

5.5. COVID-19 RELIEF MEASURES YEAR END 30 JUNE 2020

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DEPARTMENT Finance and Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Council resolve to endorse the proposed Covid-19 relief provisions for the year ended 30 June 2020;**
- 2. Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to administer such relief provisions; and**
- 3. Council note the likely impact of Covid-19 on the operating result for the year ended 30 June 2020**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council Officers wish to propose a suite of Covid-19 relief measures to assist the Douglas Shire Community, whilst informing Council of the likely impact of the pandemic on the Operating Result for the year ended 30 June 2020.

BACKGROUND

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on many businesses and individuals in the Douglas Shire, particularly the tourism sector. Council wishes to offer various measures of relief to assist in supporting affected community members for the period up to 30 June 2020.

Further measures will be considered by Council during the preparation of the Budget for 2020/2021.

COMMENT

The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Operating Result for 30 June 2020 is being tracked and forecast. This includes proposed relief measures and the impact on revenue and expenditure due to lockdown measures.

PROPOSAL

Council Officers proposed relief measures for the year ended 30 June 2020:

1. Waive interest on rates and water from 24 March 2020 to 30 June 2020 est \$42k
2. Remove rates dishonor admin fees from 24 March 2020 to 30 June 2020 est \$1k
3. Pensioner remission application dates extended to 30 June 2020 (usually only permitted in the first three months of the rating period)
4. Credit or refund all outdoor dining fees 23 March 2020 to 30 June 2020 est \$21k

5. Refund all venue hire fees where cancelled due to Covid-19 est \$25k
6. Rent relief – waive rent for all Council commercial tenants suffering financial stress or hardship due to Covid-19, as defined by their eligibility for the Commonwealth Government’s Jobkeeper program (excluding peppercorn leases, Government entities) for the period 1 April – 30 June 2020 est \$70k
7. Wonga Beach Caravan Park income relief 1 April – 30 June 2020 est \$15k

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The negative financial impact of the above relief measures on the Operating Result for the year ended 30 June 2020 is estimated to be \$174k.

The total Covid-19 related negative impact on the Operating Result for year ended 30 June 2020 (including the above relief measures) is estimated to be \$1.3m.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Covid-19 pandemic has and will continue to have a negative impact on Council Operating Results. The Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer and Management Team will continue to monitor and manage financial and other risks as they are identified.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The Covid-19 pandemic will have a negative impact on the economic sustainability of Douglas Shire Council and may impact sustainability ratios. This will be closely managed by Council and mitigated where possible.

Environmental: Nil

Social: Nil

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

Theme 5 - Robust Governance and Efficient Service Delivery

Strong governance and financial management are the foundations of the way in which Council will conduct its business and implement the initiatives of the Corporate Plan.

Goal 1 - We will conduct Council business in an open and transparent manner with strong oversight and open reporting.

Goal 3 - We will make sound financial decisions by ensuring robust strategic planning, financial management and reporting.

Goal 4 - We will work with our communities to ensure they are informed, empowered and supported so that they are resilient to the impacts of disaster events. Through our leadership and capabilities we will plan, prepare, respond and recover from events so as to minimise the impact on people, property, the environment, and our economic stability.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

Advocate	Council makes representation on behalf of the community on important issues, funding opportunities, projects and programs. Council will use its influence to seek the best outcomes for the community.
Regulator	Council has a number of statutory obligations detailed in numerous regulations and legislative Acts. Council also makes local laws to ensure that the Shire is well governed. In fulfilling its role as regulator, Council will utilise an outcomes-based approach that balances the needs of the community with social and natural justice.

CONSULTATION

Internal:	Chief Executive Officer, Management Team, Finance Team
External:	Nil

ATTACHMENTS

Nil