

Thursday 29 October 2020

COUNCIL EXTENDS RATE REBATE, COMMITS TO MORE COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR TOWN CENTRE BUSINESSES

The City of Ryde will extend the one-off \$400 council rate rebate for approved JobSeeker and JobKeeper applicants to March next year as part of Council's ongoing support for those within the community impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The extension means JobSeeker and JobKeeper applicants will now have until 31 March 2021 to apply for the rate rebate.

The one-off \$400 rate rebate was first endorsed by Council in April this year as part of a new COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy with applications initially closing on 30 September 2020.

The extension of the rate rebate – endorsed by Council this week – recognises the ongoing financial struggles some within the community are still experiencing while also aligning with the Federal Government's extension of the JobSeeker and JobKeeper package.

In addition to the rate rebate, the COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy also allows Council to not charge interest or commence debt recovery on overdue rates for those who qualify for financial hardship.

Since the policy came into effect, more than 320 applications for financial hardship have been registered, amounting to almost \$600,000 in deferred rates payments.

Council has also committed to providing further assistance to local businesses, with a focus on those in town centres.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began Council has waived \$112,000 in fees for businesses and \$76,000 in deferred lease payments for commercial tenants of Council.

Building on this ongoing support, Council will develop new small business initiatives with the input of each local Chamber of Commerce. These new initiatives will complement programs Council has already launched such as the Shop Local: Love Your Community campaign which is encouraging residents to shop locally through various promotions and offers.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said the COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy shows Council remains committed to providing targeted help for those in need during the COVID-19 recession.

"This week's unanimous resolution endorses our plan to continue to support local ratepayers, while helping grow businesses in our vibrant and much-loved town centres" Cllr Laxale said.

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