



EAST GIPPSLAND – THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS NOW

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Context

East Gippsland Shire residents, businesses and communities have been impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact has been exacerbated by the 2019/20 summer bushfires; three and half years of below average rainfall; and timber, fishing and farming industry transitions.

Our people have also been impacted by these events and changes: if not our employees directly, then their significant others, families, friends and/or the communities in which they live. While the resilience and courage our people have shown in their determination to support their communities through these events and changes has been outstanding, the cumulative psychological stress cannot be underestimated as we look to emerge from COVID-19 restrictions.

We are now in what could be termed the third phase of our journey. We have transitioned from business as usual to an operating model that observes the Stage 3 restrictions imposed by the Victorian Government. During the second phase, our focus was on continuing to deliver the best possible service to the community within those restrictions, while ensuring their safety, and that of our people, was maintained.

Which brings us to the third phase. Given our learnings about business delivery since the pandemic started and the world in which we now live, we believe that through phase 3 we will transition into the way we do business now.

This plan aims to articulate clearly what Council will do to emerge from Stage 3 restrictions in a way that benefits our community, innovatively supports our people and continues to safeguard their health and wellbeing.

Vision

That East Gippsland Shire thrives after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Goal

That East Gippsland Shire Council re-commences its services, functions and activities in a manner that supports its community's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while safeguarding the health and wellbeing of its staff.

Guiding Principles

- Staff and community safety.
- Adherence to government directions.
- Financial responsibility.
- Rethinking what and how we do things.
- Maintaining a strong customer focus.
- Timeliness and responsiveness.
- Clear, consistent and timely communication.

Role of the Mayor and Councillors

The Mayor and Councillors have an important role in providing leadership and support to the East Gippsland Shire community. This may involve providing strategic direction on how best to support the community, advocacy to other levels of government and adopting policies and initiatives that support the vision and principles of this plan.

The Mayor, as spokesperson for Council, has an important role in ensuring accurate, timely and informative communications about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Council's operations and activities, and Council's plans and actions to support our community.

Role of Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team provides strategic direction and guidance to the organisation in responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Council's operations and activities. They are further tasked with ensuring Council's plans and actions to support our community are in line with the agreed principles.

Role of Strategic Leadership Group

The Strategic Leadership Group is responsible for driving our response to the COVID-19 pandemic across the organisation. Its members are the subject matter experts, looking at innovative ways to deliver services to the community while maintaining and adhering to the directions of the Chief Health Officer.

How to Read this Plan

Because of the number and diversity of the services Council delivers it would be very difficult for a single document to chart the detail of our transition from operating under the initial Victorian Government Stage 3 restrictions, to the way we will do business now.

Instead, the plan provides an outline of the organisational priorities and timeframes, including detailed expectations and action pertaining to:

- Key organisational priorities and timelines;
- Looking after our people;
- Looking after our community; and
- Keeping everyone safe.

Business units will have individual plans, which can be viewed as an appendix to the broader document and are consistent with the overarching principles of the organisational plan.

The plan is flexible and will need to be revised dependant on restrictions, timing and associated reviews.

Review

The Plan will be reviewed as new directions are received from the Chief Health Officer and/or following announcements by the Victorian Government about changes to the restrictions in place at that time.

Requests for review will be made by the General Manager Place and Community and carried out by the Strategic Leadership Group as appropriate.

Version control

East Gippsland – The Way we do Business Now			Strategic owner: GM Place and Community
<i>Version</i>	<i>Date of review</i>	<i>ECM No.</i>	<i>Approved by</i>
1	28/05/2020		Executive Leadership Team

SECTION 1 – Key Organisational Priorities and Timeframes

ORGANISATION-WIDE

Required Outcomes	Timeframe	Priority	Manager Responsible
Provide communication to all staff confirming expectations of sustaining work from home until Council confirm otherwise.	Weekly	High	Comms / GM Place and Community
Communicate to employees the strategic approach developed to respond to easing of restrictions	By 27 May 2020	High	Comms / GM Place and Community
Promote Australian Government App information	Ongoing	Low	Comms (staff newsletter)
Identify high risk employees or those who have frequent contact with a high-risk person	Ongoing	High	Managers (to HR)
Positions/staff to establish priority for returning employees. (Our definition of 'can work from home' is): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff unable to work from home any longer due to health or personal reasons 2. Staff identified as being less effective working at home 3. Staff having sustained systems access issues 	Weekly as required	High	Manager / GM approval
Ensure escalation of on-site cleaning crews with appropriate instruction	Early June 2020	Medium	Facilities
Ensure appropriate PPE is available for when staff are due to return (refer Appendix 2)	Early June 2020 ongoing	High	Risk
Designate a COVID-19 Office Champion for each location – for responsibilities as listed in this document	Early June 2020	High	Building Strategic Owner
Close down/arrange workstations in office locations to ensure at least 1.5 metres distance can always be maintained between staff-members <i>Note: Current restrictions require no more than one person per 4m² and a minimum distance of 1.5m between people. Existing (immediately pre-COVID-19) occupancy of Council premises is well in excess of that requirement, having been determined at a rate of one person per 10m².</i>	Early June 2020	Medium	COVID-19 Office Champion
Establish maximum employee count for each meeting room based on 4m ² per person. <i>Note: All meeting rooms to remain closed until this occurs and they are listed as open with the maximum number of participants clearly identified on the door.</i>	Early June 2020	Medium	Municipal Building Surveyor/COVID-19 Office Champion
Create seating plan that identifies where each employee is allocated to sit when transitioning	Early June 2020	Medium	Managers
Establish clear visual signage and direction about social distancing requirements at all customer contact points	Early June 2020	High	Lead – Manager Customer Experience and Communications

COMMENCE TRANSITION

The below has been established on the assumption that the Australian and Victorian Governments will ease restrictions via the stages they implemented them. This section is based on people maintaining 1.5m distance from others, 4m² of indoor space for each individual, limited visitors and minimum gatherings of 10.

Dates have been included based on an assumption that further easing of restrictions will take place as at 11.59 pm on 31 May 2020 (effectively 1 June), but that the Victorian Government's order that if 'you can work from home you should work from home' will remain in place. However, the organisation's definition of 'can work from home' will be reviewed based on the criteria outlined in the Required Outcomes section of this document

Required Outcomes	Timeframe	Priority	Manager Responsible
Cleaning protocol for Council facilities and premises – refer to Section 4 of this plan	Ongoing – reviewed fortnightly	High	Senior Works Coordinator
Confirm essential employees and number of employees to return – refer to Section 2 of this plan	Ongoing – reviewed fortnightly	High	SLG – approval point = relevant GM
Confirm equipment return protocol	By 1 June 2020	Medium	Manager Information Services
Confirm how employees will work – refer to Section 2 of this plan	Ongoing – reviewed fortnightly	High	SLG – approval point = relevant GM
Confirm customer service response- refer to Section 2 of this plan	Ongoing – reviewed fortnightly	High	Manager Customer Experience and Communications
Review Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee (PISC) meeting schedule	Weekly	Low	GM Place and Community

FURTHER EASING OF RESTRICTIONS

At each review of restrictions, this plan and associated appendices will be reviewed by the relevant Strategic Leadership Group members and amended plans provided to the Pandemic Coordinator for collation and approval by Executive Leadership Team. It continues to be essential that the organisation continues to communicate effectively and that we are working in the same way between service areas. This will ensure equity for our people and an increased understanding of the organisation's approach by our community.

THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS NOW

At each review point members of Strategic Leadership Group are encouraged to reflect on what has changed and empowered to consider new ways of doing business, (e.g. What should we keep that delivers an improved service for our community? What has been actioned that makes the workplace a better one for our staff? Where have we found innovative solutions for business implementation?)

SECTION 2 – Looking after our people – personal protection

It is important to note that we are committed to looking after all our people in a highly sensitive manner. It is understood that our people work in many and varied environments; however, with good practices and the most appropriate options it is believed that all our people can be cared for safely and equitably. This commitment underpins our approach to this section of the plan.

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Responsible
	Personal Protective Equipment	May not be available to all staff	Available to all staff as outlined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every workstation/Council vehicle/lunchroom etc to have hand sanitizer available always • Every workstation/Council vehicle/lunchroom etc to have sanitizer wipes available always • Sanitizer wipes to be located at every building entry and exit point • Hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes to be located in every meeting room always 	Early June 2020	Risk Management Coordinator/COVID-19 Office Champion
	Staff education about taking care of themselves	Visual reminders about hand washing and social distancing	Review and enhance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current visual reminders to ensure up to date • Improve and enhance as required • Ensure these are located at all sites and in all vehicles 	Fortnightly	Risk Management Coordinator/COVID-19 Office Champion
	Access to vehicles	One staff member per vehicle only	Maintain as current	Review fortnightly	Fortnightly	Executive Leadership Team
	Working on location	Social distancing between staff and community is currently being practiced as a priority	Maintain as current	Review fortnightly	Fortnightly	Relevant Managers and Coordinators

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Responsible
	Working from home	Staff who are currently working from home have submitted OHS approval forms and these are on record	Maintain as current	Review fortnightly	Fortnightly	Strategic Leadership Group
	Returning to the office	The Victorian Government direction remains that if you can work from home you should work from home. However, it is acknowledged that for some people the definition of 'can work from home' is different to what it was a month ago.	Positions/staff to establish priority for returning employees: 1. Staff unable to work from home any longer due to health or personal reasons 2. Staff identified as being less effective working at home 3. Staff having sustained systems access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each office to be set up to ensure social distancing can always be maintained Establish roster as required for staff to be in and out of the office Hot desking is not appropriate and is not to occur Headsets should always only be used by the desk owner. 	Weekly	Building Strategic Owner/COVID-19 Office Champion in partnership with relevant Strategic Leadership Group member
	Meeting rooms	Meeting rooms are closed	Open meeting rooms with appropriate controls in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting rooms are to be considered closed unless they are listed specifically as open with a sign on the door that specifies the maximum number of people allowed to use the room at any given time. <p>Once designated as open, a meeting room will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contain hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes Include a sign on the outside of the room advising how many people can use the room at any given time Include signage advised of appropriate cleaning controls 	As available	Risk Management Coordinator/COVID-19 Office Champion

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Responsible
				required prior to and immediately following use of the room		
	Lunch and tea-rooms	Lunch and tea rooms are closed	Open lunch and tea rooms with appropriate controls in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch and tea rooms are to be considered closed unless they are listed specifically as open with a sign outside the room that specifies the maximum number of people allowed to use the room at any given time. <p>Once open a lunch/tearoom will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contain hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes Include a sign on the outside of the door advised how many people can use the room at any given time Include signage advised of appropriate cleaning controls required prior to use and following use of the room 	As available	Risk Management Coordinator/COVID-19 Office Champion
	Social distancing with customers	Where customer contact occurs, social distancing is observed and managed by staff. This has been achieved through staff education, community education and the use of (non-intrusive) physical barriers and visual aids where possible.	As customer contact points increase the use of current management practices will remain in place as a preferred option. However, in locations where maintaining social distancing is assessed as likely to be problematic, temporary Perspex screens may be installed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual aids for customers will be provided at all customer contact points. Where possible these visual aids will be standard and include posters with dot-point information, floor stickers and clear advice to customers about non-compliance Non-intrusive physical barriers such as bollards, desks, counters and stepping back if customers approach will be used in the first instance. 	Early June 2020 Review fortnightly or as required	Visual aids – Manager Customer Experience and Communications (in partnership with relevant Strategic Leadership Group members) Safety assessment of least restrictive practices – OHS Advisor (review fortnightly or as required based on inappropriate

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Responsible
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic customer access will be encouraged as a first priority in all externally facing communication Cash handling will be discouraged at all points, however, is required at some transaction points. Installation of temporary Perspex screens where maintaining social distancing is assessed as likely to be problematic. 		<p>behaviour/increase in virus presentation)</p> <p>Manager Customer Experience and Communications (in partnership with relevant Strategic Leadership Group member and OHS Advisor)</p>
	Staff who display any symptoms of a respiratory illness	<p>Guidelines have been prepared and are provided within this Plan (refer Appendix 1). These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice about symptoms to watch for. Requirement to arrange testing if displaying symptoms and guidance on practicalities of doing so. What is required after testing. 	Guidelines are publicised and readily accessible to staff.	Availability and location of guidelines to be promoted through the staff intranet and internal COVID-19 newsletters.	1 June 2020	Manager People, Performance and Culture

SECTION 3 – Looking after our community – Customer service response

Our community will be eager to re-engage with us and it is important that we undertake this in a way that protects the safety of the community as well as that of our staff. Available information indicates that this can occur in a non-intrusive manner, as this has been occurring successfully with staff in customer-facing roles that have continued to work while restrictions have been in place. Based on this and appropriate risk assessment processes, the following will apply at all locations where customer interface occurs.

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Manager responsible
	Social distancing with customers	Where customer contact is in place social distancing is observed and managed by staff. This has been achieved through staff education, community education and the use of (non-intrusive) physical barriers and visual aids where possible	As customer contact points increase the use of current management practices will remain in place as a preferred option. However, in locations where maintaining social distancing is assessed as likely to be problematic, temporary Perspex screens may be installed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual aids will be provided for customers at all customer contact points Where possible these visual aids will be standard and include posters with dot-point information, floor stickers and clear advice to customers about non-compliance Non-intrusive physical barriers such as bollards, desks, counters and stepping back if customers approach will be used in the first instance Electronic customer access will be encouraged as a first priority in all externally facing communication Cash handling will be discouraged at all points, however, is required at some transaction points. Installation of temporary Perspex screens where maintaining social 	Early June 2020 Review fortnightly or as required	<p>Visual aids – Manager Customer Experience and Communications (in partnership with relevant Strategic Leadership Group members)</p> <p>Safety assessment of least restrictive practices – OHS Advisor (review fortnightly or as required based on inappropriate behaviour/increase in virus presentation)</p> <p>Manager Customer Experience and Communications (in partnership with relevant Strategic Leadership Group member and OHS Advisor)</p>

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Manager responsible
				distancing is assessed as likely to be problematic.		
	Encouraging customers to manage their safety and that of our staff		Customers understand their role in managing their own safety and that of our staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every customer contact point should allow access to hand sanitizer and provide instruction/requests to customers to access this prior to entering the service area Visual aids should remind customers that they are required to respect the social distancing measures that are in place, and that non-compliance will not be tolerated 	Early June 2020	Risk Management Coordinator/COVID-19 Office Champions
	Meeting with customers/third parties/interested stakeholders	<p>If on site – social distancing practices are maintained</p> <p>Where possible meetings are conducted via Skype (or other online platforms as used by some external parties)</p>	<p>If on site – maintain current practices</p> <p>Where possible and practical meetings should continue to take place via Skype (or other online platforms as used by some external parties)</p> <p>Where personal meetings are required, social distancing and meeting room requirements must always be adhered to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting rooms are to be considered closed unless they are listed specifically as open with a sign on the door that stipulates the maximum number of people allowed to use the room at any given time <p>Once open a meeting room will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contain hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes Include a sign on the outside of the room specifying the maximum number of people that can use the room at any given time 	Fortnightly	Executive Leadership Team

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Manager responsible
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include signage advising of appropriate cleaning controls required prior to and immediately following use of the room 		

SECTION 4 – keeping everyone safe – cleaning protocol

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Responsible
	Cleaning protocol - Vehicles	In place	Protocols in place meet Worksafe recommendations	Review and implement actions required to meet recommendations	1 June 2020	OHS Project Officer
	Cleaning protocol – non office environments	In place	Protocols in place meet Worksafe recommendations	Review and implement actions required to meet recommendations	1 June 2020	OHS Project Officer
	Cleaning protocol – office environments	In place	Protocols in place meet Worksafe recommendations	Review and implement actions required to meet recommendations	1 June 2020	OHS Project Officer
	Cleaning protocol - lunch and tea rooms	Lunch and tea rooms closed	Open lunch and tea rooms with appropriate controls in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch and tea rooms are to be considered closed unless they are listed specifically as open with a sign outside the room that specifies the maximum number of people allowed to use the room at any given time <p>Once open a lunch/tearoom will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contain hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes Include a sign on the outside of the door advised how many people can use the room at any given time Include signage advised of appropriate cleaning controls required prior to use and following use of the room 	As soon as possible	Risk Management Coordinator/COVID-19 Office Champions
	Cleaning protocol – playgrounds	Deep clean complete	No increase in cleaning regime	Consider the use of visual aids to advise people that playgrounds are not cleaned and users are required to manage their own personal hygiene before and after they access the facilities.	Fortnightly	Manager Community Facilities and Open Space

Priority	Service / function	Current status	Status to be achieved	Actions required	Due date	Responsible
	Cleaning protocol – public toilets	Some public toilets remain closed Open public toilets have cleaning regimes in place (specific to each facility)	All public toilets to be open once safe to do so No increase to current cleaning regimes	As public toilets re-open they will be listed on Council's web site.	Fortnightly	Manager Assets and Projects

APPENDIX 1 – Managing employee illness during COVID-19 pandemic

APPENDIX 2 - Transition Plans for Individual Directorates / Business Units

NOTE: Because the appendices are operational in nature and so subject to regular review and amendment, they have not been appended to the plan for display purposes.