

Circular Details	20-06 / 10 March 2020 / A694616
Previous Circular	<i>NIL</i>
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / All council staff / Specific business areas
Contact	Mr Chris Allen, Director Sector Performance and Intervention / 02 4428 4100 / olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Information / Response to OLG / Council to Implement

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Development Updates

What's new or changing

- The NSW Human Influenza Pandemic Plan is the whole-of-government plan for an influenza pandemic in NSW. This plan is a sub plan to the NSW State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN). Under the EMPLAN, NSW Health is the combat agency for pandemic illnesses.
- The NSW Human Influenza Pandemic Plan details the coordination arrangements, responsibilities and mechanisms for all levels of government and compliments the federal government's *Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)*.
- The Senior Officers Group of the NSW Government has been established to coordinate management of the NSW Government response to a pandemic. This group consists of Cluster Secretaries, the State Emergency Operations Controller (SEOCN), Chief Health Officer and State Emergency Recovery Coordinator and others as required.
- The SEOCN has hosted a number of teleconferences with members of the State Emergency Management Committee since 28 January 2020 to facilitate emergency management planning and information sharing.
- The SEOCN has opened the State Emergency Operations Centre with liaison officers from key stakeholders and they are supporting the planning for potential impacts and consequences of COVID-19.
- NSW Health has existing policies and plans for the management of a pandemic which have been well tested.
- NSW Health will be advising local councils on measures that need to be implemented within the workplace. Current information and advice for the community and business is available here: www.nsw.gov.au/coronavirus.
- Information is also available on the national health website: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources#find-the-facts>.

What this will mean for your council

- Councils should review their business continuity plans as a matter of urgency to ensure appropriate planning is undertaken to address any potential disruption to their operations and the provision of services to the community.
- NSW Health will issue instructions for all agencies and will liaise directly with councils on their role.
- Councils should take a precautionary approach in line with the principles of prevention and preparation as outlined in the State Emergency Management Plan regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, working collaboratively with NSW Health to implement strategies to minimise COVID-19's transmission.

- All councils are advised to monitor the NSW Health website for updates: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>.
- The Office of Local Government (OLG) will continue close contact directly with affected councils for daily updates on any COVID-19 related developments within their Local Government Areas (LGA) in order to compile a daily report to SEOC. Councils can call OLG on 02 4428 4100, or OLG will contact affected councils as required.

Reports from affected councils will need to include the following information:

1. Any staff members affected by COVID-19
2. Actions implemented by Council to date to contain COVID-19
3. Issues/requests for action by Council that have been identified/received.

- Councils should continue to closely monitor issues reported or identified within their LGA, and actively engage with NSW Health Liaison Officers within their relevant Local Emergency Management Committees.
- Management of council operated facilities, such as council offices, childcare centres, swimming pools and public amenities must be maintained in accordance with most current NSW Health guidance and recommended processes.
- Councils should also review their delegations as a matter of urgency to ensure that decisions can be made quickly in response to any developments outside of the normal council meeting cycle.
- Councils can be assured that OLG has also undertaken its own contingency planning to identify possible regulatory changes that may be required to support council decision making should the need arise. Councils will be advised of any changes if and when they are required.
- Councils have been requesting advice regarding the conduct of public events. Please note the following advice issued by the Commonwealth Department of Health, from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) dated 8 March 2020: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-coronavirus-covid-19-statement-on-8-march-2020>.
- Due to the ongoing developments of the COVID-19 outbreak and its implications for overseas travel:
 - All currently booked and approved international travel should be reevaluated in line with the most up to date travel advice available at www.smarttraveller.gov.au
 - International travel should be restricted to essential travel only
 - Any change to planned travel should be done in accordance with standing procedures for individual councils.

Key points

- Management of local COVID-19 issues should be undertaken at Council level and elevated where appropriate to Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMC), when operational.
- The LEMC can further elevate operational or strategic issues to Regional or State Level as required.
- There is no vaccine nor antiviral medication available as this stage.
- The most important message from [NSW Health](#) is persistent, strict hand and respiratory hygiene, appropriate post exposure quarantine, provision of a nonjudgmental attitude toward those who are symptomatic and to ensure a proportionate and consistent response.
- COVID-19 is spread from an infected person to other people close to that person through contaminated droplets spread by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects. Signs and symptoms include respiratory symptoms and fever, cough and shortness of breath and/or diarrhoea.

Where to go for further information

- For up to date information on the COVID-19 situation please visit: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources#find-the-facts>.
- For any inquiries in relation to COVID-19, please ring the following health information line: 1800 020 080.
- For local operational issues in relation to COVID-19, please contact your LEMC.
- Contact details for local NSW Health Public Health Units are available here: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>.
- State level strategic or operational inquiries in relation to COVID-19 and Local Government can be directed to OLG for further investigation via the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).
- For any concerns relating to 'what to do if stations and/or work areas have potentially been exposed to COVID-19', please contact NSW Health Public Health staff who will provide immediate post exposure advice.
- NSW Health has compiled a number of Frequently Asked Questions which can be found here: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx#1-4>.



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