

## City of Ballarat's Update on COVID-19

**The COVID-19 emergency is an unprecedented event in recent history. To protect the health of residents and staff, the City of Ballarat has instigated its Response and Recovery Pandemic 2020 Plan for its staff, ratepayers, residents and the broader community.**

**Evidence from around the world has shown that pre-emptive measures are extremely effective in containing the spread of the disease.**

**NOTE: This is an extremely fluid situation and events are changing daily.**

*All information listed below is correct as at 3.30pm, Monday 30 March but is subject to change. Please keep up-to-date by visiting [ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au)*

### **The City of Ballarat has a key role to play in all emergency management situations affecting the municipality.**

The City of Ballarat's primary focus for the next six months is to ensure that we have the best chance of avoiding the major impacts of COVID-19.

### **Free parking in the CBD and hospital precinct**

The City of Ballarat has announced free parking across the CBD and hospital precinct from Monday 30 March during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Making parking free in these areas will help local businesses and the community cope with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City of Ballarat hopes access to free parking will further limit the time residents are out doing essential tasks such as shopping at the supermarket or going to see their doctor.

The City of Ballarat believes this measure will help relieve the financial burden on residents.

Ballarat Health Services has also moved to free up space in its Base Hospital multi-storey carpark to provide extra support for its staff, while St John of God Hospital will also continue to provide the parking required to support its staff.

### **City of Ballarat provides paid special leave to staff**

The City of Ballarat will provide an additional four days of paid special leave to assist Council staff affected by work-site closures. The special leave is one of many measures we are implementing to safeguard staff, their families and the wider community during

the COVID-19 pandemic. We will provide a total of nine days of paid special leave for about 200 staff at affected sites.

The City of Ballarat provides special leave to staff in exceptional circumstances. Special leave is not an entitlement under the *Ballarat City Council Enterprise Agreement No 7, 2016* or the Fair Work Act. The organisation's provision of special leave goes above and beyond the entitlements set out in the Agreement to provide some certainty and security for staff in these unprecedented times.

The City of Ballarat has been working to protect the health of residents and staff since the organisation implemented its Response and Recovery Pandemic 2020 Plan on 15 March. Most of the organisation's employees are now working from home. We have asked a small section of our staff (approx. 200 out of 1,100) to consider taking leave if they are not able to work from home due to the nature of their role, or be redeployed to essential services, such as Meals on Wheels or waste collection. This has been a request only, not a direction or standing-down of any staff.

### **Restrictions of public gatherings**

Following Premier Daniel Andrew's announcement this morning about Stage 3 restrictions, the City of Ballarat is urging all residents to stay at home unless they need to go outside for food, medical care, exercise, work or education (when it cannot be done from home).

The City of Ballarat has closed all playgrounds, off-lead dog parks, outdoor gyms and skate parks in a bid to restrict gatherings to no more than two people.

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Over the last two days we have seen the number of cases of COVID-19 in Victoria increase by 136 to 821. Four people have died, many more are in hospital or self-isolating at home.

Gatherings of more than two people (except for members of your immediate household and for work or education) are now prohibited in Ballarat and Victoria. Social distancing still applies to groups of two people.

If people breach these directions, they face on-the-spot fines of \$1,652 for individuals and \$9,913 for businesses. Larger fines can also be issued through the courts.

### Eight confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ballarat

The City of Ballarat can confirm there are eight cases of COVID-19 in Ballarat. The City of Ballarat is reminding residents that everyone has a role to play in protecting themselves and their families.

The City of Ballarat congratulates the community for following state and federal government advice to stay home and help halt the spread of COVID-19.

By staying at home and adhering to social distancing guidelines, we will see a flattening of the curve and enable Ballarat Health Services to manage the pandemic appropriately.

### Looking after our elderly

The City of Ballarat, in line with advice from state and federal Chief Medical Officers, is urging anyone over 70 years of age, and people with pre-existing medical conditions, to self-isolate at home. This category of the population is at higher risk of experiencing severe illness from the COVID-19 virus.

The City of Ballarat will continue to run its Home Support and Meals on Wheels programs. People who need to access these services should call 5320 5670.

### Lucas Community Hub closure

In line with other facility closures, the City of Ballarat is changing service delivery arrangements for immunisation and kindergarten services currently operating out of the Lucas Community Hub building.

#### Changes to MCH and Immunisation Services

- **Childhood Immunisation Clinics** effective from Tuesday 31 March 2020, the immunisation clinics (booked appointments) scheduled at Lucas Community Hub will relocate to Sebastopol Library.
- **Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services** have been relocated across multiple sites. Due to current COVID-19 precautions this service has been reduced to mostly telephone consultations and some home visits. The MCH team has moved to meeting rooms at the Sebastopol Library.
- **Lucas Kindergarten** (auspiced by YMCA Ballarat) will temporarily move to another location. The City of Ballarat is working with the YMCA to identify a suitable temporary location and a contingency plan to ensure service continuity of kindergarten services if, subject to advice from the government, they continue at the commencement of Term 2.