
Ordinary Council Meeting (Supplementary Paper)

Tuesday 24 March 2020



Urgent Business

Late General Manager's Report

UB4/20 COVID-19 Community Support Package 2

General Manager's Report No. UB4/20

Subject: COVID-19 Community Support Package

Executive Summary

- This report recommends a Community Support Package totaling an estimated \$2.3M in response to the Mayoral Minute MM10/20;
- The support package addressed four key areas of immediate consideration, including human connection, financial hardship, support for essential workers and business concessions.
- This Support Package is to be funded from the Our Communities Our Future funds.

Recommendation

That:

- a) Council adopt the Community Support package to provide initial assistance to our community through the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- b) Council delegate the General Manager to determine the criteria for rental relief for Council owned properties under the support package.
- c) the General Manager is delegated authority to approve temporary changes to the operation of the Randwick Resident Parking Scheme, in order to meet the needs of the Prince of Wales Hospital Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit employees, during the COVID-19 emergency.

Attachment/s:

Nil

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Purpose

Randwick City Council Mayor, Danny Said, put forward a Mayoral Minute in relation to Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this report is to respond to the following clause in the Mayoral Minute:

"Prepare a report for Council identifying opportunities to support local small business and non-profit organisations through this period, including but not limited to waiving of fees for Roads Act approval for footway dining, footpath occupation licencing, subsidies for council owned properties;"

Decisions being rapidly made at both State and Federal Government level to assist in slowing the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19. These decisions are having a significant impact on many members of our community, including our businesses.

Discussion

This Community Support Package has been developed as an initial response to the considerable hardship faced by our community as a result of the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

As at 24 March 2020, there have been 1,823 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Australia, with 7 deaths recorded. Within New South Wales there have been 818 confirmed cases. Across the world, there have been more than 343,000 confirmed cases and more than 15,000 deaths.

The coronavirus pandemic has caused significant and rapid change to the everyday lives of our community. For some perspective, it was less than two weeks ago that over 86,000 people gathered at ICC Women's T20 Cricket World Cup in Melbourne.

In the absence of a vaccine for this virus, governments across the world have been implementing strategies to slow the spread of the virus. While these strategies are aimed at ensuring public health within our country, they have come at a cost. Industries such as travel, entertainment, arts and culture, catering, hotels, cafes and restaurants are just some of those heavily impacted. Unemployment is expected to rise to record numbers and hardship will be far and wide.

The social and economic impacts of this pandemic are far reaching, and are expected to include increase in social isolation, mental health conditions, financial stress and loss of community connections.

All levels of Government have a role to play in supporting our country and communities through this difficult time and importantly in our recovery.

To date, the following support has been provided by the Federal Government:

Economic Stimulus Package of \$17.6 billion <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/economic-stimulus-package>, to deliver support for business including (but not limited to):

- Encouraging local small businesses to retain an apprentice or trainee, with 50% subsidy of their wages for nine months (January 2020 to September 2020)
- Instant asset write-off up to the value of \$150,000 to encourage businesses to spend on new assets
- A 50% accelerated depreciation deduction for businesses (with a turnover less than \$500 million) to stimulate investment.
- Boost cash flow for employers tax-free payments of up to \$25,000 to provide cashflow support to businesses with turnovers of less than \$50 million.
- \$4.8 billion stimulus payments to households to support growth.

To date, the following support has been provided by the NSW State Government:

Economic Stimulus Package <https://preview.nsw.gov.au/news/23-billion-health-boost-and-economic-stimulus> to deliver support for business including:

- \$1.6 billion in tax relief for small businesses to help save jobs as the state braces for dire economic impacts of the virus
- \$450 million to waive payroll tax for the next three months for businesses with payrolls of up to \$10 million
- \$80 million to waive a range of fees and charges for small businesses including bars, restaurants and tradespeople.

With the situation changing rapidly, this Community Support Package outlines Randwick City Councils immediate response and will be evolved as we work through this difficult period.

In responding to the rapidly changing environment, Council has been sensitive to these impacts, adopting actions such as reducing enforcement and compliance activities, distributing community care cards and exploring new ways of delivering existing services.

The attached Community Support Package provides a range of immediate assistance to encourage human connections, address financial hardship, provide business support, and support for essential workers.

Resourcing Strategy implications

The direct financial implication of this report is provided as follows:

- Waiver of interest on overdue rates and charges – Estimated net cost \$150,000 (estimated value \$500,000);
- Rental relief (6 months) Non-profit community tenants - \$190,000
- Waiver/refund of sporting field charges winter season- \$530,000
- Waiver of outdoor dining and footpath fees - \$400,000.
- Waiver of Environment Health Inspection Fees - \$85,000
- Waiver of Fire Safety inspection fees - \$105,000
- Rental relief of up to 100% for business tenants of council owned business properties upon application – Maximum \$495,000

Maximum Estimated Total assistance: \$2,305,000

Net estimated cost: \$1,955,000

It is recommended that this Community Support Package be funded from the Our Communities Our Future funding.

Conclusion

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic will have a significant immediate and ongoing impact on our community. The Community Support Package aims to provide initial assistance to our community during this difficult time.

Responsible officer: Therese Manns, General Manager

File Reference: F2019/00024

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