

# AGENDA.

## Special Council Meeting

21 April 2020

### Notice of Meeting

Mayor and Councillors

The next Special Council Meeting of the City of South Perth Council will be held on Tuesday 21 April 2020 as an eMeeting commencing at 5.30pm.

The purpose of the meeting is to consider the City of South Perth's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.



GEOFF GLASS  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

17 April 2020

# Acknowledgement of Country

Kaartdjinin Nidja Nyungar Whadjuk Boodjar Koora Nidja Djining Noonakoort kaartdijin wangkiny, maam, gnarnk and boordier Nidja Whadjul kura kura.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of this land, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and their Elders past and present.

## Our Guiding Values



## Disclaimer

The City of South Perth disclaims any liability for any loss arising from any person or body relying on any statement, discussion, recommendation or decision made during this meeting.

Where an application for an approval, a licence or the like is discussed or determined during this meeting, the City warns that neither the applicant, nor any other person or body, should rely upon that discussion or determination until written notice of either an approval and the conditions which relate to it, or the refusal of the application has been issued by the City.

# Contents

1.	DECLARATION OF OPENING	4
2.	ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDING MEMBER	4
3.	ATTENDANCE	4
3.1	APOLOGIES	4
3.2	APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE	4
4.	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	4
5.	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	4
6.	DEPUTATIONS	4
7.	REPORTS	5
7.4	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: LEADERSHIP	5
7.4.1	City of South Perth's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic	5
8.	CLOSURE	22

# Special Council Meeting - Agenda

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING
2. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDING MEMBER
3. ATTENDANCE
  - 3.1 APOLOGIES
  - 3.2 APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME
6. DEPUTATIONS

## 7. REPORTS

### 7.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: LEADERSHIP

#### 7.4.1 City of South Perth's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Location:	Not Applicable
Ward:	Not Applicable
Applicant:	Not Applicable
File Ref:	D-20-28732
Meeting Date:	21 April 2020
Author(s):	Colin Cameron, Director Corporate Services Geoff Glass, Chief Executive Officer Vicki Lummer, Director Development and Community Services Mark Taylor, Director Infrastructure Services Tracie McDougall, Senior Projects Officer
Reporting Officer(s):	Geoff Glass, Chief Executive Officer
Strategic Direction:	Leadership: A visionary and influential local government
Council Strategy:	4.3 Good Governance

#### Summary

This report provides Council with an update on the City's initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and identify key measures for inclusion within a broad Local Community Response and Relief Package.

In a few short weeks, the impact of COVID-19 on the South Perth community has proven to be tumultuous. While there remains uncertain times ahead, the City of South Perth has a key role in providing direction and support for our local community. In the first instance that is to initially respond to the impacts and then in the fullness of time to make a valued contribution to the recovery from the pandemic. A wide range of measures have already been implemented to respond to household, business and community needs and it is appropriate that further decisions be made on other measures to make for a comprehensive initial Local Community Response and Relief Package.

The City is committed through its Strategic Community Plan to provide sound leadership and to support our local residents, businesses and community groups at this demanding time. In addition, we have a primary responsibility to ensure that the organisation remains capable of performing a critical role in securing the future good social and economic health of the City of South Perth.

#### Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Commits to develop a City of South Perth Local Community Response and Relief Package in response to the COVID-19 crisis with the aim of assisting the community to respond to the adverse impacts of the pandemic;

2. Notes the range of initiatives already implemented by the City in response to the COVID-19 crisis and that form the initial basis of a City of South Perth Local Community Response and Relief Package;
3. Adopts Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance as contained in **Attachment (a)**;
4. Adopts the following measures from **1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 (inclusive)**:
  - a. Waive all interest accrued on Rates, Emergency Services Levy (ESL) and Waste, for residential and commercial properties that apply and are deemed eligible under Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance;
  - b. Suspend debt collection activities;
  - c. Grant a repayment holiday, with no penalty interest, for all community group self-supporting loans;
  - d. Supply specific COVID-19 Recycling Centre entry vouchers to residents and commercial businesses on request, on the basis of one voucher per household or business;
  - e. Provide one hour free parking in the following City car parks:
    - i. Car park 12, Jet Ski area;
    - ii. Car park 11, Millers Pool;
    - iii. The South Perth Esplanade from Mill Point Close to SPE11 car park;
    - iv. Car Park 14, Coode Street / Boatshed, excluding the boat ramp trailer parking;
    - v. Bowman, Lyall, Hardy, Charles and Richardson Streets;
    - vi. Car Park 3, Windsor Park;
    - vii. Car Park 6, Richardson Reserve.
  - f. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise an alteration to the Collier Park Golf Course Controller Agreement to address the impacts of COVID-19 and allow for the course to re-open;
  - g. Adopt a budget adjustment for the reduction of \$198,975 revenue and an increase of \$265,834 expenditure for the 2019/20 budget to facilitate the alteration to the Collier Park Golf Course Controller Agreement;
  - h. Note that progress reports on Collier Park Golf Course performance will be provided to Councillors on a monthly basis with presentations during the remaining budget workshops in preparation for the 2020/21 budget;
  - i. Waive club and community organisations lease and licence charges, excluding outgoings;
  - j. Approve the refund of Licence fees, on a pro-rata basis for businesses affected by the WA State Government Closure and Restriction (Limit the Spread) Directions;

- k. Freeze commercial property lease and licence payments for those that apply and are deemed eligible under Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance;
  - l. Freeze rent reviews for commercial property leases;
  - m. Endorse the refund of all cancelled booking fees and deposits held for bookings for City controlled properties and facilities upon application;
  - n. Note that the payment of suppliers will occur on a weekly basis to assist their cash flow, effectively reducing payment terms to less than 30 days;
  - o. Adopt amended Policy P605 Purchasing as contained in **Attachment (b)**;
  - p. Adopt amended Policy P607 Tenders and Expression of Interest as contained in **Attachment (c)**;
  - q. Note that Parking enforcement has been limited to compliance for safety and accessibility purposes only;
  - r. Establish a Buy Local, Shop Local web page and continue to support and provide links to other relevant web sites promoting local business.
5. Considers implementing the following measures for the Annual Budget 2020/21:
- a. 0% Rate increase (average);
  - b. 0% increase on the Waste collection levy;
  - c. 0% increase on the City's Fees and Charges schedule;
  - d. Waiver of all interest accrued on Rates, Emergency Services Levy (ESL) and Waste from 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, for residential and commercial properties in accordance with Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance;
  - e. Suspension of debt collection activities for the 2020/21 financial year;
  - f. Granting a 3 month repayment holiday, with no penalty interest, for all community group Self Supporting Loans;
  - g. Waiver of club and community organisations lease and licence charges, excluding outgoings for 3 months;
  - h. Waiver of Licence fees on a pro-rata basis for businesses affected by the WA State Government Closure and Restriction (Limit the Spread) Directions;
  - i. Freezing commercial property lease and licence payments for those that apply and deemed eligible under Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance for a period of three months;
  - j. Freezing all rent reviews for a period of three months;
  - k. Endorse the refund of all cancelled bookings at City controlled properties and facilities;

- l. Consider supporting community sporting and cultural groups by establishing grant programs;
  - m. Consider the funding of preparation of an Economic Development Strategy to provide a framework for practical support to assist the recovery of the local business sector.
6. Notes that the measures in recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5, forms the City's current Local Community Response and Relief Package;
  7. Communicates the various initiatives and measures identified in the Local Community Response and Relief Package to the public as the City's response to assist to mitigate the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Absolute Majority required**

### Background

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic. While this declaration stems from a global health crisis, the social and economic impacts that have resulted to attempt to mitigate the impact have been very dramatic, and will continue to be severe for the foreseeable future.

It appears that long term effective control of the spread of the virus remains highly problematic and highly variable from location to location. Ultimate resolution may rely upon the development of a vaccine, however, given the nature of the virus that may not be an eventuality. It is likely therefore, that measures, when applied, may have to remain in force for some time with the scope of those being modified within constraints and in response to local circumstances.

To date both the Federal and State Governments have introduced a wide range of measures aimed at attempting to minimise the spread of the virus in order that the health system can best manage the impacts.

At a Federal Government level, key public health measures that have been introduced include social distancing, infection control, restrictions on public gatherings, restrictions on travel, and self-isolation requirements. A range of support packages has also been announced including a \$130 billion JobKeeper package, \$17.6 billion economic support package, \$2.4 billion health package, \$669 million to expand Medicare subsidised telehealth services, and \$74 million to support mental health and wellbeing. A new National Cabinet comprising the Prime Minister, State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers leads Australia's response to COVID-19 based on expert medical advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee.

At a State Government level, a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency was declared on 16 March 2020 in response to COVID-19. Numerous emergency declarations, prohibitions and directions have been issued (and then subsequently modified) including inter and intra state travel restrictions, preventative restriction of activities, and closure of certain places of business and entertainment. These restrictions have impacted on the various services and programs offered by Local Government and have necessitated the re-crafting of many aspects of the way that Councils operate and do business. A range of support packages has also been announced including a \$1 billion economic and health relief package, \$159 million



relief fund to provide crisis support, and \$25 million rent relief for small businesses and not-for-profit organisations.

The Minister for Local Government has stated that Local Government is expected to play a significant role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis over the coming months by supporting public health and wellbeing, assisting in community compliance of directions, delivering proportionate emergency responses, implementing local stimulus projects and driving local community recovery. In recent days State Parliament has passed new legislation relevant to Local Government including changes to planning legislation, support to commercial tenants and amendments to the *Local Government Act 1995* in relation to the ability to suspend local laws and the introduction of Ministerial emergency powers.

The City of South Perth is proactively dealing with the multi-faceted challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City has a responsibility to provide targeted and locally relevant measures to our community beyond the initiatives being implemented at a Federal and State Government level. These measures must meet the needs of households, businesses, community organisations and employees through both the initial COVID-19 response phase and subsequent recovery phase. Importantly, these measures must be fiscally responsible noting the City's long-term responsibility to be able to deliver essential services for the community.

As guidance for the local government sector, the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) State Council held a Special Meeting on 27 March 2020 and resolved that each local government consider the following suite of actions to provide a coordinated and consistent response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Consider not increasing rates for the 2020/2021 financial year.
- Adoption of the WALGA template rates hardship policy by Local Governments that do not currently have a policy.
- Consider rate relief options to support small business affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Review fees and charges considering whether fees can be reduced, waived or deferred during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bring forward capital works and infrastructure spending with aggressive application of reserves and borrowing.
- Prioritise local government spending with businesses and contractors located within the local government.
- Implement business friendly payment terms to support business cash flow.
- Consider supporting community sporting and cultural groups by either establishing grant programs or waiving fees and charges.
- Redeploy employees affected by facility closures to tasks that support the community.

WALGA specifically noted that an ambitious and courageous response as well as strong leadership from the sector would be needed to support the health, social and economic future of WA.

### Comment

#### COVID-19 Operational Response

The emergence of COVID-19 in Australia has very quickly and significantly changed the way the City operates and needs to operate in the future.

The City has been continuously monitoring the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic situation since mid-February and has been providing information to the local community as issued by the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre of the Department of Health since that time. The City's Administration response has been to ready and prepare the organisation, as best as we can, to be able to continue to provide essential and emergency local government services during what may be an extended health and economic crisis.

A COVID-19 Crisis Team was formed with representation drawn from various parts of the organisation and this group has been meeting, up until this stage, three times a week to discuss the actions being taken by the City's Administration to support the community and to protect the workforce. To ensure business continuity and remain responsive to changing circumstances a set of guiding principles was developed to ensure the City acted in a strategic and efficient way. Those guiding principles are as follows:

#### Guiding Principles

- This is fundamentally a public health issue first – the starting premise is that this is a declared global pandemic that brings with it major economic and social disruption.
- Protect and nurture our community – the health and wellbeing of the community is paramount and the City has a range of statutory responsibilities, essential services and facilities to support a community that has a need to remain connected and an obligation to look after its most vulnerable.
- Protect our workforce – to fulfil our obligations and responsibilities the good health, safety and wellbeing of the City staff (and its contractors) is a priority.
- Ensure business continuity – the organisation if it is to provide relevant, valued and viable services commensurate to the changing circumstances and needs must be adaptable and agile.
- Respond strategically and with the best available data and advice in order to minimise reactive responses and to avoid the potential for confusing messages and indecisive leadership.
- Monitor and apply Federal and State Government directions and advice in an efficient and effective manner.
- Partner with and learn from other levels of government and the business community in the delivery of recovery initiatives and projects.
- Communicate clearly and as needed to the City's internal and external stakeholders and to the wider public of South Perth.

The City Administration has had to respond to a wide range of public health measures announced by the Federal and State Government in response to COVID-19. They have had a dramatic and immediate impact on the City's way of operating and service delivery.

In the context of those measures and as guided by the principles a summary of the major actions either completed recently or now in progress at the City are as follows:

#### **Communications**

- A Crisis Communications Plan has been developed and consistent community messaging through our website, social media and visual displays at all City facilities has been used.
- A COVID-19 page was developed and placed on the City website and is updated almost daily.
- Links have been added to the City's website under 'Useful Resources' including for a multilingual resource library for COVID-19 information.
- Bi-weekly CEO updates have been provided to all staff regarding City activity and responses.
- Bi-weekly OHS Alerts advising staff of HR, IR and OHS matters has been developed and distributed.

#### **Community Service and Programs**

- All public facilities of the City have been closed as directed and have the required signage and public notices (George Burnett Leisure Centre, Collier Park Golf Course, libraries, senior citizens centres, Old Mill, halls for hire)
- All community events have been cancelled, including citizenship ceremonies until further notice
- Waste management Cleanaway contract - mitigation plans are in place by the City contractor and an additional MOU (coordinated by WALGA) signed to allow assistance to/from adjacent districts in the eventuality that a district's waste services are impacted
- Community funding opportunities have been made available to community groups to support a range of eligible projects that provide return benefits for the local community, including in response to COVID-19. The conditions and eligibility requirements have been uploaded to the City's website
- The City has established a 'Helping Hands' program to support local vulnerable people that may need help including seniors, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds and Aboriginal people
- The City has assumed responsibility and is operating an increased Meals on Wheels service based at South Perth Senior Citizens Centre
- Through funding assistance provided by the City, Southcare are facilitating a financial relief program involving the provision of vouchers for the purchase of urgent food, household goods or clothing, and financial crisis assistance. Noting that food assistance is also available for eligible people through Waterford Plaza Shopping Centre
- Donation Management Service has been made available through the GIVIT website

- The City has been in contact with the sporting clubs to ensure they understand the status of the orders relating to COVID-19 and ensure consistent communication to the public
- Assistance has been provided to local clubs to develop Business Continuity Plans
- Contact with local businesses has been maintained with information relating to the State Government stimulus package and resources including information on disaster recovery and business continuity distributed
- Upkeep of local parks and reserves is continuing to enable people to undertake recreation outdoors in association with COVID-19 directives. Sports oval floodlighting at reserves has been programmed to stay on after sunset to enable the community to undertake walking and other recreational activities at night
- Planning compliance issues are being reviewed on a case by case basis taking account of the nature of the breach and assessing whether it is expedient to take action at the moment
- The City is investigating creative ways to assist local children and youth to stay connected during the COVID-19 phase. For example, 'virtual' online activities for school holidays
- South Perth Youth Network (SPYN) meetings will continue to be facilitated using an online format
- Digital storytimes have been launched. Link to our digital storytime has been provided to Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) to add to their list of virtual storytimes
- Online e-resources including e-books, audiobooks, newspapers, magazines, e-learning, research and streaming services are still operating as normal
- Library due date for all existing Library loans has been extended to 30 June 2020 - all notices and fees have been suspended until further notice.
- List of e-resources has been compiled and put up on our webpages of paid subscription e-resources that have recently been made accessible free of charge by commercial vendors e.g. Audible.com books for children, Ancestry Online
- New subscriptions have been purchased – Comics Unlimited (launched) and Beamafilm
- SPYWA writing competition has been launched and available on website
- Digital Local history 'reflect from afar' talks – images and audio launched on website
- Welfare checks have been conducted for homebound readers and are conducted on a weekly basis and weekly check-ins for over 80 Library and Old Mill Volunteers
- Collier Park Village (CPV) residents "FACT SHEET – What you need to know" has been delivered
- Volunteer support groups are being encouraged and assisted by CPV staff to coordinate assistance to those in need

- Ranger Services have been re-oriented to be community safety 'eyes on the street'.

#### **Organisational Readiness**

- The front door of the Administration Centre has remained open and measures are in place to effectively manage the limited numbers of walk in customers (approximately 20-25 per day)
- Social distancing practices for staff on site working or meeting at the Administration Centre and Operations Centre has been applied
- Information Systems Team have equipped and prepared supporting material to enable all staff, as able to, to work from home. Staff are able to access all software and systems as though they were at the workplace.
- Minimum numbers of essential internal staff are working on site and split rosters between work from home and work from City offices is also in place
- Outside staff continue to function fully and travel to their work sites in their own vehicles
- A matrix of extensive data on all staff has been prepared to be able to know their work location, nature of work and suitability for re-deployment if required
- A cross organisation Re-deployment Initiatives Team has been established to create opportunities for new ways of doing business and prepare activity that can use staff that might otherwise be required to be stood down
- Options to conduct Council briefings and meetings via online mediums has been developed (Zoom and Teams)
- A mobile cleaner delivers a sanitation program which provides for the treatment of surfaces frequently used by multiple staff and/or community members within work spaces and key public buildings on a continuing cycle
- Ongoing risk management and review in place of current contracts to ensure critical contracts are operating and back up plans are in place - these will be reviewed as the situation changes
- EMT have approved stand down terms and conditions for if/when staff stand-downs are required
- A status report on capital works, assessment of working arrangements/resources required, backlog of work, status of suppliers is currently being produced
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services has been promoted to all staff via regular Employee OSH Alerts
- Checklist/file created for the tracking and recording of staff when isolating or working from home including a daily roll call
- A Working From Home Management Practice and OSH ergonomic checklist has been prepared and is in place.

**Proposed Local Community Response and Relief Package**

Given the scale and impact of the COVID-19 crisis, it is essential that the City directly support households, businesses, community organisations and employees through a Local Community Response and Relief Package. This Package must respond to local community needs while also complementing other packages released by the Federal and State Government. It must also support our community through the current COVID-19 response phase with a longer term view to be capable of making a solid contribution to a subsequent recovery phase.

While the Federal Government has already announced a broad range of stimulus packages the overall intent is to keep Australian's in jobs, keep businesses in business and support households and the Australian economy.

The State Government has also announced a range of support packages targeted at Western Australian households, pensioners, small to medium sized businesses, and not-for-profit organisations.

This report identifies and recommends further initiatives that can be added to the initial City responses and is recommended to form a City of South Perth Local Community Response and Relief Package that delivers whole of community benefits.

As a general guide it is anticipated that there will be three key phases leading ultimately to recovery over the short, medium and long term. Whilst the circumstances can be highly volatile, the three phases are considered to be as follows:

***Phase 1 Short Term - Response***

This is the current phase and can be considered to have started with the declarations by the Federal and State Governments of national and state emergencies in mid-March 2020. It is likely to extend until the end of April 2020. This phase is focussed on understanding and responding to the immediate changing impacts of COVID-19. The primary focus is on re-setting the operations of the organisation to the new environment, gaining an understanding of the potential impact on the City's current 2019/20 budget and cash flow and determining appropriate relief measures.

***Phase 2 Medium Term - Adapt and Relief***

This phase could be expected to last for several months. This phase is focussed on embedding the changes made in response to the impacts of COVID-19. The major tasks are to apply the relief measures, forecast and plan for a significantly affected 2020/21 budget, re-deploy staff as necessary and re-prioritise service offerings, maintain a strong and responsive connection with the community through an expanded online presence and be particularly sensitive to the needs of those most vulnerable and impacted.



***Phase 3 Longer Term – Recovery***

This phase will last for the balance of the 2020/21 financial year and potentially beyond. Depending on the success or otherwise of controlling the health crisis and the ability of the economy to be resurrected given global circumstances at the time, the recovery phase may last a number of years in one form or another. The primary emphasis during this phase is on fully integrating the responsive operating changes caused by COVID-19. This will require the preparation and application of a Recovery Plan that supports social reconnection and an economic rebound. This may require bold and innovative approaches to meet the extraordinary circumstances the community may find itself in. Any commitments and actions will need to be continuously reviewed to match those circumstances. The City will be drawing on our close working relationship with other levels of Government, the not for profit sector and the business community to deliver results for the benefit of its community.

Given the three phases outlined above, in terms of the initial phase, the following initiatives are indicative of the measures that may be included in the City's Local Community Response and Relief Package:-

**Recommended Measures**

The Guiding Principles, as described above, have informed the recommendations presented for Council consideration. These recommendations respond to the current financial year (1 April to 30 June 2020) requiring a Council determination, as well as measures that inform the development of the 2020/21 Annual Budget, with Council adoption only permissible after 1 June 2020. The 2020/21 Annual Budget will be presented to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 23 June 2020.

The various Federal and State Government economic measures have been principled in responding to those adversely affected by the public health measures introduced to mitigate COVID-19. The City has applied a similar approach, with the focus on the vulnerable local residents, business and community groups, through the introduction of a new policy responding to financial hardship.

**Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance**

As described above, the WALGA resolution of 27 March 2020 recommended adoption of the WALGA template rates hardship policy. Officers reviewed this template, as well as many other local government policies, and have recommended a much broader approach, covering all debts owed to the City rather than just Rates. Informing P697 was the Ombudsman WA – Good Practice Guidance that focused attention on those most vulnerable. The Guidance states “it is not designed to inform the collection of rates from people who are able, but unwilling to pay their rates”.

Some Councils have indicated measures that respond to all ratepayers universally, regardless of need, for example a freeze on interest payments for 6 months. This approach is not considered equitable as those that have the capacity to pay, should, with penalty interest incentivising a payment by the due date.

In managing applications under Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance, care will be taken to simplify the process and utilise existing Federal and State Government programs. By way of example, a successful application for the Federal Government Job Seeker program would be sufficient evidence for acceptance of a claim under the policy. Further, if Council adopted the recommended measures for the remainder of the 2019/20 year and included the same measures in the 2020/21 Annual Budget, this business would have interest waived for 6 months, with no debt collection activities contemplated before 1 July 2021.

In addition to catering for individual financial hardship, a number of measures have been recommended for community, sporting clubs and other groups impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions. These include the waiving or freezing of lease/licence payments as well as a loan repayment holiday.

### Rates

Two Budget Workshops have been undertaken with Councillors with two more remaining before the 2020/21 Annual Budget is presented for Councils consideration. Councillors have indicated a preference for a zero percent rate increase, or for the rates issued to be the same as those issued in 2019/20. However, it should be noted that the City is unable to issue ratepayers with the same rates as the previous year if the State Government enforce a revaluation of Gross Rental Values (GRV).

On 16 March 2020, following Premier McGowan announcement of a stimulus package including a freeze on the Emergency Services Levy (ESL), the City wrote to the Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts office, WALGA and Local Government Professionals WA to point out that this could not be implemented if the revaluation of the GRV occurs for the 2020/21 Budget. A GRV revaluation always delivers variation between properties, regardless of the average increase or decrease in valuations. This variation means that a zero percent rate and/or ESL increase would still result in some properties levied significantly greater, some similar and some significantly less than in 2019/20.

By way of example, the following three (A, B, C) properties had identical Gross Rental Valuations (GRV) provided by the Value Generals Office (State Government) in 2017, being \$26,000 (i.e. \$500 x 52 weeks). However due to the 2020 GRV variations, each property will be issued with a different rates assessment, despite a 0% rate increase, as follows:

	GRV @2017	Rates 2019/20	GRV @2020	Rates 2020/21	Variance	
A	\$26,000	\$1,749	\$15,600	\$994	-\$755	-43%
B	\$26,000	\$1,749	\$22,100	\$1,749	\$0	0%
C	\$26,000	\$1,749	\$27,560	\$2,181	\$432	25%

As illustrated, despite a 0% rate increase, the rates for property A will be \$755 less, whereas for property C the rates will be \$432 more. In a revaluation year, almost every property will have different Rates and ESL, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Valuation of Land Act 1978*.



The City eagerly awaits a decision by the State Government, noting that if the revaluation proceeds, a zero percent increase will, for almost every property, result in a rates and ESL levy that is different to the amount that was levied in 2019/20. This issue cannot be avoided under the existing legislation, the only action that would result in the issuing of the same rates and ESL levy as last year is the State Government determining not to enforce the 2020 Revaluations. In that regard, the City supports the advocacy work undertaken by WALGA in facilitating a real freeze for rates and ESL, as well as for a freeze of the waste levy and utility tariffs.

#### **Expediting supplier payments**

The City will endeavour to pay suppliers on a weekly basis to assist them in their cash flow, effectively reducing payment terms to periods much shorter than 30 days.

#### **Procurement and Tendering**

It is suggested that the City's purchasing and tendering policies be modified to align it to recently legislated amendments to the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996 to:

- allow for an increase in the tender threshold from \$150,000 to \$250,000,
- allow the extension of existing tenders by a further 12 months if the tender is to expire in 3 months, without a requirement to retender.
- waive the requirement to tender for goods and services associated with an emergency
- allow for a "Local Buy" approach to purchasing and procurement of City goods and services.

#### **Fee relief**

As part of the 2020/21 budget preparation, options will be reviewed for rates relief to support small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consideration is also recommended to be given to waiving bonds and fees associated with:

- Sporting clubs and community groups for their affected operational periods (e.g. sporting season)
- Building Development Verge Access Bonds
- Verge Storage Permits
- Vehicle crossover fees
- Other fees applicable to businesses within the City.

### **Parking**

The City proposes to amend current paid parking restrictions to enable one hour free parking in key commercial and recreational areas to help facilitate activity. This will apply to the following parking stations that currently have no free parking allowance:

- Car park 12, Jet Ski area;
- Car park 11, Millers Pool;
- The South Perth Esplanade from Mill Point Close to SPE11 car park;
- Car Park 14, Coode Street / Boatshed, excluding the boat ramp trailer parking;
- Bowman, Lyall, Hardy, Charles and Richardson Streets;
- Car Park 3, Windsor Park;
- Car Park 6, Richardson Reserve.

It is not proposed to include one hour free parking in Onslow and Angelo Streets surrounding the Perth Zoo as these bays are largely used by Zoo staff in a permit arrangement and the Perth Zoo is currently closed. Car Park 7, Angelo Street already offers two hour free parking.

The City will be installing new 'pay by plate' parking machines which are better suited to manage free time periods than the existing machines. The machines have already been purchased and are easily configurable to timed free parking at no additional cost to the City.

Parking enforcement has been limited to compliance for safety and accessibility purposes only.

### **Recycling Centre Entry Vouchers**

The City proposes to supply specific COVID-19 Recycling Centre entry vouchers to residents and commercial businesses. These additional vouchers will be available in response to requests and supplied on the basis of one voucher per household or business. Making the vouchers available on request will enable the City to assess and confirm resident or business requirements.

### **Collier Park Golf Course**

The City closed the Collier Park Golf Course (CPGC) on 29 March to comply with a Government direction on non-essential services. The City's intention has always been to keep CPGC open wherever possible in recognition of the importance of recreation in maintaining community wellbeing during this time. The enforced closure of CPGC results in a significant shortfall in City revenue. This has equated to approximately \$200 - \$250k for April alone.

On Friday 10 April the City received advice from the Department of Health that golf courses may be open as long as there is strict compliance with social distancing requirements. This would result in two person tee times, effectively halving the CPGC capacity from the usual four. These measures accordingly have a significant impact on revenue and expenditure for both the operator (Clublinks) and the City, but under the current agreement this disproportionately impacts on the operator.

The CPGC Course Controller's agreement would not be enforceable because of the impact of a *force majeure* due to the COVID-19 business restrictions. With CPGC open, the operator's losses increase to approximately \$30k per month, therefore it would be in their interests to remain closed. That would leave the City in a position where it would be unable to open CPGC resulting in zero revenue, with ongoing City costs of \$180k per month. In addition to the financial implications the City would not be providing a key service valued by the community, particularly during these challenging times of social isolation.

It is proposed to best manage the City's risk exposure whilst the CPGC operation continues to be impacted by COVID-19 that the operator model be changed to a fee for service model. The operator would be reimbursed their operational costs only (with no profit allowance). This will support the operator in surviving the current economic situation whilst not providing any opportunity for profit. The City would then retain the entire remaining income to mitigate the reduction in revenue resulting from the social distancing measures in place. This is expected to be in the region of \$150 - \$250k per month, with the operator's costs between \$50k and \$80k monthly depending on the amount of federal government subsidy they are able to attain.

Council is therefore requested to authorise the CEO to finalise the terms of an amended agreement to cover the COVID-19 impacts and to approve the budget adjustments resulting from the revised operator fees. It is essential the CEO is able to respond quickly in order to mitigate ongoing losses. The City will report to Council on a monthly basis and would seek to revert to the original contract arrangements as soon as practicable.

#### **Exempt land use policy**

To assist new business in the City once the pandemic is over, the City has developed a policy that will remove the need for planning approval for new small-scale, low impact businesses that may open in the City. This is in accordance with the Minister for Planning's Notice of Exemption from planning requirements during the State of Emergency.

#### **Reprioritise Capital Works Projects**

The City will be re-assessing the draft 2020/21 Capital Works program to determine project opportunities to:

- assist local business; and
- access Federal and State Government stimulus funding.

The State and Federal Governments have indicated their desire to kick start the economy post COVID-19 and will be calling for 'shovel ready' projects that can commence in a short time period.

The City has already provided a response to the Deputy Prime Minister's call for local road projects that can be commenced in three months with a \$4 million proposal in the South Perth Activity Centre.

Any reprioritising of projects will need to consider the City's asset renewal program to ensure responsible management of infrastructure assets.

Earlier communication to the Federal Government also identified examples of projects and works that could be achieved very quickly and with low risk. That included:

- Road improvements and shared path networks aiding mobility and choice.
- Intergenerational play structures that increase physical activity for all ages, including seniors.
- Natural environmental projects that facilitate the use of a low skilled temporary workforce for planting, weeding and bushland rehabilitation.
- Lighting upgrades that increase park use and physical activity as well as promoting community safety.
- Community facility improvements to engender public pride and community cohesion.
- CCTV and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and other safety initiatives that reduce crime, promote a safe community and facilitate efficient crime detection.

### **Support for Local Business**

It is the intention of the City to redeploy staff into a role dedicated to local business support. Tasks will include creating a data base of local businesses, and as a starting point to create a web page to encourage the community to support these businesses. This will support the “Buy Local, Shop Local” program as recommended by WALGA. A range of other supports will be offered depending on the needs identified through building relationships with businesses.

With the use of dedicated staff, a great deal of work can be done to promote business recovery and build the relationships needed for the development of a relevant Economic Development Strategy. In March 2020, Council resolved to consider an Economic Development Strategy as part of the 2020/21 budget preparation. This strategy will be important in supporting the long term recovery of the City’s businesses.

### **Consultation**

Given the nature and timing of the issues the City is responding to, community consultation has not been undertaken.

### **Policy and Legislative Implications**

*Local Government Act 1995*

Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996

### Financial Implications

The financial implications across 2019/20 and 2020/21 will be profound, the full impact will only be appreciated once the economy returns to a normal footing. In that sense, it is difficult to provide an estimate for this report, given the number of measures as well as how long they are required. Each measure may impact on Revenue, Expenditure, Assets and Liabilities which includes Capital, Reserves, Investments and ultimately Cashflow. By way of example, measures that freeze repayments impact on Cashflow, whereas the waiving of fees and charges impacts on both Revenue, Assets and Cashflow.

### Strategic Implications

This matter relates to the following Strategic Direction identified within Council's [Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027](#):

Strategic Direction:	Leadership
Aspiration:	A visionary and influential local government
Outcome:	Good governance
Strategy:	Empower effective and quality decision-making and governance

### Attachments

7.4.1 (a):	Policy P697 Financial Hardship Assistance
7.4.1 (b):	Policy P605 Purchasing (Amended)
7.4.1 (c):	Policy P607 Tenders and Expressions of Interest (Amended)

## 8. CLOSURE