

# Joint Media Statement

## Mount Alexander works together to respond to COVID-19

Mount Alexander Shire, along with the rest of the nation, is facing disruption and challenges as we prepare to slow the spread of Corona (COVID-19) virus.

We all have a role to play in reducing the impact of COVID-19 in our community. Our own health depends on the health of the person next to us, and the person next to them. Observing safe physical distances and good hygiene are the simple and most effective ways to protect yourself, your family and those people in our community that are most at risk from this virus. Please stay at home unless you're going to work, going to the shop to buy essential items or receive essential services.

As we have already started to see, the recent government directive on non-essential activities has a big-flow on effect for our community. Some businesses have been forced to close, team sports, social events and group recreational activities have been cancelled. For many people in our community this will result in lost employment, financial stress and increased social isolation, which may affect mental and physical wellbeing. The Federal and Victorian Governments have announced economic and health support packages for those impacted by the virus and those most vulnerable.

In Mount Alexander Shire, local government, health and social services, police, ambulance and community groups are working together to prepare for the challenging time ahead. We are also working closely with the Victorian Government, as part of a regional pandemic plan to respond to this pandemic, protect our vulnerable community members and prepare for an increased demand on services.

Non-essential programs and services have been cancelled and everyone is working to adapt to a new way of working with a greater reliance on phone and on-line applications where possible. Refer to local organisation websites to stay up-to-date with any impacts on local services.

If you require any medical attention, please ring your regular GP for advice before you attend the clinic. If you are experiencing serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing call triple zero (000) for urgent medical health, otherwise please keep the 000 number for emergencies only.

It is understandable that many people may be experiencing feelings of anxiety, distress or concern in relation to the COVID-19 virus. These emotions can be compounded by feelings of isolation. During these times of physical distancing it is important to remember to be kind to yourself and maintain social connections. Make a call, send a message or catch up for an online coffee. You can also contact help-lines such as Lifeline or Beyond Blue during times of distress. Headspace is an excellent resource to help young people keep a healthy mind.

Mount Alexander has a strong culture of looking out for each other. If everyone just did one kind thing a day for another person, it will make a big difference on how we get through this. This could be dropping an offer of help into a neighbours letterbox, leaving supermarket items on the shelf for some-one who needs them more or donating food items to the food bank.

For the most up-to-date advice on COVID-19 in Victoria visit [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus), or have any other questions, please call the dedicated Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) hotline on 1800 675 398 (24/7)

If you are in crisis and need to talk to some-one about your distress or trauma (24 /7):

Lifeline	13 11 14
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636
Kids Helpline (5-25yrs)	1800 551 800

