

COVID19 Stage Three Restrictions Returned

The following is from South Gippsland Shire Council CEO, Kerry Ellis:

Sunday's announcement that regional Victoria will be returning to stage three restrictions has been a blow for all of us. Although the news was perhaps not entirely unexpected considering the increasing number of COVID-19 cases across Victoria, the restrictions mean that our movement and our ability to socialise with friends and family will again be limited.

This closure will be difficult for many people. Stage three restrictions were hard the first time but this time it is even more important that we work together, that we reach out to others and that we "be kind" to all. Many in our community are still struggling with the impacts of isolation from the first lockdown and our local businesses are only just in the process of getting back on their feet. They will need our support. The one benefit we have is that we have been through this already, we know we can get through it and we know how we can do better.

Here is a summary of some of the changes that will be in place from Thursday:

- There will be only four reasons to leave your home: necessary goods and services; medical care or compassionate reasons; exercise; work and education if necessary. Exemptions include visiting a person with whom you are in an intimate personal relationship, including inside metropolitan Melbourne. Face coverings are mandatory.
- You cannot enter metropolitan Melbourne for exercise or recreation.
- You are unable to have visitors in your home. Meeting in public can be with up to two people or household members only. Social distancing measures apply.
- Council's customer service centre and offices will remain closed. However, we are still here to support you and customer service is available via telephone, online and email.
- Outdoor sporting facilities will close except for facilities where public gathering and physical distancing limits can be adhered to and there is no use of shared equipment or communal facilities (except toilets), eg: tennis courts, golf courses.

- Outdoor sports will only be allowed with one other person, or household members, providing 1.5 metre distance can be maintained, eg: activities such as fishing, golfing, boating, tennis, surfing.
- Swimming pools and playgrounds will close.
- Libraries will close. Caring Calls, Tech Talks, Online Chat, home deliveries, online programs and events and other online resources including ebooks, eaudiobooks, emagazines, kids' reading and activities will all still be available. More details are available at wgrlc.vic.gov.au
- Community venues including halls will close other than to host an essential public support service (such as Alcoholics Anonymous), or a wedding or funeral. This covers Memorial Hall and its associated meeting rooms. The immunisation session planned for tomorrow (Wednesday 5 August) at Memorial Hall will proceed.
- Community Transport and the L2P program will be put on hold.
- All buildings and facilities managed by Council or through Section 86 Committees will close. This includes SPLASH and many halls and recreation reserves. The outdoor facilities can still be used for casual activities – such as walking the dog or having a kick of the footy – but planned gatherings are not permitted. However please remember to respect the current social distancing guidelines to keep yourself and those around you safe.
- Travel within regional Victoria is allowed for work and education (if necessary), necessary goods and services and care or compassionate purposes only.
- Visitor Information Centres, Coal Creek Community Park and Museum and Council-run caravan parks will remain closed.

For more information I would encourage you to view the DHHS website:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Council will continue to work on ways to assist our community via the COVID-19 Community Support Fund and community feedback is encouraged via our COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Survey which can be found at: <https://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/covidsurvey>

It goes without saying, that our community needs to come together right now. Please take the time over the next six weeks to regularly check in on your family, friends, neighbours or any people you think might need a hand in these trying circumstances. Buy local where you can and please stay safe. Together we can get through this.