

MEDIA RELEASE

Shire of Esperance

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3 April 2020

Emergency Evacuation Campsite Opened

The Shire of Esperance has opened a short-term emergency evacuation campsite to ensure the safety of displaced travellers and the community.

From 5pm Friday April 3 the Esperance Greater Sports Ground will open up to travellers with no permanent residence in Australia, this will be reviewed in a fortnight.

Over the past few weeks Shire Environmental Health Officers, Rangers and other staff have performed daily checks with travellers stranded in the region due to the current pandemic.

Officers have kept travellers informed of current travel restrictions, and helped with embassy information and contacts.

Shire of Esperance CEO Matthew Scott has liaised with numerous government agencies, as well as the Minister for Local Government via a Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) meeting.

Mr Scott said he would continue to speak with the appropriate agencies to work on the best, long term outcome for both the travellers and the Esperance community.

“Frustratingly, at this time there is no policy yet created to help displaced travellers who find themselves in this unprecedented situation,” he said.

“This is an opportunity for us, as a community, to be compassionate towards these people - one would hope that if any Esperance resident were to find themselves in a similar position overseas, they too would receive the same assistance which we will be offering, and have a safe and secure place to sleep.

“This is not the time to travel to Esperance.

“This Campsite is only open to travellers who have no permanent Australian residential address and to those who can’t afford accommodation during the pandemic.

“The site will turn away travellers who have a place of residence in the Goldfields–Esperance region who ignore messages to holiday at home.

Esperance Shire President Ian Mickel said he was very happy with the outcome.

“Making sure our travellers are safe in our community at this time is important, as well as ensuring our residents are happy that the travellers aren’t moving around from place to place,” he said.

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“Thank you to Sime Building Contractor, who are currently working at the Greater Sports Ground, for their professionalism and flexibility.”

Hot showers and toilet facilities have been made available with Shire Rangers and other Shire staff members on site during the day to assist with any queries.

Ends

MEDIA CONTACT:

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