

Thursday 28 May 2020

COUNCIL SUPPORTS SMALL BUSINESS DURING COVID-19

More than 230 eligible businesses have received a support grant via the City of Ryde's Eastwood Small Business Hardship Fund.

The \$500,000 Eastwood Small Business Hardship Fund was established by Council to assist businesses that are experiencing significant financial hardship since the first case of coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified in Australia in January.

Eastwood was hit earlier and harder than most small businesses, with disinformation and rumours leading to the usually vibrant shopping precinct resembling a ghost town well before social distancing and lockdown measures were implemented.

Each eligible business that successfully applied for a grant received \$1,906, which represented an equal share of the total funding made available (\$450,000) under the Hardship Fund.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said Council was committed to helping businesses get through this extremely challenging period.

"These support grants will help more than 230 businesses keep their staff employed and keep their doors open," Cllr Laxale said.

"Crucially, as the economic restrictions start to be lifted, these support grants will help businesses get back on the road to recovery faster."

City of Ryde Deputy Mayor, Cllr Simon Zhou, said the support grants have gone to a range of retail businesses as well as restaurants and cafes.

"Council has acted quickly in response to the worsening economic conditions and by creating a simple application process we have ensured the support grants have been distributed to the businesses that really needed them."

In addition to the Hardship Fund support grants, Council also implemented its Small Business Support Package this week to support local businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak and assist in business recovery during the post-pandemic phase.

Under the Small Business Support package more than 40 different fees and charges will be waived for six months. This includes:

- Waiving outdoor dining fees payable by cafes and restaurants
- Waiving administration fees payable by food premises
- Waiving health inspection, health compliance and fire safety certification fees. The inspections will still be undertaken during this time.

In addition, Council will also negotiate financial assistance support for café and restaurant owners operating from Council premises and other commercial tenants of Council. These negotiations will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis to develop a tailored solution for each tenant and may include rent waivers, rent deferrals or lease extensions.