

Shire of Morawa

COVID-19 Community Recovery Package

Friday 3 April 2020



Overview

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic infection rate has escalated world-wide over the last few weeks. This has resulted in considerable and serious economic and social impacts on communities.

Within the Shire's financial and operational capacities, the Shire has taken significant steps to review its services to avoid face to face contact. These actions seek to protect both staff and the community and prevent the potential spread of infection from the COVID-19 virus. In addition, the Shire recognises the need to provide additional support to the community, particularly our most vulnerable members, and notes that there could be a significant increase in the number of people falling into this category. It is possible that this support may be required for a significant period of time.

This *COVID-19 Community Recovery Package* has been prepared to provide a range of support mechanisms to assist the community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Identification of those in need

Council recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has, and will continue to, affect every community member in some way. It is noted that both the Federal and State Governments continue to announce measures to support people. For example, Federal Government and banks are now both offering relief packages for business and personal customers.

Within the financial and operational capacity of the Shire, Council seeks to support these measures by planning to support our businesses that endure hardship due to the COVID 19 Virus. Council has resolved at its Special Meeting held Thursday 2 April, 2020, to responsibly use reserve funds to enhance the ability of Morawa businesses to continue to operate and provide critical services to our community. This funding will not replace, nor duplicate, funding already provisioned to businesses and organisations from the Federal and State Governments. This funding will be an additional and fast way for Council to support Morawa businesses that operate and employ people within our community.

The Shire will also assist community members to access the critical help that they might need if they have compromised health, income and safety concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Council has authorised the Chief Executive Officer to redeploy Shire Staff with agencies in community support and recovery roles. Council and the Shire acknowledges the absolute value and commitment of our staff in these troubling times.

Council's commitments through the Community Recovery Package

Funding

Council will establish a *COVID-19 Emergency Response Reserve* of \$190,000. This represents 10% of 2019/20 rates revenue and will be sourced from existing Shire reserves. The COVID-19 Reserve will be administered by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the President.

The nature and extent of the COVID-19 pandemic is changing daily and the full impact of COVID-19 on our community is difficult to predict. The administration of the funding will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer. These decisions will take into account government directives, evolving issues on a national and local level, as well as any other relevant factors relating to the situation as it unfolds.

Rates, Fees and Charges

- Nil Increase for Rates for the 2020/2021 financial year;
- Waiving of all non-regulatory or externally imposed Shire fees and statutory charges for the period from 2 April 2020 until 30 June 2020; and
- Waiving of penalty interest charged on outstanding rates for the period from 2 April 2020 until 30 June 2020; and
- Continuing flexible payment plans for those in vulnerable situations or experiencing financial hardship; and
- Providing specific support for Morawa's operating Commercial Traders as follows:
 - Where practical, the Shire will seek to immediately purchase goods and/or services from these operating traders; and
 - Where an operating Commercial Trader is still to pay their 2019/20 Rates (either totally or partially) and upon evidence of hardship due to COVID-19, the Shire may reduce the overall Rates cost by the value of their last quarter 2019/20 Rates Notice; or
 - Where an operating Commercial Trader has paid their 2019/20 Rates, and upon evidence of hardship due to COVID-19, the Shire may reimburse the value of their last quarter 2019/20 Rates Notice or alternatively, discount the value for the 2020/21 Rates.

In Kind Support

- For the Morawa-Perenjori Health Service and Morawa Police service workers, the Shire will make available accommodation units at the Morawa Caravan Park at no cost; and
- Shire staff to support recovery activities within the community where possible.

Community Care

Quick access to Federal and State Agencies to assist vulnerable people and those most affected by the pandemic. The Shire's services may include, but not be limited to, the following types of support:

- Where sought, direct assistance to the Morawa Perenjori Health Service and Morawa Police in the form of re-directing Shire Staff to support required tasks;

- Programs that connect community members to Agency support; and
- Enhancing people's access to critical information; resources; mental health and counselling services.

Review of Community Recovery Package

The Shire of Morawa's *COVID-19 Community Recovery Package* is intended to support the community over the next 3 months. However, there are many unknowns and this package may need to be reviewed and restructured as the pandemic continues to ensure that it is effectively meeting the needs of the community.

Questions about the Shire of Morawa's Community Recovery Package

If you have any queries or suggestions regarding the Shire of Morawa's Community Recovery Package then please email us using covid19recovery@morawa.wa.gov.au or give us a call on 9971 1204.

A centralised hub of COVID-19 information and resources, including full extract of the *Shire of Morawa's COVID-19 Community Recovery Package* is available via the Shire's homepage at www.morawa.wa.gov.au