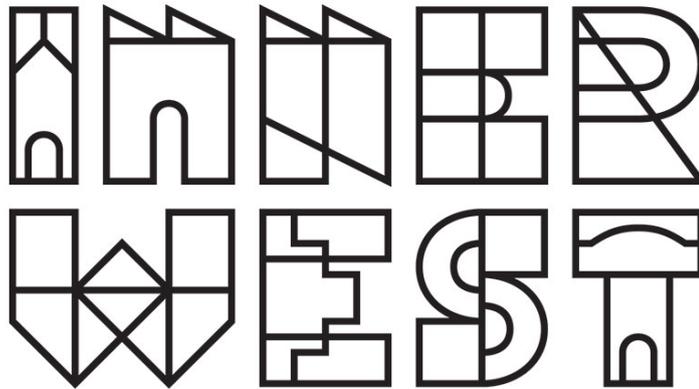


AGENDA



EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 7 APRIL 2020

6.30PM

Live Streaming of Council Meeting

In the spirit of open, accessible and transparent government, this meeting of the Inner West Council is being streamed live on Council's website. By speaking at a Council meeting, members of the public agree to being recorded and must ensure their speech to the Council is respectful and use appropriate language. A person who uses defamatory, discriminatory or offensive language may be exposed to liability for which Council takes no responsibility. Any part of this meeting that is held in closed session will not be recorded

PRECIS

- 1 Acknowledgement of Country**
- 2 Apologies**
- 3 Notice of Livestreaming**
- 4 Disclosures of Interest (Section 451 of the Local Government Act and Council’s Code of Conduct)**
- 5 Moment of Quiet Contemplation**
- 6 Condolence Motions**

Nil at the time of printing.

- 7 Mayoral Minutes**

ITEM	PAGE #
C0420(1) Item 1 Actions to Address Community Concerns around COVID-19	4

- 7 Reports with Strategic Implications**

Nil at the time of printing.

- 8 Reports for Council Decision**

Nil at the time of printing.

- 9 Reports for Noting**

Nil at the time of printing.

Item No: C0420(1) Item 1
 Subject: ACTIONS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS AROUND COVID-19
 From: The Mayor, Councillor Darcy Byrne

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Expresses great gratitude and thanks to the citizens of the Inner West, the officers of Inner West Council and all of the health and emergency services personnel who have dedicated themselves to saving lives and protecting public health during this crisis.
 - a. Officially convey the thanks of all Councillors to Council officers for their professionalism and commitment in responding to the crisis and protecting our community.
2. Notes the detailed contingency planning that has been completed and enacted by Council officers since the onset of the crisis, and the commitment to maintenance of frontline services.
 - a. Note the actions of the Incident Management Team (See Attachment 1) and convey the thanks of all Councillors to members of the IMT for their professionalism and commitment in responding to the crisis and protecting our community.
 - b. Officially convey the thanks of all Councillors to the officers of NSW Health, NSW Police and members of all the other agencies who have collaborated with the IMT on a daily basis, which has been vital in responding to the crisis and protecting our community.
3. Request the CEO prepares a report on the budgetary impacts of the crisis and a preliminary plan for amendments to regulations, fees and rates as well as economic recovery in the Inner West to be tabled at the April 28 Ordinary meeting (noting that this report may need to be tabled late and can be provided to Councillors any time up to and including April 26). The report should include updates and recommendations on the following:
 - a. The impact on Council’s revenue and expenditure, including the additional expenditures identified through this resolution.
 - b. The process for preparing and adopting the upcoming Budget, including the potential for deferral of the Budget.
 - c. Any identified adverse budget impacts from relief measures adopted by the State or Federal Governments, where strong advocacy from Council is required to represent the needs of local government and local services (e.g. childcare).
 - d. A review of the hardship policy for business and residential rates and recommendations on how they need to be amended to meet the current circumstances.
 - e. A review of rental and evictions policy for tenants of Council properties with an immediate deferral of rental payments for affected businesses and organisations until this report is tabled and a new policy adopted.
 - f. Consideration of how public car parking could be made free for the healthcare workers in line with the request from the Health Services

Union.

- g. Sporting clubs not be charged fees for sporting fields and facilities that are closed and unable to be used during this crisis.**
 - h. Establishing an Inner West Recovery Taskforce, to be chaired by the CEO and including local business leaders from a variety of sectors and community organisations, to plan and coordinate the economic recovery of the Inner West as well as maximise the local effect and delivery of State and Federal relief and stimulus measures.**
 - i. Practical assistance for local businesses seeking to reopen in coming months to be informed by consultations with local Chambers of Commerce and local businesses on what assistance from Council would be useful, within the fiscal and budgetary constraints, as a result of the crisis.**
 - j. An outline of how infrastructure renewal works to improve footpaths, curb and guttering, roads, parks and recreation facilities can be brought forward and expedited. Consideration should also be given to how this program could be expanded should Federal and State funds be made available for local stimulus.**
 - k. How existing grants programs could be expanded and redeployed to support local organisations in responding to the crisis.**
 - l. The extension of the delivery and acquittal timeframes for approved grant recipients to complete funded projects. Where necessary, the nature of the projects themselves might need to be amended.**
 - m. A regional approach to recovery of creative industries be developed in partnership with the City of Sydney and other major metropolitan Councils. An initial teleconference with leaders of the Inner West Arts and Cultural sectors, including Council's advisory committee be convened by the Mayor to gain their input into immediate priorities, with the outcomes to be tabled as part of the report to Council.**
 - n. Consideration of reallocation of funding for EDGE and other arts grant programs to support the recovery of the arts sector.**
- 4. Thanks NSW Health, the NSW Police and other critical service providers for their collaboration in responding to the crisis and commits to further depending these partnerships to address ongoing challenges.**
- a. Notes the anticipated exacerbation of a range of health and safety issues as a result of the crisis and the requirement of isolation including drug and alcohol abuse, domestic and family violence, and mental ill-health.**
- 5. Thanks the local NGOs and charities working to provide outreach services to older people and vulnerable citizens and that the Mayor writes to them requesting their partnership in coordinating our efforts to address food security, outreach services and volunteer mobilisation.**
- a. Notes the regular information sharing teleconferences and collaboration between the Mayor and the Inner West's NGO and charities sector.**
 - b. Notes the advice received from the local charitable and not-for-profit sectors that food insecurity is rapidly emerging as a challenge for their existing clients, as well as low income families, pensioners and**
-

-
- many casual workers who have lost their jobs.
- c. **Allocates \$250,000 as an initial investment in establishing a large-scale volunteer coordination service in the Inner West, aimed at mobilising the community to help alleviate hunger and isolation. The program would be auspiced by local NGOs, including Addison Road Community Centre, the Exodus Foundation, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Inner West Neighbour Aid, Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre, St Vinnies Rozelle and the Asylum Seekers Centre. Following consultation with the sector, a report with the details of the plan and confirmation of the auspicing organisations be tabled at the April 28 Council meeting.**
 - d. **Notes and accepts the offer from the Play for Lives campaign to partner with the Inner West to pilot their national campaign here with the goal of mobilising sports club members to volunteer to assist local NGOs and charities (See Attachment 2).**
6. **Thanks Council’s Early Childhood Educators for their professionalism and commitment in responding to the crisis and:**
- a. **Makes urgent representations to the Federal and State Governments noting the assessment of the United Services Union and Local Government NSW (LGNSW) that under the new funding arrangements announced last week Council-run early childhood education services are not properly funded and are at risk of being unviable.**
 - b. **Reiterates Council’s commitment to our high-quality Council-run children’s and family services, and the staff, and notes that families accessing these services should have equal access to childcare services, fee relief and enrollment options as that of families enrolled in privately-run centres.**
 - c. **Receive an update, to be tabled at the April 28 Council meeting, including any additional information received on childcare funding.**
 - d. **Convenes regular information sharing teleconferences and collaboration between Council and Inner West childcare providers.**
7. **Notes the vital importance of communication with the community and between community members during the crisis, recognises Council’s leadership role in facilitating this, and undertakes the following actions immediately:**
- a. **Makes Inner West Council’s social media channels available, upon request, to not-for-profit community organisations and local service providers to promote resources, services, donations and volunteerism in response to the crisis.**
 - b. **The Mayor to write to all residents explaining the ways that Council can assist them during the crisis and include information about local resources that are available to them, this should be done through letterboxing rather than direct mail. A “Hi Neighbour” postcard based on that already distributed by City of Canada Bay Council and other Councils (See Attachment 3) should be included in the distribution.**
 - c. **Recognise the need for information to be made accessible in community languages and liaise with Multicultural NSW and local**
-

-
- ethnic community organisations to make sure that Council's communication of health and other messages are accessible to all.
- d. Note the cancellation of the paper edition of the Inner West Courier by News Corp Australia.
 - e. Write to the NSW Government seeking clarification about how Council's statutory notification requirements can be carried out as there is no longer a local newspaper to advertise in.
 - f. Discontinue all existing advertising with the Inner West Courier and reallocate those budgeted funds to resource Council's ongoing communication with the community during the crisis in the first instance and to communications generally in subsequent budgets.
 - g. Allocate \$20,000 to social media expenditure to promote critical information and public health messages through the crisis.
 - h. Collaborate with Australia at Home (See Attachment 4), the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, community radio and other relevant bodies on a partnership to utilise new methods of communication to ensure our Inner West community is informed and connected during the crisis, with a report on the potential partnership to be tabled at the April 28 Council meeting.
 - i. Liaise with the local RSLs about ways to conduct ANZAC Day commemorations with the population in isolation.
 - j. Condemn in the strongest terms the hurtful and racist remarks and actions targeted at people of Asian descent amid the Covid-19 outbreak.
 - k. Express our deepest sympathies and condolences to all nations, particularly those who have suffered a significant number of deaths during the pandemic.
8. Aims to be an employer of best practice in dealing with the crisis, recognising that Council officers are our most important asset and are in need of support. To this end, a report to be prepared for the April 28 Council meeting addressing the following:
- a. Support for casual staff, and how to achieve the goal of maintaining existing staff levels.
 - b. Redeployment of staff whose work has been reduced or disrupted to other useful roles particularly combatting social isolation and supporting community organisations.
 - c. Expansion of the Employee Assistance program to address any emerging mental health and other needs of staff.
 - d. How the successful collaboration between the Executive and the United Services Union and other industrial organisations can be further strengthened to aid Council's response to the crisis.
9. Recognises that the closure of libraries and recreation facilities has greatly impacted on the local community, particularly vulnerable populations, and seeks to ameliorate this through the migration of services online:
- a. Seek to make library programming, recreation, arts and other
-

relevant sections accessible online and through virtual methods with the specific aim of combating social isolation particularly among older residents, parents and children, people with a disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. A report on the implementation of this to be prepared for the April 28 Ordinary meeting.

- 10. The Mayor write immediately to relevant Federal and State Government Ministers and agencies to advocate on the following critical issues that have emerged:**
- a. The need for the JobKeeper payment or other subsidy to be extended to Council employees in business areas affected by the crisis, including childcare and aquatics.**
 - b. The need for a local government stimulus strategy with Federal and State investment and incentives for all local governments to bring forward infrastructure renewal works to generate employment in local communities.**
 - c. The need to expedite state government requirement of Council in relation to procurement and approval of work so that infra schedules can be brought forward. And to review existing Loan mechanism, so that infrastructure schedules can be brought forward.**
 - d. The need for intervention by the NSW Government to provide certainty and protection to residential and commercial tenants.**
 - e. The need for local parks to remain open, accessible and usable for everyone, particularly in the context of our local government area where many people are only able to access open space outside their home. It is outside the remit of Council rangers to enforce physical distancing directives.**
 - f. The need for immediate investment of funding for the NGO and charitable sectors to enable them to meet increased demand for food aid and outreach services.**
- 11. Maintain the adopted schedule of Council meetings and briefings with the following adjustments:**
- a. The April 14 Council meeting should be deferred to April 21 and dedicated to motions of notice from Councillors.**
 - b. For the duration of the crisis, business pertaining to Council's response and essential services will be prioritised and completed at Council meetings prior to motions on notice being considered.**
 - c. Tuesday evenings on weeks without a Council meeting be allocated to briefing sessions.**
 - d. A draft forward plan of reports from Council officers be tabled at the first Ordinary Council meeting in May for adoption.**
 - e. The schedule of meeting is to be reviewed at the end of June.**

DISCUSSION

The following report provided by staff and in consultation with Councillors sets out the current Council response to support the community with the impact of the Coronavirus 19 pandemic. The report includes a number of matters for noting, requests for approvals and some advocacy recommendations to other tiers of government.

The impact of the pandemic has been both quick and immediate. The preparation by Council officers for such emergency has placed the Council in a strong position. Emergency governance is well established with an incident management team meeting regularly under the leadership of the Chief Operating Officer, Liz Richardson. A list of actions that the IMT has put in place is shown in Attachment 1. Operational leadership by the executive and management team is of a high standard in communities, environment, business support, infrastructure, corporate and planning. The brave decision by officers to introduce the OneCouncil system and TechOne IT systems has proven a boon to our current circumstances. All non-front line staff are working from home and have been doing so for some weeks. The decision of the executive in consultation with the unions to introduce a strong working from home policy in January 2020 has proven to be timely. Our front line staff have performed brilliantly and not without its own strains in childcare, outdoor services and customer services. Their efforts are acknowledged.

Business Fee Waivers

The economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on small business in the Inner West is expected to be significant. As part of a broader suite of initiatives for small business, it is recommended that additional relief could be provided to those business which may be looking to establish or expand, during or after the current coronavirus situation. For the remainder of the 2020 calendar year, it is recommended that Council waive fees for the following types of applications, as they relate to small or medium enterprises:

- Pre-Development Application Advice;
- Development Applications;
- Complying Development Certificates;
- Construction Certificates;
- Activity Applications.

The vast majority of proposals for new uses of a property are able to be undertaken without Council approval as 'Exempt Development', or through the streamlined 'Complying Development Certificate' process. Given the early stage of the coronavirus outbreak, the level or nature of development interest is unclear, although any incentive to promote new businesses and ease pressures on existing businesses would be of assistance. It is therefore recommended that, in line with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council publicly exhibit a draft fee waiver to this effect.

Mandatory payments such as Long Service Levies and Infrastructure Contributions would still be required.

Please note that Council does not charge for applications or ongoing licencing for footpath dining.

Impacts on Council's Budget

The current forecast loss to June 30, 2020 is \$18 million. Finance staff are revising these and longer term forecasts particularly as we better understand the demand from business and residences for rate relief, and the child care budget impact. All costs are being closely monitored and an emphasis on necessary and essential matters. We continue to support the jobs in the infrastructure sector through our procurements.

Long Term Economic Recovery

Staff are finalising a package for Council consideration. In the short term, Government funding of the maintenance backlog in roads, kerbs, footpaths and stormwater would be an easy solution to creating local jobs.

Advocacy for People With a Disability

Staff have been working with the Access Local Democracy Group and other people with disabilities in our community who have highlighted the following issues:-

- Inner West residents with disabilities, Council’s Access Local Democracy Group, peak disability organisations and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability are all expressing concern regarding a lack of information, emergency responses and planning to support people with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- People feel ignored in messaging despite the potential for disproportionate impact on people with disability.
- People feel they are being forgotten.
- People with disability and older people are among the most at risk groups due to existing medical conditions and vulnerabilities, higher rates of poverty, increased support needs and greater isolation
- Both groups experience unique barriers in accessing essential services, and these barriers can compromise health, wellbeing and leave them exposed to greater risk if they contract the virus

Supporting Creative Industries

Officers seek Councillor support to continue collaboration with the City of Sydney which has proved highly effective in the creative space previously. We are proposing to align application and assessment process for support guarantees consistency and prevents double dipping.

- The cultural ecosystem features creatives living and working in both LGAs and collaboration sends a strong positive signal to the sector that local government supports reaction and adaptation that delivers long term recovery
- In addition, it is recommended that the City of Sydney, Inner West Council and the City of Parramatta collaborate to create an inter-Council response for the creative sector, and approach Create NSW about targeted funding and support for Greater Sydney’s creative hubs

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. [↓](#) IMT Actions
- 2. [↓](#) Play for Life
- 3. [↓](#) Hi Neighbour Postcard
- 4. [↓](#) Australia at Home

1. Children and Family Services

Centres are open to assist families who need care. On 2 April 2020, the Australian Government announced changes to early childhood education commencing Monday 6 April. The announced package includes free care for families.

2. Rental Relief and Abatements

Inner West Council has received numerous requests for rental relief and abatements from its tenants. In order to support our business community, a framework has been established to efficiently and fairly assess these requests. Our assessing staff will actively work with tenants to ensure that the minimum documentation required to assess their claim has been received. If tenants are deemed **COVID-19 impacted**, their rental support will range from:

- a. a set % discount or a deferment of rent payments to a later date during the lease term or holding over period or
- b. A full rent abatement

3. Residential Rates Relief

Inner West Council will offer their qualifying Ratepayers who are experiencing hardship due to the loss of employment, reduced disposable income the ability to defer their rates over an agreed period of time with a repayment plan not exceeding 12 months starting from the end of the agreed deferred period.

No interest will be charged on outstanding balances for a Covid-19 Assisted Deferred Rate Account, however if the repayment agreement is not upheld, Council has the right to review this and add interest at its discretion.

Customer will need to make an application to Council via the 'Application For Hardship Covid-19, which will be assessed by our Finance team for eligibility.

4. Commercial / Business Rates Relief

Inner West Council will offer qualifying Commercial/Business Ratepayers who are experiencing hardship due to the loss of operating revenue or reduced disposable income the ability to defer their rates over an agreed period of time with a repayment plan not exceeding 12 months starting from the end of the agreed deferred period.

No interest will be charged on outstanding balances for a Covid-19 Assisted Deferred Rate Account, however if the repayment agreement is not upheld, Council has the right to review this and add interest at its discretion. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

5. Aquatic Services

Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre is now closed in line with Australian Government safety advice.

IWC has proposed the following actions in order to safeguard the payments for services / memberships made by the community:

- Learn to Swim and Squads accounts will be held in credit for future bookings, effective immediately
- Gym memberships suspended, effective immediately
- Multi-pass memberships are now extended
- Personal training credits will be held on file to be used in the future

Council will also be financially supporting Annette Kellerman Aquatic Centre and Fanny Durack Aquatic Centre (Belgravia Leisure) to a limited extent so that they can protect the asset and be in a position where they can start back up again as soon as possible.

6. Community Venue Operations

Council is taking this immediate action to protect community, staff and essential services. It has closed most of its' venues in line with Commonwealth advice.

Hirer booking fees (and one-off booking bonds) will be returned.

However, we continue to provide essential services (ie Meals on Wheels) to vulnerable members through Tom Foster Newtown.

7. Libraries

All of Council's libraries are closed.

All library members still have access to online membership and borrowing including access to books, audio books, movies, e-learning and magazines.

No fines will be applied until further notice.

8. Regulatory Services

Additional time periods (up to 3 months) for compliance for non-urgent/safety related matters in the following areas:

- Annual Fire Safety Statements
- Abandoned Motor Vehicles
- Companion Animal Registration

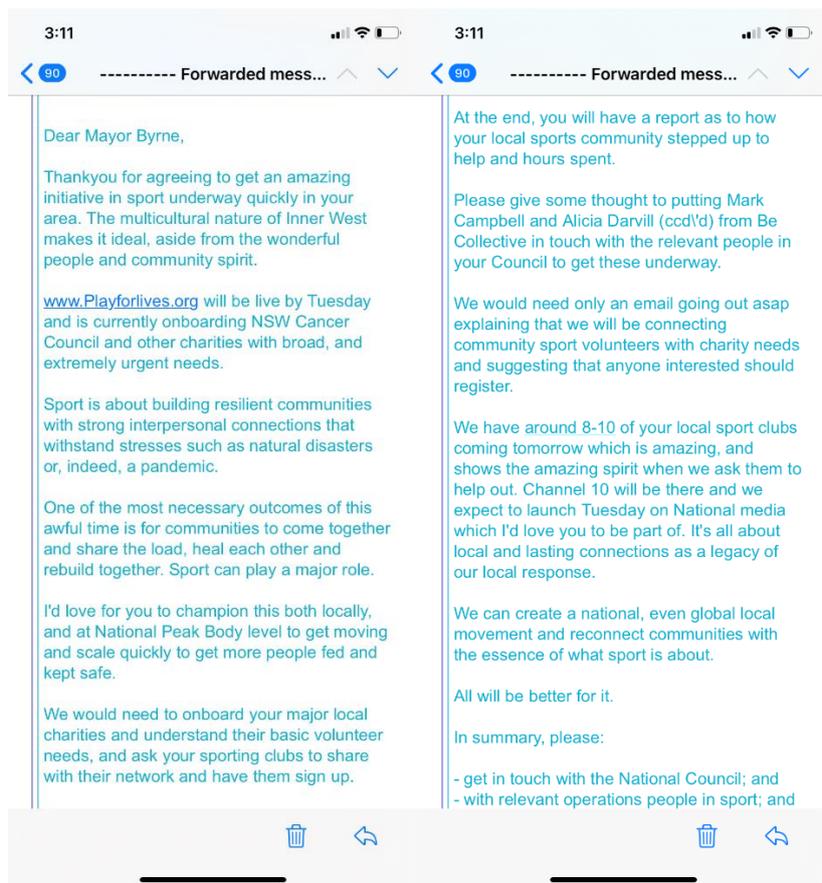
In line with government advice, Council has suspended its routine food safety inspection program.

With respect to management of parking in the LGA, prioritisation of public safety issues over other enforcement activity will occur until further notice.

9. Stimulus Funding

Should Council be successful in receiving any Local Government Infrastructure Stimulus package, there will be a significant employment opportunity to enable IWC to address the renewal backlog in roads, kerbs, gutters, stormwater and footpaths.

Should Council be successful in receiving any Environment Funds package, this could be utilised for renewal works in parks, tree planting and water sensitive urban design (WSUD).





Australia at Home is designed to be a meeting place for civil society in Australia and to equip all of us to keep making a positive impact in solidarity with one another throughout this time. To support each other, cheer each other on and share ideas. It's a project of Essential Media, The Guardian, Centre for Australian Progress, Principle Co and Community Council for Australia and the Australian Conservation Foundation.