

Monday 12 July 2021

## **RATE RELIEF FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY LOCKDOWN**

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, has announced that he will seek for Council to provide rate relief to those in the community who have been adversely impacted by the current Greater Sydney lockdown.

Options being considered include a rate rebate for those who qualify for financial hardship as well as Council not charging interest or commencing debt recovery on overdue rates.

Cllr Laxale said it was important to act quickly to implement rate assistance to provide support and reassurance to those in the community who have lost their jobs or had to temporarily close their businesses.

“The COVID-19 situation has escalated rapidly in Greater Sydney, with experts now forecasting that we will be in a lockdown situation for weeks longer, possibly months,” Cllr Laxale said.

“While it is essential that we all abide by the stay-at-home orders to protect the health and safety of everyone, the impact this prolonged lockdown will have on businesses and residents who may find themselves out of work will be devastating.”

Last year, Council approved a Financial Hardship Policy which provided approved JobSeeker and JobKeeper applications with a \$400 Council rate rebate.

Cllr Laxale said the latest rate assistance provided would be similar and tied to those eligible for Federal and State Government subsidy programs.

“I understand the NSW Government is working with the Federal Treasury to develop a new assistance package which will be announced later this week, and it would make sense to apply our financial relief to those recipients,” he said.

The latest assistance measures from Council will be included in a report being prepared this month that also outlines the support that City of Ryde will provide local small businesses as well as sporting and community groups that have been adversely impacted by the current Greater Sydney lockdown.

The report will identify and provide information on the financial impact of small business fee waivers and rental relief for Council’s commercial tenants on the 2021/22 budget.

In addition, it will provide costings for fee refunds for sporting and community groups that were unable to use grounds and facilities during the current lockdown.

These measures were also previously implemented by the City of Ryde during the 2020 lockdown.

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