

Thursday 26 March 2020

COUNCIL TO FURTHER ASSIST RATEPAYERS AND BUSINESSES DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

The City of Ryde has announced a range of cash stimulus and financial assistance measures to assist members of the community cope with the significant challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

A \$500,000 Eastwood Small Business Hardship Fund Program will provide support grants of up to \$2,000 for eligible businesses in Eastwood that have experienced economic hardship since the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Australia in January.

Applications for the fund will open next week after the proposal was placed on public exhibition and endorsed by Council. More than 160 submissions were received during public consultation and the majority of respondents provided supportive sentiments.

In response to the requirement for cafes, bars and restaurants to close their dining-in services, Council resolved to take steps to waive fees for outdoor dining over the next six months and also consider all applications for rent deferrals from café and restaurant owners operating from a Council premises.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said the City of Ryde would be the first local government agency to implement a cash stimulus in the local economy as a result of COVID-19.

“Given the magnitude of this crisis, we have made the decision to act quickly and decisively to provide appropriate support to the local economy. This is likely to be the biggest economic challenge they will ever face, and it is clear that our community want Council to support them where possible,” Cllr Laxale said.

“Council staff will get the ball rolling on the Hardship Fund so that we can get these funds directly to local businesses as soon as possible.”

To assist ratepayers, Council will fast-track a process for financial hardship applications to be received in regard to the payments of rates. Council will also review its other fees and charges.

In addition, Council will also waive cancellation fees for swim schools and swimming carnivals that were due to be held at the Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre between January and March this year.

Cllr Laxale said Council will continually try and identify ways to support everyone in the community throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

“These are tough times for everyone, but I can assure you that Council will do everything in its power to provide support throughout the duration of this health and economic crisis.”