



## 4.2 COVID 19 - COUNCIL SUPPORT OPTIONS

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** CHRIS CARROLL, GENERAL MANAGER, CUSTOMER AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval to provide transparent, effective, efficient and affordable support to our community and economy, to enhance resilience to and recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- 1.2 Inform Council of the support being provided to Council staff, whose roles may be impacted through service level reductions as a result of COVID-19.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This paper identifies tiered levels of support that Council can provide to members of our community, community organisations as well as local traders and other important sectors of the City of Port Phillip economy.
- 2.2 If approved, this will allow implementation of agreed support options including development of policies, procedures, communication materials, administrative arrangements, expenditure tracking and organisational and community reporting.
- 2.3 It is estimated the immediate measures will cost approximately \$2.5m in the remaining period to 30 June 2020. The financial impact for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 will be assessed based on how the pandemic evolves and is resolved and will be the subject of further discussions with Council through the 2020/21 budget process.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Approves the immediate emergency relief measures for members of the community as outlined in Attachment 1 and notes that further work will be undertaken on other options for consideration and that these will be brought back to Council at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 3.2 Approves the immediate emergency relief measures for community organisations as outlined in Attachment 1 and notes that further work will be undertaken on other



options for consideration and that these will be brought back to Council at the earliest possible opportunity.

- 3.3 Approves the immediate economic relief measures as outlined in Attachment 1 and notes that further work will be undertaken on other options for consideration and that these will be brought back to Council at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 3.4 Delegates to the CEO the ability to amend the above immediate emergency measures in response to announcements from other tiers of Government to ensure that there is no duplication of support provided.
- 3.5 Delegates to the CEO the ability to develop eligibility criteria in line with the overarching principles outlined in this report.
- 3.6 Notes the support being provided to City of Port Phillip employees where service level changes are required in response to COVID-19.

#### **4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES**

- 4.1 The coronavirus pandemic is forecast to have significant impact on our community, businesses and our organisation.
- 4.2 We are already starting to see some of the impacts from service closures, self-isolation, restrictions on travel and gatherings, physical distancing, and panic buying.
- 4.3 There will be increased incidence of illness and fatalities, significant service disruption, large financial and economic losses, increases in under and unemployment, and business failures.
- 4.4 The Federal and State Governments have a leading role to play in reducing and managing the impacts.
- 4.5 In addition to its normal support provided to the community and local business the Council will need to play its part in helping deal with this crisis.
- 4.6 At the same time, we must maintain financial sustainability to enable us to continue to provide critical services and infrastructure.
- 4.7 The principles that have been used in developing the emergency relief measures contained in this paper include: -
  - 4.7.1 There must be confidence that the support will be effective in providing the intended relief and increasing capacity to withstand and recover from the pandemic.
  - 4.7.2 Support should be targeted towards those that need it most. It should address specific gaps in support rather than duplicate or substitute support that should be provided by others.

## SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL – 25 MARCH 2020



- 4.7.3 Council must ensure financial sustainability in the maintenance of community assets and key services to the community. Support must be affordable.
  - 4.7.4 Initially focus on low / no cost support options including making people aware of existing support and advocating to other agencies and bodies on their behalf.
  - 4.7.5 Consider more complex and costly forms of support in the context of the overall budget for FY21 and FY21 Mid-year review, to both account for the context at that time and ensure support is financially sustainable. i.e. 3 months plus 6 months plus 6 months.
  - 4.7.6 Support should be simple to understand and easy to administer with limited costs to Council and those needing support.
  - 4.7.7 Support should be transparent, defensible, and distributed fairly based on the role of Council, support available from others, risk, and cost.
- 4.8 The various support recommended to be provided by Council is outlined in **Attachment 1** as well as information on support that is available from other tiers of Government (publicly announced at this point in time). It is recommended that as further information becomes available on support available from the Federal and Victorian Governments that there be the ability to vary Council support to ensure that this is well targeted and helps to fill gaps in other support.
- 4.9 With respect to the proposal to provide commercial, community and sporting organisation rent, levy and rating relief, the proposed eligibility criteria is as follows: -
- 4.9.1 Organisations must be able to demonstrate:
    - a significant financial impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
    - that they have taken reasonable action to mitigate the impacts on their business;
    - they are taking reasonable action to support staff.
  - 4.9.2 Organisations must not have an overdue debt or reporting obligation to Council from the period prior to 1 February 2020 (the period prior to COVID-19).
  - 4.9.3 For Tenants and Licensees that have sub-tenants such as the St Kilda Marina they must pass on the same or greater support to sub tenancies.
  - 4.9.4 Further criteria and a process will be established by the CEO to ensure support is targeted towards those who need it most while ensuring simplicity, efficiency and speed of delivery.

## 5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 In the urgent circumstances officers and ELT have considered recommendations anticipating concerns of their stakeholders and having received initial queries from our community and local organisations.



**6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The recommendations are designed to mitigate risks to our community and local economy arising from the impact the pandemic and ensure Council provides an appropriate coordinated response having regard to initiatives from the Victorian State and Federal Governments.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

7.1 It is estimated the measures will cost Council approximately \$2.5m in the remaining period to 30 June 2020.

7.2 The financial impact for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 will be assessed based on how the pandemic evolves and is resolved and will be reflected in the budget for next financial year.

**8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

8.1 There are no environmental impacts for Council.

**9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 The initiatives proposed have been designed in a way to have a positive impact on the community.

**10. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST**

10.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

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**ATTACHMENTS 1. Emergency Relief Options**