

Office of Local Government



Message from Minister Hancock

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4 April 2020



I am writing today to first express my gratitude for the hard work that councils and council staff are undertaking through this unprecedented crisis. It is amazing to see all levels of Government working together to help keep the community safe and well. I also welcome and thank all of NSW's mayors, councillors and council staff for their amazing efforts in keeping services and infrastructure going in these trying times. These services play a crucial role in helping to manage and mitigate the impact of this crisis upon the community.

Both as Minister and as a local member from regional NSW, I have been supporting councils and the community by asking people to stay home this Easter and school holidays and to not

travel. While many people think they are supporting local economies in this difficult time, in practice we all know that all it is doing is putting pressure on local communities, and

potentially their limited health resources.

On another note, I am acutely aware of the impact the decision from yesterday morning's National Cabinet meeting will have for local councils. I have heard from many of you already about the difficulty you are having keeping staff employed as well as providing services, such as childcare. The Commonwealth has advised me that they have heard our concerns about childcare services in particular and will provide more information soon.

I would also like to acknowledge and actively encourage all councils to support essential services, workers and infrastructure within their communities. We strongly urge councils if at all possible to keep open their childcare and early childhood services. I understand the challenges that many councils are facing in keeping these services open but they are playing a crucial role in ensuring we can staff our hospitals, public transport and other key services.

I would also like to ask councils to work with their local hospitals to help ensure there is adequate parking around local hospitals for staff. We all know the health system and workforce are under considerable stress and I encourage councils to think about how they can support hospitals and their staff during this period. Whether this be by exercising discretion or finding alternative parking at another site, everything we can do to keep these services operating efficiently and effectively will I am sure be welcome.

Please keep up to date with recent developments on [the Office of Local Government COVID-19 page](#). I also encourage you to contact your OLG council engagement manager with any questions you may have.

Stay well.

Shelley Hancock
Minister for Local Government

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