



# **ATTACHMENTS**

**Tuesday, 7 April 2020**

**UNDER SEPARATE COVER**

**Extraordinary Council Meeting**



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# COVID-19 Community and Economic Development Resilience Package

April 2020



# Rationale

The rapidly changing nature of this crisis and the presently unmeasurable impacts on our community and economy mean that Council will continue to adapt and investigate ways it can assist the community and businesses to be resilient through these challenging times. This package sets a framework for this assistance.

## Guiding principles

- Direct actions to support our community well-being.
- Timely responses which address cash-flow for small business.
- Innovative programs which provide long-term strategic benefits.
- Collaboration with partners and contribution to existing initiatives.
- Financial responsibility for the long-term sustainability of the organisation.



# Phases of delivery

This package has been designed to be delivered in two phases which deal with both the immediate crisis and also the strategic actions which can take place to ensure our businesses and community are in the best position to recover quickly.

- PHASE I – Immediate response
- PHASE II – Strategic recovery actions

Delivery will be implemented through a number of measures including changes to policy, priority actions and operational procedures.



# Phase I: Immediate response

**Timing: Today – June 2020**

**Focus: Community & Economic Resilience**

## Programs:

1. Financial hardship support
2. Local procurement and purchasing
3. Industry resilience taskforce
4. Flexible Council support
5. Compliance assistance for business
6. E-Library services
7. Small business crisis training
8. NRLX vital operations





**Phase I: Immediate response****Financial Hardship Support**

Council has identified the payment of rates and water may become challenging for those who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

The package proposes that zero interest on outstanding payments be charged during the COVID-19 Public Health Order restrictions.

Staff will assist affected ratepayers to enter into payment plans which will aid in the prevention of accumulation of debt.

<b>Short-term benefit</b>	Cash-flow relief for property owners and residents
<b>Cost</b>	The amount of interest Council collects on outstanding rates and charges differs year to year, in the last full financial year, being 2018/19 Council collected \$165,987, year to date the amount is \$93,484. Based on these figures an estimation on what this would cost Council is approximately \$85,000 for a six month period (1 April to 30 September 2020)
<b>Lead</b>	Finance
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	Finance, Customer Service, Communications
<b>Timeframe</b>	Next two weeks
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media announcement</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Inclusion of details in newsletters (hard copy and eNews) to ensure all residents are provided with information.</li> </ul>



**Phase I: Immediate response****Local procurement and purchasing**

Councils procurement team will issue an instruction notice to staff undertaking procurement activities that an additional 10% weighting in favour of local contractors and suppliers should be added when undertaking procurement during the COVID-19 crisis.

Invoices from existing contracts with local suppliers will be processed within seven days following approval, and subject to available staff resourcing.

<b>Short-term benefit</b>	Improves cash flow for local businesses and will act to stimulate local economic activity.
<b>Legacy</b>	Greater awareness of local suppliers
<b>Cost</b>	Potential for indirect costs which are not yet measurable.
<b>Lead</b>	Purchasing
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	Finance, Customer Service, Communications and all staff undertaking engagement of contractors.
<b>Timeframe</b>	Next two weeks
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media announcement</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Inclusion of details in newsletters (hard copy and eNews) to ensure all residents are provided with information.</li> </ul>

**Phase I: Immediate response****Industry resilience taskforce**

Establish a taskforce of regional representatives to develop ways to provide innovative and targeted support to heavily impacted local industries.

<b>Short-term benefit</b>	A strong network of industry representatives who are best placed to implement significant benefits for the region.
<b>Legacy</b>	Stronger, more resilient industries.
<b>Cost</b>	No additional cost to Council
<b>Lead</b>	Economic Development
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	General Manager, Communications
<b>Timeframe</b>	Two weeks
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct communication with taskforce stakeholders</li> </ul>



**Phase I: Immediate response****Flexible Council support**

Richmond Valley Council has committed to giving businesses and individuals flexibility to ease pressures relating to COVID-19.

This flexible approach will allow essential businesses and service providers to operate responsively to changing needs in line with the latest advice from the Australian and NSW governments.

- Library services: extended loan period and put a hold on overdue notices and fines.  
Cost: approximately \$500
- Supporting more flexible delivery times and truck movements at supermarkets.  
Cost: no additional cost to Council
- Support for doctors' surgeries to stay open longer and businesses to adapt to continue to operate under the requirements of public health orders.  
Cost: no additional cost to Council
- Restrictions on the way businesses use footpaths be eased for food premises to help patrons practice effective social distancing.  
Cost: no additional cost to Council
- Refund of booking fees to people and organisations who have booked Council venues and are now unable to proceed with their bookings  
Costs: Average reservations for Bookable for period 1/4/20 to 30/6/20: \$7,200.  
Seasonal sports bookings (some fees not yet raised) total \$18,800, however, partial renewals are anticipated in some cases which will reduce this cost.
- Parking fines – focus to be on education and information for the period to 30 June 2020, with fines only issued for safety, health and disability access reasons.  
Cost: Forgone revenue estimated at \$12,500

**Phase I: Immediate response****Compliance assistance for business**

Some businesses may have to change the way they operate in order to comply with NSW Public Health Orders. Council's Environmental Health Officers will be undertaking educational inspections for food premises to assist businesses, and to help provide assurances to the community that safe food standards are still being achieved.

<b>Short-term benefit</b>	Improves cash flow for local businesses and encourages businesses to continue to comply with food, health and safety standards.
<b>Cost</b>	No additional cost to Council
<b>Lead</b>	Development and Environment
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	Finance, Customer Service, Communications
<b>Timeframe</b>	Next two weeks
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media announcement</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Inclusion of details in newsletters (hard copy and eNews) to ensure all residents are provided with information.</li> </ul>



## Phase I: Immediate response

### e-Library services

Council's library service is a powerful way of supporting vulnerable people in our community.

With COVID-19 impacting more people, whether by illness or the need to stay at home, we are encouraging residents to make use of our extensive e-Library services.

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/community-services/libraries-2/elibrary/>

<b>Short-term benefit</b>	During periods of isolation, access to library facilities will enable personal well-being and enjoyment. The Library currently has more than 16,700 members, making it a powerful way of supporting vulnerable people in our community.
<b>Legacy</b>	More resilient communities which will continue to utilise library resources after the crisis.
<b>Cost</b>	No additional cost to Council
<b>Lead</b>	Library
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	Customer Service, Communications
<b>Timeframe</b>	Immediate
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media announcement</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Inclusion of details in newsletters (hard copy and eNews) to ensure all residents are provided with information.</li> </ul>

**Phase I: Immediate response****Small business crisis training**

Council has engaged online training experts “Brand Local” to provide a crisis training program for businesses.

The course is specifically designed to give businesses a plan on how they can adapt their businesses to not only survive this crisis but to thrive. It also teaches businesses what they must do right now to ensure they have a quick recovery once this crisis ends.

<b>Short-term benefit</b>	Assisting small business to develop ways to adapt to respond to the current crisis.
<b>Legacy</b>	Stronger businesses who recover quickly and are more resilient to future events.
<b>Cost</b>	\$7500 plus GST
<b>Lead</b>	Economic Development
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	Customer Service, Communications
<b>Timeframe</b>	Two weeks
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media announcement</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Inclusion of details in newsletters (hard copy and eNews) to ensure all residents are provided with information.</li> </ul>



**Phase I: Immediate response****NRLX vital operations**

Council acknowledges the essential role livestock sales have with producers, as well as to maintain the food supply for consumers.

Adaptions are being implemented to ensure operations continue at the NRLX for as long as possible. This includes fast tracking the implementation of the Stocklive online sales/bidding streaming capability, and operational adaptions to comply with social distancing measures to ensure the safety of both staff and stakeholders.

<b>Short-term benefit</b>	Maintaining facilities vital for the continuation of the food supply chain.
<b>Legacy</b>	More resilient NRLX business which continues to provide services to major employment generating industries.
<b>Cost</b>	Costs for the establishment of Stocklive include \$10,500 in infrastructure and equipment. A fee structure for the use of the online platform will be implemented in the 2020-2021 financial year.
<b>Lead</b>	NRLX
<b>Internal stakeholders</b>	Customer Service, Communications
<b>Timeframe</b>	Immediate
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media announcement</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Inclusion of details in newsletters (hard copy and eNews) to ensure all residents are provided with information.</li> </ul>



## Phase I: Financial summary

Program	Proposed budget
Financial hardship support	\$85,000
Local procurement and purchasing	\$0
Industry resilience taskforce	\$0
Flexible Council support	\$39,000
Compliance assistance for business	\$0
eLibrary services	\$0
Small business crisis training	\$7500
NRLX adoptions	\$10,500
<b>Estimate of total costs for Phase I</b>	<b>\$142,000</b>

# Phase II: Strategic recovery actions

**Timing: July 2020 – June 2021**

**Focus: Looking to the future**

## Programs:

1. Infrastructure and bushfire recovery actions
2. Government advocacy
3. Sustainability programs
4. Events promotion
5. Community grants program
6. Tourism promotion



## Phase II: Proposed programs July 2020 – June 2021

Budgets to be developed and proposed in May 2020 as part of the 2020/21 budget

Name	Detail	Benefit
Infrastructure and bushfire recovery actions	Roll out an infrastructure program and bushfire recovery actions in 2020/21. Shovel-ready projects to be prioritised and funded at the earliest possible time.	Increased provision of local infrastructure and economic activity.
Government Advocacy	Strategic advocacy campaign to the Australian and NSW governments to access increased funding in forthcoming budgets to assist in developing projects which create economic growth in the region.	Government commitment to the future of the Richmond Valley and the effective delivery of the significant regional projects.
Sustainability Programs	Investigation into the feasibility of implementation of renewable energy initiatives including microgrids to encourage sustainable development in the region.	Sustainable growth which facilitates the creation of new employment opportunities and diversification of industries.
Events promotion	Provide assistance for rescheduled events from across autumn and winter to provide the Valley with an unprecedented level of activity and events (scheduled once safe). Provide marketing and promotional assistance and review events funding schemes.	Richmond Valley tourism has re-opened for business and opportunity. Events will drive local activity. To be included in 2020/21 budget
Community Grants Program	A targeted round of Community Grants to assist the community through the recovery phase.	Applicants are provided with funds to support local-based recovery programs noting the increased social challenges reflective of a higher unemployment rate.
Tourism promotion	Tourism is a key regional industry and has been heavily impacted by the crisis. This strategy includes development of a destination management plan to set out the vision for the future of tourism in the valley.	Tourism operators are given structure around recovery and future resilience.

## Communication and Consultation:

A communications plan is being developed to wrap all of these initiatives together and promote them to our local community. This will incorporate:

- Actively sharing innovative stories from the local business community about how they are responding to the challenges faced and promoting ways to continue to support local business.
- Engaging with regional councils to consider regional impacts and develop plans which support community, business and industry and to help prepare for recovery planning.
- Communication and engagement will include key stakeholders for both the implementation and promotion of the program to ensure maximum benefit to the community.

