

# Media Release

17 March 2020

## Council Service Delivery during COVID-19 (Coronavirus) conditions

*From Wednesday 18 March 2020 the City of Burnside will be taking proactive and responsible measures, ensuring minimal disruption to services where possible, to ensure the safety of our community, stakeholders and employees is first priority and at the forefront of decision making.*

Council Chief Executive Chris Cowley said his team has been focused on planning for the impact of COVID19 and regularly reviewing business continuity practices to mitigate the risk from the virus to Council's operations.

As part of this proactive review several changes will occur to certain aspects of Council's operations and service delivery. Mr Cowley said that with a high population of elderly and vulnerable people living in the City, adequate action needs to be taken to support and protect residents and employees.

"For the most part the majority of the community will notice minimal differences to the way they receive and rely on Council services", Mr Cowley said.

"It will be business as usual for the Ranger services and compliance teams, field services from the depot, the rapid response team and waste collection and management" Mr Cowley said.

However, Council will be limiting gatherings and reducing the occurrence of face to face contact with frontline staff to reduce the risk to our residents and employees. Effective from tomorrow, **18 March** and until further notice, the following changes will occur to various aspects of Council's services.

- No **events** on Council premises exceeding 60 people will be permitted. Council will ask the community to reconsider their need to hold private events and postpone. Hirers will be refunded their deposits.
- The **George Bolton Swimming Centre** and **Tusmore Wading Pool** will close.
- The **Civic Centre Library** will close. A new 'click-and-collect' service will be in place along with an increase in the Home Library Service.
- The **Commonwealth Home Support Program** will continue to provide certain essential wellbeing services. Non-essential services will cease.
- **Volunteers** and the volunteer program will temporarily cease, with existing casual staff utilised where possible for service provision.
- The **Regal Theatre** will close.
- **Pepper Street Art Gallery** will close.
- The **Civic Centre Customer Service Desk** and **Community Centre Service Desk** will be closed with frontline staff continuing to deliver the call centre services (phone and email). Additional resources will be diverted to call centre facilities and to manage queries.

- Recognising these unprecedented circumstances, Council will not impose late fines or interest on the fourth rates instalment for 2019/20 that are due on 1 June 2020.
- **Sports clubs and other hirers** of recreational facilities will be asked to abide by the advice of their official professional body and the Federal Government.
- **Council meetings** will continue as normal with variations made to the setting of the public gallery.
- **All creditors paid within 14 days to drive small business cash flow.**

Additional resources resulting from the frontline changes will be diverted and invested to allow for alternate models of service delivery and a customer attention in these areas.

“These are not easy decisions to make. However, the health of the community, City staff and volunteers will be the top priority in all decision making. We are putting the community first and foremost”. It is important to acknowledge this is not about long term service review or cost considerations” Mr Cowley affirmed.

“Importantly, I have also made a commitment that our casual workforce will not be disadvantaged due to this situation, and we will source suitable opportunities for them in light of these changes”, said Mr Cowley.

The Council has produced a guide and information toolkit for the public in addition to contacting, where possible, other key stakeholders to allow for a seamless transition where possible.

“I encourage members of our community to be calm and careful. There are many simple precautions you can take to help prevent the spread of the virus, including regular hand washing with soap and water, and covering the mouth if coughing or sneezing. These additional measures are designed to protect the health of our staff and to help reduce and slow the spread of the virus in the community. In turn, this provides us the best chance of continuing to deliver our many crucial services to all”.

“In local disaster events, I am always encouraged and heartened by the willingness of the City of Burnside community to help and assist each other, and those most vulnerable. I have confidence we will see this again as we respond to the impacts of COVID-19”.

## **ENDS**

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