

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND STIMULUS PACKAGE

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic and the imminent recessionary impacts expected to follow, Council has introduced this initial Business Support and Stimulus Package of measures to direct immediate responses to support and as far as possible, provide early stimulus to Isaac communities and businesses. Council's priority is to take considered and progressive action to do what it can to keep its 17 communities and many small to medium businesses as strong as possible in the weeks and months ahead.

Further measures will continue to be identified and considered by Council as the pandemic progresses and its consequences are better understood.

PACKAGE DETAILS

The Business Support and Stimulus Package includes the following measures:

1. CONNECTION AND WELLBEING

Wellbeing

- Economy & Prosperity team to conduct immediate and ongoing direct contact local Business wellbeing check ins throughout the pandemic and aftermath, to:
 - establish an immediate understanding of business support needs;
 - develop regional intelligence and relevant advocacy positions; and
 - facilitate connection to support services.

Connecting with local businesses

- Establish a Business Support communication platform through the *Bang the Table* medium to enable direct dialogue with and feedback from local businesses for informing business support needs over time and changing circumstances.
- Economy & Prosperity team to establish regional economic development & business support networking connections to remain informed, leverage relationships and share information and opportunities for support.

Supporting information

- Research sources and contacts for clear, simple, easily understood critical information to assist decision-making by small to medium businesses and facilitate contact with those sources.
- Publish relevant links to key information, support and funding sources on a prominent business support tab on Council's website.
- Continue to publish Economic Indicators reports with content review to reflect relevant Economic information, report to published be on a quarterly basis.

- Provide a concierge service to facilitate prompt and reliable planning scheme advice to assist small to medium businesses make any adjustments to operations that may be necessitated by the pandemic and its consequences.

2. ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Shop Isaac – driving local cashflow

- Bring forward the commencement of the 'Shop Isaac' program for Isaac's small to medium businesses; and develop and deliver the supporting 'buy local' promotion and messaging to support its introduction.
- Council will cover the costs for participating small to medium businesses to register for the first 12 months of the program.
- Engagement with the resources industry partners and major employers in the Isaac region to redirect their established programs for distributing gift cards as part of their usual business, to the Shop Isaac cards.
- Payment by Council of all invoices for local businesses within 7 days.

Economic relief

- Continue the moratorium for annual increases of Clermont Saleyards fees for the FY2020/21 year.
- Review the impacts of Business-Related Fees and Charges for the whole of the Planning Environment and Community Services Directorate, for small to medium businesses to address in the FY2020/21 Budget.

Stimulus projects

- Re-weight the criteria in the Council's 2020/21 Project Accountability Gateway business case analysis to provide greater priority for capital projects which have a stronger stimulus effect for the local economy.
- Subject to any Commonwealth or State directive and appropriate pandemic related risk management, continue to deliver Council's FY2020 Capital works program and undertake early programming to continue with the FY2021 Capital works program

3. CAPACITY BUILDING

Interim capacity

- Review available Council facilities that may support or enable interim or short-term business pop up spaces, virtual community hubs and digital connectivity opportunities.
- Review the Small Business Month activities that have been postponed from May 2020 and promote and engage in delivery of virtual business support programs for growth in resilience and capability.
- Facilitate one or more 'Down-time Hackathon' event/s to encourage innovation from adversity.

Tourism capacity

- In anticipation of the resumption of tourism related activities post-pandemic, conduct pre-assessment of Isaac Region tourism localities that would enable safe-haven outdoor experiences and develop informative guides i.e. Cosgrove Peak hikes/drives, gold prospecting, fishing, self-drive tours, mountain biking, Isaac secluded coastal and other locality camp grounds.