



## CEO UPDATE - COVID-19

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** KYLIE BENNETTS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE CEO  
**PREPARED BY:** LAUREN BIALKOWER, MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide to Council an update on what City of Port Phillip in relation to COVID-19.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Council receives and notes the CEO update.

### 3. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 3.1 Since entering these uncharted waters, the health of our community, visitors and staff has been the City of Port Phillip's greatest concern.
- 3.2 Senior Council officers from a range of departments have been meeting daily to discuss developments relating to the COVID-19 virus and have been working to support the relevant government departments in limiting the spread of the virus.
- 3.3 Council activated its Municipal Emergency Management Influenza Sub-Plan on 2 March, adapting this to cover COVID-19. This sub-plan clearly identifies Council's role in responding to a pandemic which is to support the State Government's DHHS Department as the lead response agency.
- 3.4 The City of Port Phillip has been ensuring our community stay well informed through proactive communications and we have been updating our website and social media channels daily.
- 3.5 Council has a critical role to play in relief and recovery activities. This involves Council connecting vulnerable people to the support services needed and we are focussed on ensuring that our vulnerable and elderly community members stay top of mind in all considerations.
- 3.6 Council continues to administer vaccination programs on behalf of the State as well as being ready to provide logistical support if requested, such as traffic management and storage locations.
- 3.7 We have updated our business continuity plans to ensure we're in the best possible position to keep delivering essential services, such as waste collection and beach



cleaning, in the face of business interruption. This includes looking at ways of redeploying staff and resources and implementing remote working, if necessary.

- 3.8 Our infection control measures have included the provision of more hand sanitisers and increased cleaning regimes in Council buildings and facilities, such as community centres, libraries, community buses and town halls. Council already cleans its public amenities regularly throughout the day and will continue to take the advice of DHHS regarding the need to increase this.
- 3.9 The experts agree that the most effective means of preventing the spread of COVID-19 is ensuring high standards of personal hygiene such as the proper washing of hands and we have promoted this widely to our community and throughout our venues.
- 3.10 One of the greatest concerns for our Community is their continued access to food and essential supplies as the stress caused by recent shortages of items such as toilet paper is considerable. We have been working with Woolworths, Coles and Aldi to increase their ability to receive deliveries and hope this will assist in quicker replenishment of shelves.
- 3.11 The South Melbourne Market remains open providing our community with a vital source of fresh food and supplies. Market management are communicating daily with Traders to keep them informed of all developments and are providing additional communications to customers via social media and the website to assure them of precautions being taken to keep everybody safe.
- 3.12 The Market will shortly announce a click and collect service in the York Street Car Park to accommodate those unable to go inside. They are also working to introduce a home delivery service in the upcoming weeks.
- 3.13 Whilst the total Market capacity exceeds 500 people, it's important to realise that the size and division of the space means that it does not fall into the definition of mass gathering imposed by the Federal Government. Having said that, if we decide that restricting traffic through the market is desirable then this is something we will implement.
- 3.14 We are continuing to support our local businesses who are struggling with demand issues at both ends of the spectrum. Whilst our supermarkets continue to do a roaring trade, smaller traders are struggling. We are in regular contact with traders' associations and lending support where we can.
- 3.15 Officers have been busily making risk-based assessments of the various services we provide to determine changes that need to be made and we have been communicating these decisions as they occur. Tonight's Council meeting will likely result in us seeing the first of our key services, programs and facilities affected. It is inevitable that this list may increase in the upcoming days and weeks and we'll continue to communicate widely as these decisions occur via our website and social media channels.

## ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL – 18 MARCH 2020



- 3.16 We have cancelled or postponed all large-scale gatherings planned for March/April and have also advised many of our venue hirers and event bookers that their events will not be able to continue at this time.
- 3.17 We will continue to work with Federal and Victorian Government guidelines about public safety and make all decisions based on how we best demonstrate a duty of care.
- 3.18 We are following directives from Australian and Victorian Government departments, including the Department of Health and Department of Education, in relation to infection control procedures for any cases of coronavirus that may arise in Port Phillip. If staff think they may have symptoms of the coronavirus, we have asked them to stay home and seek medical advice. In-line with advice from DHHS, some staff have chosen to self-isolate as a precaution. At this stage, we have not been advised by DHHS to make any closures and we are not aware of any Council staff being diagnosed with COVID-19.
- 3.19 The Executive Leadership team plus key Managers have been meeting daily to ensure decision making is prompt, timely and effective.
- 3.20 We are taking measures to protect our Councillors and Officers by discouraging public attendance at Council meetings. We have proposed changing the venue until the situation is resolved and limiting public participation to online questions and statements.
- 3.21 We are aware that this is an evolving situation and that our response must remain dynamic. There is also the likelihood of considerable staff infection so having plans in place to work with a reduced workforce is vital. We are currently considering options of allowing non-essential staff to stand down and self-isolate, while rostering skeleton staff to deliver our core services.
- 3.22 As we continue into these extraordinary times, I ask our community, staff and councillors to take this issue extremely seriously, follow advice from the Department of Health and Human Services and look out for your family, friends and people around you. Many of you may have neighbours, colleagues or friends who are struggling and it's vitally important we reach out and come together as the strong community we are.

#### 4. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 4.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

**TRIM FILE NO:** F20/1  
**ATTACHMENTS** Nil