



Media Release

27 March 2020

COVID-19 – A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In these times of uncertainty, Mayor Peter Petty wishes to assure the community that Council is taking all possible measures to ensure the major services of waste removal, water availability and quality, and maintenance of sewerage services remain functional for the unknown period before us.

Council continues to monitor the evolving guidelines issuing from the Federal Health Department, NSW Health, NSW Office of Local Government, and the Prime Minister, and remains confident that the early precautions of closing the Libraries, School of Arts/Cinema, Tenterfield Memorial Pool, Visitor Information Centre and face to face Customer Service desk will pay dividends in ensuring that Council will be able to offer the community a level of service in other areas, albeit reduced.

Much work has been done this week to relocate staff from the Administration Office to their homes, ensuring they have the internet connections and equipment required to continue to work from home. Yesterday, Council reduced staff levels in the Administration Building with only 10 staff members now able to access the building, the remaining working from home and delivering or picking up documents and items through a specially set up area to ensure isolation.

“Chief Executive Terry Dodds and his team of managers have done an amazing job.” Mayor Peter Petty said.

“Despite the anxiety of having to face a totally unknown situation, staff have got on with the job and with the support of Council’s IT team, the majority of indoor staff members are now out of the building and where they should be, at home supporting their family, while still able to function and deliver most of the requirements of their work place,” the Mayor added.

Meanwhile, the outdoor workforce have not been idle with the following actions being taken:

Water & Sewer

- Water & Sewer services will continue as normal for Tenterfield, Urbenville and Jennings (water only).
- Back-up procedure and guidelines being prepared and tested to provide for un-trained staff to carry out operations at Tenterfield and Urbenville Water and Sewerage Treatment Works if needed.
- Council staff in Tenterfield are separated into 2 crews. Working week about in the Sewerage Treatment Plant and Water Treatment Plant. The crews will continue to provide services for water meter installations/replacements/leaks and sewer (boundary shaft) connections as well as mains breaks and sewer chokes. Capital works will be prioritised and scheduled monthly.
- Urbenville teams have been separated to work at the Water Treatment Plant and Sewerage Treatment Plant. As with Tenterfield, the Urbenville team will undertake services and will additionally undertake some asset maintenance.

- Cross training with Works staff has commenced in case social isolation is required.
- Discussions are taking place with Kyogle Council and Southern Downs Regional Council regarding cross training with existing Woodenbong arrangements in place.

Waste

- Waste services will continue as normal at all Transfer Stations, kerbside pickups and the Boonoo Boonoo landfill.
- Transfer Station hygiene and customer service training completed. Staff will wear personal protection of masks and gloves when dealing with the public and follow de-contamination procedures. No assistance will be provided to customers to limit staff exposure.
- Council is working towards cashless transactions at all Transfer Stations.
- Tenterfield Waste Transfer Station will no longer accept cash from Monday, 6 April 2020.

Fleet/Workshop

- Essential services are number one priority – Waste, Water and Sewer.
- Implementing roster (which may vary depending on developments going forward and operational hours of outdoor workforce).
- Planning from Works is a priority; staggered shifts to allow repairs or services outside current working hours.
- Vehicle registration check suspended to Thursday, 30 April 2020 subject to review.

Roads and Bridges

- Some capital projects to be postponed.
- Plains Station Road construction –conducting repairs to storm damage through Frasers Cutting.
- Urbenville Bridge and Boundary Creek Bridge on Beaury Creek Road – Following the prestart meeting, construction of the sidetrack will occur. Bridge work commencement under review.
- Long Gully Road – fire/storm damage. Works to continue unblocking pipes on Rocky River Road in the short term
- Rivertree Road grading – postponed.
- Bruxner Way road widening project - postponed.
- Woodside Road causeway – programmed.
- Road Maintenance Work – continuing as scheduled for the Urbenville crew.
- Western Grading - as programmed.
- Eastern Grading – as programmed.
- Northern Grading – as programmed.
- Central Area Grading - as programmed.
- Slashing as programmed.
- Concrete crew - Springfield Road storm repairs.
- Bridge crew undertaking bridge inspections in preparation for maintenance activities.
- Tenthill Road – work on fire damaged trees followed by drainage upgrades.
- Patching – as programmed and reactive.
- Footpath inspections to continue.

“We cannot expect, under the circumstances, to go about our normal business. However we will continue to maintain operations for as long as we can and ensure

that our essential services continue to function, especially those related to safety, water, sewer and waste," Chief Executive Terry Dodds said.

Mayor Peter Petty added, "Council have worked hard to build a wonderful team of staff (both indoor and outdoor). They rose to the task over and over again during the fire and drought events in 2019 and have bounced back to achieve great things once again with the implementation of harsh guidelines to battle the oncoming COVID-19 pandemic".

"We need to ensure that we do everything we can to carry on so that as many services as possible are maintained".

"I am extremely proud to have such a dedicated Council workforce. They are indicative of the spirit and resilience of our whole Shire wide community and although this disaster is unknown, I am sure that we will all work together to come out the other end intact," the Mayor concluded.

ENDS

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