

NEWS



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: Ray Warn on the road for Tenterfield Taxis, which has expanded its services to cater for COVID-19 world.

Calls to support regional media

THERE is renewed pressure on the federal government to help ensure locals stay connected and informed, after several community newspapers folded in recent weeks.

The federal government is being urged to step in, following the newsroom closures in Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

Public Interest Journalism Initiative (PIJI) chair Professor Allan Fels, says the COVID-19 pandemic is putting greater strain on regional newsrooms.

New England MP Barnaby Joyce said regional media was vital to having a healthy democracy.

"It is an absolute priority that we have a vibrant fourth estate to support our democracy and our nation," Mr Joyce said.

"I have stated the source of a lot of the problems is Google, Facebook, Reddit and a whole range of other platforms that use the news as a mechanism for attracting advertising revenue, but they don't invest in regional staff.

"Basically they miss out on the investment in the community but collect on the revenue that would normally go to regional mastheads," he said.

Driving new business

BY DONNA WARD

TENTERFIELD Taxi is expanding its services to support those opting to stay close to home.

The taxi is now offering an Uber-eats type operation with door-to-door delivery of takeaways from those eateries still operating.

This also extends to purchases from the pharmacy or a few necessities from the supermarket or even just transferring items between

family members and friends.

Bottleshop takeaways aren't included, however, due to licensing laws although Tenterfield Taxi can of course collect the passenger and transport them to the bottleshop and return, to make their own purchase.

Tenterfield Taxi's Nicole Haddock said It's time to think outside the box as many local businesses are, for strategies to survive the Coronavirus downturn. The company's two cars used

to be busy particularly on Friday and Saturday nights with the local pubs and clubs and with Department of Veteran Affairs trips to Lismore, Toowoomba and Brisbane, but all that has come to a grinding halt as restrictions set in. Many of the eateries have also expanded their service with takeaway deliveries, but the taxi remains a backup option.

"Every business is trying to keep afloat," Mrs Haddock said.

"It's about businesses adapting to a new way of life.

"We should be shutting down but we can't afford to. We've been around for 30 years and want to continue to be for the next 30.

"It's just heartbreaking. We're struggling to keep our main driver on."

While the business hopes to organise an EFTPOS option, arrangements can be made for payment to be put out on the doorstep in exchange for the goods left

there, so that the transaction is contactless. This will be a boon for the over-70s and immune-compromised who are now being urged to stay inside their homes.

For those who are still on the move (for essential trips), vehicle hygiene has been stepped up with a sanitation sweep before and after each hire. This includes disinfecting door handles, seats and seat belts.

Patrons are offered hand sanitiser before entering.

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WEATHER

TODAY



Min: 12°C Max: 21°C

TOMORROW



Min: 12°C Max: 20°C

FRIDAY



Min: 12°C Max: 21°C

SATURDAY



Min: 13°C Max: 23°C

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Classifieds: (02) 6736 1799 News: 0437 312 572
Website: tenterfieldstar.com.au
Post: PO Box 15 Tenterfield NSW 2372

Tenterfield Star

The Tenterfield Star, founded in 1870, is published on Wednesdays for Regional Publishers Pty Ltd (ABN 20 000 014 700). Advertising conditions are available on request. Phone: (02) 6736 1799. Post: PO Box 15 Tenterfield NSW 2372.



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