



LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

**Emergency Management Act 2005
SECTION 38 (1)**

A Local Government is to establish one or more local emergency management committees for the local government district.

Special Meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee
Held at the Shire of Plantagenet Committee Room
10.00am Monday 30 March 2020

**Rob Stewart
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Committee Members

Cr M O'Dea (Chairperson), Cr S Etherington (Deputy), Mr M Barnes (Executive Officer), Mr A Smith, Ms A Tucker, Sgt D Johnson, Mr D Lynch, Ms E Drage, Mr J Stasev, Ms J Hollingworth, Ms K Beidatsch, Ms K Hill, Mr N Blackburn, Ms N Rouse, Mr N Handasyde, Mr S Player, Mr W Hood, (Resolution No. 217/19)

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DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

At 10:02, the Presiding Member declared the special meeting open.

Special Business

Incident – **HUMAN EPIDEMIC**
Incident Name – **COVID 19**
Incident Level – **CHO (State Human Epidemic Controller)
Declared Level 3**

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES

Members Attended

Cr Marie O'Dea	Council Representative
Sgt David Johnson	Western Australian Police Force
Ms Alex Tucker	Environmental Health Officer
Mr David Lynch	Executive Manager Works and Services
Ms Julie Hollingworth	Department of Health
Mr Mike Barnes	Community Emergency Services Manager

Visitors

Andrew Fraser	Mount Barker Community College
Gary Tempany	Mount Barker Coop
Rob Stewart	Chief Executive Officer

Apologies

Mr Neville Blackburn	District Emergency Services Officer
Kylie Spencer	Department of Health Mount Barker and Denmark COVID-19 Coordinator

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Nil

1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Nil

2 STANDING ITEMS

Nil

3 AGENCY REPORTS

3.1 WA POLICE FORCE (WAPF)

The commissioner has requested that a meeting of the committee be held every week from now to look at the recovery arrangements going forward and who else should be included in these meetings.

Road closures will be in place as of 23:59 Tuesday 31 March 2020 for each region and there will be no crossing of regional boundaries with some exemptions of work, emergency volunteers, shopping (if only option), freight drivers, compassionate grounds, and important health appointments/acute sickness. There are 14 entrances into the shire and with two officers, two Main Roads and two emergency volunteers expected to man these locations this is just not possible due to the lack of resources. Patrols will be random, and travellers will be questioned as to why they need to come into the region.

Funerals, especially aboriginal funerals will need education around large gatherings. Bans on the sale of ammunition, gun and alcohol have been relaxed slightly. Now investigating recovery around stakeholder mapping and the messages that need to be delivered and how

WAPF procedures have changed; random breath tests will still continue but cut down to one every 15 minutes with cleaning of all of the equipment in between each test.

We have been working with Gary at IGA re social distancing recommendations. Consequentially there have been two persons banned from coming into the store.

There has not been any talk of lock down yet, but this may come in the future.

Armed robbery has increased in the eastern states but overall crime rate in the Great Southern has dropped since September last year, from 40 per month to 10 per month.

Question

Are we able to use all of the resources within the Shire to alleviate the pressure?

Answer

Definitely, we need to be a team to survive and thrive after this incident.

Statement

Communication around the banning of guns, alcohol etc. This needs to be explained when the ban is put in to place.

Response

The expectation is that domestic violence will increase with home isolation: restricting the sale of guns, ammo and alcohol should see a reduction in this area. When legislation is passed by the courts then it becomes law. We will only police the law and not the suggested actions i.e. social distancing is a suggested action: not law. Police cannot enforce this just as local government cannot enforce this.

Statement

Communication needs to be clearer around when things become law and when they are only suggestions.

3.2 PLANTAGENET/CRANBROOK HEALTH SERVICE

Everyone should only refer to the following websites as a source of truth:

WA Health Website –

ww2.health.wa.gov.au

Australian Government Health Website –

<https://www.health.gov.au/>

These sites are updated daily with issues and information for staff and the public. There is also the app that can be downloaded. Both the Website and App include Information, statistics, latest news and current health alerts.

The Mount Barker Health Service has been preparing for weeks and have been some changes to our site. For the aged care facility, visitations have been limited to one visit per day and only two family members per visit.

The movement of staff is restricted and split in to the area they are working in i.e. if staff are working in Overton House, they will stay there for the entire shift. The main hospital staff will stay in the acute areas.

There are fewer people coming into the hospital, but if people are feeling sick then they need to come in and be assessed.

The Hospital sits on a Local Emergency Operations Committee (LEOC) between the Shires of Plantagenet and Denmark and includes representatives from the General Practitioners (GPs). The Hospital also sits on the Regional Emergency Operations Committee (REOC) which is held in Albany for the region. Julie Hollingworth is the representative for both of these committees and will be able to update the LEMC of any developments and vice versa, Julie can take any issues to either of the LEOC or REOC meetings.

All WA health providers are looking hard into the future to ascertain what will be required going forward. There are dedicated zonings of Red and Green Hospitals. A Green zone or hospital (Mount Barker and Denmark) will be taking patients from the Red zones or Hospitals (Albany and Kojonup) that are not infected with the COVID 19 to open up beds in the Red hospitals for those more acute patients with the virus. Alternatively any cases from the Green hospitals who are COVID 19 positive will be transported to the Red hospitals for admission via a dedicated ambulance. Mount Barker Volunteer Ambulance service is using their event ambulance which has had most of the equipment removed to provide the basics; this is only a transportation ambulance and not a first response vehicle.

If the cases were to increase in number and Mount Barker was required to become a Red zone hospital then some major upgrades will need to be completed prior. This is something that is being considered and as you can appreciate will take time to plan and complete.

Question

What are your staffing availabilities, do you have enough staff?

Answer

The Mount Barker hospital is fully staffed with nurses and care givers at the moment however there is space for cleaners on a casual basis if you know of someone that can assist.

Question

Are your mortuary facilities adequate?

Answer

We do not have a mortuary: only a room with an air conditioner for temporary storage.

The Mount Barker hospital has adequate supplies of personal protective clothing (PPC) and Equipment (PPE) and we are able to request more if required. Medications have been restricted as are areas in and around the hospital with swipe card access limiting staff to certain areas.

The vulnerable people that we service will no longer be taken to the shops. The staff will do this on a one to one basis for them. If there are any vulnerable persons in the community that currently are not in our care then we can assist them in the first instance with an assessment to be done later. Normally the assessment would be required first. Please let me know if there is anyone we can assist.

Mount Barker and Denmark health campuses have appointed Kylie Spencer as the COVID 19 Coordinator and may be the one attending these meetings either with me (Julie Hollingworth) or instead of me.

Question

Are the private health care providers still operating?

Answer

Yes. The private operators like Silver Chain are still operating. The vulnerable people coordinator is Anne Marie. The private providers are being assessed through the REOC.

Mount Barker hospital is increasing their telehealth services options as are all other hospitals across Western Australia. This will allow patients to keep appointments for their health needs and is proving to be successful.

Question

Is there any provision for messaging for those who do not have access to printers or even computers?

Answer

Messaging is being sent out via the web sites and radio services

Statement

We need a place for members of the public to go to get the correct information when the normal places are closed for long periods.

Response

Organisations need to be ready with notices, signs, messaging and work as a team giving the same correct messages from a single source of truth.

Statement

Between the Shire and IGA the messages can get out to the public.

Response

If people of sick they need to come and be checked out at the hospital as soon as possible.

3.3 MOUNT BARKER COMMUNITY COLLEGE – PRIMARY EVACUATION CENTRE

Changes made at the college, some children are staying at home at their parents' wishes. When children come to the college they are being supervised but not taught.

Packages are being put together for down loading at home to continue home education/activities until the college is back to normal

Schools/Colleges may not be open in term 2 but education definitely will be. The College is refurbishing old computers at a very low cost of \$50 to assist students who do not have a computer at home

Children's social networking will be disrupted and it is important to keep the networks open as much as possible, especially the CALD community.

The messaging is getting through to the children to keep an eye on each other including vulnerable people, Kids help line phone numbers and websites have been disseminated.

3.4 INDEPENDENT GROCERY ALLIANCE (IGA)

This is the 4th week of above average sales with 25% of the sales being completed in the first two hours of opening.

The expectation is that sales will start to get back to normal going forward as the supply chain is about two weeks away from catching up. The warehouse was a day behind but has now caught up.

The liquor store has been experiencing panic buying again but this is expected to subside. The panic buying seems to have moved to gas cylinders. There is no a shortage of gas either.

There has never been a shortage on anything: just a supply disruption to keep up with demand.

We have been receiving some great assistance from the Police. Having them in store is deterrent enough for people to keep calm.

Seniors, vulnerable and isolated people have been receiving home deliveries, around 15 at this stage: I am expecting this to ramp up in the region of 50 plus. We are looking at including Cranbrook Shire too. Sue Etherington is the point of contact for the volunteers for the home deliveries.

Changes instore have occurred at the front end with only two of the three fast checkouts open, the middle one being closed. The main centre checkout has also been closed to keep social distancing recommendations. No changes were necessary to the liquor store with only two checkouts with one being used most of the time. Mitre 10 has a big counter to separate the staff from the customers and red crosses have been placed on the floor as an indication to the social distancing recommendations while waiting to be served.

Question

Are you employing more staff and hiring vehicles to complete the deliveries?

Answer

Yes. Once the orders increase we have thought about hiring staff and vehicle in the short term.

Question

Are you promoting the message on your website about the home deliveries?

Answer

The home deliveries have only just started, we will now be advertising on our website and in the Plantagenet Newspaper as long as they are still printing. We will be promoting this service to the doctors too as they are working longer hours to see more patients. They do not get time to come to the store.

Question

Has bottled water been in short supply? Some properties are not connected to the mains and have limited rain water available so they rely on bottled water.

Answer

We have not had any restrictions or limitations on bottled water and stocks are good in store and at the warehouse.

3.5 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

The Dept. of Communities (DOC) has sent in their apologies for not attending this meeting but they have sent in a short report.

When people isolate they receive a fact sheet from the Health Department which outlines support avenues. If they are unable to help themselves or have no one to assist them then the DOC can assist these people. The assistance offered is food deliveries and accommodation for local and interstate/international Australian citizens. If in doubt isolated persons can call the hotline and we can fully explain the assistance we can offer.

3.6 SHIRE OF PLANTAGENET

The Shire of Plantagenet (SOP) has made some changes. We have closed to the public the Pool, the Gym and the Rec Centre. We have limited access to the library by appointment with orders online. Once the order that the customer has requested arrives then the customer is contacted. That person then attends the library but must stay in their car, call the library phone to say they have arrived and then their order will be placed outside the doors for the customer to pick up. No contact with staff or customer.

The front counter at the Shire office has been experiencing larger numbers through the doors, the shire has made changes here with a line on the floor requesting people stay behind the line and not approach the counter until called. This helps maintain the distancing recommendations.

The shire offices will remain open although the front counter staff have expressed concerns and are worried about contact so some more changes may be warranted. The roads will still be graded, applications will still be processed: it will be business as usual where possible. We need to be seen to be maintaining as normal shire functions as possible to instil confidence to all. After a staff meeting this morning there may be further restricted access to the building. We will talk about what restrictions will be put into place at our COVID 19 team meetings each morning.

Question

Are forms and other shire documents available to be filled in online and for people to access?

Answer

Our web site is not a good platform for filling in forms online at the moment; our Internet Communications Technology (ICT) department are working on a solution.

The ICT is working on Virtual Private Networks (VPN) for the employees that are working outside (remotely) of the office. All of the staff have been separated and are now working from the normal shire office, the rec centre, library and the shire depot. The works and services crew that normally work outside have also had some separation in that operators now only drive one machine each day and that machine is thoroughly cleaned at the end of each shift. Car-pooling has been banned, single use only from now on. Travel has been limited and if the employee needs to use their own vehicle then we are paying travel allowance.

Senior staff and the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) are meeting daily to discuss updates, recommendations and concerns. This is proving to have good results.

The SOP has started to use the online video conferencing App called 'Zoom' which is something new and may be the norm by the time this is all over.

The SOP electronic sign at the front of the offices can be used solely for emergency info if required

The council meetings are still happening in the chambers in person. There are some councillors that have stated that they will not come in for these meetings so phone in options are being investigated for them to dial in.

The SOP is in agreeance of the need for a central local location for the dissemination of information but will need to coordinate this information with the health service.

Question

What is the possibility of using the text messaging system to be able to pass on information?

Answer

That could be a possibility but would depend on the information to be passed. There are currently around 1400 mobiles phone numbers on the system which is not all of the people in SOP or this could be too many. It's a fine line it all depends of the target audience.

The recommendation made to the bush fire brigades is to only have one driver and no one else in the cab. Other fire fighters that attend could do so in their own vehicles. Then park a safe distance away from the fire. The fire fighters can then climb on the working deck (maximum of two, one in each side) or stay on the ground with the fire fighting equipment. All of the equipment and the appliance is to be cleaned back at the shed, outside, prior to the driver putting the appliance away.

3.7 OTHER BUSINESS

Marie O'Dea - People are just worried about the situation.

David Johnson - These are unprecedented times at the moment.

Marie O'Dea - These risks are forced upon us where farmers are doing risk assessments everyday

- David Lynch - We are practicing Business As Usual (BAU) to instil confidence, we have ramped up the hygiene messaging and we are sourcing our information from one source at the health department.
- Andrew Fraser - The College is still spending its budget as BAU even if the student numbers are down.
- Rob Stewart - Our Local Government is a central business to the community and we need to be seen to have as minimal disruption as possible without exposing shire staff to the risk.
- David Johnson - Just received an email regarding the road blocks and the exemptions these are;
- For work purposes if you cannot work from home
 - Shopping if no other options for what you need
 - Freight services
 - Compassionate grounds and
 - Health appointments that cannot be deferred
- Alex Tucker - How will travellers be assessed to their legitimacy for crossing the region boundaries?
- David Johnson - Through questioning, it is for the traveller to provide proof as to the validity that they need to travel.
- Things to think about for the next meeting;
- David Johnson - If total lock down comes in to force what will this look like? How will this be managed?
- Marie O'Dea - Water cartage and feed for livestock and pets, what if money runs out? Where can people get assistance; will starving animals end up with animal welfare issues?
- David Lynch - the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) have predicted an above average rain fall this year.

4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date for the LEMC Special meeting of the COVID 19 is 10:00am start on Monday 6 April 2020 at the Shire of Plantagenet Committee Room, Lowood Road Mount Barker:

5 CLOSURE

At 11:43am, the Presiding Member declared the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

 Presiding Member

 Date