



# Pyrenees Shire Council PANDEMIC PLAN 2019

## *Amendment Record.*

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# Introduction

## ***Background***

**Pandemic** is a worldwide outbreak of disease in humans.

A pandemic creates a public health emergency with political, social, and economic effects. Although the likelihood of one occurring is low, the potential impact of a pandemic is too great to ignore.

The Pyrenees Shire Council (PSC) Pandemic Plan is a municipal sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

## ***Aims of this plan***

- To work in line with the Victorian action plan for pandemic and other relevant documents.
- Assist in minimising the impacts of a pandemic on the community;
- Provide support and recovery assistance throughout and following the pandemic.

## ***Objectives of this plan***

**Preparedness** – have arrangements in place to reduce the pandemic impact;

**Containment** – prevent transmission, implement infection control measures, provide support services to people who are isolated or quarantined within the municipality;

**Maintain essential municipal services** – provision for business continuity in the face of staff absenteeism and rising demand on local government services;

**Mass vaccination** – assist in providing vaccination services to the community, if a pandemic vaccine becomes available;

**Communication** – develop media and communication messages, in line with whole of government messages, to inform the community and staff of any changes to normal municipal service delivery; and

**Community support and recovery** – ensure a comprehensive approach to emergency recovery planning in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan, with specific focus on a pandemic.

# Section 1: Pandemic Planning

## 1.1 Vulnerable Groups

The Australian Health Management Plan for pandemic and Victorian Health Management Plan for pandemic identify at-risk groups and those with special needs because they may be especially vulnerable during a pandemic.

The Victorian Health Management Plan for pandemic provides operational guidance for organisations and facilities that play important roles to help minimise potential adverse health consequences of a pandemic, including:

- Local government, to develop a pandemic plan for their municipality
- Emergency services
- Organisations that engage with:
  - Children, and where children gather, including schools and childcare
  - People who live in residential facilities, including residential aged care and disability accommodation services
  - Custodial facilities.

Municipalities have three compelling reasons why they need to plan for pandemics. These are:

1. Victorian State legislation requires them to do so;
2. Councils have a duty of care for those they provide direct support services to, their staff and the broader community;
3. They know their communities better than any other organisation.

## 1.2 Business continuity planning

Organisations should enhance their business continuity plans to prepare for the direct impacts of extended staff absences during a human pandemic – 40 per cent during the peak of the pandemic. *Victorian Health Management Plan – Pandemic Influenza 2014*

Pyrenees SC has a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) which includes a strategy to address a large number of staff absences. This BCP is an appendix of the PSC MEMP.

# Section 2: Vaccination Guidelines

Advice on the process of mass vaccination is provided in the Mass Vaccination Guide, which forms Appendix 2 of the *Victorian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (July 2014)*. The guide was developed to provide advice to all organisations undertaking vaccination during a pandemic, as well as those setting up mass vaccination centres.

## 2.1 Prioritisation

The priority groups will be identified by the State Health Department.

Vaccination of front line priority groups (such as essential services, at risk groups) will be based on the epidemiology of the pandemic. That is, those age groups most affected will be targeted first.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will source and distribute the vaccine.

## ***2.2 Guidelines for a vaccination program***

In response to a pandemic and on the availability of a suitable vaccine, the Australian Government will introduce a vaccination program in order to minimise the amount of virus circulating in the community. At the time of such a program, guidelines will be developed to provide useful information, forms, guidelines and tips to be used to implement such a program.

## **Section 3: Role Statements**

### ***3.1 DHHS Regional Coordinator***

The lead agency for the State's pandemic response is DHHS. They have primary responsibility for activating the pandemic response at the level appropriate to the specific stage of the pandemic.

The DHHS Regional Coordinator will liaise with the Municipal Pandemic Coordinator (MPC) and provide advice, resources and support as the situation warrants.

### ***3.2 Municipal Pandemic Coordinator (MPC)***

This person is the Pyrenees Shire Council (PSC) Environmental Health Officer (EHO) and responsible for the coordination of Council functions during the Pandemic in conjunction with the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) and the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM). They liaise with all local health services, neighbouring EHO's, regional Department of Health and Neighbouring Local Government Areas. Their duties are to :

- Identify critical staff and functions
- Convene the Pandemic Sub-Committee as required
- Activate the plan in conjunction with the MEMO and MRM when required
- Ensure staff have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriate to their role in Council
- Ensure staff are educated on the need to take appropriate precautions
- Ensure there is an adequate supply of information for distribution to the community and internal Council staff utilising Council's Emergency Communications Officer.
- Provide daily reports to the CEO and the Business Continuity Management Team
- Monitor measures to reduce the risk of contamination in the workplace
- Organise the immunisation of staff and the identified priority groups in the community

The MPC will report to the MEMO and supervise the support EHO's.

### ***3.3 Municipal Business Continuity Management Team (BCMT)***

Located at the Beaufort Shire Offices, they are responsible for the operation of the Council service delivery and provision of support to the emergency management team. Their duties are to:-

- Ensure business continuity is maintained for essential services
- Acquire and provide resources (capital and human) to support the Pandemic Emergency Management (EM) team and business continuity
- Ensure Council OH&S policies and staff welfare are primary considerations.
- Support staff with their family commitments and work from home options if possible.

The BCMT reports to the CEO and supervises the Pandemic Sub-Committee. The BCMT is required to liaise with the Department of Health both regional & state, neighbouring CEO's and DTF.

## **Section 4: Pandemic Action Plan**

### ***4.1 Role of Council***

Pyrenees Shire Council has responsibilities in the following areas:

- 1. Community Support and Recovery:**
  - Provision of support to people affected by the pandemic who are in quarantine.
  - Provision of food and medical supplies where affected individuals demonstrate lack of access to support from family and friends.
- 2. Public Health:**
  - Reinforcing public awareness.
  - Messages conveying appropriate hygiene.
  - Social distancing.
  - Use of personal protective equipment.
  - Maintaining quarantine arrangements.
  - Contact tracing in accordance with DHHS requests.
- 3. Vaccinations Coordination**
  - Coordinate mass vaccinations with appropriate medical staff.
- 4. Essential Services:**
  - Ensure Council can maintain business continuity for the duration of the pandemic.
  - Provide appropriate additional services to the community when requested by DHHS.

**Council may face the challenge of undertaking these tasks while facing significant staff shortages due to absenteeism.**

## 4.2. Preparedness

**Situation** – No novel strain of the virus has been detected.

**Action** Plan and prepare for pandemic as part of normal risk management business<sup>4</sup>.

	Pandemic Coordination– Actions Required	Responsible
1.	Review the Municipal Pandemic Plan and update any contact details and operating procedures.	Pandemic Coordinator
2.	Promote prevention activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offering workplace seasonal influenza immunisation to staff</li> <li>• promote good personal hygiene – hand hygiene and respiratory/cough etiquette</li> <li>• staying away from work or public gatherings if symptomatic..</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator
3.	Ensure all business continuity plans are current at all times.	Manager Risk and Governance
4.	Promote seasonal influenza vaccination via Pyrenees Community Care client newsletter	Manager Community Wellbeing
5.	Promote seasonal influenza vaccination to the broader community via the community newsletter, local newspaper and the council website.	Pandemic Coordinator Communications Officer

## 4.3 Standby

**Situation** - Sustained human-to human transmission of a novel virus has been detected overseas in one or more countries

**Action** – Upon hearing news of a pandemic outbreak overseas; move to standby response stage and commence arrangements to reduce the impact of a pandemic on the Pyrenees Shire and increase vigilance for case detection.

	Pandemic Coordination– Actions Required	Responsible
1.	Convene the Pandemic Planning Sub-Committee of the PSC MEMPC to ensure the following occurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain access to the Chief Health Officer’s alerts to monitor the situation</li> <li>• Liaise with Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies.</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator
2.	Messages to staff should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of the local status.</li> <li>• The infection prevention arrangements and promote ongoing education regarding the minimizing of infection spread.</li> <li>• Need to increase vigilance for case detection.</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator Communications Officer



Pandemic Coordination– Actions Required		Responsible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate advice from Department of Health &amp; Human Services.</li> <li>• Promote messages for employees to convey to fellow staff members, friends, family, clients and customers.</li> <li>• Provide link to the Department of Health &amp; Human Services website and other pandemic information resources.</li> </ul>	
3.	Confirm that the procedures to support people in home isolation are current and operable.	MRM Pandemic Coordinator
4.	Ensure business continuity plans consider the impacts of a Pandemic.	Pandemic Coordinator
5.	Review stocks of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and make arrangements to increase capacity.	Pandemic Coordinator

#### 4.4 Response

**Situation** - Novel pandemic virus detected in Australia with limited information available'

**Action** - Upon hearing that the virus has entered Australia, minimise transmission by implementing maximum infection control procedures and monitoring staff wellness.

Pandemic Coordination– Actions Required		Responsible
1.	Alert Council staff of the situation and reinforce the infection control measures implemented in the previous stage. Also to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stay away from work or public gatherings if symptomatic to minimise the risk of infecting others.</li> <li>• seek medical advice if symptoms continue or get worse.</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator
2.	Maintain the communication activities initiated in the Standby Response stage.	Communications Officer
3.	Consider further arrangements for minimising the risk of infection in the workplace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement remote work arrangements if applicable</li> <li>○ Use alternate non face-to-face work arrangements</li> <li>○ Introduce additional cleaning and disinfecting (handrails, door handles, lift controls, telephones, rubbish bins)</li> <li>○ Use clear screens or PPE for staff in customer interactive roles</li> <li>○ Encourage home quarantine for suspected cases</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator

### 4.4.1. Targeted Action – Response Stage

**Situation**– The pandemic virus has entered the country and is spreading throughout the community. Enough is known about the disease to tailor measures to specific needs. Pandemic virus infections are being reported in the Pyrenees Shire.

**Action**– Provide targeted support and quality care while maintaining business continuity

	Pandemic Coordination– Actions Required	Responsible
1.	Maintain current infection control measures implemented in the Initial Action stage. If the severity of the virus is deemed high the following is recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public access to the Council offices be restricted</li> <li>Promote social distancing</li> <li>PPE usage – the State controller will provide advice about the appropriate use of PPE.</li> </ul>	BCP Team
2.	Establish a Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre and implement the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct regular tele-conferences with DHHS, support agencies and neighbouring municipalities</li> <li>Identify which parts of the municipal plan will need to be implemented on advice from DHHS.</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator
3.	Implement procedures to ensure continued support for Council Pyrenees Community Care clients and people who are isolated in their homes.	Manager Community Wellbeing
4.	Implement the procedure to establish and deliver community support services.	Pandemic Coordinator
5.	Liaise with the BCP Team regarding measures to maintain critical Council service delivery.	Pandemic Coordinator
6.	Maintain communication with Council staff and the community.	Communications Officer
7.	Provide vaccination services to the priority community groups when directed by the DHHS.	Pandemic Coordinator
8.	Prepare for the recovery arrangements for the affected community (s) as the need arises. Liaise with the local health and other service providers to ensure these actions complement each other.	Pandemic Coordinator

## 5 Stand Down – Response Stage

**Situation**– *Pandemic subsiding and/or Vaccinations result in a protected population – the infection rate has dropped significantly*

**Action** – *The public health threat is managed within normal arrangements and monitoring for change is in place*

	Pandemic Coordination– Actions Required	Responsible
1.	<p><b>Stand-down:</b> Initiate stand down procedures which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing community support activities while maintaining quality care of Pyrenees Community Care clients</li> <li>Cease activities that are no longer needed</li> <li>Communicate these changes to staff and external agencies.</li> <li>Maintain basic infection control procedures</li> <li>Monitor for a second wave of the outbreak and also for development of anti-viral resistance</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator Manager Community Wellbeing
2.	Liaise with the Pyrenees Municipal Recovery Manager regarding a hand-over from response to recovery operations.	Pandemic Coordinator
3.	Continue to coordinate vaccination sessions when requested by DHHS.	Pandemic Coordinator
4.	Participate in a Pandemic Recovery Committee to determine the services and resources required to address the identified needs.	Pandemic Coordinator
5.	<p>Conduct staff debriefs to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status of their psycho-social well-being</li> <li>Effectiveness of the Pandemic Plan procedures</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator
6.	Participate in regional operations debrief/s	Pandemic Coordinator
7.	<p>Review municipal plans and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement recommendations arising from the debriefs.</li> <li>Modify the PSC Pandemic plan to reflect those actions.</li> </ul>	Pandemic Coordinator

## Section 5: Notes

### 5.1 Supporting People Isolated In Their Homes

As well as having primary responsibility for the care and support of their Pyrenees Community Care clients, Council will be asked to extend this support to members of their community who are quarantined in their homes who don't have any form of assistance (family or friends). Identification of these people could be made by DHHS via their Help Line, requests for assistance through the Council Reception or referrals from members of the community.

## ***5.2 Infection Prevention Procedures***

Infection control in the work place should focus on respiratory and hand hygiene. Keeping a distance from people with respiratory symptoms should be promoted. Infection prevention could include the use of masks by persons with respiratory symptoms if feasible.

The organisation has decided to invest in a limited supply of PPE face masks. A small quantity of surgical masks and P2 masks has also been purchased. Protective materials are mainly stored and located in the EHO office. Alcohol wipes, face masks and other protective equipment are distributed by the EHO and a strict handwashing regime is to be encouraged.

## ***5.3 Setting Up and Operating a MECC during a Pandemic***

A meeting of the MECC Team will be held whenever it is deemed necessary to source and share information. Teleconferencing will be the primary means of communication to maintain social distancing. Locations of participants could be multiple, even within the same organisation.

Members of the MECC Team would likely include the:

- MRM
- MEMO
- MEM
- EHO
- DHHS
- Ambulance Victoria
- Beaufort and Skipton Health Services
- Maryborough and District Health Service
- Others as required

DHHS will organise and provide the teleconferencing capability and will email MECC members the phone conference number as required. The Pandemic Coordinator will provide the agenda. DHHS will chair the meetings and provide support. It is likely that multiple LGAs will be participating and minutes will be recorded and distributed to MECC participants.

## ***5.4 Debriefs***

Debriefs are to be conducted involving all staff to identify what went well and what needs to be improved. A report on the debrief and its outcomes should be distributed to all stakeholders.

A review of the reports stated outcomes and actions should be undertaken at a later stage to check on the status of their implementation.

## ***5.5 Information Resources***

Public gatherings are likely to be cancelled during a Pandemic outbreak to minimise cross-infection. Stay in touch with events happening in the Pyrenees by liking the EVENTful Pyrenees Facebook page – [www.facebook.com/eventfulpyrenees](https://www.facebook.com/eventfulpyrenees).

Further information and fact sheets can be found at the Department of Health Website by following the link below.

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/>