

We've encountered many challenges over our time in Grocery industry

EVERYONE in Rochester has been through some pretty demanding times in recent years.

From the disaster of our floods to the drawn – out pain of drought and its impact on small towns and their economies, we have been through it together.

From the closure of Murray Goulburn to technical challenges such as Rochester IGA having access to enough power to match the ever increasing demand in our store.

But nothing has been as crazy as the past six weeks.

Trying to deal with coronavirus and its collateral damage in a small town and a small supermarket is something none of us have ever faced.

Just the logistics of co – ordinating our grocery deliveries, rostering, ordering of stock (when you can get it), cleaning the store and having to night fill so we do not have too many in the store during the day has bordered on overwhelming.

At times we have needed another phone line as the landline rings constantly and Brads mobile has not stopped pinging with messages, texts, social media, emails, and customer requests in – store.

We have introduced a home delivery and/or store pick up service, which has quickly evolved into another little business in its own right.

We have hired a refrigerated van to make things easier and to make sure we meet food safety laws.

All this has added approximately another 100 hours to our roster but has certainly helped reduce our numbers in – store.

We have had to implement many changes, such as restrictions on product quantity so everyone can get some stock.

Restrictions on the amount of people in store to maintain social distancing – along with floor decals to help remind them of that, arrows around the store to direct people to go the correct way down aisles.

Finally, there are screens at the registers to limit contact between staff and customers.

As of 2 weeks ago we have been able to relax our purchase limits on most products in the store, we have kept some limits on products we are still having trouble keeping stock of. You will see signs up to help you know which products have limits still apply.

We cannot thank our customers and our community enough for their understanding – and assistance – in these unusual and difficult times and hopefully it will be over sooner rather than later and we can all get back to normal.

IGA SUMMARY OF COVID-19 POSITIONS

- 1 Manage number of shoppers in store.** Supermarkets across Australia have come together to agree on a maximum number of shoppers that we would like in our stores at any one point in time. It is based on store size, so each store has a different limit that they will monitor themselves.
- 2 One-way shopping direction in some of our smaller stores.** If we have arrows on the floors, please follow them to help us better manage the 1.5m social distancing rules.
- 3 We may ask our shoppers to pack their own bags.** This will help us to keep contacts to a minimum.
- 4 Shop solo.** Please nominate just one person from your household to do the grocery shopping. This will help us keep the number of shoppers in store to a minimum.
- 5 Extra cleaning routines.** Our stores are being cleaned more frequently than ever. We are wiping down trolleys and baskets frequently, as well as all high traffic areas such as service areas, checkouts and EFTPOS pin pads etc.
- 6 Contactless limits lifted.** Many banks have lifted their tap & go limits from \$100 to \$200 to keep more transactions contactless and quick.
- 7 Be kind to our team members.** They are locals too and they are risking themselves to keep serving their local communities throughout this crisis.
- 8 Priority shopping and home delivery.** So those in genuine need, who don't have anyone can still access the grocery essentials.
- 9 Ongoing limits on items.** To keep everyone shopping normal.
- 10 Temporary suspension on returns policy** for changes of mind.
- 11 We are protecting our staff.** They are asked to take breaks outside of our stores, in the fresh air. We are limiting the number of people on break at the same time. We have made hand sanitizer available to all staff during their shifts. And while it's not government advice, if our staff members feel more comfortable wearing gloves or masks, then we are letting them do that, but it won't replace the additional hygiene practices we have implemented like more frequent hand washing and sanitising.