

9<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## **Environmental Health Officers and their role in the community in response to COVID-19**

Environmental Health Australia (EHA) is the premier environmental health professional organisation in Australia, advocating environmental health issues and representing the professional interests of all environmental health practitioners. EHA is committed to the professional development and status of its members and the enhancement of environmental health standards and services to the community through advocacy, promotion, education and leadership.

EHA has a strong national membership base, namely of Environmental Health Officers (EHO's), whom are experienced and expertly qualified. We understand our members know their Work Health and Safety requirements and continue to perform their duties in a manner that keeps both them and the community safe.

EHOs are the eyes and ears on the ground in the local community and are uniquely placed to assist in the response to COVID-19. EHO's are accustomed to taking an educative approach in the first instance and support local Public Health Units, however EHOs understand their powers under their states *Public Health Acts* and are prepared to carry out any necessary action where requested by local governments.

The South Australia Local Government has partnered with EHA South Australia Association and has enlisted the assistance of local government EHO's to enforce COVID-19 restrictions along side the South Australia Police. EHA Tasmania has also reached out to the Tasmanian Government to offer support. EHA encourages all state/territory jurisdictions who have not already done so to authorise EHO's under respective jurisdictions legislation being utilised to manage COVID-19.

EHA supports the work of our members to protect the community and recognise the fact that during this incredibly uncertain time the eyes and ears of the community will play an important role in relation to the prevention of any escalation in risk. EHOs will continue to support Public Health Units and local authorities and play an integral role in the national response to COVID-19 with the support of EHA.