
ORDINARY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: MAYORAL MINUTE - COVID-19 RESPONSE

FROM: The Mayor

TRIM #: 20/111453

The past few months have seen communities across Australia and the world suffering the impacts of COVID-19, during one of the world's most horrific pandemics.

People have lost their lives, their jobs, their livelihoods and their future is unclear, as new measures are put in place across the nation to stop the spread of COVID-19.

With the health and wellbeing of our staff and community paramount, Camden Council acted swiftly, by implementing a number of measures and changes to our programs, events and services in response to the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation. These include the:

- Postponement of all Council-run events, programs and activities;
- Temporary suspension of all kerbside pickups;
- Temporary closure of Council's Customer Service Centre and hubs;
- Temporary closure of public and Council-owned facilities, community centres and halls;
- Temporary closure of all playgrounds, youth play spaces, skate parks and outdoor gyms;
- Operating our animal holding facility by appointment only;
- Signage installed at all our parks encouraging community to maintain social distancing and practice good hygiene; and
- Postponement all non-essential external services and inspections.

Despite changes to Council's service delivery, the successful implementation of our business continuity plans has meant our essential services such as waste, customer relations, construction and maintenance services have continued to run.

Council has introduced two digital campaigns, focused on the mental health and wellbeing of our community and supporting our local businesses during this difficult time.

The #camdenlove campaign celebrates and promotes the acts of kindness happening across our local government area, with the #camdenbought campaign encouraging our residents to shop local and support our local businesses who are still open.

Another fantastic initiative is our Hey Neighbour! cards, which provide an opportunity for our residents to let their neighbours and vulnerable members of our community know they are there to help them if needed.

Unfortunately, the social distancing measures that are so crucial for public health and slowing down the spread of COVID-19, is severely hurting the livelihoods of many in our community.

This is why, over the past month, the Councillors and I have been working collaboratively with Council Officers to develop a comprehensive community and business support package which we will consider at the next Council meeting.

As an immediate relief to business and residents utilising council services, I am proposing that Council waive non-statutory fees for an initial period of six months, pertaining to the following service areas:

- Fees associated with fire safety certificates and health inspections, including food shop inspections;
- Fees associated with cemetery services;
- Fines associated with our library services;
- Fees associated with outdoor dining; and
- Fees associated with companion animal release.

The above measures will be the first of a number of financial support measures Council has developed to ensure our community and businesses receive the financial relief and support that is very much needed right now.

We are in unprecedented times. I understand this has been a really unsettling time for some residents and I know there's a lot of fear, worry and anxiety in our community.

I want our community to rest assured that Council is doing everything in our power to keep them safe and informed.

I'd like to take a moment to thank Council staff for their extraordinary work navigating this ever-changing situation. I have full confidence in the approach we have taken to tackle this issue.

As this situation progresses, there is no doubt things may change further and the way Council offers its services may look different again.

I would like to thank our community for doing the right thing and I encourage you to continue checking in on your friends and family. Together we will get through this.

RECOMMENDED

That Council:

- i. note the above information;**
- ii. adopt the immediate measures as outlined in this Mayoral Minute; and**
- iii. delegate to the General Manager or his nominee the authority to implement the waiving of the associated fees.**