

Meeting Date: Tuesday 24 March 2020
Location: Council Chambers, Level 1A, 1 Pope Street, Ryde
Time: 7.00pm

Council Meetings will be recorded on audio tape for minute-taking purposes as authorised by the Local Government Act 1993. Council Meetings will also be webcast.

NOTICE OF BUSINESS

Item	Page
LATE ITEMS	
14 WAIVER OF FEES - SWIM SCHOOLS AND CARNIVALS, SPORTSGROUNDS AND PARKS, LIBRARY FINES AND NOTICE PERIOD FOR VENUES	1

LATE ITEMS

14 WAIVER OF FEES - SWIM SCHOOLS AND CARNIVALS, SPORTSGROUNDS AND PARKS, LIBRARY FINES AND NOTICE PERIOD FOR VENUES

Report prepared by: Senior Coordinator - Social Development & Capacity Building
File No.: GRP/15/1/8 - BP20/234

REPORT SUMMARY

At its meeting of 11 February 2020, Council resolved the following:

- (a) *That Council waive the cancellation fee specified in Council's adopted "Fees and Charges" for swim schools and swimming carnivals for the period January to March 2020 inclusive: and*
- (b) *Waive the notice period under Council's Venue Hire Application, for cancellations for the period January to March 2020 inclusive.*

As per Section 356 of the Local Government Act (1993), the resolutions were placed on public exhibition for 28 days. Two (2) submissions were received specifically in support of waiving the cancellation fees.

Since the Council meeting of 11 February 2020 the COVID-19 crisis continues to escalate. Therefore, it is imperative that Council continues to implement measures to support the community through this difficult period. As a result, it is recommended that the period that the cancellation fees and the notice period is waived, as specified above, is extended from 01 April to 30 June 2020.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the following additional adopted "Fees and Charges" are waived following an exhibition period of 28 days with a further report being brought back to a Council meeting to determine the resolution following the public exhibition period:-

- (a) The cancellation fee for sporting fields or parks.
- (b) Library fines associated with the late return or loss of items.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Waive Cancellation Fees and Notice Period January - March 2020:-
 - (a) That Council adopts the resolution to waive the cancellation fee specified in Council's adopted "Fees and Charges" for swim schools and swimming carnivals for the period January to March 2020 inclusive.
 - (b) That Council adopts the resolution to waive the notice period under Council's Venue Hire Application, for cancellations for the period January to March 2020 inclusive.

ITEM 14 (continued)

2. That the following proposed resolution (as identified in (2) (a), (b), (c) and (d) below) be exhibited for a minimum period of 28 days with a further report being brought back to a Council meeting to determine the resolution following the public exhibition period:-
 - (a) That Council waive the cancellation fee specified in Council's adopted "Fees and Charges" for swim schools and swimming carnivals for the period 01 April to 30 June 2020 inclusive; and
 - (b) That Council waive the cancellation fee specified in Council's adopted "Fees and Charges" for sporting fields or parks for the period 01 March to 30 June 2020; and
 - (c) That Council waive the notice period required under Council's Venue Hire Application, for cancellations for the period 01 April to 30 June 2020 inclusive; and
 - (d) That Council temporarily waives the following library fines associated with the late return or loss of items for the period 1 April to 30 June 2020, as outlined in Council's *Fees and Charges 2019-2020*.
 - (a) Daily overdue charge
 - (b) "Fast Reads" overdue charge
 - (c) Replacement processing charge

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

Report Prepared By:

Sue Verhoek
Senior Coordinator - Social Development & Capacity Building

Report Approved By:

Lindsay Godfrey
Manager - Community and Ranger Services

Angela Jones-Blayney
Director - Customer and Community Services

ITEM 14 (continued)**Discussion**

The situation regarding the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, continues to progress in NSW. Many organisations and community groups, venues and communities are being impacted in the short term and are expecting longer term effects. Many community activities, programs and events continue to be cancelled or postponed and it is anticipated that further disruption will occur.

With the government's announcement of restrictions to indoor gatherings of 100 plus people there have been a significant number of hirers of Council's community facilities and venues that have cancelled their bookings. Further measures on indoor gatherings of fewer than 100 people are currently being considered.

As the coronavirus situation continues to unfold, the impact is being felt hard by community sporting clubs, with many of the local community sports clubs cancelling training and suspending their seasons. Events and gatherings at local parks are also being cancelled.

The current COVID-19 situation has led to a review of library fees and charges, and this report recommends that several of these fees be waived on a temporary basis in order to provide support to the community through this period.

Library books (and other items such as DVDs, CDs and toys) are a shared community resource. Fines are commonly used by Councils as a mechanism to encourage the return of library items. At City of Ryde borrowing rights are suspended when library items are overdue, and fines begin to accumulate for each day that the item is overdue. If an item is lost, accumulated library fines are waived and the borrower is charged for the purchase cost of the item plus a processing charge which covers staff time and resources in the replacement. These charges are formally outlined in Council's adopted *Fees and Charges 2019-2020*.

The current escalation of the COVID-19 crisis means that borrowers of library items may have limited ability to return items. In order to ease community anxiety on this issue it is recommended that all library fees for overdue items be temporarily waived for the period 1 April to 30 June 2020.

It is further recommended that this measure be extended to the replacement processing charge associated with lost items. Members of the community link these charges in their understanding of library fines. It is likely that the current situation with COVID-19 will lead to disruption of day to day routines, and there is an increased risk that library items could be lost. This report recommends that the processing charge be temporarily waived, but that the replacement cost charge is retained. It is important to retain this aspect of the fee to as it is a key measure that encourages borrowers to take care of Council's library books.

ITEM 14 (continued)

The recommendation to temporarily waive the daily overdue charge, the “Fast Reads” overdue charge and the replacement processing charge applies to all items that become due on or after 1 April 2020 up to 30 June 2020. It will not apply to items that become due or are lost before that date.

Financial Implications

The anticipated financial impact of customers requesting the waiver of fees is considered to be marginal and can be absorbed into the relevant department’s base budgets.