

# Shire of Exmouth MEDIA RELEASE



23 March 2020

## SUMMARY:

- Shire President urges visitors to rethink and reschedule their holidays.
- Regional locations do not have the support facilities in place to adequately deal with an outbreak of this rapidly spreading pandemic
- The Shire of Exmouth is frequently surveying the local industry and preparing adequate information to government to ensure that a stimulus package for tourism communities and business sectors like the whale shark industry are considered.

## COVID-19: RE-THINK YOUR HOLIDAY

For the safety and well-being of our community, council is requesting that any tourists and visitors planning to visit Exmouth over the next couple of months re-think their need to travel. With the implementation of new restrictions and arrival requirements to travel to Western Australia from other Australian States and Territories it is time for tourists and visitors alike to rethink their holidays in the Ningaloo Region.

Shire President Matt Niikkula said "Whilst we understand that this is an enormously devastating blow for our local tourism sector, it is our priority to ensure we take every precaution in restricting the possibility of an outbreak of COVID-19 in our town. Our small population, like many other regional locations does not have the support facilities in place to adequately deal with an outbreak of this rapidly spreading pandemic and the limited supplies of grocery items currently trickling into our supermarkets cannot sustain a large seasonal increase in population."

Following announcements made by the Prime Minister last night, we have seen many of our local operators be forced to make extremely hard decisions about the immediate future of their businesses. "My heart goes out to all the small business owners and employees, who just finished preparations for the start of our busy season with the Easter School Holidays coming up; and now have their lives turned upside down."

Council applauds the Exmouth community for rallying together and being supportive of each and urges all locals to maintain calm, kindness and respect for all sectors trying to survive in this rapidly changing social landscape.

To assist the local industry in a speedy recovery the Shire of Exmouth is frequently surveying the local industry and preparing adequate information to government to ensure that a stimulus package for tourism communities and business sectors like the whale shark industry are considered.

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Contact 9949 3000

*Opportunities for choice*

