

## Media Release

**Date: 21 March 2020**

### **COVID-19: Maintain social distancing when shopping and don't buy more than you need**

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Islanders are being urged to behave responsibly when shopping, both in terms of taking the importance of social distancing seriously and buying only goods that they need.

The shopping experience was unnecessarily fraught for many on Saturday, with empty shelves the result of too many people buying more than they need – combined with a delayed freight delivery – and not nearly enough people practicing appropriate levels of social distancing.

Retailers have been working closely with the States and are trying their best to implement changes to help social distancing – but they also need the community's support. Shoppers must give each other space and are asked to be patient when retailers put measures in place such as opening fewer tills.

The island has no current issues with the supply of essential goods. Retailers have confirmed they have access to product lines and supply lines are being maintained. However, what shoppers are experiencing is empty shelves on occasions brought on by the current demand outstripping the supply. This is in spite of Condor having increased its freight capacity.

Deputy Gavin St Pier, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Authority, said:

'I know this is a stressful time for us all, but as a community we have to remain disciplined and considerate towards each other. Everyone must take social distancing seriously given the clear advice from the Director of Public Health about its benefits as mitigation against the community spread of coronavirus. We are in regular dialogue with retailers who are trying to help, but all of us as their customers must play our part too.

'Likewise, and we have been consistent in this message, there is absolutely no need to buy more than you need. Our current supply lines are strong, they are secure, and retailers have reassured us that they can access the goods the island needs. A freight delivery was late today but that's an occurrence we have all seen hundreds of times. The biggest cause of temporary shortages of supplies at this stage is our own collective behaviour. Everyone buying more than necessary, needs to just get a grip and not be so selfish. We are all in this for some weeks yet, so it is foolish to think

panic buying now is going to meet all your needs over that extended period of indeterminate length. If you are worried about what happens if you self-isolate. Don't. If friends or family are not in a position to help you then, the community will rally around. We've seen plenty of groups setting up for just this type of problem.

'We are implementing proportionate measures to meet the Bailiwick's needs at each stage of this disease and to safeguard our community. We do not want to take draconian steps, but we have already shown that we will do so when needed and we will have no hesitation in doing so again if we have to. I would urge everyone to heed the advice, maintain social distancing wherever you are and do not buy any more goods than you actually need.'

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### Notes to Media

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