

ATTACHMENT TO AGENDA ITEM

Ordinary Meeting

16 June 2020

Agenda Item 10.6	Greater Shepparton Economic Response to COVID-19 Package Stage 2	
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Greater Shepparton Economic Response to COVID-19 Package Stage 2 “Road to Recovery” Response Plan

Greater Shepparton City Council acted quickly to support our community and businesses to lessen the burden of the significant social and economic consequences of COVID-19. We truly understand members of our community are doing it tough. As a Council, we are committed to supporting our community on the road to recovery.

In response to COVID-19 Council immediately initiated a suite of measures through the introduction of a Stage 1, Greater Shepparton Economic Response to COVID-19 Package on 31 March 2020. The Stage 1 Package included 21 targeted initiatives and aimed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of Greater Shepparton residents, our vulnerable community, and provided immediate and ongoing support to our local businesses experiencing devastating levels of disruption and uncertainty.

While the local economic effects from the pandemic are yet to be fully understood, the Package provided timely financial and direct support to businesses and the broader community to assist in managing and navigating the immediate and ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

Council is now ready to deliver a Stage 2 Economic Response Package valued at over \$2 million as we start the journey to recovery. Stage 2 focuses on business and economy, our community, our visitor economy and events. We will also continue to advocate to State and Federal governments to fund major initiatives designed to stimulate our economy and speed up the recovery process.

Stage 2 will continue to strengthen the on-going resilience and capacity within the community, as well as enabling Council to be more agile in its planning, processing and delivery of services.

Council's Stage 2 Economic Response targets four areas:

Business and Economy Community

Visitor Economy Advocacy

Business and Economy

1. Implementing the Working for Victoria initiative in Greater Shepparton, creating in excess of 200 jobs in Greater Shepparton.
2. A Business Rebound and Resilience Mentoring Program utilising a locally focused mentoring approach to support local businesses to adapt to changing work practices and models to support reactivation, recovery and future planning.
3. Greater Shepparton business and services recovery campaign "You Want it We Got it" to increase local and regional spend and assist with financial recovery for Greater Shepparton businesses.
4. Great Things Happen Here – Getting Greater - Invest and Grow campaign to market the Greater Shepparton region as the place to invest, start or grow an existing business. With a push to invest in Australian-based manufacturing, Greater Shepparton is strongly positioned to attract further manufacturing initiatives to the area.
5. Great Things Happen Here - Careers and Lifestyles strategy aimed at workforce attraction and retention. Enticing more people to live regionally and encouraging our young people to learn, earn and live locally. This will also support our local tertiary education sector and provide a localised workforce to fill existing and future skills and workforce gaps.
6. A 10% reduction on fees for class two and three food businesses, beauty and accommodation premises. The fee reduction excludes supermarkets and large food manufacturers.
7. Reduction in rent by 50% for tenants of Council owned buildings or facilities from 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020.
8. Council to work with State and Federal Governments on leveraging significant COVID-19 stimulus funding opportunities to increase job creation and economic activity in the region, such as the Maude Street Mall Redevelopment, Museum of Vehicle Evolution project and Local Road and Community Infrastructure program
9. Ensure the 2050 Regional Growth Plan supports the investigation of long term growth areas to ensure sufficient land supply.
10. Bring forward the strategic work program relating to future industrial and residential growth corridors to ensure that the corridors are in a position to be developed when needed and ensure sufficient land supply - 15 years of zoned supply
11. Businesses are able to enter into a payment arrangement or apply for financial hardship consideration regarding rates. No interest will be raised on business rates from 16 March 2020 until 30 September 2020.

Community

12. COVID-19 Community Quick Response Round 1 Grant Program across Arts grants, Community Matching, Our Sporting Future and Events grants to access funding faster to implement community projects and activities to aid and adapt in COVID-19 activation and recovery. A total pool of \$150,000 is available.
13. In partnership with the Greater Shepparton Response develop a whole of community response recovery campaign.
14. Increased support of an additional \$20,000 to support Shepparton Food Share.
15. Increased support of an additional \$10,000 to support Shepparton Family and Financial Services initiatives.
16. Continued financial support of Greater Shepparton Foundation.
17. In partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services support the Community Activation and Social Isolation (CASI) initiative.
18. Reduction in rent by 50% for tenants of Council owned buildings or facilities from 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020.
19. All fees waived for all sport clubs who lease Council managed buildings/facilities in 2020/2021.
20. All Section 86 Committees of Management of Recreation Reserves and DELWP owned Committee of Managements of Recreation Reserves reimbursed for utility costs for 2020/2021.
21. All fees waived for Council managed outdoor sports facilities (excluding light charges) for the 2020/2021 financial year.
22. Indoor Sports facilities Support Program to provide foundation user groups peak court hire at off peak rates for 2020/2021 bookings.
23. Residents are able to enter into a payment arrangement or apply for financial hardship consideration regarding rates. No interest will be raised on resident rates from 16 March 2020 until 30 September 2020

Visitor Economy

24. COVID-19 Visitor Economy Recovery and Activation Grant Program for visitor economy businesses including the accommodation sector, transport operators, event suppliers and contractors, tour companies, attractions, wellness tourism, farm gate experiences, retail who have a direct link to local produce, hospitality and food production. A total funding pool of \$125,000 available with grants of up to \$5,000 per business available.
25. Supporting tourism campaigns and visitor economy support initiatives identified in the tourism recovery and activation plan developed in partnership with the region's tourism industry. This includes visitor campaigns focussing on visiting friends and relatives, overnight and short stays and key initiatives such as the Good Grub Food project development to enhance the region's reputation as the food bowl, grow visitation and economic stimulus opportunities in COVID-19 recovery.

26. Development of a COVID-19 Events Capacity Building Program to enable event organisers to implement and adapt to the COVID-19 environment i.e. Safety Officer training course and sessions on health, risk and marketing.
27. Development of COVID-19 Virtual Events Program and Event Transition and Adaption Program to enable adaptation to the current environment to ensure Greater Shepparton's reputation as a leading events destination continues and is well placed to capitalise on a new COVID-19 major events delivery and acquisition model.

Advocacy

28. Continue to advocate to the State and Federal Governments on stimulus opportunities to allow local Councils to provide targeted infrastructure projects and support initiatives for residents and businesses.
29. Partner with State and Federal Governments to identify the most efficient process for our community to access upcoming funding programs.
30. Advocate to the State Government to extend and increase funding to the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) so that important strategic work can be fast tracked to facilitate growth and investment.