

COMMUNITY UPDATE

HERE FOR YOU



Message from the Mayor

These are trying times for all communities. Whether it is you and your family, your business, your club or your group, we want you to know that we are here for you.

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve Council is taking a proactive approach to ensure the balance of the health and safety of the community and staff alongside the provision of essential services.

Some of our services and facilities have again closed. Some services will again take on a different form for the time being. We are enacting these changes on the back of advice from the Federal and State Governments. Essential services like waste, public amenity cleaning and Independent Support Services will continue.

As well as remaining committed to community safety and wellbeing, Council also has an obligation to look after staff, volunteers and Councillors. Minimising disruption is a high priority, second only to the health and wellbeing of the community. Council will continue to keep the community updated and you can find a range of resources and a full list of affected services at www.buloke.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-health-alert. For the latest COVID-19 public health information please visit the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.



Business Support

Council is here for business. We have established a business support team with staff being employed to this area under the Working for Victoria Program to assist our incumbent staff.

Council will continue to connect with each business in Buloke. "Not only to check in and see how the business is going, but to understand any specific challenges businesses are facing."

There are a range of government initiatives in place to support businesses and you can learn more at www.buloke.vic.gov.au/support-for-business



Council will in the near future launch an online resource for the community to access information relating to local Buloke businesses.



Library Services

Normal Buloke library sites and mobile service operations have been suspended until further notice. Library members have access to "Borrowbox" which is a great alternative to access e-audiobooks. You can download the free app and use your library membership number for access. You can find more information at www.buloke.vic.gov.au/libraries

For the kids, Council is continuing to drop a new Story Time read with Mary every Thursday morning on Facebook and Council's website.



Customer Service

As you likely know we have made some changes to the way customer service is being accessed. Face to face service at Council's Wycheproof Customer Service Office will be limited and accessible by appointment only.

Customer service will still be provided by calling **1300 520 520** and online and there are a range of ways to make any payments you may need without visiting our office. With social distancing measures in place, it is advisable to use one of the online or over the phone options.

Council is still here to support you and our hours of operation remain the same, 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). It just continues to look a little different.



Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels is a vital community service. The service provides nutritious meals and enhances the well-being and independence of clients. Meals on wheels is continuing, but like many services it is a little bit different.

Council is here for our Meals on Wheels clients and for the time being our generous volunteers have been replaced with Council staff as we continue to care for vulnerable community members. We look forward to being able to reinstate our volunteers.

Your Council

Councillors will still have key responsibilities that will continue throughout the COVID-19 health crisis. Meetings will still need to be held in a form and the usual decision making on business will continue.

As always, Councillors are here for the community and will offer their support in any way they can.



Children's Services

For Maternal and Child Health clients, some consultations can occur over the phone, there may be some home visits where necessary. Normal Key Age and Stage visits will be cancelled until further notice to reduce face-to-face interaction with vulnerable populations. If in doubt, please call Council.

If you have any questions or urgent needs, please get in touch with the MCH nurses on **0417 506 174 (0428 615 732 in Sea Lake)** or you can call the MCH 24-hour hotline on **13 22 29**.

Immunisation Services will be by appointment only to avoid large groups gathering. Please call ahead to Council on **1300 520 520** to book an appointment.

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Social Media

Council has ramped up its communications during the COVID-19 situation. As you know, it is a fast moving situation with Council having to make decisions and implement change quickly.

The best way to keep up to date with the latest is to follow Council on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Did you know Council has over 3,000 people engaged with our platforms? That is one of the highest uptakes per capita for any Local Government Area in the state.

Please understand that when interacting with our social media channels that our staff may be experiencing some delays in getting to your questions. For any urgent matters please call **1300 520 520**.

Council is also working with local radio stations to keep you up to date. Listen out for updates on ABC Wimmera and Flow FM.

Lakes and Community Facilities

When you have beautiful assets that locals and travellers love, it is hard to close them down. But in the interests of everyone's health we have had to close all our lake amenities buildings and caravan parks. Camping in these spaces is not reducing non-essential travel. People need to stay home.

Buildings are closed to the public at Green Lake, Lake Tchum, Lake Watchem and Wooroonook Lakes. This closure extends to caravan parks at Donald Lakeside, Travellers Rest and Gordon Park (Charlton), Wycheproof Caravan Park and Sea Lake Caravan Park.

Caravan parks will still be accessible for permanent residents and people staying for work purposes.

Boating ramps at the lakes are not closed, however there are strict social distancing and gathering limitations around fishing to be aware of.

Other closures include museums, sporting facilities, playgrounds and senior citizens buildings.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back once the COVID-19 threat has passed.

PHONE: 1300 520 520

www.buloke.vic.gov.au

