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BUSINESS PAPER

Updated Item

Ordinary Council Meeting

21 April 2020

Warwick Bennett
General Manager

We hereby give notice that an Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on:

Tuesday, 21 April 2020 at 6pm
in the Council Chambers, Civic Centre
184 - 194 Bourke Street, Goulburn

Order Of Business

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Cr Bob Kirk
Mayor

Warwick Bennett
General Manager

15 REPORTS TO COUNCIL FOR DETERMINATION

15.1 COVID-19 UPDATE - AS AT 17 APRIL 2020

Author: Warwick Bennett, General Manager

Authoriser: Warwick Bennett, General Manager

- Attachments:**
1. Office Of Local Government COVID-19 Update 17 April 2020
 2. Minister for Local Government Media Release
 3. OLG Circular Statutory Requirements in response to COVID-19
 4. Media Release 'Make a BOOKing'

Link to Community Strategic Plan:	Leadership in the Community
Cost to Council:	Unknown at this time but we propose to undertake ongoing reviews of the budget implications.
Use of Reserve Funds:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The report from the General Manager on COVID-19 Update be received.
2. Council endorse the following process for the notification of public advertisements.
 - a) Placing all Council ads in full on the Council website
 - b) Placing postings on our Facebook page summarise the ads and directing residents to the website
 - c) Having the Communications Manager pre-record for all three local radio stations a summary of the ads and directing residents to the website or phoning the Council Office for a hard copy.
 - d) Placing full copies of the advertisements in the foyer of the Civic Centre, and suitable locations in Tarago Marulan and Tallong
3. Council does not change the time table for the adoption of the Delivery and Operational Plan 2020/2021 or the levying of rates and annual charges.
4. The General Manager present to Council in May 2020 an addendum to the Hardship Policy that will provide assistance to rate payers who can give evidence that they are financially adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

REPORT

This report is to highlight the issues that are effecting the organisation since the last report.

I am pleased to advise that the number of positive cases in the Goulburn Mulwaree local government area since the last report have remained steady with the vast majority of positive cases now being reported as totally recovered.

The majority of our time has been focused on ensuring that our staff resource are well protected in the workplace from the virus and that essential services are maintained.

As an initial position we have in some cases reduced the level of service. The one service we are reviewing and proposing at this time to return to full operating hours is our waste management centres. The re-opening of these facilities to normal operating hours should be effective from the week beginning 27th April 2020. This is of course very much subject to the current position of limited cases of positive coronavirus in the community being maintained.

Also from Monday 27 April 2020 we will commence a partial library service which will be known as 'Make a BOOKing'. This will be similar to a 'Click and Collect' service that will provide access to Library and audio books, DVD's, CDs, games and magazines whilst the Library itself remains closed.

Please find attached the media release explaining this new service.

Other facilities such as libraries, the Gallery, Aquatic Centre, museums, playground sports fields etc will remain closed as per the direction of Government.

Those staff who normally work in what are now closed facilities are being re-deployed to other tasks in the organisation. Unless staff are truly categorised as vulnerable they will be required to work full time. Some staff have the capability of working from home and we have limited that to a maximum of 3 days per week.

We continue to do research on what will be the effect on our finances after 1 July 2020. We are confident that we will maintain our income stream until then – with the exception of Commercial waste – but after that income from rates may be challenging. At a State level we have undertaken a survey of all General Managers on a variety of issues and are preparing a position paper for the Local Government sector to consider.

Also attached is information from the Office of Local Government notifying that Councils no longer are required to advertise in local newspapers. As Council is aware the Goulburn Post has suspended the printing of the hard copy of the paper until the 30 June 2020. We propose to put the following process in place:

1. Placing all Council ads in full on the Council website
2. Placing postings on our Facebook page summarise the ads and directing residents to the website
3. Having the Communications Manager pre-record for all three local radio stations a summary of the ads and directing residents to the website or phoning the Council Office for a hard copy.
4. Placing full copies of the advertisements in the foyer of the Civic Centre, and suitable locations in Tarago Marulan and Tallong

Council received from the attached circular from the Office of Local Government that regulations have been changed to provide a one month extension for the Operational Plan and Budget (including the Revenue Policy and Statement of Fees and Charges). Further Government has allowed delay in the issuing of rates notices to 1 September 2020 – usually 1 August 2020. The recommendation in this report is to continue with the existing time frames. We don't believe that a one month delay will have any significant effect, although this may need to be reviewed if this pandemic deteriorates within the Goulburn Mulwaree area. I note that the Prime Minister has made the public statement that he expects a relaxation on the restrictions placed on the Australian community to commence in about 4 weeks.

Although this report is not recommending a delay in the adoption of the Operation Plan and the issuing of rates notice we believe that Council needs to develop an addendum to the Hardship Policy that takes into account the COVID-19 pandemic. As you would all be aware a number of businesses will have had a significant effect on their operating income in fact some have closed and that income has reduced to \$0. We will be proposing that this addendum to the hardship policy be placed before Council in May 2020 and will give those rate payers (not just businesses) that can prove that they have had a significant effect from the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity to pay off their rates over a two year period with no penalties. That is our current thinking and we will put that draft addendum to the policy to the Council probably on the 19 May 2020 as it will not be effective until 1 July 2020.

Amy Croker

From: Office of Local Government <newsletter@info.olg.nsw.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 17 April 2020 10:30 AM
To: Warwick L Bennett
Subject: COVID-19 Council Update - 17 April 2020



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COVID-19 COUNCIL UPDATE

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17 April 2020



New COVID-19 regulations help councils and their communities

The NSW Government has today made a series of regulatory changes to ensure council resources continue to be focused on frontline COVID-19 response efforts and allow councils to provide financial relief to businesses and residents.

Regulations have been made under section 747B of the *Local Government Act 1993* to temporarily modify the application of the Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amendments include:

- Allowing councils to delay sending out the first quarterly rates notice for 2020-21 and extend the payment deadline by one month
- Enabling councils to immediately waive or reduce fees for services such as food premise inspections and footpath usage for COVID-19 affected businesses, without the need to provide 28 days public notice
- Providing councils with a one-month extension to adopt their 2020-21 operational plans and budgets and submit their 2019-20 audited financial statements and annual reports. Councils will also have an extra month to submit their last quarterly budget review statement for 2019-20, and
- Removing the requirement for documents to be made available for inspection at council offices, if the document is published on the council's website or available electronically.

Amendments have also been made to remove the requirement for council notices to be advertised in newspapers and instead allow the relevant notice to be published on the council's website. This is not a temporary measure and will be ongoing.

The Office of Local Government has today issued a circular providing local councils with further technical information about the new regulations.

Read the [Minister's media release](#) and the [OLG circular](#).

Let us showcase your council's great work during pandemic

Many councils are doing incredible work for their local communities in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. That inspirational work should be celebrated.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) wants to hear from councils to share their success stories and acknowledge the contribution of individual teams and staff members.

If you have a story to tell, please send a 200-300 word description, a photo and any relevant links to media@olg.nsw.gov.au. Success stories will be published on the OLG website.





Information and resources

Online survey reminder

OLG is reminding councils to complete an online survey each day to make it easier to report their needs and issues.

Data on COVID-19 cases

Councils can access the latest data on the number of COVID-19 cases by local government area and by local health district on the NSW Health website here.

Quicklinks

Councils can access the latest information and resources about COVID-19 on the NSW Government, NSW Health, Commonwealth Government and Commonwealth Department of Health websites. The Office of Local Government also has a COVID-19 section on its website.

Please click here to unsubscribe from our mail list.



Shelley Hancock
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 17 April 2020

REGULATORY CHANGES TO TAKE PRESSURE OFF RATEPAYERS, BUSINESSES AND COUNCILS

The NSW Government has today made a series of regulatory changes to ensure council resources continue to be focused on frontline COVID-19 response efforts and allow councils to provide financial relief to businesses and residents.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said the changes acknowledge that councils are redirecting resources to ensure the delivery of essential services to their communities across the State.

“Councils are playing a vital role in supporting and protecting local communities during these unprecedented times,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The changes provide councils with the flexibility to adjust to rapidly shifting circumstances.

“Importantly, they also give ratepayers more time to pay their rates notices and allows councils to provide financial support to businesses suffering from reduced cashflows or forced closure by waiving or reducing fees.”

Amendments to local government regulations include:

- Allowing councils to delay sending out the first quarterly rates notice for 2020-21 and extend the payment deadline by one month;
- Enabling councils to immediately waive or reduce fees for services such as food premise inspections and footpath usage for COVID-19 affected businesses, without the need to provide 28 days public notice;
- Providing councils with a one-month extension to adopt their 2020-21 operational plans and budgets and submit their 2019-20 audited financial statements and annual reports. Councils will also have an extra month to submit their last quarterly budget review statement for 2019-20;
- Removing the requirement for documents to be made available for inspection at council offices, if the document is published on the council's website or available electronically; and
- Removing the requirement for council notices to be advertised in newspapers and instead allow the relevant notice to be published on the council's website.

“The NSW Government will continue to work with local councils to identify, develop and implement more measures to support them and their local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Mrs Hancock said.

MEDIA: Nicholas Story | 0438 255 020



Circular Details	20-12/ 17 April 2020 / A696830
Previous Circular	20-06 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Development Updates
Who should read this	General Managers / Finance, Governance and Integrated Planning and Reporting staff
Contact	Council Performance Team / 02 4428 4100 / olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Council to Implement

Modification of statutory requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

What's new or changing

- Regulations have been made under section 747B of the *Local Government Act 1993* to temporarily modify the application of the Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The regulations made under section 747B modify the Act as follows:
- Councils have been provided with a one-month extension:
 - to adopt their 2020-21 Operational Plan (including Revenue Policy, Statement of Fees and Charges and annual budget) before 31 July 2020;
 - to submit audited financial reports by 30 November 2020; and
 - for the preparation and publishing of annual reports by 31 December 2020.
- Councils have the option to delay issuing rates notices to ratepayers until 1 September 2020, and the collection of the first quarter rates instalment until 30 September 2020.
- Councils may immediately waive or reduce fees under a new "COVID-19" category.
- The requirement for councils to make certain documents available for physical inspection at their offices has been modified to allow access to the documents to be provided remotely.
- In addition to these temporary measures, in response to the closure of some local newspapers and to assist councils to reduce their costs, the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (the Regulation) has been amended to remove requirements for newspaper advertising. This amendment is not temporary and will continue to apply after the COVID-19 pandemic passes.

What this will mean for your council

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an exceptional set of circumstances with unprecedented impacts. The NSW Government is committed to supporting local councils and their communities during this period of uncertainty.
- To provide NSW councils with flexibility to adjust to the rapidly shifting circumstances and to allow them to provide appropriate financial support to their local communities, a number of statutory deadlines for 2019-20 and 2020-21 have been modified. These are set out in the table below:

Section of LG Act	Prior deadline	New deadline
Submission of audited Financial Reports – 416(1)	31 October 2020	30 November 2020
Preparation and publish of Annual Reports – 428(1)	30 November 2020	31 December 2020

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 Locked Bag 3015 NOWRA NSW 2541
 T 02 4428 4100 F 02 4428 4199 TTY 02 4428 4209
 E olg@olg.nsw.gov.au W www.olg.nsw.gov.au ABN 20 770 707 468

Section of LG Act	Prior deadline	New deadline
Adoption of Operational Plan - 405(1)	By 1 July 2020	By 1 August 2020
Making of a rate or charge - 533	By 1 August 2020	By 1 September 2020
Date by which quarterly rates are payable - 562(3)(a)	31 August 2020	30 September 2020
Quarterly review statements (QBRS) - CI 203(1) of Regulation	The third quarter 2019-20 QBRS (currently due May 2020)	Third quarter QBRS - June 2020 . All future QBRS remain due as per Regulation.

- In exercising discretion to extend the making of a rate or charge under section 533 or the collection of rates under 562(3)(a) of the Act, each Council must consider both the financial circumstances of local ratepayers and the potential impact such actions would have on the general cashflow of Council.
- The Government recognises that there may be circumstances where adopting such extensions may not be appropriate or desirable for councils.
- Councils do not need to resolve to extend the date to adopt its Operational Plan, issue rates notices or collect the first rates instalment. A council may, however, choose to direct its General Manager to submit an Operational Plan for adoption prior to 1 July 2020 and to ensure that its rates and charges notices are served by 1 August 2020 (as is normally the case under legislation).
- Councils should also note that there are no changes to the provisions in the following table at this time. However, the Government is continuing to monitor the broader strategic and operating environment for local councils.

Section	Ongoing requirement
405(2)	Councils Operational Plan must include a statement of a council's revenue policy
405(3)	Council must give public notice of draft Operational Plan for not less than 28 days
405(6)	Council must post a copy of its Operational Plan on website within 28 days after the plan is adopted

Extension of the ability of councils to waive or reduce fees

- The application of section 610E of the Act has been broadened to allow councils to waive or reduce fees under a newly established "COVID-19" category, which has been added to the Regulation.
- This means that councils can immediately apply the waiver or reduction without establishing a new category or going through the normal public notice requirements of section 610E(2) for adding new categories.
- Councils may choose to apply such a waiver or reduction, for example, in cases where a business has seen significantly reduced income as a result of COVID-19. The application of any such waiver or reduction of fees is voluntary and is decision for each council based on local circumstances.
- Councils do not need to resolve to waive or reduce fees under the "COVID-19" category if the existing powers delegated to the General Manager include the power to determine a new category in which a council may waive or reduce fees.

Modification of requirements for councils to make certain documents available for inspection

- Under the regulations, the requirements under the Act for councils to make documents physically available for inspection will be satisfied if:

Office of Local Government
 5 O'Keefe Avenue NOWRA NSW 2541
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 E olg@olg.nsw.gov.au W www.olg.nsw.gov.au ABN 20 770 707 468

- in the case of a document that is “open access information” for the purposes of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (the GIPA Act), the information contained in the document is published on the council’s website and is made available on request in an electronic form or in such other manner determined by the council.
- in the case of a document that is not “open access information” for the purposes of the GIPA Act, the information contained in the document is made available on request in an electronic form or in such other manner determined by the council.

Removal of newspaper advertising requirements under the Regulation

- To alleviate the red tape burden on councils and to reduce their costs, amendments have also been made to the Regulation to remove remaining requirements for notices to be published in newspapers.
- Councils are now instead required to publish notices on their websites and in such other manner that they consider necessary to bring it to the notice of the local community or other interested persons.

Key points

- Regulations may be made under section 747B to modify the application of the Act for the purposes of responding to the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Regulations may only be made under section 747B if:
 - Parliament is not currently sitting and is not likely to sit within 2 weeks after the day the regulations are made, and
 - the arrangements made by the provisions of the regulations are in accordance with advice issued by the Minister for Health and Medical Research or the Chief Health Officer, and
 - the regulations are reasonable to protect the health, safety and welfare of persons.
- Regulations made under section 747B automatically expire after 6 months or earlier if decided by the Parliament.

Where to go for further information

- For further information please contact the Council Performance Team on 02 4428 4100 or by email at olg@olg.nsw.gov.au.



Tim Hurst
Deputy Secretary
Local Government, Planning and Policy

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17th April 2020

Mayor: Councillor Bob Kirk

General Manager: Warwick Bennett

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

Goulburn Mulwaree Library launches click and collect service

Make a BOOKing! Goulburn Mulwaree Library is offering a new click and collect BOOKing service to provide essential access to Library books and audio-books, DVDs, CDs, games, and magazines while the Library is closed.

The team at Goulburn Mulwaree Library believe that having access to books and other resources is essential for the health and wellbeing of the Goulburn Mulwaree community during these unprecedented and difficult times. From Monday 27 April, Library members will be able to borrow from the Library using the new click and collect BOOKing service.

To use the service, Library members just need to make a reservation online via the Library's catalogue.

When reserved items are ready for collection, Library members will be notified via email or SMS, and can then visit the front of the Library between 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm weekdays to collect reserved items. The Library returns chute will also be open weekdays 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm for returning borrowed items.

Whether you're reading a great new release novel, or catching up on classics; looking for craft and hobby ideas, helping kids learning from home, or just looking for some great movies to pass the time, the Library has something to suit everyone.

"Reading is a great way to feel connected to the world, and find a little bit of joy in these tough times", said Library Manager Erin Williams.

"We are so pleased to be able to continue providing access to Library resources, whether it's via our online collections or using our new click and collect BOOKing service. Please get in touch with us if you need some help reserving items or re-setting your password".

When coming to collect your items from the Library, please maintain social distancing measures, and follow directions from Library staff. If you are unwell or have any symptoms of illness please do not come to the Library. Library staff will not serve you if you are symptomatic.

For more information or assistance, please call the Library on (02) 4823 4435 or email library@goulburn.nsw.gov.au

Please find conditions for the Goulburn Mulwaree Library BOOKing service on the following page.

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MEDIA INTERVIEWS: Please contact Goulburn Mulwaree Council's Communications Manager
Jackson Reardon on 4823 4515



17th April 2020

Mayor: Councillor Bob Kirk

General Manager: Warwick Bennett

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

Conditions:

1. You must be a current member of Goulburn Mulwaree Library to use the BOOKing service
 - If you're not a member, you can join online and access our online resources only
2. Maximum of 5 reservations at any one time
3. Reservations may be placed on Goulburn owned items only
 - We recommend reserving items that are currently available so you can collect them more quickly
 - Reservations on items held at Crookwell or Gunning will not be processed until the Library re-opens
 - Reservations on items that are on loan will not be available until the items are returned
4. You must be receiving SMS or email library notices. If you currently receive postal notices, you'll need to contact the Library to change to email or SMS
5. Once your items are ready to collect, you'll have 10 days to pick them up from the front of the Library
6. You must show your Library card or other ID when coming to collect. If collecting for someone else, you must have their Library card when you come to collect
7. Items will be loaned to you until 1 August, and will be extended if the Library has not re-opened
8. Loans can be returned via the outdoor returns chute between 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm weekdays
9. The Library building will not be open to the public. Only reserved items are able to be collected

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MEDIA INTERVIEWS: Please contact Goulburn Mulwaree Council's Communications Manager
Jackson Reardon on 4823 4515