



W A V E R L E Y
C O U N C I L

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

A meeting of WAVERLEY COUNCIL will be held by video conference at:

7.30 PM, TUESDAY 7 APRIL 2020

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'R. B. McLeod'.

Ross McLeod
General Manager

Waverley Council
PO Box 9
Bondi Junction NSW 1355
DX 12006 Bondi Junction
Tel. 9083 8000
E-mail: info@waverley.nsw.gov.au

Live Streaming of Meetings

This meeting is streamed live via the internet and an audio-visual recording of the meeting will be publicly available on Council's website.

By attending this meeting, you consent to your image and/or voice being live streamed and publicly available.

AGENDA

PRAYER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

The General Manager will read the following Opening Prayer:

God, we pray for wisdom to govern with justice and equity. That we may see clearly and speak the truth and that we work together in harmony and mutual respect. May our actions demonstrate courage and leadership so that in all our works thy will be done. Amen.

The Mayor will read the following Acknowledgement of Indigenous Heritage:

Waverley Council respectfully acknowledges our Indigenous heritage and recognises the ongoing Aboriginal traditional custodianship of the land which forms our Local Government Area.

1. Apologies/Leaves of Absence

2. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

3. Addresses to Council by Members of the Public

4. Reports

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5. Meeting Closure

REPORT
CM/4.1/20.04E2

Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Business Continuity, Response and Service Delivery**

TRIM No: A20/0245

Author: Ross McLeod, General Manager

Director: Ross McLeod, General Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Receives and notes this report.
2. Notes the business continuity arrangements put in place within the organisation to ensure the continued delivery of essential services.
3. Notes the service disruptions and steps taken to meet additional compliance demands.
4. Notes the early projections of impacts on Council revenue and financial performance from Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and receives a further report on these matters as part of the Q3 budget review.
5. Notes the contextual matters likely to influence Council's approach to community support and fiscal and financial management during the pandemic crisis.
6. Notes that Council financial performance for Q4 in financial year 2019–20 is likely to be markedly different than the approved budget due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Executive Summary

Council is responding to the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. The organisation has enacted business continuity arrangements to enable it to continue to deliver essential services in the context of the pandemic event, and has taken steps to close services, facilities, programs and activities as appropriate. Council has also taken steps to provide assistance to its community to help deal with the impacts from the pandemic, including support for the business community and efforts to help support vulnerable persons.

Council has received some feedback in relation to parking services and fees. This report provides an opportunity for Council to consider that feedback and related actions. Council is also seeing increased demand on compliance services in relation to pandemic-related matters.

The pandemic and associated restrictions are severely affecting Council revenues at this time. This will likely have a significant impact on financial performance given some of the expectations Council is likely to be operating under. A very preliminary analysis of financial impacts is provided in this report.

2. Introduction/Background

The Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic is significantly affecting countries, communities and organisations around the world. Council has made its own preparations for impacts caused by events such as this pandemic. These include business continuity arrangements designed to lessen impacts on Council's delivery capacity, and to enable Council to continue to deliver essential services should the organisation's delivery capability be affected by the pandemic.

3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Nil.

4. Discussion

Business continuity arrangements

The organisation has enacted business continuity arrangements to enable it to operate in the context of the Pandemic event. These will share commonality with the arrangements of other organisations including other councils.

The central priority of business continuity arrangements has been to enable the organisation to continue to operate to deliver essential services to the community. These services in the current context include:

- Public health functions (waste collection and recycling, public place cleaning, environmental health services such as food hygiene inspections).
- Infrastructure and community support functions (roads and footpaths, stormwater, parks and exercise areas, community support programs to support the community through the pandemic).
- Compliance (rangers and other enforcement staff).
- Business support activities (development application and building certification processes, activity to support businesses through the crisis).
- Internal support services essential to the operation of the organisation (IT, Payroll, HR and Finance).

A range of measures have been put in place to ensure continued delivery of essential services. These include:

- Provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) where required.
- Splitting of shifts, teams and rosters.
- Staggered start times and staff commencing work on site rather than from centralised start points to remove risk of cross-contamination of essential service personnel within a particular service.
- 'Isolation' of particular depots and sites to stop cross-contamination of essential service personnel by other staff
- Planning for redeployment of staff to fill in any absences due to illness among essential service staff.
- Where possible and desirable, staff are working from home; other staff are in their own 'bubbles' within sparsely populated offices.

To date, the measures are working effectively. It should be noted, however, that PPE and other cleaning products such as hand sanitisers, are becoming increasingly difficult to source. Staff are implementing measures to mitigate this risk but there is no guarantee of supplies over the short-term.

Service disruption/response to impacts of events

A number of Council services, programs, events and facilities have had to be closed or discontinued in order to ensure compliance with various Public Health Orders enacted by the NSW Government or because of staff risk assessments. These include:

- Waverley Library, its programs and most services (e-books and some online courses are being offered and welfare checks are being conducted with Home Library service clients).
- Bondi Pavilion and all venue hire, services and programs.
- Margaret Whitlam Centre.
- Mill Hill Community Centre venues and programs.
- All Council events and cultural programs.
- Footpath dining services.
- Beaches and coastal pools.
- Playgrounds, outdoor gyms, sports courts, bubblers/drinking fountains.

These closures will be reviewed from time to time based on any changes in restrictions and/or staff risk assessments. Staff do not foresee the reopening any of these services in the short-term.

Further matters to be considered

Parking meters, parking buildings and parking enforcement.

Impacts from the coronavirus and the various restrictions imposed have seen numbers of vehicles in our commercial areas drop. Council's Compliance staff have also eased the usual enforcement procedures with respect to parking infringements except in cases involving parking in red zones (loading bays, accessible parking bays, loading zones) or where cars are parked in a dangerous manner. These factors have led to a decline in the average daily revenue from on-street parking meters and parking infringements from approximately \$52,000 per day down to approximately \$7,000–\$8,000 per day or \$56,000 per week on current projections. It is important to note that this is a significant decline from the weekly budgeted revenue of \$364,000 provided for in the 2019–20 budget. This will have a serious impact on the fourth quarter of Council's 2019–20 budget, but the relaxed enforcement is considered an appropriate response to the difficulties that the local business community and the community in general are experiencing. Making parking accessible and helping contribute to viability for local businesses is important to the Council strategically.

Given the significance of the decline already, Council could consider whether turning off the parking meters for a period will help to further support local businesses. It will also help to respond to community concerns about potential health risks associated with the manual use of parking meters to generate parking tickets. Recommendations to enable parking meters to be switched off are provided below should Council wish to do so; however, this is not a firm recommendation from officers.

Council has also had issues raised in relation to its parking buildings. Some issues have pertained to health concerns relating the need to touch payment machines, while others have highlighted that Council parking facilities are still charging when other carpark operators (e.g. Westfield) have removed parking charges and barrier arms.

In relation to these issues, parking meters and pay stations are no different to door handles and other surfaces people touch each day. If people wash their hands and practise good hygiene, machines are safe to use. Council is also in a position with respect to on-street parking where it can promote use of the parking payment app, Pay Stay, to enable people to pay for parking. From a financial perspective, any moves to turn off meters and remove fees for off-street parking facilities would further impact on Council's revenues and budgets. Allowing free parking in Council-operated parking buildings would cost Council

approximately \$300,000 per month in revenue over and above existing revenue losses. It is noted that any changes proposed to the operation of the Eastgate car park building will require consultation with ISPT, the shopping centre owner. It is also noted that opening barrier arms would remove Council's ability to manage parking within buildings. Some parking is being allocated to operational purposes in the current circumstances and some users have longer term arrangements.

Council has been considering the introduction of ticketless parking within its parking buildings. However, a tender process for these services was withdrawn last year after process issues, and there is a Council resolution requiring a feasibility evaluation before we proceed to install ticketless parking. Council is not in a position to introduce ticketless parking at the current time.

Overall, changes to parking building management and charges are not recommended, however recommendations are provided here should Council wish to implement them.

Parking meters, parking buildings and enforcement – Possible motion should Council wish to proceed with them (not recommended by officers)

That Council:

1. Turns off the on-street parking meters throughout the Waverley LGA as from Wednesday 8th April 2020.
2. Authorises the General Manager to turn on on-street parking meters throughout the Waverley LGA when he considers circumstances make it appropriate
3. Continues the current approach of being flexible and compassionate in the enforcement of parking restrictions, except in cases involving parking in red zones (loading bays, ACROD bays, No Stopping zones) or where cars are parked in a dangerous manner.
4. Notes the above approaches will result in the loss of revenue of approximately \$56,000 per week on current projections, down from \$364,000 per week as budgeted for in the 2019/20 budget or a reduction of approximately \$728,000 in the balance of the budget projected to 30 June 2020.
5. Subject to agreement by ISPT with respect to the Eastgate carpark, suspends charging fees for parking in Council carparking buildings as from Wednesday 8 April 2020.
6. Authorises the General Manager to recommence charging fees for parking in Council carparking buildings when he considers circumstances make it appropriate.
7. Notes the above approach will result in the loss of revenue of approximately \$300,000 per month from carparking buildings on current projections.

These matters have been considered by the General Manager and the Crisis Management Team, however staff felt it was arguable whether this was an adjustment to Council's fees and charges and whether the General Manager had the authority under law to be able to make such an adjustment.

Community assistance

Council has developed a range of measures designed to facilitate volunteer and NGO efforts to support vulnerable persons in the community and to provide direct Council support as appropriate. Councillors were advised of these measures in the week ending 27 March 2020. A copy of that advice is attached.

There have been a number of proposals come forward from organisations and people wanting to assist the community. Many of these have or are being put in place, some with support or facilitation from Council. Some proposals are looking for direct financial support from Council. As an example, a restaurant business has put forward a proposal for Council to essentially purchase meals from it and other restaurants for provision to vulnerable persons. Some detailed thinking has gone into the proposal, and it would cost Council \$213,000 for a 13-week program. While this proposal has merit in that it would help vulnerable people and obviously help keep one or more businesses operating, with the revenue reductions and other demands Council is experiencing, it does not seem to be affordable. Given the merit in it, staff propose to

refer the program and others like it to the relevant community agency within government to see if there is any interest in it.

As part of its community assistance efforts, Council has undertaken an audit of homeless persons/rough sleepers and occurrences of people sleeping in cars. While staff are not noticing significant numbers in these circumstances at present, efforts are being made to connect those affected with appropriate services.

Council is also assisting Health agencies to operate a Covid-19 testing clinic out of Bondi Pavilion to increase testing within the Waverley community.

Business assistance

Council has released a range of assistance measures to support businesses in Waverley. This was advised to Councillors in the week ending 27 March 2020. A copy of the advice is attached.

The authorisation of certain aspects of these measures is the subject of another report on the agenda.

Compliance matters

As greater restrictions have been announced and enacted to combat the spread of Coronavirus, there has been a greater level of reporting of breaches of those restrictions and a greater demand on compliance resources. This is the case even where Council does not necessarily have powers to enforce the restrictions such as is the case in relation to Emergency Public Health Orders. The approach of Council officers where they do not have clear powers of enforcement is to encourage compliance with a friendly reminder in the first instance and report any continuing breaches to the appropriate authorities.

Staff are principally monitoring parks and public spaces in respect of gatherings and social distancing.

Council Lifeguards and Rangers have been on the frontline of enforcing beach closures and dealing with associated issues. They have had excellent support from NSW Police.

Concerns associated with backpacker premises, boarding houses and the operation of certain residential flat buildings (RFBs) have become a focus for compliance activity. While Council has not been provided with specific additional public health powers in this area, staff are using powers under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Local Government Act to inspect premises of concern, enforce compliance where appropriate under those pieces of legislation, advise on public health compliance matters and report breaches to the appropriate authorities. Council's inspections and advice on compliance have generally been well received to date.

NSW Health have advised they are producing a strategy for managing risks associated with Backpacker and boarding houses. It has been signalled that Council assistance in this area alongside Health and Police may be required. A balanced approach to compliance action will be required. While these premises present risks that need to be managed, it appears less than desirable from a public health perspective to force unmanaged closures that result in occupants being forced out of their accommodation with no support and nowhere to go. Some of the businesses are likely to be under financial stress due to a reduction in numbers on patrons.

The organisation is looking to redeploy appropriate staff to assist with more general compliance demands to assist Rangers and other compliance staff.

5. Financial impact statement/Time frame/Consultation

Officers are still analysing the impacts on Council revenues and budgets from the Pandemic and associated restrictions. Based on work done to date, reductions in revenue of between \$2.6 and \$3.0 million per month are likely, assuming we retain some level of income from carparking buildings and on-street parking meters. This is likely to result in an overall downturn of between 26 and 28% on overall operating revenue in Q4 and into the 2020–2021 financial year. There is no certainty as yet as to timeframes over which revenues may start to recover. This will depend on progress in reducing the incidence of infection, Government restrictions in place and recovery of the economy more broadly. Government authorities are talking about some form of restrictions being in place for a period of six months.

Expenditure reductions are unlikely to match this revenue decrease, although some will be achieved. Context matters that are likely to influence expenditure and financial management decisions include:

- Council is likely to wish to continue with construction programs to support continued employment in that sector.
- While there is less cost associated with some services, greater costs are being experienced for supplies such as hand sanitiser and cleaning products.
- There is likely to be an expectation that governmental organisations such as Council will keep as many people employed as practicable.
- There may be some relaxation of balanced budget and ‘fit for the future’ requirements on councils.
- Other levels of government will run deficits to help the community through the coronavirus pandemic. It is likely council may be expected to take a similar approach.
- Council staff are being reallocated internally to areas of high demand for service (e.g. cleaning, compliance)

Council will receive a report on impacts on Council revenue and financial performance from Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 in conjunction with the Q3 budget review. While there is no certainty as to the financial result at year end as yet, staff are confident in saying that Council financial performance for Q4 in financial year 2019–2020 is likely to be markedly different than the approved budget due to impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Application of reserve funds to Council operational activity is likely to be necessary, and the possible loosening of restrictions on restricted reserves is a matter that has been raised with the Office of Local Government for consideration.

6. Conclusion

The report provides an overview of Council’s response to the Novel Coronavirus Covid-19 Pandemic and provides a very initial analysis of financial impacts on Council.

7. Attachments

1. Business Support Plan - Media release and FAQs [↓](#)
2. Supporting the community during Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 - Media release [↓](#) .

Waverley Council announces \$1 million per month relief package for small businesses

25 March 2020

In response to the economic impact on small business caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Waverley Council has prepared a relief package with immediate short-term support measures to assist small businesses operating in the local government area. The package offers approximately \$1 million per month in financial relief that is in addition to the stimulus support packages already announced by the federal and state government. Waverley's relief package is aimed at helping all small businesses, including those in the retail and hospitality industries, that have been impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

The support measures in our relief package include:

1. Relaxed conditions of consent for restaurants to enable trade as takeaway-only services.
2. Footpath seating fees will be waived as these paths are no longer able to be used.
3. Health, hygiene, licensing and fire safety inspections fees will be waived to all small business in the local government area. Inspections will still be carried out.
4. Fee waivers will be applied to outdoor fitness permits and to community markets (such as Bondi Junction Mall, Carl Jeppesen Place and Roscoe St Mall).
5. On-street parking in commercial centres will focus on infringements where community safety access is a risk.
6. Mobile vendor licence fees will be waived.
7. Commercial waste fees and charges to be adjusted to level of service. Customers can also apply for extended credit terms during the pandemic period.
8. Commercial rent support for small businesses who operated out of Council-owned assets. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
9. Council will pay its small business suppliers promptly within 15 days payment terms.
10. Extended credit on certain fees and charges small businesses owe to Council with a suspension of interest charges.
11. Financial hardship policy which will review and implement a process for considering applications for other forms of assistance, including deferred rate payments with no interest charge.
12. Relaxed operating hours for all supermarkets and grocers to ensure a continual supply and restock of products.
13. Continuation of Council's current capital works program of over \$50 million per annum through to June 2021 to support employment in the construction sector.
14. Council procurement from local suppliers if consistent with statutory procurement regulations and prescribed delegations.
15. "Buy Local" publicity campaign via Council communication channels and the Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce.

Council's COVID-19 business response team will monitor and review these measures on an ongoing basis, with the intent that they remain in place until at least 30 June 2020 or until such time that the pandemic restrictions are lifted. The business response team will also try to work with small businesses on a case-by-case basis where possible.

In addition to the above measures, Council has agreed to contract the [Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce](#) to provide consulting and advisory services to the value of \$10,000. As part of this, an ongoing working group has been established to begin planning for medium and long-term relief measures once pandemic restrictions have eased or ended.

Mayor of Waverley, Councillor Paula Masselos, supports Waverley Council's commitment to supporting small businesses through these unprecedented times.

"Our \$1 million per month package will help provide relief for those families who have put their heart and soul into building a small business and serving our community.

"Local business is what drives the Waverley economy and it's the mum and dad operators who need our support during these overwhelmingly difficult times.

"Waverley Council is committed to helping local business during this unprecedented time of economic hardship, and together we can make it to the other side.

"I strongly urge the community to shop locally where possible and support your local cafes and restaurants that are offering take away options. It is small actions like these that will help our local businesses survive this crisis.

"I also ask the community to make a commitment to support those businesses in the future who are closed temporarily."

For members of the community who have appropriate skills or knowledge to provide support to local businesses, Council encourages you to contact the Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce so that they can direct your support through to various services. Council is also encouraging community members with specific needs, practical ideas or suggestions to get in touch with its business response team. Contact information is listed below.

- Waverley Council business response team: business@waverley.nsw.gov.au
- Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce: info@bondichamber.com.au



Waverley Council's Business Support Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

In response to the economic impact on small businesses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Waverley Council is working to ensure the local business community is supported, well informed, and able to access advice and financial support. Please see below for frequently asked questions from the Waverley business community. If none of the answers below address a question you have, please email us at business@waverley.nsw.gov.au

1. I operate a business in the Waverley area, what assistance is available to me?

There are a number of support packages and financial incentives available to you from federal, state and local government.

- For information on federal government support, [see here](#).
- For information on state government support, [see here](#).
- For information on Waverley Council support, including the recently announced \$1 million per month relief package for small businesses, [see here](#).

There are also two emergency business hotlines available if you require urgent assistance:

- Australian Government Business Hotline: 13 28 46
- Australian Taxation Office Emergency Hotline: 1800 806 218

2. What is Waverley Council's business relief package?

On 25 March 2020, Waverley Council announced a business relief package targeted at supporting small businesses in the local community. This package offers approximately \$1 million per month in financial relief. The support measures in the package include:

- Relaxed conditions of consent for restaurants to enable trade as takeaway-only services.
- Footpath seating fees will be waived as these paths are no longer able to be used.
- Health, hygiene, licensing and fire safety inspections fees will be waived to all small business in the local government area. Inspections will still be carried out.
- Fee waivers will be applied to outdoor fitness permits and to community markets (such as Bondi Junction Mall, Carl Jeppesen Place and Roscoe St Mall).
- On-street parking in commercial centres will focus on infringements where community safety access is a risk.
- Mobile vendor licence fees will be waived.
- Commercial waste fees and charges to be adjusted to level of service. Customers can also apply for extended credit terms during the pandemic period.

- Commercial rent support for small businesses who operated out of Council-owned assets. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Council will pay its small business suppliers promptly within 15 days payment terms.
- Extended credit on certain fees and charges small businesses owe to Council with a suspension of interest charges.
- Financial hardship policy which will review and implement a process for considering applications for other forms of assistance, including deferred rate payments with no interest charge.
- Relaxed operating hours for all supermarkets and grocers to ensure a continual supply and restock of products.
- Continuation of Council's current capital works program of over \$50 million per annum through to June 2021 to support employment in the construction sector.
- Council procurement from local suppliers if consistent with statutory procurement regulations and prescribed delegations.
- "Buy Local" publicity campaign via Council communication channels and the Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce.

For more information about the package, [see here](#).

3. How long will the measures in the relief package be in place for?

Council's COVID-19 business response team will monitor and review measures on an ongoing basis, with the intent that they remain in place until at least 30 June 2020 or until such time that the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

4. Is Council still undertaking health, hygiene, licensing and fire safety inspections as usual?

Yes. Council will still be undertaking these inspections to ensure health and safety standards are maintained. However, all fees associated with these inspections will be waived to small businesses.

5. I own/operate a restaurant. Can I trade as a takeaway business?

Yes. Council is relaxing conditions of consent for restaurants and other approved food businesses to enable trade as takeaway only services.

6. I own/operate a small business in Waverley that has an approved mobile vendor license. Am I eligible for support?

Yes. All fees for mobile vendors will be waived while pandemic restrictions are in place.

7. I am an existing supplier of products and/or services to Waverley Council. Will I still be paid?

Yes. Council will pay its small business suppliers promptly within 15 days payment terms.

- 8. I own/operate a food business in Waverley with approved outdoor dining area. Will I be charged ongoing fees?**

No. All approved footpath seating fees will be waived while pandemic restrictions are in place.

- 9. I own/operate a small business and my landlord is Waverley Council. Is there any rental support available to me?**

Yes. Rent support is available for small businesses who operate out of Council-owned assets. This support will be provided on a case-by-case basis. Please contact our business assistance team to discuss further: business@waverley.nsw.gov.au

- 10. I own/operate a small business and currently contract Waverley Council for commercial waste services. Is there any support available in relation to this service?**

Yes. Customers can apply for extended credit terms during the pandemic period. To arrange this, please contact Waverley Council's commercial waste team: dl_commercial_waste@waverley.nsw.gov.au

- 11. I am struggling to pay my utility bills. What can I do?**

All major utility providers including electricity, water, gas and phone services are offering deferred payments for those experiencing financial hardship. Please contact your provider directly to apply for a deferral on payments.

- 12. Is there somewhere I can to receive additional advice for local businesses?**

Yes. Council is working closely with the Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce, who are also providing advice and support to local businesses. Please visit their website for more information or get in touch with them via email.

- Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce website: www.bondichamber.com.au
- Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce email: info@bondichamber.com.au

- 13. Is any further support going to be available, in addition to the measures outlined in Waverley Council's business relief package?**

Yes. The current package provides immediate short-term support to local businesses. The measures within the package will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, as the COVID-19 situation evolves. Waverley Council has also established a working group with the Bondi & Districts chamber of Commerce to plan for medium and long-term relief measures once pandemic restricts have eased or ended.

Supporting the Community during Novel Coronavirus Covid-19

Council is focused on supporting the whole community, and particularly vulnerable and at-risk residents, to prevent the spread of Covid-19, and maintain social connections and quality of life.

We have been overwhelmed by residents, precinct groups and businesses offering support for neighbourhood and community support initiatives. We want to make sure people have as much information as possible about making a difference in these challenging times while keeping themselves (and others around them) healthy and well.

The following information details some of the ways in which Council is providing support, and how the community can get involved.

What Council is doing

We're continuing our support for the most vulnerable people in our community – socially isolated, older people or people who are at risk of homelessness.

- Through our **Community Housing Manager**, we are liaising with our social and affordable housing tenants to ensure they are supported.
- While **Waverley Library** remains closed, we are still able to offer our online resources to our members. Our staff are also continuing to provide welfare checks on registered clients of our **Home Library Service** to ensure they remain connected during this difficult time. [You can find out more on this here.](#)
- **Public WiFi** will continue to be available throughout Waverley.
- We are looking after our **homeless residents** by coordinating support within established internal and external networks. Regular monitoring, referral and cleaning routines are being maintained. Weekly Outreach services providing ongoing support for individuals also continues. Council is working with the **Eastern Suburbs Homelessness Assertive Collaboration (ESHAC)** on key issues.
- We continue to provide our **Waverley Community Living Program**, with one-on-one support and services by remote means.
- **Early Education Services** and our **Family Day Care** services remain open at the current time and are closely following health advice.
- **Mill Hill Seniors & Community Services** is closed, and seniors programming is suspended. During this time Council is supporting our seniors through alternative means that will replace face to face contact to ensure our seniors keep well and are connected to information and support.
- Council continues to support local essential services providers, grassroots initiatives and community groups such as the **Waverley Community and Seniors Association**, **Our Big Kitchen** and others, in helping vulnerable people and assist to contain the spread of COVID 19.
- The **Junction Neighbourhood Centre (JNC)** is providing up to date information on local services that are still operating during the COVID-19 pandemic including details of any changed arrangements to access them. These services are changing daily and the directory will be updated regularly. [Click here to access this.](#) This external link will open in a new window
- For those **families** in the community with **children and young people**, we've put together [a list of websites that provide advice and guidance for you during Covid-19](#). Also, here's [a list of services offering support for adolescents](#), such as contacts for Headspace and Lifeline, amongst others.

- We are supporting **local business** in a number of ways, [outlined here](#), including a relief packaging offering approximately \$1 million per month.

Council is disseminating Australian & NSW Government information on social distancing and personal hygiene to all members of our community. Please go here for more information on this at health.nsw.gov.au/coronavirus. This external link will open in a new window. They remain the best point for health advice in this situation.

Small Grants

Council works in partnership with local community groups and services. Some of these groups have been funded by Council through our community and small grants program, and we encourage those eligible to apply – the next round of small grants applications close 6 April. If you have a bright idea for a small project, [check out if this funding is for you](#).

Volunteering Opportunities

Council supports a range of local services that respond to community needs. If you are keen to volunteer over the coming weeks and months, please email us at connected@waverley.nsw.gov.au and we will contact you as relevant opportunities arise within the range of local services that Council supports.

Other ways to support people at a neighbourhood level, include:

- **Relationships Australia:** you can assist by distributing calling/connection cards to your neighbours neighbourday.org/resources/connection-cards. This external link will open in a new window.
- **The Neighbourhood Hub** can help people stay informed and connected: au.nextdoor.com. This external link will open in a new window.
- You could start a **WhatsApp** group in your street: whatsapp.com. This external link will open in a new window.

There are also a number of grass roots community-driven Facebook groups setting up in Waverley:

- **Viral Kindness Eastern Suburbs Sydney:** facebook.com/groups/683921549083289. This external link will open in a new window.
 - **Bondi Seniors:** facebook.com/groups/bondiseniors. This external link will open in a new window.
- Other volunteering opportunities are:

- **Do Something Near You:** dosomethingnearyou.com.au. This external link will open in a new window.
- **Go Volunteer:** govolunteer.com.au. This external link will open in a new window.
- **Good Company:** goodcompany.com.au. This external link will open in a new window.
- **The Centre for Volunteering:** volunteering.com.au. This external link will open in a new window.

Talk to us

As this situation evolves, we want to hear from you. Council wants to know what your issues or concerns are in relation to community connections and supporting our vulnerable and high-risk members at this time. Please email us at connected@waverley.nsw.gov.au and we will get back to you.

For up-to-date information on Council's response for all services and programming please go here: waverley.nsw.gov.au/coronavirus

REPORT
CM/4.2/20.04E2

Subject: Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Business Support Package

TRIM No: A20/0258

Author: John Coudounaris, Manager, Economic Development

Director: Darren Smith, Chief Financial Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council

1. Endorses the short-term COVID-19 Business Support Package and the measures contained therein as outlined in this report.
2. Notes that a review of the operation of the package will be carried out by staff on or before 30 June 2020.
3. In accordance with sections 610E and 610F of the *Local Government Act 1993*, publicly exhibits for 28 days:
 - (a) The introduction of a \$0 (fee waiver) COVID-19 Small Business Support category in Council's Fees and Charges to apply to the following fees:
 - (i) All fees for licence inspections.
 - (ii) Fitness permits fees.
 - (iii) Mobile vendor licence fees.
 - (b) The following criteria for the COVID-19 Small Business Support category:
 - (i) Recipients must be small businesses (according to the ATO definition) or registered not-for-profit organisations.
 - (ii) The Business Support Package is in effect.
4. Authorises the operation of the Business Support Package until 30 September 2020 or until such earlier time as determined by the Council or the General Manager.

1. Executive Summary

Council has developed a short-term Business Support package. These details of the package are outlined in this report. The package includes both financial and non-financial support. Much of the financial support is in the form of revenue that will be foregone by the Council.

It is estimated that the value of the Business Support Package is approximately \$1 million per month. The package is expected to be in place until 30 June 2020 or until the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The full

implications of COVID-19 on the budget will be assessed in the 3rd Quarter Review and in the development of the draft 2020–21 budget.

2. Introduction/Background

Following a declaration by the World Health Organisation of the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia has undergone a series of social restrictions that have impacted local business significantly. Businesses have been affected in every industry as uncertainty and disruption continue to cause moderate to severe financial hardship across Australia, including Waverley. This is likely to worsen in the months ahead dependent on what happens with particular restrictions.

All levels of government, federal, state and local, are working to support businesses to enable a continuance of vital services to our communities and financial support to protect as many businesses and jobs as possible. At this early stage, Council's priority is to ensure our local business community feel supported, remain informed and know where and how to access advice, funding and practical resources and assistance. In this regard, Council has at the time of writing this report, arranged the following:

- COVID-19 Business Support Group established.
- Weekly meetings with Bondi Chamber of Commerce.
- Linked local business-people with Chamber of Commerce to obtain support.
- Point of contact <business@waverley.nsw.gov.au> established.
- Waverley website updated with Federal and State stimulus packages; outlined below.
- Flyers/newsletter circulated to local businesses on Waverley's support package.
- Creation of support package including a range of measures to assist small businesses that include billing cessation for services that can't be used, flexible billing and extended credit terms and proposed fee waivers. Together these measures are valued at approximately \$1 million per month.

Council is using the Australian Tax Office definition of a small business to try to target its support—a business with a turnover of less than \$10 million per annum.

The Federal and NSW Government stimulus packages announced will support small businesses with a number of initiatives. These include:

Federal Government support

- Boosting cash flow for employers

Up to \$100,000 (previously \$25,000) to eligible small and medium-sized businesses, and not-for-profits (including charities) that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000. Small and medium sized business entities with aggregated annual turnover under \$50 million and that employ workers are eligible.

- Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme

A guarantee of 50% to small and medium enterprise (SME) lenders for new unsecured loans up to the value of \$250,000 to be used for working capital.

- Supporting apprentices and trainees

If you employ an apprentice or trainee, you may be eligible for a wage subsidy of 50 per cent of their wage paid from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2020. You can register for the subsidy from

early April 2020.

- Increasing the Instant Asset write-off

This threshold has been increased from \$30,000 to \$150,000 up to value from 12 March 2020 until 30 June 2020, for new or second-hand assets first used or installed ready for use in this timeframe.

- Backing Business Investment

A time-limited 15-month investment incentive to support business investment and economic growth over the short term, by accelerating depreciation deductions. Deduction of 50% of the cost of an eligible asset on installation, with existing depreciation rules applying to the balance of the asset's cost.

- Temporary relief for financially distressed businesses

A temporary increase to the threshold at which creditors can issue a statutory demand on a company and the time companies have to respond to statutory demands they receive. This includes temporary relief for directors from any personal liability for trading while insolvent.

The Government has in recent days also introduced the Jobkeeper scheme to assist with the retention of jobs and the provision of income to people whose jobs are under threat.

State Government support

A NSW state government stimulus package for business support and jobs was announced on 17 March, which includes:

- \$1.6 billion in tax relief for small businesses to help save jobs as the state braces for the economic impact 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, cafes, restaurants and trades people.

Realise business support

Realise Business is the NSW Government Business Connect provider for Northern, Eastern and Southern Sydney. The Realise team of Advisors can provide general and specialist business advice in all areas of business. Their Advisory team consists of specialists in the areas of business disruption, retail, marketing, digital, finance and hospitality to name a few.

Realise also hold regular webinars and workshops, latest of which was a webinar on Small Business Interruption from the Coronavirus. The Council is seeking their support to provide specialist advice to local businesses that have been affected.

3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Nil.

4. Discussion

Council launched a set of initiatives to support local businesses through the COVID-19 Business Support Group. The group has followed a basic emergency response and recovery framework based on short-, medium- and long-term measures. These are in addition to the ongoing measures announced by Federal and State stimulus packages.

The short-term measures Waverley has packaged were based on discussions with Chamber of Commerce, developments at surrounding Councils and review of issues and enquires Council was receiving for support from local business direct to Council. They are also based in reality, assessing that many businesses will be unable to use or pay for a number of the services Council provides to businesses in the coming months and that billing and collection action by Council is unlikely to be helpful or effective.

To provide context, there are approximately 35,000 business registered in the local government area (LGA). A large proportion of these are small businesses and represented by retail and hospitality, healthcare and social assistance, professional, scientific and technical services and accommodation and food services.

A review of Council issued permits and licences across various areas reflect the extent of support that can be offered.

Table 1. Permits and licences.

Category / group	Description of licence / permit	Quantity
Markets	Roscoe St and Oxford St Mall	2
Mobile Vendors	Vendors operating at Council beaches	7
External Hirers	Individual sole traders hiring Council community venues.	125
Footpath Seating approvals	Trade from footpath on Council managed land throughout LGA. Food and beverage.	147
Community Tenants	Community services operating out of Council buildings with subsidised rent.	19
Commercial & Retail Tenants	Mostly commercial businesses may need to consider Golf Club, Fishing Club and Let's go Surfing Surf School	33
Sporting Clubs	Utilising Council managed sports fields under license	9

Short-term package (0-3 months)

The short-term package represents an immediate response for support during and immediately after the pandemic restriction period. It has been generated on the basis of numerous inputs. The assistance measures range from financial, including adjusting certain fees and charges to reflect current utility of the service levels and accepting deferral of rents, to non-financial with relaxing of certain business requirements. These measures will be reviewed in three months (prior to 30 June 2020) to assess whether they should be extended to a longer time period.

A summary of the support package, including financial and non-financial measures is outlined below:

Table 2. Summary of support package.

Area	Revenue of Council	Proposal	Responsible Team
Financial			
Licence inspections	Less than 1% of revenue	Health, hygiene, licensing and fire safety inspection fees will be waived to all small business in the local government area. Inspections will still be carried out. Measure is a waive across Waverley LGA (No action required by community members)	Compliance
Fitness permits	Less than 1% of revenue	Fee waivers will be applied to outdoor fitness permits and to community markets (such as Bondi Junction Mall, Carl Jeppesen Place). Measure is a waive across Waverley LGA (No action required by community members)	Events
Mobile vending	Less than 1% of revenue	Mobile vendor licence fees will be waived for four months and reviewed in June.	Property & Facilities
Footpath seating		Fees not charged for four months as businesses are unable to trade on the footpath.	Property & Facilities
Markets		Mobile vendor licence fees will not be charged for four months due to the reduced utility of the service. Reviewed in June. (NB Roscoe St market ceases annually in April for winter break).	Property & Facilities
Community tenants		Community tenants that have ceased operating will have their rent suspended for at least 3 months. NB Randwick community transport continuing to operate essential service.	Property & Facilities
Commercial, retail and stratum (small business)		Three month rent suspension for small businesses on case by case basis.	Property & Facilities
Pavilion tenants		No support - Building is closing on 4 May; cafes could be continuing to trade as take away under restrictions. Exception of Lets go Surfing due to inability to trade as a result of beach closure.	Property & Facilities
Commercial, retail and stratum (Corporate)		No support provided. Tenants such as Spotlight, Officeworks, Scentre Management, ISPT lease.	Property & Facilities

Residential leases		Case-by-case basis dependant on the impact of the pandemic on income of tenants.	Property & Facilities
External hirers of community venues		All hirers have ceased operation and no fees are payable. Refunds provided for payments made past last day of operation.	Property & Facilities
Licensed sporting groups		Winter season clubs under license, fees not be applied for period of closure of sporting facilities.	Property & Facilities
On-street parking	15% of revenue	On-street parking in commercial centres will focus on infringements where community safety access is a risk. Measure is a relaxing on infringing (No action required by community members)	Compliance
Commercial waste	2% of revenue	Commercial waste fees and charges to be adjusted to level of service. Customers can also apply for extended credit terms during the pandemic period.	Waste & Cleaning
Council suppliers	Reduces councils cash holdings affecting invest. income	Council will pay its small business suppliers promptly within 15 days payment terms. Measure will be implemented by responsible team (No action required by community member)	Finance
Credit extensions	32% of revenue	Extended credit on certain fees and charges small businesses owe to Council with a suspension of interest charges.	Finance
Hardship policy	Reduces Council's cash holdings affecting invest. income	Financial hardship policy which will review and implement a process for considering applications for other forms of assistance, including deferred rate payments with no interest charge.	Finance
Non-financial			
Take-away trade	N/A	Relaxed conditions of consent for restaurants to enable trade as takeaway-only services.	Compliance
Relaxed hours of operation	N/A	Relaxed operating hours for all supermarkets and grocers to ensure a continual supply and restock of products. (now a Govt. requirement)	Compliance
Public works	N/A	Continuation of Council's current capital works program to support employment in the construction sector.	Major Projects

Buy local	N/A	'Buy Local' publicity campaign via Council communication channels and the Bondi & Districts Chamber of Commerce.	Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce
Procurement	N/A	Council procurement from local suppliers if consistent with statutory procurement regulations and prescribed delegations.	Procurement

Medium-term (3-6 months)

A medium-term package will focus on transitioning from immediate response to recovery phase. It will represent support once the pandemic restrictions begin to be lifted. Medium-term solutions are currently being collated and considered. Some solutions can possibly include grants to businesses or industry groups who can support multiple business needs, and ongoing measures from the most needed short-term package. Council is currently liaising with other Councils, government agencies, and local industry to determine needs in this recovery phase. These and other medium-term solutions are currently being collated and will be outlined in a subsequent report to Council at a later date.

Long-term (6+ months)

Long-term solutions are currently being considered and will be outlined in a subsequent report to Council at a later date.

Fee waivers

Much of the package outlined above can be implemented under the delegated authority of the General Manager. Extended credit terms and the non-charging for services that can no longer be offered or charged for fit within this category. Procurement initiatives and promotion of purchasing locally are also of this nature.

Council approval is required for fee waivers, and proposals of this nature must be placed on public exhibition. Staff have recommended that a special category for small business assistance be created within Council's Fees and Charges to enable fee waiver to be provided for. In practice, assistance will be provided by way of extended credit terms until such time as fee waivers are available or, in the event they are not approved, until such time as it is considered appropriate to seek payment under the extended credit terms.

5. Financial impact statement/Time frame/Consultation

Financial

Initial estimates of the financial support package values it at approximately \$1 million a month through a reduction in a number revenue sources as identified above. However, it should be noted that the financial implication of COVID-19 on the Council, the LGA community and Australia will be significantly greater, requiring a realignment of priorities for all.

Time frame

These short-term measures are expected to cover the period of the pandemic restrictions and the initial impact of the pandemic, i.e. three months. These will be reviewed on or before 30 June 2020. If Council accepts the recommendation they will apply until 30 September unless ceased earlier by Council or the General Manager.

The medium-term measures are expected to cover the initial economic rebuilding between three to six months, while the long-term measures will be extended over a longer period of time depending on the extent of the economic impact and support of state and federal government.

Consultation

This package has been developed in partnership with the Bondi and Districts Chamber of Commerce and based on feedback from a number of businesses. The measures included were circulated to Councillors for comment prior to being announced. The fee waiver proposals will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days.

Future programs in the recovery phases of medium- and long-term will be consulted further based on the changing circumstances and needs of the community.

6. Conclusion

The local business community has been deeply impacted by the pandemic restrictions and is seeking Council help alongside the federal and state government support offered. Council is in a position to offer support through a range of financial and non-financial measures in order to reduce certain business costs and pressures. The proposed short-term measures aid in addressing current business requests for help that the Council have received.

It is noted that some of the assistance to be provided through revenue foregone will be likely to occur due to financial conditions whether or not Council endorses this package and approves fee waivers. Staff hold the view it is preferable for Council to assist proactively than to lose revenue alongside the loss of businesses.

7. Attachments

Nil.