

Wednesday 1 April 2020

## APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR SMALL BUSINESS HARDSHIP FUND

Applications have opened for the Eastwood Small Business Hardship Fund, with eligible businesses encouraged to apply for support grants of up to \$2,000 made available via the fund.

The \$500,000 Eastwood Small Business Hardship Fund has been established to assist businesses that have experienced severe economic hardship as a result of misinformation and rumours being spread since the first case of coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified in Australia in January.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said Council moved quickly to open applications for the hardship fund given how bad the economic situation has become for many businesses.

“With the support of the community, Council has established this hardship fund to support businesses that have ground to a halt due to the COVID-19 outbreak,” Cllr Laxale said.

“These funds will help small businesses in Eastwood pay staff and keep their businesses operational during this difficult time. Residents tell us that they love our town centres. This is one of many measures we have put in to ensure they survive during the COVID-19 crisis.”

More information about the Eastwood Small Business Hardship Fund, including the eligibility criteria and the application form, is available at [www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/ESBHF](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/ESBHF).

Applications are open until 30 April 2020.

In addition to the hardship fund, the City of Ryde is also proposing a range of other financial measures to assist local businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak. Over the next six months, these include:

- Waiving outdoor dining fees payable by cafes and restaurants
- Waiving health inspection and compliance fees. The inspections will still be undertaken during this time
- Waiving fire safety certification fees
- Waiving filming application fees
- Considering all applications for rent deferrals submitted by café and restaurant owners operating from a Council premise.

These additional measures are now on public exhibition until 28 April. For more information and to provide a submission visit the Have Your Say section of the City of Ryde website.

“As the COVID-19 outbreak develops, Council will continually try and identify ways to support everyone in the community throughout this crisis,” Cllr Laxale said.

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