

Monday 4 May 2020

COUNCIL TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RELIEF TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

Approved Jobseeker and Jobkeeper applicants will be eligible for a \$400 council rate rebate as part of the City of Ryde's new Financial Hardship Policy. In addition, eligible pensioners will receive an extra \$150 voluntary pensioner subsidy to supplement the \$250 statutory pensioner subsidy they already receive.

The City of Ryde endorsed the new policy at last week's Council meeting as part of its continued efforts to support the community impacted from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The policy aims to simplify the application process that is required for someone to be assessed for financial hardship.

In addition to the \$400 rate rebate, which will be provided as part of the November 2020 rates instalment, the policy also allows Council to not charge interest or commence debt recovery on overdue rates for those who qualify for financial hardship.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said Council has moved quickly to provide appropriate support to the community.

"This policy ensures that the bulk of support during the COVID-19 crisis goes to people who need it most. Council's strong financial position means we can assist those in need during this crisis, and where we can help, we will do so," Cllr Laxale said.

Council has always provided assistance to anyone in financial difficulty so ratepayers who are not a pensioner or an approved Jobseeker or Jobkeeper applicant can continue to provide access to rate relief via a mutually acceptable payment plan.

The Financial Hardship Policy is the latest support measure endorsed by the City of Ryde in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition to the financial rate relief for City of Ryde ratepayers (residents and businesses), Council 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 due to social distancing restrictions
- Waiving health inspection and compliance fees, however, these inspections will still be undertaken during this time for the safety of the public
- Waiving fire safety certification application fees even though these applications will still need to be submitted to Council
- Waiving filming fees on an application
- Considering all applications for rent deferrals submitted by café and restaurant owners operating from a Council premise.

"As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, Council will continue to support everyone in the community to get through this crisis," Cllr Laxale added.

Anyone seeking to apply for assistance or would like more information should go to www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/hardship and make an application to Council. Ratepayers who do not have access to the internet to assist staff access their application can call Customer Service on 9952 8222.