


















RELIEF AND RECOVERY PLAN



Council plays a vital role in the response, relief and recovery efforts during times of crisis and emergency. The recent COVID-19 Pandemic is no exception.

So far Council has:

-  Placed greater emphasis on buying local and using local services where possible;
-  Waived fees to support local businesses, clubs and users;
-  Worked with Council leasees and facility hirers to reduce financial burdens;
-  Implemented a seven-day payment cycle to ensure our creditors receive payment as soon as practicable;
-  Enacted the COVID-19 Hardship Policy to hold interest on any debtor or rates accounts and to cease debt recovery processes on any outstanding debts or to defer payments;
-  Implemented the Federal Government's Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package, which provide free childcare;
-  Supported local health service planning and communications;
-  Worked with local community groups to help them to navigate restrictions;
-  Increased services to our Community Care customers to reduce risks of social isolation and respond to additional needs brought on by restrictions;
-  Developed a new program in partnership with Carers Gateway and local schools to support remote learning and improve access to the internet;
-  Continued to deliver on Capital Works Program, including delivery of the projects supported by the Drought Communities Programme - Extension;
-  Directly contacted local small businesses to provide information and supporting access to State and Federal government support payments and programs;
-  Developed a television and radio campaign promoting Council support services and encouraging the community to support local business;
-  Liaised with business leaders on the type of support required by the business community;
-  Delivered Council's annual influenza immunisation program with over 1100 people immunised against season flu so far;
-  Participated in State and regional emergency management and relief forums and processes; and
-  Implemented Council's Pandemic Plan

At present Council is:

-  Working with the Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee to develop a Community Recovery Plan which will be delivered in conjunction with the current Drought Community Resilience Plan;
-  Working on plans to reopen Council services and facilities as restrictions ease;
-  Working with cafés, restaurants, beauty therapists, caravan parks and accommodation premises to ensure compliance as restrictions ease;
-  Developing a range of media and marketing campaigns to support business recovery;
-  Develop a business services training and skills development plan; Monitoring and updating information on Government support services;
-  Developing a Gannawarra relocation campaign and buy local campaign;
-  Working with representatives of the retail sector to monitor business support programs;
-  Securing economic stimulus funding to support new and existing projects and encourage commercial investment including:
 - Cohuna Waterfront and CBD upgrades
 - Kerang Industrial Estate expansion (Tate Drive Final Stage)
 - Koondrook All Abilities Playground
 - Roads funding; and
-  Supporting new and emerging commercial businesses to drive local jobs

In the future Council will:

-  Lead the development of a Community Relief and Recovery Action Plan to support social, economic and environmental recovery across Gannawarra communities;
-  Work directly with community to ensure the delivery of timely and appropriate relief and recovery support;
-  Partner with community organisations to develop a network to support mental health and wellbeing;
-  Partner with community groups to develop plans which support volunteering;
-  Bid for further grant funding from State and Federal government as part of economic stimulus;
-  Support and coordinate a Gannawarra Business Action Team to support small business recovery;
-  Continue to develop major projects that support commercial development and employment;
-  Maintain a strong marketing and promotion campaign aimed at increasing visitation;
-  Continue to develop major agricultural projects aimed at providing employment and local investment;
-  Advocate for continued investment in economic recovery through State and Federal funding packages;
-  Work in partnership to support the re-starting of events and community activity when it is safe to do so; and
-  Support a range of initiatives that strengthen capacity for safer and more resilience communities into the future