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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Hindmarsh Business Concierge and Hospitality Support officer update**

The Business Concierge and Hospitality Support program is designed to assist businesses, community groups, and event organisers through changing COVID-19 regulations as we slowly transition to a new “COVID normal”.

A large part of the role is dedicated to researching restrictions and clarifying ambiguities to ease the burden they place on individuals and groups. As gradual easing of restrictions is expected to increase the limitations on operations and events, Emma Ussing will be available within Hindmarsh Shire Council to assist businesses and event organisers.

Moving into the final stages of pandemic response, and heading towards a state of “COVID normal” there will likely be a great deal of anticipation at the prospect of re-engaging in the activities we have been missing out on, but also a great deal of apprehension concerning how it will be managed and made safe. It is likely we will all experience some degree of reopening anxiety over the next six to twelve months.

As we progress through the roadmap to reopening in Victoria, while monitoring the current COVID-19 outbreak, there are some major ongoing and upcoming challenges that it is critical to be mindful of in taking care of ourselves and those around us.

#### **Ongoing Challenges: Pandemic Fatigue**

As the pandemic drags on we all feel the effects of pandemic fatigue and the exhaustion created by the extra work and stress it places on individuals and communities.

Symptoms of pandemic fatigue may include:

- feeling irritable;
- nervous;
- angry;
- anxious;
- feeling depressed or low in energy;
- having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much;
- increasing alcohol consumption;
- withdrawing from friends and family;
- aggressive outbursts or destructive behaviour;
- experiencing a sense of ineffectiveness.

Work related symptoms may also include:

- having trouble concentrating;
- having trouble meeting deadlines or carrying out duties to the standard you're used to;
- withdrawing from staff;
- feeling less engaged than usual;
- feeling negative and being absent from work.

Strategies to manage pandemic fatigue include:

- making sure you get some of the basics right – eating sensibly, regularly exercising, and sleeping well;
- acknowledging your feelings and reactions;
- maintaining healthy links to community;
- limiting media impact and influence
- focusing on what you can control, and
- seeking additional support and care when you need it.

### Upcoming Challenges: Re-opening

Reopening anxiety can manifest differently for different people, but may look like excessive worrying about:

- the uncertainty of the future,
- fears about how to adapt to new changes like wearing masks,
- being exposed to situations where you might feel unsafe,
- or reluctance to engage in pre-pandemic activities.

Strategies for dealing with reopening anxiety may include:

- re-engaging in activities at a pace you're comfortable with;
- getting information from reliable sources;
- talking to others about how you're comfortable socialising ahead of time;
- telling someone how you feel; and
- finding routine where you can – including making time to relax and switch off.

Although it is important to remember that challenges and strategies will vary for everyone.

For employers, if there isn't one already in place, it would be a good time to consider implementing a workplace wellbeing plan, to assist staff and community members with the challenges that the next phase of the pandemic will bring.

Further Resources and Support Services:

- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Sane Australia – 1800 187 263
- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800
- Mensline Australia – 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467
- Beyond Blue Support Service – 1300 224 636
- Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service – 1800 512 348
- NewAccess for Small Business Owners – 1300 945 301  
Offering support for business owners including with developing personal and workplace wellbeing plans.

We are welcoming input on how the program can be developed in Hindmarsh Shire Council to best address community concerns and deliver an effective recovery.

For more information, please contact Emma Ussing, Business Concierge and Hospitality Support officer, on 03 5391 4444, or email [eussing@hindmarsh.vic.gov.au](mailto:eussing@hindmarsh.vic.gov.au).

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**Acting Chief Executive Officer**