



Media Release

Wednesday 22 April 2020

No rates' increase and economic support from Brighton Council

BRIGHTON Council has agreed not to increase rates for the next financial year as part of a comprehensive community-based support package to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.

Meeting remotely, the Council also approved moving back the rate instalment dates to assist ratepayers in managing their finances and to provide rent relief on Council-owned buildings where tenants are experiencing financial hardship.

Mayor Tony Foster said the meeting also supported the actions taken by Council management in its immediate response to the current emergency.

This included the suspension of debt collection and accumulation of interest on outstanding rates until June 30, 2020, allowing flexibility on the payment of rates and other debts if requested. Council will also be immediately paying invoices from small and local businesses.

Cr Foster said the decision to hold rates to a zero increase hopefully would provide some relief for ratepayers in these challenging times. Any other fees and charges, if increased, will only rise in line with the CPI.

“We appreciate that many people are worried, not only about the impact of COVID-19, but also the financial implications of the current shutdown and we are determined to do what we can to help.

“As well as no rates' increase and the rent relief on Council-owned buildings, we'll also refocus our community grants program to support local businesses and not-for-profit groups recovery or conversion to the digital environment or more efficient business practices until 30 June 2021.

“We'll also favourably support loan guarantees, subject to Council approval, for community groups where current financial hardship is demonstrated, where the long-term operating position is stable.”

Cr Foster said as far as possible, the economic support package was designed to assist ratepayers, the local community, community organisations and businesses adversely affected by COVID-19.

“We are determined to play our part, along with the State and Federal Government's to ensure that our community can negotiate the current situation and recover when the emergency passes.

“Brighton Council commends the leadership shown at this time by Premier Peter Gutwein and the combined response from the local government sector, that is helping Tasmanians to navigate through these unprecedented times.

“While we have closed our offices, Council is still working and observing all social distancing measures. Brighton Council is contactable by telephone and email and is meeting remotely to support and assist our community,” Cr Foster said.

Ends.

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