for a large number of visitors while city health services are.

The Department of Health and Human Services has a very informative Frequently Asked Questions page to help you understand what is appropriate under the current requirements. The easiest way to access it is by searching for 'Coronavirus FAQ' at [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au)

At Council we have been adapting as the circumstances progressed. All of our services continue in some form – however the delivery of these services may have changed as staff transition to working remotely where possible. One big change that we have seen this week however is how we deliver immunisations, which is an essential service for our community.

Since the current immunisation schedule did not meet Government requirements, one Shire-wide session will be held on Wednesday 8 April at Memorial Hall, McCartin Street, Leongatha from 9.30am-12.30pm. Keep in mind that there will be strict provisions to keep our community and staff safe. For further details you can visit Council's website. We would like to thank our staff who are working hard to keep this service available to our community.

In order to support the Stay at Home provisions and follow the State and Federal Governments' requirements our outdoor facilities such as playgrounds, skateparks, BBQs and water fountains were closed indefinitely last week. This was further extended to include the closure of our boat ramps to the general public from 1 April.

We have also deferred our deliberation on the Council Plan and Budget in order to account for the impacts of COVID-19 and consider how we continue to support our community at this time. It is our current aim to reconsider this at the April Council Meeting if it is appropriate to do so.

Ultimately the message from all levels of government is clear: stay at home unless it is otherwise essential. Don't forget we are all in this together and we will get through this if we provide support and kindness to one another where we can.

**Julie Eisenbise, Christian Zahra AM and Rick Brown**  
**Administrators**