



CITY OF HOBART

# **AGENDA**

## **Council Meeting**

### **Open Portion**

**Monday, 23 August 2021**

**at 5:00 pm**

**Council Chamber, Town Hall**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM**

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- 21. COVID-19 Update - Business Support and Engagement..... 3**

**The Chief Executive Officer reports:**

“That in accordance with the provisions of Part 2 Regulation 8(6) of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015*, these supplementary matters are submitted for the consideration of the Committee.

Pursuant to Regulation 8(6), I report that:

- (a) information in relation to the matter was provided subsequent to the distribution of the agenda;
- (b) the matter is regarded as urgent; and
- (c) advice is provided pursuant to Section 65 of the Act.”

**21. COVID-19 Update - Business Support and Engagement**  
**File Ref: F21/82756**

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Memorandum of the Chief Executive Officer of 20 August 2021.

Delegation: Council



City of **HOBART**

## MEMORANDUM: COUNCIL

### COVID-19 Update - Business Support and Engagement

#### Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek the support of the Council to develop a local economic package to support businesses who continue to be impacted by ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Background

Elected Members will recall that during the initial wave of the COVID-19 in 2020, the City developed a suite of measures to support our community through the economic and social impacts of pandemic. These included:

- Rent relief for tenants of city-owned buildings;
- Extension of the Council's Hardship Policy to include rate remissions and rate postponements;
- Deferment of penalties and interest for the fourth instalment of 2019/20 rates until 30 June;
- A freeze on general rates and most fees and charges during 2020/21;
- Quick response grant programs to support businesses; creative industries and activities that built capacity, strength and resilience in the Hobart community;
- Extension of time limits and grace periods applying to metered parking spots, closures and reduced hours of operation for City car parks and free and / or discounted parking for Royal Hobart Hospital, other DHHS, Ambulance Tasmania, SES, Tas Police and Australian Defence Force personnel;
- Refunded fees and charges (or credits) on cancellations of bookings;
- Occupation licences for outdoor dining were waived for the balance of the 2019/20 financial year and food licensing fees were waived for six months;
- A dedicated online store for Salamanca Market stallholders.

*Resilient Hobart* was also developed to help Hobart communities respond to the pandemic, providing support as well as access to information and advice which is ongoing. *Resilient Hobart* is made up of:

- *Hobart Together* which connects people with services, advice around staying healthy mentally and physically, ideas to keep you creative and connected and information on how to access grants programs and other support;
- *Resilient Hobart Community* which provides valuable information and further resources for the community to access;
- *Resilient Hobart Business* which connects local business owners to important information, resources and support.

As part of the City's response to support business, we contacted over 650 businesses in Hobart to see how they were coping with restrictions and the economic downturn. Many businesses adapted their business models, using the crisis as an opportunity to reset and connect with their customers on a new level. However, others were unable to trade at the time of contact, or were relying on government support to operate.

### **Discussion**

It has become apparent with the current situation of ongoing border closures that some areas of the business community are continuing to struggle, particularly in the accommodation and food services, creative industries and arts and recreation sectors.

In order to identify how the City can best support affected businesses, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has met with a number of stakeholders to better understand the extent of the problem and what role the City can play.

Meetings have been held with the Waterfront Business Community and representatives from the Department of State Growth and next week the Hobart Economic Recovery Business Consultative Group will meet to discuss further support. The Hobart Economic Recovery Business Consultative Group was an action out of the *COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Framework and Action Plan 2020-22* which outlines how the City is approaching economic immediate and medium-term recovery from COVID-19.

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 on Australia's capital cities cannot be underestimated. Prior to the pandemic, capital cities accounted for 69 per cent of Australian GDP and 69 per cent of Australian businesses. Our cities have felt the impact of declining employment, plateauing office occupancy rates, reduction in international and domestic tourists and delays in the return of international students and whilst Hobart has not experienced this on the scale of Melbourne and Sydney it is obvious that some sectors of the Hobart business community are finding things difficult.

In response to COVID-19, it is proposed that the City launch a local economic package to support city businesses, including grants, rent and rate relief to businesses that have and continue to be impacted by border closures.

### **Proposal**

It is proposed that our local economic package include:

- One-on-one advice and support through a new Business Concierge Service. In preparation for this, officers will update its Business Concierge discussion paper to establish the best pathway to establish this service;
- Provision of rent relief in Council-owned and managed buildings;
- Suspension of fees for occupation licences for outdoor dining;
- Reduced registration fees for food businesses;
- Facilitating business support round tables focusing on impacted industries such as tourism and hospitality and the creative industries;

- Partnering with the State Government to provide one-off grants to support small businesses not eligible for the most recent round of State and Federal Government grants;
- Review parking arrangements across the city to support business affected by border restrictions;
- Continue to explore the feasibility of a weekend ferry service from Bellerive to Hobart to support Tasmania's Own Market and our waterfront hospitality and retail sector;
- Commence a comprehensive return to the Hobart CBD campaign and work with key industry leaders to encourage their staff to return to our CBD offices to ensure support for city traders.

The City recently approved the new business grant stream 'Local Business for a better Community' which is currently available to businesses. The total amount available for this grant is \$56,000. Given the rapidly changing economic environment it is proposed the City increase its budget allocation up to an additional \$100,000 for an additional COVID-19 recovery grants scheme. The budget for this program can be reallocated from the current major events sponsorship budget allocation. If the Council is supportive of the CEO developing a local economic package, it is proposed the CEO be delegated the authority to develop the additional grant program and its guidelines.

The City has a key role to help support affected local business as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The range of measures recommended in this report gives the City the capacity to do this.

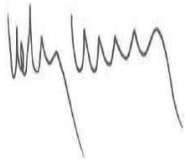
## **RECOMMENDATION**

### ***That:***

- 1. The Chief Executive Officer be delegated the authority to develop a local economic package to support business who continue to be impacted by border closures.***
- 2. The local economic package, include, but not be limited to, the following components:***
  - (a) One-on-one advice and support through a new Business Concierge Service***
  - (b) Provision of rent relief in Council-owned and managed buildings;***
  - (c) Suspend fees for occupation licences for outdoor dining for affected businesses;***
  - (d) Reduce registration fees for food businesses;***
  - (e) Facilitate business support round tables focusing on impacted industries such as tourism and hospitality and the creative industries;***

- (f) Partner with the State Government to provide one-off grants to support small businesses not eligible for the most recent round of State and Federal Government grants;**
  - (g) Review parking arrangements across the city to support business affected by border restrictions;**
  - (h) Continue to explore the feasibility of a weekend ferry service from Bellerive to Hobart to support Tasmania's Own Market and our waterfront hospitality and retail sector;**
  - (i) Commence a comprehensive return to the Hobart CBD campaign and work with key industry leaders to encourage their staff to return to our CBD offices to ensure support for city traders.**
- 3. The Council approve an increased budget allocation of up \$100,000, in addition to the existing \$56,000, for additional grants to assist impacted business. The program to be funded from the major events sponsorship budget.**

*As signatory to this report, I certify that, pursuant to Section 55(1) of the Local Government Act 1993, I hold no interest, as referred to in Section 49 of the Local Government Act 1993, in matters contained in this report.*



Kelly Grigsby  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Date: 20 August 2021  
File Reference: F21/82756