

## UPDATED: IMPACT OF COVID-19 FOR WALCHA COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Walcha Council will implement additional controls this week in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and threat to the safety of our community and our staff.

Walcha Mayor Eric Noakes says, *“Changes to Council services are not intended to isolate our residents, but to protect both our community and our staff so that we can continue to provide essential services. All of your council services are only a phone call or internet click away.”*

*“We need to appreciate the seriousness of the COVID-19 situation and the consequences of not acting early enough. We need to act together to protect each other. All eight of your Councillors, and your Council staff are only a phone call away. We are here to support you through this and are ready to listen to any of your concerns.”* says Mayor Eric Noakes.

Significant changes will include restricting access to the council office. There will be no access to visit either the Engineering or Environmental Services departments from Tuesday 24 March 2020. From Wednesday 25 March 2020, any visits to the Council Office must be by prior appointment. Residents should to first make contact with Council via phone or email and staff will do their best to resolve your issue over the phone. This includes payment of rates, bills and all Service NSW services. If this is not possible and the issue is considered urgent by staff, then individual appointments can be made. We will continue to take guidance from the State Government in relation to schools, and at the time of print our Preschool remains open.

*“We have already been through so much together, but this is by far the biggest threat to our community. It won’t be a Government Policy, vaccine or the health system that can slow the spread of COVID-19, it will be us. We know we need to change our actions and I know that we can together.”* says Mayor Eric Noakes.

General Manager Anne Moddero says, *“These actions and changes to Council Services have been made after putting the safety of our staff, their families and our community first. If you have any questions relating to Council Services please get in touch with us over the phone first.”*

Residents can contact Council on 67742500 or via email at [council@walcha.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@walcha.nsw.gov.au).

Please continue to refer to NSW Health site [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au) as the primary source of information and health updates.

The following table will be displayed on the Council’s website at <http://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19.aspx> and will continue to be updated as our response develops.

<b>Council Services</b>		
<b>Council Service</b>	<b>Service Status</b>	<b>Services Provided:</b>
Water & Sewerage	Operational	Services will be continued
Waste Management	Operational	Services continued including bin collection and recycling.

		Waste Depot services as normal at this stage.
Road Maintenance & Safety	Operational	Council crews will continue to maintain roads and road safety at this stage.  Staff could be reduced if virus is ongoing and therefore skeleton crews will be working.
Council Main Office (including Service NSW)	<b>Restricted Access</b> <b>From 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020:</b>  Enquiries to engineering department and environmental services departments – ALL VIA telephone and/or email ONLY from <b>24.03.2020 onwards</b>  Phone: 0267742500  Email: <a href="mailto:council@walcha.nsw.gov.au">council@walcha.nsw.gov.au</a>  <b>From 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020:</b>  Council office will be closed for drop ins. This includes Service NSW. All customers must first call council to determine if an appointment is required to facilitate the specific enquiry.	<b>Services Maintained but all visits to the office will be by prior appointment ONLY from Wednesday 25 March 2020 onwards.</b> Please call the council office in the first instance to understand if we can facilitate your enquiry over the phone. If over the phone or internet is not possible, then arrangements can be made to attend the council office in person through an approved appointment.
Ranger Services	Operational	Service maintained. Uralla Shire Council will determine this decision.
Walcha Preschool	<b>Operational</b>  Council note the advice from the state government is to keep you children at home if you can. Note that families will not be charged if their child(ren) are taken out of Preschool.	Services maintained until further notice. Council will take advice from the NSW Department of Education regarding any decisions to change operations for the Preschool.
Park & Sporting Grounds	Open	Maintenance of grounds will continue however we encourage event organisers, sporting clubs and associations to observe social distancing practices as prescribed by Federal Government.
Public Toilets	<b>Restrictions</b>	Lions park and Quota Park toilets will be closed from <b>24.03.2020</b> .  McHattan Park and will remain open with increased cleaning frequency.
Squash Court Complex including Gym	<b>CLOSED</b>	This service will be closed from Monday 23 March 2020 following advice issued by the State and Federal Governments.
Meals on Wheels	Operational – with new controls	Service is continuing as normal. Additional controls have been implemented for our volunteers providing this service.
Town Bus for Walcha local shopping	Operational	Service increased to twice per week. Bookings required on 6774 2471.
Council Depot	Operational	Services Maintained but will be reviewed to ensure staff safety.

Walcha Community Care Office	<b>Restrictions</b> – Drop ins by prior appointment only. Please call 67742471 to make an appointment.	Open but will be reviewed to ensure staff and community safety. All events and group gatherings have been cancelled.
Walcha Library	<b>CLOSED</b>	Online services will be made available and access to drop off and pick up books made available. Books returned will be quarantined for 3 days then cleaned prior to being put back into circulation.
Development applications and Assessments	Operational – Tues/Wed/Thursday. <b>Access via phone and email only from 24.03.2020 onwards</b>	Services Maintained through phone and email only during Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

### Revisions to Services

<b>Council Service:</b>	<b>Service Status:</b>	<b>Services Provided:</b>
Walcha Memorial Baths – Pool	<b>Closed</b> from Wednesday 18 March 2020	Re-open next summer.
Visitor Information Centre	<b>Closed</b> from Thursday, 19 March 2020	Closed until further notice. Tourists referred to Walcha Tourism website for information.
Bus to Armidale	Service suspended	Suspended until further notice.
Bus to Tamworth	Service suspended	Service suspended until further notice.
April School Holiday activities	Activities Cancelled	Suspended until further notice.
Library Storytime and other group activities	Activities suspended	Suspended until further notice.

For interviews phone Walcha Mayor Eric Noakes on 0428 774 504 or General Manager Anne Moddero on 0467 764 455.

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