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## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

17 March 2020

### COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) information

The health and safety of our community and staff is Huon Valley Council's number one priority and we are putting measures in place to respond to the outbreak of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus).

In Tasmania we have had seven confirmed cases of the virus and Council is closely monitoring the situation. While the risk of contracting the COVID-19 is currently very low in Tasmania, we want to do everything we can to act responsibly and help slow the spread. This will allow our local health services to keep up with demand and help protect those most at risk.

Council has enacted its Business Continuity Plan to ensure we maintain an appropriate level of service to the community. In the interest of public safety, we are making some changes in the way we deliver services in accordance with advice from the Department of Health.

#### **Council halls and events**

In an effort to limit the spread of the virus through face-to-face contact, Council has adopted the social distancing advice from the Australian Government Department of Health. Community halls are temporarily closed and hall events are postponed until further notice. All council-run events with gatherings of people are postponed, including committee meetings, excursions, social activities, talks, and learner driver mentoring sessions.

The format of Ordinary Meetings of Council is currently under review and further advice will be provided.

#### **Council sites and service delivery**

Council is putting additional hygiene practices (including more frequent cleaning) in place across all our sites, including our Customer Service Office, visitor centres, child care centres, medical centres, sports centres, waste transfer stations and depot. Council is installing soap dispensers and signage in all public toilets.

To reduce the number of face-to-face interactions with the community and support COVID-19 containment measures, Council is seeking the community's support in considering the way it interacts with Council. Many transactions and service requests can be dealt with via phone or email.

#### **Communications & Media Officer**

Huon Valley Council

[communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au](mailto:communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au)



If you have a service request, we ask that you please contact us over the phone on (03) 6264 0300, online at [www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au](http://www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au), or via [hvc@huonvalley.tas.gov.au](mailto:hvc@huonvalley.tas.gov.au) if possible, rather than visiting us in person.

As this pandemic unfolds and we are experiencing reduced staffing due to self-isolation requirements. A reduction in the council services delivered to the community will be ongoing and is likely to continue until the pandemic subsides. Please consider if your request is time sensitive and if you could lodge your request via the phone or internet rather than visiting in person.

“Please understand when contacting council that some staff may not be available or be as quickly as resolved as possible,” said Huon Valley Council General Manager Emilio Reale. “We understand the level of concern and potential inconvenience for both staff and community members during this difficult time, however we will endeavor to continue to provide essential services and return to full service as soon as possible.”

Huon Valley Council Mayor Bec Enders encourages all community members to protect against COVID-19 by practicing good hand hygiene, limiting contact with others, and staying home and seeking medical advice if you are unwell. Information on the coronavirus and hygiene practices can be found on the Tasmanian Department of Health website at [dhhs.tas.gov.au/coronavirus](http://dhhs.tas.gov.au/coronavirus).

“Taking more time and care in practicing good hand hygiene will also help reduce the demand on our health services so that they can meet the needs of our community and protect people who are at a higher risk of severe illness. Like many others, I have also needed to change the way I work, with most of my meetings now taking place online over the internet or by phone,” said Cr Enders.

“We advise all sporting clubs, organisations and businesses to increase your cleaning regimes and let your members know what they can do to help stop the spread. We recommend placing hand sanitiser and safety messaging in locations where people will see them, such as entrances.”

New information is being released everyday by the Australian Government Department of Health at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au). Although many people are not comfortable with change, we all need to be prepared to respond promptly to the professional advice we are given about COVID-19.

**For more information: Mayor Bec Enders (03) 6264 0300**

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