



**Minutes of Special Council Meeting
Held Wednesday 25 March 2020**

*Held in the Simeon Lord Room
Library / Museum Building
Redbank Street, Esk*

Present

Cr G D Lehmann	(Mayor)
Cr D Hall	(Deputy Mayor)
Cr H Brieschke	(Councillor)
Cr S Choat	(Councillor)
Cr C Gaedtke	(Councillor)
Cr B Whalley	(Councillor)
Mr A Johnson	(Chief Executive Officer)
Mr M McGoldrick	(Director Corporate and Community Services)
Mr C Young	(Director Operations)
Mr L Hannan	(Director Planning and Development)
Mr G Smith	(Director Finance)
Mrs K Jones	(Director HR and Customer Service)
Mrs S Pitkin	(Minute Secretary / Executive Assistant)
Ms M Maesele	(Communications and Marketing Manager)
(by teleconference)	

Apologies:

Cr M Ogg	(Councillor)
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Opening of Meeting

The Mayor, Cr Graeme Lehmann, opened the Special Council Meeting at 8.34 am.

Leave of Absence

Cr Ogg sought leave of absence from attending today's Special Meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes**Resolution**

Moved – Cr Choat

Seconded – Cr Brieschke

“THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 11 March 2020 as circulated by email to all Members of Council be confirmed”.

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	COVID-19 Pandemic Response Sub-Plan
File Ref:	COVID-19
Action Officer:	DMO

Background/Summary

The Council has had to respond swiftly to the Pandemic that was declared on the 11 March 2020. It was established early that we needed a plan to ensure we were able to respond to the threat and ensure that critical functions can be maintained during these uncertain times.

The sub plan provided outlines the strategies required to achieve the identified objectives of;

- Providing of accurate and timely information to all council staff to ensure they are well informed about the situation and have adequate health advice to take measures to protect themselves.
- Ensuring council's critical functions are maintained.
- Minimising of transmission to council staff.

Significant actions have already been undertaken and we will continue to monitor and adapt as necessary. Some of these actions are as follows:

- Staff have commenced dispersing across the region (Esk, Kilcoy, Lowood & Fernvale) with the Esk Civic centre ultimately home to 17 staff. Fernvale Futures is operational with 4 staff members basing themselves from that location;
- A Team Somerset News info letter has been prepared and distributed to all staff;
- Front line staff (customer service, etc.) have been issued with a COVID-19 cleaning schedule. Further, tip sheets provided to all staff about personal hygiene;
- Community messaging on Council VMS LED Boards - **Be hygiene aware: Wash your hands!**

- Website home page has a banner now that links to Qld Health for COVID-19 information;
- Email sent to venue management services about postponement/cancellation of events. No further bookings at the Civic centre for now.
- Library and Visitor centres remain open (wait and see)—waiting for advice from State Agencies or other reliable sources.
- Early voting hours have been extended with advice received from Returning Officer, Ann Bichel. Candidates have been advised directly.
- Currently trialling a bollard system at the Esk admin building to ensure a 1.5m distance is maintained between customer and front-counter staff. If successful, this will be rolled out to Lowood and Kilcoy offices.
- All staff have been given a personal hand sanitiser, and more are on back order.
- Council LDMG is presently on 'Lean Forward' with the IMT on 'Stand Up'.

Council is committed to maintaining all critical services and the sub plan developed, when combined with our Business Continuity Plan, will assist us in achieving this goal in a practical and sustainable manner.

Attachments

Pandemic Subplan (COVID-10) v1.0

Recommendation

THAT Council receive this report and endorse the "Pandemic Subplan (COVID-10) v1.0" as presented (*Attachment A*), noting that the subplan will be updated as further information is provided from Federal and State Government agencies.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Gaedtke

Seconded – Cr Hall

"THAT Council receive this report and endorse the "Pandemic Subplan (COVID-10) v1.0" as presented (*Attachment A*), noting that the subplan will be updated as further information is provided from Federal and State Government agencies."

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Request to temporarily reduce days of operation at Harlin Refuse and Recycling Centre
File Ref:	Waste management - contracting - Coominya Harlin Kilcoy transfer station (1184536)
Action Officer:	CSSA (Debbie Chandler)

Background/Summary

Council engages a contractor, KDG, to operate the Harlin Refuse and Recycling centre. Due to the impacts of COVID-19 virus, there has been a reduction of patronage of the Harlin refuse facility. KDG has requested to reduce the number of days of operation of the Harlin facility

from its current Wednesday to Sunday to Friday to Sunday.

Council operates four refuse and recycling centres, with the current existing days of operation:

- Coominya – Wednesday to Sunday
- Esk – Friday to Tuesday
- Harlin – Wednesday to Sunday
- Kilcoy – Friday to Tuesday

If approved, the only other facility that will currently be open on Wednesday and Thursday will be Coominya, which is operated by the same contractor.

In the Operations Departments Business Continuity Plan, Waste Operations were identified as a critical service to be provided to the community during this period. This includes the ongoing operation of as a minimum a single refuse facility and kerbside collection. Harlin facility, being mid-way between Kilcoy and Esk, was identified as the first facility that could be closed if COVID-19 impacted our contractors to a level where they were unable to operate all facilities. Under the worst-case scenario, the Council-run facility in Esk can be operated as a seven day a week operation by redeploying other Works staff.

Attachments

Letter from KDG requesting reduced days of operation at Harlin Refuse and Recycling Centre.

Recommendation

1. THAT Council approve the reduction in days of operation of the Harlin Refuse and Recycling Centre to Friday to Sunday inclusive.
2. THAT the Chief Executive Officer is empowered to make further changes to waste operations in response to impacts of the COVID-19 virus.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Whalley

Seconded – Cr Hall

- “1. THAT Council approve the reduction in days of operation of the Harlin Refuse and Recycling Centre to Friday to Sunday inclusive.
2. THAT the Chief Executive Officer is empowered to make further changes to waste operations in response to impacts of the COVID-19 virus.”

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Operations Department Report - Response to pandemic
File Ref:	Emergency Services - Emergency Response - 2020 Pandemic - Coronavirus Covid-19
Action Officer:	DOPER

Background/Summary

The Operations leadership team have undertaken business continuity planning to address the risk posed by the current pandemic situation, based on the current information available

supplied by Queensland Health and other government sources.

The business continuity planning is on an alert but not alarmed basis and identifies the critical services provided by the Operational Department. Services that relate directly to public health such as: waste operations, cemetery operations and urgent/hazardous maintenance tasks will be considered the top priority to resource, followed closely by activities that will contribute to the economic stimulus of the region, such as: servicing public open space and designing for infrastructure projects in preparation for potential stimulus grants.

Council is currently delivering several projects associated with government grants, which may be impacted as a result of the pandemic. Extensions of time are being sought as a precautionary measure and alternative delivery methods are also being explored. For example, public consultation for the Local Floodplain Management Plans was planned for April this year, however, this may now be delayed or look to use alternative engagement methods including such methods as print media, online engagement, telephone or video conferencing. It is recognised that these methods may not work for all of our community so it is likely multiple methods may be used.

The Operations Department are well placed to continue to deliver effective services during this unprecedented event to our Somerset community.

Attachments

NIL

Recommendation

THAT Council receive the Operations Department Report, Response to pandemic and that the contents be noted.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Whalley

Seconded – Cr Gaedtke

"THAT Council receive the Operations Department Report, Response to pandemic and that the contents be noted."

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Commercial fees and charges, cost recovery fees, business support and public health and safety
File Ref:	Financial management - fees and charges
Action Officer:	DFIN

Background/Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving public health and economic emergency and it is recommended that flexibility be provided in Council's cost recovery charges and commercial fees and charges.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the following statement be added to the schedule of cost recovery fees:

“COVID 19 Pandemic

The Chief Executive Officer is empowered to waive relevant commercial or regulatory fees relating to the any public health or economic stimulus matter during the COVID 19 pandemic after giving due consideration to matters such as potential conflicts between business development and public health and safety. For example, fees for standing stalls or itinerant vendors in Council parks or roadsides will not be waived where it is considered that there may be a heightened risk of contagion or accident as a result.”

Resolution

Moved – Cr Whalley

Seconded – Cr Choat

“THAT the following statement be added to the schedule of cost recovery fees:

“COVID 19 Pandemic

The Chief Executive Officer is empowered to waive relevant commercial or regulatory fees relating to the any public health or economic stimulus matter during the COVID 19 pandemic after giving due consideration to matters such as potential conflicts between business development and public health and safety. For example, fees for standing stalls or itinerant vendors in Council parks or roadsides will not be waived where it is considered that there may be a heightened risk of contagion or accident as a result.”

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Cash handling and health risks - public waste facilities
File Ref:	Waste management - fees
Action Officer:	DFIN

Background/Summary

Council has budgeted around \$23,000 in public waste facility fees for 2019/2020.

It is recommended for public health reasons that customer interactions be minimised at Council’s four public waste facilities by making waste disposal free for Somerset Residents who dispose of non-regulatory waste.

Three of the four facilities are operated by a contractor, Lockyer Bins (Kaine Diverse Group Pty Ltd).

In principle agreement has been reached with the contractor that if this measure was adopted, Council would reimburse tipping fees foregone (as is already the situation with residents using waste vouchers). Controls would be placed around this.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Chief Executive Officer be empowered to cease charging waste disposal fees for Somerset residents disposing of non-regulatory waste until 30 June 2020.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Choat

Seconded – Cr Gaedtke

"THAT the Chief Executive Officer be empowered to cease charging waste disposal fees for Somerset residents disposing of non-regulatory waste until 30 June 2020."

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Action under section 130 of the Local Government Regulation 2012
File Ref:	Rates and government valuations - rate payments – FY2020
Action Officer:	DFIN

Background/Summary

It is recommended that Council use section 130 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 to potentially save administrative costs in respect of rate payments received during April 2020 and to recognise potential economic challenges due to pandemic. The due date shown on rate notices that issued on 25 February 2020 was 7 April 2020.

The regulation says:

- 130 (7) The local government may, by resolution, change the discount period to end on a later day (the new discount day).
- 130 (8) However, if the discount period is changed under subsection (7), the local government must also, by resolution, change the due date for payment to a later day that is no earlier than the new discount day.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council under subsections 130 (7) and (8) of the Local Government Regulation 2012, change the discount date and the due date for payment for the current rating period to 28 May 2020.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Choat

Seconded – Cr Hall

"THAT Council under subsections 130 (7) and (8) of the Local Government Regulation 2012, change the discount date and the due date for payment for the current rating period to 28 May 2020."

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Pandemic Economic Potential Stimulus - Australian Government Infrastructure Programs - Bridges Renewal Program - Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program
File Ref:	Grants - programs - BRP and HVSP
Action Officer:	DOPER

Background/Summary

The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Michael McCormack MP has announced a joint funding round of the bridges renewal program (BRP) and the heavy vehicle safety and productivity program (HVSP).

Councils are permitted to lodge a maximum of five road or bridge proposals with the maximum government funding available for each proposal to be limited to \$2 million. Councils are required to contribute at least 50% of the cost of each project and all projects must be completed within two years. The implication is that applicants are encouraged to propose projects costing less than \$4 million.

This is a competitive process and Council has been successful in the past with obtaining BRP and HVSP funding through preparation and solid applications. Proposals are due 29 May 2020.

Projects will be assessed on:

- Assessment Criterion 1 – Structural Improvements Contributing to Access and Productivity;
- Assessment Criterion 2 – Evidence of Economic and Social Benefits;
- Assessment Criterion 3 – Construction Readiness and Risk;

Authorisation is sought for Council to focus on bridge renewal projects with its applications, notably:

- Replacement of Lester Kropp Bridge on Neurum Road. Please note that this project may cost in excess of \$4 million.
- Strengthening of 17 timber concrete hybrid (Doolan Deck) bridges throughout Somerset region for rural safety and productivity (one or two proposals)
- Replacement of Sandy Creek Bridge, Copely Lane, Crossdale for rural safety and productivity
- Replacement of Braeburn Road Bridge, Monsildale for rural safety and productivity

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the Chief Executive Officer to lodge five proposals under the Bridges Renewal Program and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program focussing on renewal of ageing Council bridges and committing joint funding for each project of the minimum required amount consistent with the funding guidelines.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Whalley

Seconded – Cr Hall

"THAT Council endorse the Chief Executive Officer to lodge five proposals under the Bridges Renewal Program and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program focussing on renewal of ageing Council bridges and committing joint funding for each project of the minimum required amount consistent with the funding guidelines."

Carried*Vote - Unanimous*

Subject:	Corporate and Community Services Update - Coronavirus
File Ref:	SRC - Community Services - Reporting
Action Officer:	DCORP

Background/Summary

The following is a brief summary of the changes that have been made within Corporate and Community Services to ensure services to the community are sustained where possible and where Council's business will continue:

- The Libraries are remaining open until advised otherwise. Small scale regular events have been cancelled. Staff are providing services to customers but are practising good hygiene and social distancing. Library events for the April school holidays are cancelled. The RADF funded Jillaroo Jive event at the Civic Centre is cancelled;
- All Sport and Recreation facilities and clubs in the Somerset region are now closed;
- The schools are still open but the youth week and school holiday programmes have been cancelled or postponed. The RADF funded movie project has been postponed along with the youth week movie night;
- Facilities are still being cleaned on a regular basis although a request has been made of the cleaners to provide a price for additional cleaning/disinfection and where a facility may require a disinfection should an infection be reported. At this stage things are being prepared rather than actioned;
- IT staff are assisting with the deployment of staff to various locations as part of Council's Business Continuity Plan (BCP). This is stretching the available resources;
- Records and other functions within Corporate and Community are being split to ensure that Council is ready as part of the BCP.

Events generally are either being cancelled, postponed or run without any public attending.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Corporate and Community Services Update re COVID-19 Coronavirus be received and the contents noted.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Brieschke

Seconded – Cr Choat

“THAT the written and verbal Corporate and Community Services Update re COVID-19 Coronavirus be received and the contents noted. It was also noted that Somerset libraries and pools will also be closed from today.”

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Overgrown allotments policy
File Ref:	Corporate management - policy - policy development
Action Officer:	DPAD

Background/Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving public health and economic emergency and it is recommended that greater discretion is provided to the actions and response timeframes outlined in Council's existing *Overgrown allotments policy (C/ 029)*.

Attachments

Proposed Amendments – Overgrown allotments policy

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the inclusion of the following addition in the *Overgrown allotments policy (C / 029)*:

“The Chief Executive Officer is empowered to nominate alternate actions and / or response timeframes nominated under this policy where extraordinary circumstances prevail.”

Resolution

Moved – Cr Gaedtke

Seconded – Cr Brieschke

“THAT Council endorse the inclusion of the following addition in the *Overgrown allotments policy (C/ 029)*:

“The Chief Executive Officer is empowered to nominate alternate actions and / or response timeframes nominated under this policy where extraordinary circumstances prevail.”

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	Tourism Update – Coronavirus
File Ref:	Emergency services - emergency response - 2020 Pandemic - Coronavirus COVID-19
Action Officer:	CMM

Background/Summary

Below is a brief update from the tourism team following the coronavirus outbreak:

- Visitor information centres (VICs) closed on Friday, 20 March, with staff displaying the appropriate signage and providing 'takeaway' information packs outside all centres. Volunteers have been advised they are not required until further notice.
- All room bookings at the four VICs have been cancelled until further notice. An exhibition that was due to be installed at The Condensery this week has been postponed.
- Staff are maintaining a 'Closed and Cancelled' document detailing events and attractions impacted, and this is distributed to the CEO and Customer Service at least once daily. Community calendars and electronic signs are updated as required and staff have visited townships to remove promotional posters.
- Staff continue to manage the Somerset Regional Council, Experience Somerset and The Condensery Facebook pages. Messaging remains clear, concise and calm.
- Staff are maintaining communication with organisers of The Brisbane Airshow. At the time of writing this was going ahead as planned.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council receive the Tourism Update – Coronavirus Report and that the contents be noted.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Choat

Seconded – Cr Brieschke

"THAT Council receive the Tourism Update – Coronavirus Report and that the contents be noted."

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	HR and Customer Service Update COVID-19
File Ref:	SRC - Personnel - employment conditions - directives
Action Officer:	DHRCS

Background/Summary

Business continuity planning has been undertaken in the human resources and customer service department to address the risks associated with the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Control measures have been implemented across the organisation, and are reviewed daily and updated as required, to ensure the health and safety of our employees while retaining the ability to provide continuity of service to the Somerset community.

Weekly information bulletins and daily messaging from the CEO is also being distributed to all staff.

Workforce management

The attached confidential report is provided as a guide to assist Council in the management

of workforce matters associated with COVID-19. In developing this guideline, information and directives provided by the Federal Government, State Government and Queensland Health have been considered. Regard has also been given to Council's responsibilities, obligations and powers under Workplace Health and Safety legislation, Industrial Relations legislation etc.

Attachments

Confidential Report (provided separately)

Recommendation

1. THAT Council receive the HR and Customer Service Update re COVID-19 Report.
2. THAT Council receive and support the separate Confidential Report regarding Workforce Matters – COVID-19.

Resolution

Moved – Cr Choat

Seconded – Cr Hall

- "1. THAT Council receive the HR and Customer Service Update re COVID-19 Report.
2. THAT Council receive and support the separate Confidential Report regarding Workforce Matters – COVID-19."

Carried

Vote - Unanimous

Subject:	COVID 19 – Closure of Customer Service Centres, Libraries and Swimming Pools
File Ref:	COVID-19
Action Officer:	CEO

Background/Summary

Council management has remained agile within the rapidly changing environment bestowed upon us by Coronavirus (COVID-19), with customer service centres, libraries and swimming pools remaining open within a risk management framework. Council staff have worked tirelessly and adapted to find alternative ways to operate safely and keep community centres open.

However, with the increase of confirmed cases of Coronavirus within the West Moreton Health District, advice has been received via the Local Disaster Management Group that Council should now move to close the customer service centres, libraries and swimming pools. Regardless of the closure, Council staff have innovated and will continue to offer customer service to our community, albeit by different approaches.

To enable time to facilitate the closure of customer service centres, libraries and swimming pools, it is suggested that Council remain open until close of business Wednesday 25 March 2020 then remain closed for an indefinite period.

Council will communicate this message via regular media outlets; meanwhile, staff will continue to operate safely as per Federal and State Government messaging.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council proceed with the closure of Somerset Regional Council customer service centres, libraries and swimming pools from close of business Wednesday 25 March 2020, and remain closed for an indefinite period, as a direct result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Resolution

Moved – Cr Choat

Seconded – Cr Brieschke

“THAT Council proceed with the closure of Somerset Regional Council customer service centres, libraries and swimming pools from close of business Wednesday 25 March 2020, and remain closed for an indefinite period, as a direct result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).”

Carried*Vote - Unanimous***Closure of Meeting****Summary**

There being no further business, the Mayor, Cr Graeme Lehmann closed the meeting at 9.24 am.