



24 March 2020

## **Updated Message to the Walcha Community Re: COVID-19**

Dear Community Members

Less than a week ago we could never have predicted where we would be today, and what decisions we are making in relation to our health. So much alas already changed since my letter just last Friday. The COVID-19 Pandemic will impact us all. We will have cases in Walcha and we know that this virus can kill. We need to work together to slow the spread of infection so that we give our hospital system every opportunity to care effectively for patients in need. We can't stop it from happening, but we can slow it so that we can cope with it.

This week Council will introduce further measures to help in controlling this pandemic. In addition to last week's closures of the pool, Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and reduced travel services for our Community Care customers, the Library is now also closed. Effective 24 March 2020, there will be no access to visit either the Engineering or Environmental Services departments; and effective 25 March 2020 any visits to the Council office must be by prior appointment. I encourage residents to first call or email Council with your enquiry so that the staff can do their best to resolve it over the phone. If this is not possible and the issue is considered urgent by staff, then individual appointments can be made. These restrictions include all Service NSW services, payment of bills, rates and all other Council enquiries. We will continue to take guidance from the State Government in relation to schools, and at the time of print our Preschool remains open.

Introduced changes to Council services are not intended to isolate our residents, but to protect both you and our staff so that we can continue to provide essential services to our community. Council will use our website and Facebook pages as well as publishing in local media to report changes to services. While Council is temporarily closing some facilities and services, remember that all services are only a phone call or internet click away. As a service facility we will continue to do all that we can to keep our community informed, safe and assured.

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. 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.

***Eric Noakes***

Mayor of Walcha