

16 March 2020

## **Council activates plans for COVID-19, closes Redland Performing Arts Centre**

Redland City Council has activated plans to mitigate adverse impacts of the emerging COVID-19 outbreak, ensuring continuation of critical business and the health and safety of its customers, employees and the Redlands Coast community.

Chair of the Local Disaster Management Group, Mayor Karen Williams, moved the group to 'lean forward' status last week to ensure heightened vigilance and preparedness.

"Both myself and Cr Wendy Boglary, as Deputy Chair of the LDMG, have been working with Council's CEO and the group," she said.

"Teams are working and planning across Council to ensure continuation of essential services should COVID-19 impact heavily on Redlands Coast.

"The LDMG is also receiving regular briefs from Federal and State health authorities to assist with planning; and Council's Business Continuation and Pandemic plans have been activated.

"This means community members will start to see advisory posters and health messaging consistent with that of the Australian and Queensland governments, which are leading the health communications on COVID-19.

"Our priority at Council is the health and safety of our community and employees; and other necessary actions may be taken as the situation evolves and more information comes to hand."

Council is working with local event organisers to assist them in preparing for changes in line with the Australian Government's direction to cancel static, non-essential mass gatherings of more than 500 people after today, Monday 16 March.

Council's Redland Performing Arts Centre will be closed from today until Thursday 30 April, with all performances during this time cancelled or postponed.

Cr Williams said: "We have many performances at RPAC in the coming weeks that have more than 500 people due to attend or are close to this number.

"As always, the safety of our audience, employees and artists is our highest priority.

"A large proportion of our regular audience members are elderly and therefore more at risk should they become infected with the virus.

"Due to the vulnerability of our regular theatre audience and the need for many of our performing artists to travel interstate, Council has made the difficult decision to temporarily close RPAC to protect the health of our audience members and artists, and to help reduce the risk of this virus spreading further."

The list of performances affected include *Charmaine Wilson, The Sapphires, Gravity & Other Myths – Backbone, The Australian Tenors – Spirit of Australia Tour, Redland Sinfonia – Passion Play, #FirstWorldWhiteGirls – Spirit Animal, Prada's Priscillas, Flipside Circus School Holiday Workshops, The Wiggles – Fun and Games Tour!, Beautiful Noise – The Life & the Music of Neil Diamond, Three Legends in Concert, The One Day of the Year, The Owl and the Pussycat* and *Orava Quartet*.

RPAC box office staff will contact patrons who are currently booked into these shows to offer a rescheduled date and/or a refund as appropriate.

It will take some time to contact all patrons impacted by these postponements or cancellations and Council asks for your patience while RPAC works its way through the list of patrons booked into shows.

Performances from May 2020 onwards will be reviewed regularly and updates will be available on the RPAC website [www.rpac.com.au](http://www.rpac.com.au) and on the RPAC Facebook page /RedlandPerformingArtsCentre.

The annual Easter Festival committee has also advised Council they will be cancelling the event in 2020 to help reduce the spread of the virus, with other community events also cancelled. (List at end of this release).

Cr Williams stressed the need for all community members to help slow the spread of COVID-19 by following the recommendations of health authorities:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Stay at home if you are unwell
- Practise social distance, keeping 1.5m away from others
- Cover your mouth or nose with your elbow when coughing or sneezing
- Use disposable tissues and, immediately after use, dispose of them in an appropriate waste bin, ideally with a lid
- Clean surfaces regularly with disinfectant
- Avoid contact with anyone showing adverse respiratory symptoms
- Adhere to the Australian Government's 14-day self-isolation requirement if returning from overseas

"Importantly, we all have a vital role to play in protecting the most vulnerable people in our community while averting overload on our health system," she said.

"It's important that we look out for our older residents and others with underlying health issues, listen to reliable advice from health authorities and take responsible action.

"Council is also aware of the vulnerabilities of our island communities and I have written to both the State and Federal health ministers to highlight these vulnerabilities.

"Council has been liaising with local aged care facilities to advise that their staff should be adequately trained and understand the practises that need to be put in place for the management of disease outbreaks."

Redland City Council CEO Andrew Chesterman said operationally Council was focusing on four key areas:

- Keeping employees and the community safe
- Business continuity planning to ensure critical services continue
- Supporting the LDMG at 'lean forward'
- Communicating reliable information to employees and the Redlands Coast community

"This is an unprecedented situation and it is important that we as an organisation and community do not panic but are prepared."

**Health advice**

For the latest health advice, visit the [Queensland Health website](#).

**Redland Performing Arts Centre**

To meet social distancing requirements, all performances and shows at Redland Performing Arts Centre have been cancelled until 30 April 2020. Box office staff are contacting patrons with tickets to the relevant shows to offer a rescheduled date and/or a credit/refund as appropriate.

**Events**

The following events scheduled for March and April have been cancelled:

**MARCH 2020**

- Redland City Bands Dance/Concert on Saturday 21 March 2020
- Redlands Coast Community Garden Grand Opening on Saturday 21 March 2020
- Community Connections Movie in the Park on Saturday 21 March 2020
- Redland Museum's Harmony and Heritage Fiesta on Sunday 22 March 2020

**APRIL 2020**

- BIMSARA Billy Cart Race on Sunday 5 April 2020
- Straddie Sharks Easter Carnival on Saturday 11 April 2020
- Redlands Easter Family Festival on Monday 13 April 2020
- Coochiemudlo Easter Markets on Easter Sunday 12 April 2020

**Travel**

As directed by the Australian Government, if you are travelling into Australia from any overseas country, you are required to isolate yourself for a period of 14 days after arrival. For the latest travel and border advice, visit the Australian Government's [Smart Traveller website](#).

**ENDS****Media contact – not for publication**

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