

MAYOR'S MESSAGE APRIL 2020

Firstly, I would like to apologise for my lack of communication over recent weeks but when I put out a newsletter in the middle of the Local Government elections four years ago I was reported to the Electoral Commission of Queensland and received a rap over the knuckles so you need to be cautious during the caretaker period. The election has now run its course and, although the councillor results aren't yet finalised I have been returned as mayor and that has been declared by the ECQ. I am humbled by the amount of support I received from the community to run again so thank you for that.

Coronavirus

Can I assure everyone that, election or no election, the CEO, Dave Burges, and I have been in daily contact and we have both, either individually or together, been receiving almost daily updates on the rolling developments of the Coronavirus crisis. In the last two weeks we have conducted two Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMG) meetings and have phoned in to the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMG) and State Disaster Coordination Committee (SDCC) meetings. I have also, through Outback Tourism, had a telephone hook up with our Tourism Minister, Kate Jones, spoken privately to Federal Agriculture Minister, David Littleproud, and on Monday this week had a Mayoral phone in with Premier Palaszczuk and relevant Ministers and health experts.

There is so much happening and it is changing daily but Dave and I are as informed as we can be so please feel free to contact us if you are at all unsure of what is happening. The Premier did ask us to put out the very clear message that they don't want anyone holidaying or tripping for any reason, whether you live in Queensland or not – stay at home!

There is so much info that we are privy to that I can't put it all down here but, again, I urge anyone who needs to know something relevant to them to feel free to get in touch.

For instance, councils have no jurisdiction to close our shire boundaries and this won't be happening at this stage. The message is out there, however, that people should be staying at home. We love our visitors and we will welcome them out here as soon as we can but, for now, everyone must stay at home. At the time of writing there have been no recorded cases of Coronavirus in the South West Health Area (Roma west).

Lastly, as the Prime Minister has iterated repeatedly, we must work together. There are deeply contrasting circumstances in the present situation – those that are relatively unaffected and those that have lost their jobs or have had to close their business completely and see their revenue go from healthy to zero! Please, please have some thoughts and respect for those most affected. I cringe when I hear of people who have safe, secure jobs demand that other businesses should close or do some such detrimental activity without a moment's thought for their position.

This is going to be a long haul but just remember what the Prime Minister said – "Everyone who has a job has an essential job"! We have to get through this without completely shutting down and destroying our business's and eventually our community in the process. We also have to do everything that is practical to ensure we don't lose anyone in our community from this virus.

Now is not the time to turn on each other, even any visitors that may turn up. **It has never been more important to support and be kind to each other – every person and business across our shire!**

Warm Regards,

Stuart Mackenzie