



**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
18 March 2020**

**LATE
AGENDA ITEMS**



LATE AGENDA ITEM: 9.1 - Compliance Audit Return 2019

Subject:	Compliance Audit Return 2019
Applicant:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM129
Disclosure of Interest (Staff):	Nil
Disclosure of Interest (Member):	Nil
Author:	Scott Wildgoose, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Date:	9 March 2020
Attachments:	Compliance Audit Return 2019

SUMMARY

Council to endorse the Compliance Audit Return for the period 1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019.

BACKGROUND

Each year all local governments across the State are required by legislation to undertake a compliance audit for the period 1 January to 31 December. This audit is performed against the requirements of the Compliance Audit Return prepared by the Department of Local Government covering the following business areas considered to be 'high risk':

- Commercial Enterprises by Local Government
- Delegation of Power / Duty
- Disclosure of Interest
- Disposal of Property
- Elections
- Finance
- Integrated Planning and Reporting
- Local Government Employees
- Official Conduct
- Tendering for Providing Goods and Services

A completed Compliance Audit Return for the year ended 31 December 2019 must be submitted to the Department of Local Government by the 31 March 2020.

COMMENT

During the Compliance Audit Return process two areas of non-compliance have been identified. The areas of non-compliance related to the risk area associated with Disclosure of Interest. Specifically, not all designated employees had lodged primary and annual returns. This area of non-compliance seems to stem from a misunderstanding of the legislation, such that the administration for a number of years has only been classing a designated employee as someone with an authorisation to purchase. In my opinion this is an incorrect interpretation of the legislation.

Part 5, Division 6, Section 5.74 of the Local Government Act 1995 defines a designated employee as:

- a) a CEO; and
- b) an employee, other than the CEO, to whom any power or duty has been delegated under Division 4; and
- c) an employee who is a member of a committee comprising council members and employees; and

d) an employee nominated by the local government to be a designated employee

The main area that relates to Shire employees is 2) such that the employees have been delegated a power or duty by the CEO – in line with Division 4 – Section 5.36 to Section 5.51, specifically Section 5.44.

An authorisation to purchase is not a delegation of the CEO's powers or duties; it is the enactment of a policy and the provision of authority to act within the policy.

In essence using the purchasing example, the delegation would come in the form of Cheque Signing Authority/Power to Make Payments from Municipal and Trust Funds. Only certain employees are delegated this power from the CEO.

Due to the misinterpretation of the legislation, employees who have been delegated powers or duties from the CEO who do not have purchasing authorisation have not completed primary or annual returns over the last few years.

Action has now been taken to remediate this area of non-compliance.

No other areas of non-compliance were identified.

Note this report was prepared by the Acting CEO, who also completed the majority of the Compliance Audit Return and review.

In line with legislation, the audit committee has reviewed the completed Compliance Audit Return and has recommended its approval to Council.

CONSULTATION

Community and Economic Development Officer

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Act 1995

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

STRATEGIC PLAN REFERENCE

Nil

RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Nil

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the 2019 Compliance Audit Return for signing by the Shire President and Chief Executive Officer; and
2. Endorse the Compliance Audit Return for submission to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the 2019 Compliance Audit Return for signing by the Shire President and Chief Executive Officer; and
2. Endorse the Compliance Audit Return for submission to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MIN

MOTION - Moved Cr.

2nd Cr.

CARRIED /

LATE ITEM: 9.2 - Event and Facility Management through COVID-19

Subject:	Event and Facility Management through COVID-19
Applicant:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM553
Disclosure of Interest (Staff):	Nil
Disclosure of Interest (Member):	Nil
Author:	Scott Wildgoose, Executive Manager Corporate Services
Date:	17 March 2020
Attachments:	NA

SUMMARY

Council to review and endorse the Shire's course of action in relation to the management of events and facilities in response to COVID-19.

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses known to cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). This new coronavirus originated in Hubei Province, China and the disease is named COVID-19.

On 27 February 2020 the Prime Minister announced that the Australian Government would initiate the implementation of the Coronavirus Emergency Response Plan. The implementation of this plan is in response to a respiratory illness outbreak caused by coronavirus (COVID-19).

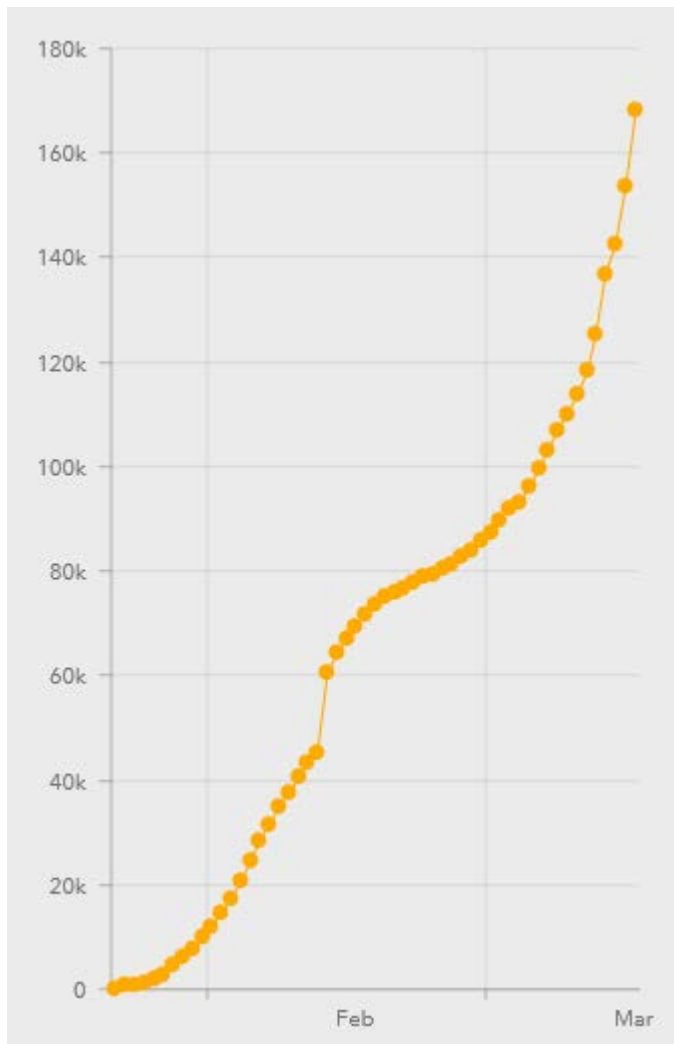
Coronavirus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared.
- Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes.
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

As of 16 March 2020, the World Health Organisation statistics for COVID-19 showed:

- 168,019 confirmed cases
- 6,610 deaths
- 148 countries, areas or territories affected

The graph below shows the rate at which the number of cases of the virus has increased over the last two months. The graph shows quite a steep rate of growth in confirmed cases; as such governments have begun implementing measures to slow the rate of transmission.



In WA a State of Emergency has been announced. As of 13 March 2020, there are 14 confirmed cases in WA. To date, 3,788 Western Australians tested for COVID-19 in WA have returned a negative result.

The Australian Government – Department of Health has brought in a number of precautions to protect people most at risk and slow the rate of community transmission:

- Non-essential organised gatherings should be kept to fewer than 500 people
- Non-essential meetings or conferences of health care professionals and emergency services should be limited
- Reconsider if you need to visit residential aged care facilities and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- From midnight Sunday 15 March, all travellers coming into Australia will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Although, globally the likelihood of death if you contract COVID-19 is around 4%, the risks are higher if the person contracting the virus:

- Has other illnesses that suppress the immune system or make them more vulnerable to respiratory disease. This includes:
 - lung disease
 - diabetes
- Has a suppressed immune systems

- Is elderly, particularly over the age of 60 and in a state of poor health or have a chronic disease.

During this difficult time, everyone is being encouraged to monitor their health and sanitation practices closely.

COMMENT

During this emergency situation many people are looking towards Local Governments to take action and respond to reduce the risks to their community.

The remote nature of the Narembeen community is beneficial in terms of being away from large gatherings of people (500+) however it also means that access to supplies and services if an outbreak does occur comes with greater uncertainty.

The 2016 Census of the Narembeen population showed approximately 37% of the population would be 60+ years of age and as such classified as being at risk if an outbreak was to occur in the town.

Given the demographics of the population and the remote nature of the town, the administration has analysed its events, operations and facilities to propose changes and practices that would be put in place over the next 12 weeks (until 1 June 2020), at which point a further review will be conducted, to manage the spread of COVID-19.

Events

The Australian Governments current precautionary measures has restricted gathering of 500 people or more.

Given the Narembeen town site only has 472 people (according to the Census information) – this measure probably would not restrict any of the Shire's events going ahead.

For a town the size of Narembeen and given the proportion of the population that could be classified as at risk, it seems prudent to further restrict non-essential events and gatherings organised by the Shire.

It is being proposed that the Shire and CRC cancel/adjust the nature of any events where a gathering of 30 or more people is likely to occur.

At this time the two main events affected by this change would be the Narembeen Triathlon and Anzac Day.

It is recommended that the Narembeen Triathlon be cancelled, given it often attracts outside visitors to town and has in the past had 100 entrants with 50+ spectators.

Given the significance of Anzac Day to the Australian community, it is recommended that this event proceed but be restricted to the wreath laying ceremony, to go ahead in the early morning, approximately 8am, with the Town Hall and Food and Drink aspects of the day to be cancelled. An early morning wreath laying will provide those who hold the formal respect paying parts of the day close to their heart with the opportunity to partake in this activity, plus the monument is in the open and provides enough space for people to create a suitable separation space. The Town Hall activities put a large amount of people in a close proximity and this is even worse in the Shire Chambers, especially given the buffet style food etc. as such it is recommended that these components of the day be cancelled for this year.

Other events run through the CRC such as Youth Week have the potential to attract more than 30 attendees but this would need to be monitored based on RSVPs.

It is proposed that the Council also empower the CEO to take other steps as necessary and where appropriate cancel events of fewer than 30 people if they are deemed high risk or if the pandemic situation escalates.

Public Toilets

The Shire's public toilet facilities are where most travellers' etc. passing through town stop. At this time the Shire has reduced the number of toilet rolls available in the toilets due to theft and moving forward it is being proposed that the facilities are now to be cleaned twice a day (at the moment it is only once in the morning), to reduce the risk of infection.

The Shire should have enough hand wash, toilet roll and cleaning supplies to last for the next 12 weeks, however stock monitoring is being undertaken with a view to supplier's stock levels running low.

CRC and Library

The Narembeen CRC and Library is one of the Shire's main customer interaction points. The CRC Coordinator will be working with the Executive Manager Customer Services to develop a COVID-19 risk management plan for this facility. The State Library has implemented practices such as cleaning books upon their return and taking greater precautions when handling books, however concerns still exist given people may handle 10-20 books or DVDs in the Library before they hire any. Increased hygiene practices and customer interaction limitations may be implemented.

Increased cleaning practices relating to public PCs and office facilities have already been implemented.

At this time feedback regarding events such as the senior's movies, is positive in terms of the community members really valuing having somewhere to interact during this time of escalated stress and anxiety. As such the Shire will take caution before cancelling any of these activities as the social impact may outweigh the health benefits.

Narembeen Aquatic Centre

Over the last week the Narembeen Aquatic Centre has been closed due to electrical issues and customers experiencing very mild shocks. Given this centre usually closes on the last weekend of March, it seems prudent to close the centre immediately to allow the electrical issue to be resolved and to also reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 spreading through interactions at this centre.

Narembeen Caravan Park

The Narembeen Caravan Park is not an area where large gatherings occur but does have the potential to be an incubator for the virus with lots of people passing through and using utensils and changing facilities etc.

Again it is proposed that the Shire increase its cleaning practices for the community amenity areas of the Caravan Park – kitchen, showers, toilets, laundry etc. this should reduce the likelihood of this being an area where the virus can arrive and be spread.

Shire Offices

The Shire offices will also require a risk review as with the CRC and Library; many other organisations have brought in precautions such as cancelling non-essential face to face interactions or employees working from home. This may be possible for the CEO, EMCS and CEDO roles; however the front counter will still encounter face to face interactions

through Department of Transport licencing transactions etc. At this time the front counter has increased their hand washing regime.

The Shire may consider imposing other practices such as trying to reduce cash transactions or encouraging phone calls or emails as opposed to face to face interactions. The Shire may also consider encouraging certain employees to work from home if there role allows for this.

It is proposed that the Council empower the CEO to take any measures necessary to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the workforce whilst ensuring continuity of essential services. Australian estimates are suggesting that the pandemic could affect 20% of the workforce at different stages, if this occurs it will have a bigger impact on service than implementing precautionary measures.

Narembeen Gym

The Gym is an area where lots of people visit on a regular basis and touch lots of machines etc.

At this time the Shire plans to increase signage around the facility to encourage improved hygiene practices. The Shire also proposes to increase the cleaning practices at this facility.

Other

The Shire should also turn off the public water fountains and consider other social distancing or hygiene initiatives.

CONSULTATION

Chief Executive Officer
CRC Coordinator
Community and Economic Development Officer

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Act 1995

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this time there is no financial implications of modifying the two events given no funding is available for these events. For other event types, most grant funding bodies are being responsive to date changes etc. so it is unlikely income will be lost if event dates change.

The Shires current budget should be sufficient to cover costs associated with increased advertising regarding personal hygiene practices.

The main financial implication to the Shire will come in the form of increased cleaning costs – at this time the increase in staff costs is predicted to be approximately \$1,000 per week. This may impact the May budget review but at this time expenditure will be monitored but it is likely the increased costs can be covered by the current surplus predictions. There may also be increased material costs associated with extra disinfecting regimes but it is anticipated this would be covered under normal budget allocations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

STRATEGIC PLAN REFERENCE

Nil

RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Nil

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the Chief Executive Officer to take any necessary actions in managing employees, customer interactions, facilities and activities to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the district.
2. Endorse the cancellation and/or significant amendment of any events where a gathering of 30 or more people is likely to occur, this includes:
 - a. The cancellation of the Narembeen Triathlon
 - b. The modification of the Anzac Day celebrations to remove the social gathering parts of the day and restrict the activities to the formal wreath laying procedures with suitable health precautions in place.
3. Endorse the closure of the Narembeen Aquatic Centre for the 2019/2020 season.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MIN

MOTION - Moved Cr.

Seconded Cr.

CARRIED /