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I hereby give notice that a Special Meeting of Council will be held on:

Date: Thursday, 7 May 2020
Time: 5.30 p.m.
Location: virtual meeting available for live streaming
Council Chamber
Civic Centre - virtual meeting available for live streaming
<https://www.youtube.com/user/CityOfMountGambier/live>
10 Watson Terrace
Mount Gambier

AGENDA

Special Council Meeting 7 May 2020

Andrew Meddle
Chief Executive Officer
7 May 2020



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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE BOANDIK PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND WHERE WE MEET TODAY. WE RESPECT THEIR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND AND RECOGNISE THE DEEP FEELINGS OF ATTACHMENT OUR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE WITH THIS LAND.

2 APOLOGIES

Nil

3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil



4 COUNCIL REPORTS

4.1 COVID-19 RATE RELIEF – REPORT NO. AR20/28591

Committee:	Council
Meeting Date:	7 May 2020
Report No.:	AR20/28591
CM9 Reference:	AF19/416
Author:	Andrew Meddle, Chief Executive Officer
Authoriser:	Andrew Meddle, Chief Executive Officer
Summary:	A report providing options for rate relief and the operation of such options for Council and the community.
Community Plan Reference:	Goal 1: Our People
	Goal 2: Our Location
	Goal 3: Our Diverse Economy
	Goal 4: Our Climate, Natural Resources, Arts, Culture and Heritage

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Report No. AR20/28591 titled 'COVID-19 Rate Relief' as presented on 07 May 2020 be noted.
2. That Council agree to Option C.
3. That Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to determine applications until 30th June 2020.
4. That Council agree the relevant Direction for application and decision-making be the *Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 4) (COVID-19) Direction 2020*.
5. That the provision of funds to businesses to be considered separate to a deferral of rates, consistent with Council's decision on 31st March 2020.



BACKGROUND

A confidential report was presented to the Special Council meeting held on 5th May 2020 regarding the recently undertaken Business Survey. An outcome from that meeting was a trigger for a further Special Council meeting to discuss related matters.

Council considered the issue of rate relief on 31st March 2020 and made a decision at that time to defer rates, consistent with its adopted policy and position developed over a number of years. This report seeks to address a different approach, which is to waive rates for businesses who are both affected by specific COVID-19 restrictions (specified in a series of Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities (COVID-19) Directions [The Directions]) and in receipt of JobKeeper payments. The current Direction (4) can be found as **Attachment 1**.

Section 3 of the Direction specifies 'defined premises' together with other definitions. Whilst this provides a list of businesses that are affected, it needs also to be read in the context of Section 4 which specifies the restrictions and Section 5 which specifies the exemptions. An example of this is item 'z' on the list of which means that funerals are prohibited, but which are then exempted (to a degree) by the content of Section 5. It is therefore not as simple as just being on the list in Section 3.

This report does not address rate relief for individuals, operations not subject to the Directions or employers ineligible for Job Keeper payments.

DISCUSSION

The Local Government Act provides Council with the flexibility to determine rate relief for its community and this can be community wide or down to a specific property if they are clear as to the hardship impact on a specific ratepayer. The Act requires that any postponement or remission is required to be on application. The Council has prepared for this by endorsing a Rate Rebate Policy, which is endorsed annually as part of the Annual Business Plan and Budget process. The current policy dates from 21st May 2019. As a result, the Policy dates from a time when COVID-19 was not a threat to our community.

However, Council's consideration of rate relief was made when the impact of the pandemic was clear and before the impact of Federal and State Government stimulus packages or the results from the Council's Business Survey. Since Council made the decision on 31st March 2020, it has received 33 requests for help with rates, the majority of which did not relate to waivers or to businesses.

The request from the Special Council Meeting was as follows:

"Effect on Council's rates income of granting a refund or waiver of 1 quarter of rates for all Mount Gambier based businesses impacted by the COVID pandemic direction in the event that every business on that list was to make application for a rate refund or waiver."

Rates Budget for 2019/20

The Council's budgeted rates income for the current year is \$21,412,336.02. This is comprised of rates charges residential, commercial, industrial, primary production vacant land and other uses. The totals associated with each category can be seen in the following table:



CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE NUMBER	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE VALUE
Residential	12,379	84.20	\$15,334,687.30	71.62
Commercial	1,050	7.14	\$4,055,183.55	18.94
Industry	232	1.58	\$1,103,128.41	5.15
Primary Production	46	0.31	\$77,817.25	0.36
Vacant Land	387	2.63	\$675,705.20	3.16
Other	58	0.39	\$165,814.31	0.77
Non Rateable	550	3.74	\$0.00	0.00
TOTAL	14,702	100.00	\$21,412,336.02	100.00

The annual average for commercial rates is \$3,862.08 per annum, as compared to annual average residential rate of \$1,238.77. The average potential repayment is therefore \$965.52.

Looking in more detail at the properties that may be covered by the request from the special meeting, the following table sets out some key data for Council:

ITEM	AMOUNT
Number of rateable Commercial properties 2019/2020 financial year	1,050
Total income predicted for Commercial properties 2019/2020	\$4,055,183.55
Total amount outstanding for Commercial properties as at 6 th May 2020	\$918,998.44
Estimated total number of Commercial Properties as defined under Directions	150
Estimated total yield for Commercial Properties as defined under Directions for 2019/2020 financial year	\$599,268.885
Estimated fourth quarter instalment levied amount for Commercial Properties as defined under Directions for 2019/2020 financial year	\$149,817.20
Estimated total outstanding for Commercial properties as defined under the Directions	\$178,552.25

Council should also note that:

- This does not include businesses affected which operate from a dwelling
- Council should also note that any support offered under this, would mean that Council will have to pay the Regional Landscape Levy for the relevant business. The indicative figure provided for this is \$121,412 (\$117.42 per commercial property).

However, the Rates Officers have advised that they are unable to accurately calculate overall cost to Council due to the following:

- The defined list is confusing and challenging to follow as it does not give consideration to Council rates – it is designed to be based on Health requirements not financial requirements and does not consider the flow on effects from businesses providing to them and services they supply to other businesses, which also goes both ways;
- The defined list currently includes large takeaway chains (e.g. KFC, McDonalds) who may have had the same impacts as a restaurant;
- The values provided are accurate, but the list may not be as commercial properties are changing continually and our information is extracted from sources which may not be contemporaneous;
- No consideration has been given to equity across the community (e.g. some cafés closed which has impacted on all the smaller shops around them – Commercial Street East is a case in point where Presto, Jens Hotel & Metro all shut their doors for a period which impacted all



the other shops around them. They all then closed their doors. Cafés will be eligible under the Directions, but the other shops affected will not be;

- Homebased business impacted e.g. sports therapist, beauticians operating from home have had their income reduced, but we would be unable to identify or calculate cost for Council without knowing how to calculate the split between dwelling and work space;
- *Other business have been impacted, but were not covered by the Directions, e.g. fish factories (as importing was ceased for a period), travel agents, motels, Caravan Parks, Child Care centres, hairdressers (with mixed businesses), B&B's, dentists to name a few have all been impacted but are not listed in the Directions;*
- *Some businesses as defined have been able to adapt and continue trade whilst others with circumstances beyond their control have not. However, businesses who have adapted (e.g. delivering meals/food) have incurred extra cost for doing so, therefore the financial benefit opposed to being closed altogether would be minimal, if at all. How would this be defined? Another example is Personal Training; some have been running external boot camps within COVID-19 restrictions, but with the added cost of travel;*
- *There may be an influx of rebate requests from vacant property owners who claim they are unable to lease their properties due to COVID-19;*
- *No consideration has been given to the follow on effect or the "supply chain businesses" i.e. those businesses who would usually supply the shops who have closed or the building / construction industry;*
- *No consideration has been given to the employees or owner/occupier residential rates;*
- *Some properties / businesses were closed by parent companies (e.g. Cotton On, Rivers, shops in Marketplace/Centro) – this decision was made on a national level (not local) are these to be assessed as per local businesses.*

These are all relevant points, from Council Officers who will be at the front end in supporting the introduction of a rebate process and handling applications and to make this as painless as possible for proud business owners. It is important for Council to consider not only the impact on businesses, but also the impact on how we help these businesses and ensure equity not just across businesses, but also across our community.

Our City. Our Response

As part of Our City. Our Response a three pronged approach has been developed focused on Our People, Our Economy and Our Recovery. This particular item has a positive impact on Our Economy and Our Recovery. Longer-term there may be an impact on Our People, but that depends on the success of Our Recovery. Having a strong business base will support Our Recovery and can be considered the obverse to a strong investment strategy in projects and Our People.

Options for Rate Relief

In our region, the City of Mount Gambier has been taking the lead with stimulus measures and with rate relief. No other Limestone Coast Councils are doing as much. Other provincial cities are also offering relief from fines and interest, but none are waiving rates currently. It would appear that only Wakefield Regional Council and Prospect Council have taken these decisions to date. The Prospect Council approach is different to that proposed and is put forward as an option for Council to consider.

At a recent LGASA briefing, three Councils were asked to present on their approach. Wakefield Regional Council gave a presentation which had a business development approach (rate rebate for a quarter, plus investment in professional services for businesses), whilst the City of Prospect tabled a three stage rate relief model, which has more similarities to our city than a regional council with a non-nucleic structure.

The City of Prospect website sets out the following for their businesses:



“Rates Remission 2020

Council will remit rates for the fourth quarter of 2020 for businesses defined by Council in two categories A and B as defined below:

Category A – Business forced to close or had their trade modified by Government.

These businesses will receive 100% remission for rates in the current quarter.

Commercial rated businesses which has had a mandatory closure or modified trade.*

100% Remission/refund to the value of fourth quarter Rates due on 2 June 2020

* *Note: the State Government clearly [defined this business in the category](#) on 25 March 2020.*

Category B - Business closed/impacted trade for a minimum 6 weeks due to impact of COVID-19.

These businesses will receive 50% remission for rates in the current quarter.

Commercially rated business closed/impacted trade:

- 1) for a minimum 6 weeks due to impact of COVID-19;*
- 2) be able to demonstrate significant loss of income over 60%;*
- 3) by acceptance to Commonwealth Job Keeper program**.*

Remission/refund to the value of 50% of fourth quarter Rates due on 2 June 2020

** *To meet the above criteria, please provide evidence of the above. This can be in the form of a signed statutory declaration.*

Applications will be accepted from either the tenant or the landlord, as long as the Assessment Number from the Rates Notice is supplied.”

With the City of Prospect model all other businesses or residents who face hardship are dealt with under their existing policy.

A further option is the payment of a fixed amount to all affected businesses, this could be equated to the average rate payment of \$965.52. A payment could be made, on application to all Mount Gambier based businesses of \$1,250, subject to an assessment of being specified in the Directions, or being in receipt of JobKeeper payments or being able to demonstrate a downturn in trade of 30%.

Decision-making

Council currently requires all rate relief applications to be determined by Council. It is proposed that this be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer as otherwise Council could potentially have to consider around 150 applications individually and in confidence. It may create commercial confidentiality issues for some businesses who operate in the same sector as Elected Members.

Current Policy

The current policy is due for review later in May and it is proposed to delay that until the Annual Business Plan and Budget returns to Council for consideration. The COVID-19 pandemic creates a clear reason for Council to step outside of its policy position to offer relief, which requires an application prior to 31st March each year and which does not allow waivers.

Council do need to consider social equity in their approach. Businesses affected by the pandemic, but not covered by the Directions or JobKeeper scheme are not entitled to a waiver. Residents who have lost their jobs or businesses are not entitled to a waiver. Only 150 businesses are benefitted with a waiver as opposed to a deferral, which is the position facing every other person in the City of Mount Gambier.

Immediate Impact

The act of either deferring or waiving rates for businesses has the same immediate impact on cash flow, which is considered (by them) to be an important area where Council can help. However, this is not a positive actual impact, it simply a non-negative.



Regional Impact

The City of Mount Gambier does not operate in a vacuum and the decisions of Council affect the region. Elected Members are required to consider the impact of their decisions on their broader community, noting that this approach will set a precedent and for which other councils may be ill prepared or unable to afford

Financial Impact

Whilst the precise financial impact is not known. The worst case scenario for the remainder of the current financial year can be predicted and this is affordable. Longer-term requests for support would also be affordable, subject to consideration against other Council priorities.

Resolution

A resolution was put forward detailing a particular approach and was lost at the Special Council meeting on 5th May 2020. It is not clear whether this was because of the timing or because of the principle. As a result three options are put forward for Council, all of which are imperfect in how they deal with the social equity issue:

Option A

A refund or waiver equivalent to one quarter of the rates and Regional Landscape Levy for the property 2019/20, on application, for all Mount Gambier based businesses impacted by the Direction and in receipt of JobKeeper payments.

Option B

- i) A 100% refund or waiver equivalent to one quarter of the rates and Regional Landscape Levy for the property 2019/20, on application, for all Mount Gambier based businesses impacted by the Directions; or
- ii) A 50% refund or waiver equivalent to one quarter of the rates and Regional Landscape Levy for the property 2019/20, on application, for all Mount Gambier based businesses in receipt of JobKeeper payments.

Option C

A payment, to all Mount Gambier based businesses of \$1,250, which would be slightly more than the average quarterly commercial rate and indicative Regional Landscape Levy, subject to:

- i) Being a business specified in the Direction; or
- ii) Being in receipt of JobKeeper payments; or
- iii) Being able to demonstrate a 30% or greater loss of trade for one month or more as a result of COVID-19.

[N.b. This approach would also enable the business to bank the payment and to apply for a deferral of their rates as per the existing decision of Council].

Other Decisions

Council will also need to consider:

- Which of the Directions it wishes to base its decision on and specify that as there have now been four, which have subtly changed (two of which were in relation to reducing travel over the Easter period);
- They need to agree whether to continue the current deferral position as agreed on 31st March 2020;
- They also need to agree a decision-making mechanism; and
- The recommendations deal with the above, together with a preferred option.



CONCLUSION

Council are recommended to follow Option C, together with a maintenance of the existing deferral position. This activity will then lead to a need to make a decision, where it is recommended that the Chief Executive Officer be delegated to make decisions on behalf of Council until 30th June 2020.

This approach provides further clear evidence that this Council is listening and compassionate; that this Council is seeking to help businesses so that they can help with the recovery. This approach is a more holistic, yet still affordable, solution that meets the intent of our multi-pronged approach to *Our City. Our Response*, but ticks all the boxes for *Our People, Our Economy* and *Our Recovery*.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Signed Direction Non Essential Business and Other Gatherings No 4 [↓](#)



Settled

South Australia

Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 4) (COVID-19) Direction 2020

under section 25 of the *Emergency Management Act 2004*

Preamble

- 1 On 22 March 2020 I, Grantley Stevens, Commissioner of Police, being the State Co-ordinator for the State of South Australia pursuant to section 14 of the Emergency Management Act 2004 (the Act), declared pursuant to section 23 of the Act that a Major Emergency is occurring in respect of the outbreak of the Human Disease named COVID-19 within South Australia.
- 2 Now I, Grantley Stevens, being of the opinion that this is necessary to achieve the purposes of the Act, give the following directions pursuant to section 25 of the Act.

1—Short title

This direction may be cited as the *Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 4) (COVID-19) Direction 2020*.

2—Revocation of previous direction

- (1) This direction replaces the *Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 3) (COVID-19) Direction 2020*.
- (2) The *Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 3) (COVID-19) Direction 2020* is revoked.

3—Definitions

- (1) In this direction—

commercial freight transporter means a person or body that delivers items for fee or reward;

defined premises means any of the following:

- (a) licensed hotels, bars and clubs (including nightclubs), including any premises operated under the following categories under the *Liquor Licensing Act 1997*:
 - (i) general and hotel licences;
 - (ii) on premises licences;
 - (iii) club licences;
 - (iv) liquor production and sales licences;
- (b) wineries, breweries and distilleries;



**Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 4) (COVID-19)
Direction 2020**

- (c) buildings used by social and sporting clubs;
- (d) facilities used primarily for indoor physical recreation;

Note—

Examples of indoor physical recreation facilities include gymnasiums, health clubs, fitness centres, yoga, barre and spin facilities, and dance and pilates studios.

- (e) indoor premises at which boot camps and other personal training are offered;
- (f) indoor sporting venues;
- (g) indoor play centres;
- (h) public swimming pools;
- (i) motor sport facilities and other racetracks (including for any form of horse or greyhound racing);
- (j) community, youth and recreation centres (such as community halls, clubs, RSLs, PCYCs);
- (k) a cinema, function centre or entertainment venue of any kind;
- (l) theatres, concert venues, arenas, auditoriums, stadiums and other places where live performances occur;
- (m) galleries, museums, libraries (other than libraries in educational institutions), public institutions and historic sites;
- (n) local government non-essential facilities (such as libraries and pools);
- (o) casinos and other gaming and gambling venues;
- (p) retail gambling outlets;
- (q) restaurants and cafés;
- (r) food courts within shopping centres or shopping or business precincts;
- (s) auction houses;
- (t) premises at which a real estate auction or an inspection by a prospective purchaser or tenant of the premises (other than a private inspection by appointment) is conducted;
- (u) outdoor and indoor markets;
- (v) beauty salons, nail salons and tattoo parlours and other premises at which beauty therapy and tanning, waxing, piercing or body modification services are provided;
- (w) saunas, bathhouses, wellness centres, spas and massage parlours;
- (x) amusement parks and arcades;
- (y) places of worship;
- (z) any venue to the extent that it hosts weddings or conducts funerals;
- (za) outdoor spaces associated with the above venues;



Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 4) (COVID-19)
Direction 2020

defined work or operations means any of the following:

- (a) boot camps or other personal training activities conducted outside;
- (b) the provision of prepared food or drink to the homeless in an outdoor location;
- (c) the provision of re-usable equipment such as 'hookah' or other pipes, tubes, heads or any other equipment associated with the operation of shisha, smoking or vaping business operations, including any such equipment supplied for use away from business premises (for example, equipment that is hired or lent out);
- (d) social sporting-based activities;
- (e) the provision of driver training and testing by a motor driving instructor or an authorised examiner (within the meaning of the *Motor Vehicles Act 1959*) conducted inside a vehicle, other than inside a light rigid, medium rigid, heavy rigid, heavy combination or multi combination heavy vehicle;

density requirement is the requirement that the total number of persons present at premises must not exceed one person per 4 square metres;

member of the public includes the members of any club or association that owns, controls or operates defined premises or undertakes defined work or operations;

social distancing principles—see subclause (2).

- (2) The *social distancing principles* require a person to attempt to maintain a space of at least 1.5 metres between themselves and each other person present in the same premises.

4—Direction

- (1) Subject to the exceptions set out in clause 5—
 - (a) a person who owns, controls or operates a defined premises must close those premises and keep those premises closed in so far as it is necessary to prohibit access to consumers or members of the public; and
 - (b) a consumer or member of the public must not enter into defined premises.
- (2) Subject to the exceptions set out in clause 5—
 - (a) a person must not conduct defined work or operations; and
 - (b) a consumer or member of the public must not participate in defined work or operations.
- (3) A person who, pursuant to the exceptions set out in clause 5, is present at defined premises or who participates in defined work or operations must use their best endeavours to comply with the social distancing principles (having regard to the all the circumstances).

5—Exceptions

Clause 4(1) and (2) do not apply to or in relation to—

- (a) general shopping where goods are to be taken away;

Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 4) (COVID-19)
Direction 2020

- (b) the provision of take away food and beverages to be consumed away from the defined premises, whether the food or beverage is collected by a home delivery service or the purchaser;

Note—

This would mean that any tasting of food or beverages in or on the grounds of defined premises would not be permitted.

- (c) the provision of food, beverages and facilities to persons who provide transport or freight services into, within and out of South Australia on premises commonly known as truck stops or roadhouses provided that the density requirement is complied with;
- (d) the provision of accommodation services on defined premises to house guests, permanent residents and workers provided that the density requirement is complied with;
- (e) the provision of room service to people being accommodated on defined premises;
- (f) funerals conducted where the total number of persons attending does not exceed—
 - (i) if held outdoors—15 people; or
 - (ii) if held indoors—10 people,provided that the density requirement is complied with;
- (g) weddings conducted where the total number of persons attending does not exceed 5 people provided that the density requirement is complied with;
- (h) performances of small groups being recorded for broadcast (whether live or otherwise) provided that the density requirement is complied with;
- (i) outdoor sporting and recreational venues, such as golf courses, tennis courts and playing fields where the total number of persons participating in a particular activity does not exceed 10 people and provided that the density requirement is complied with;
- (j) public swimming pools used for non-recreational purposes where the total number of persons participating in a particular activity does not exceed 10 people and provided that the density requirement is complied with;

Note—

This would allow supervised hydrotherapy, registered swimming club training and elite athlete training to occur in public swimming pools, provided that the total number of persons participating in a particular activity does not exceed 10 people and the density requirement is complied with.

- (k) boot camps or other personal training activities conducted outside and limited to no more than 10 people provided that the density requirement is complied with;
- (l) the conduct of motor sports or other forms of racing (including any form of horse or greyhound racing) if—
 - (i) no persons are present only as spectators; and

**Emergency Management (Non-Essential Business and Other Activities No 4) (COVID-19)
Direction 2020**

- (ii) the total number of persons participating in the activity does not exceed 10 people; and
- (iii) the density requirement is complied with;
- (m) the provision of essential voluntary or public services at a community or recreation centre (such as a food bank or homeless service).


6—Powers of Authorised Officers

Nothing in this direction derogates from the powers of authorised officers to exercise powers pursuant to the Act.

IMPORTANT— IT IS AN OFFENCE TO BREACH THIS DIRECTION

This direction operates from the 15TH day of APRIL 2020 at 1100 hours

SIGNED at ADLAIDE on this 15TH day of APRIL 2020
at 1050 hours



GRANTLEY STEVENS
STATE CO-ORDINATOR



4.2 REQUEST FOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT 'COVID PREPARED' – REPORT NO. AR20/28592

Committee:	Council
Meeting Date:	7 May 2020
Report No.:	AR20/28592
CM9 Reference:	AF19/416
Author:	Andrew Meddle, Chief Executive Officer
Authoriser:	Andrew Meddle, Chief Executive Officer
Summary:	A report providing context around a request for funding to support the COVID PREPARED project to help build confidence in businesses in our region.
Community Plan Reference:	Goal 1: Our People Goal 2: Our Location Goal 3: Our Diverse Economy Goal 4: Our Climate, Natural Resources, Arts, Culture and Heritage

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Report No. AR20/28592 titled 'Request for Funding to Support 'COVID PREPARED' as presented on 07 May 2020 be noted.
2. That \$2,000 be allocated to supporting a COVID PREPARED project to build confidence for a return to our region.
3. That the funding be provided to the Chamber of Commerce to auspice the COVID PREPARED project on behalf of our community.



BACKGROUND

At the Special Council meeting on 5th May 2020, there was discussion about building confidence by the community and visitors who attend various premises in our region, as restrictions are adjusted. This report provides information for Council on this project as provided by Cr Perryman and the imagery from Cr Hood.

DISCUSSION

“COVID PREPARED”

This is envisaged to be a joint initiative of the Limestone Coast Local Government Association (LCLGA), Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Mount Gambier. Its intent is to ensure that participating businesses are suitably informed on procedures and guidelines to enable them to provide the safest environment that they can for their staff and customers.

Businesses that register for 'COVID PREPARED' agree to adhere to the standards prescribed in the website. Businesses would be required to read, understand and acknowledge all of the information presented on the website and at the conclusion, successfully answer a series of multiple choice questions. Once answered correctly, the business would qualify to be a 'COVID PREPARED' business, and would be issued a sticker and other materials to display at their business premises. The branding can be found in **Attachment 1**.

The onus would be on the business operator to ensure that they follow the requirements mandated by government, and any additional requirements as part of the 'COVID PREPARED' program. The program would be largely self-regulatory, however site visits by council staff could form a valuable element to adding integrity to the COVID PREPARED status.

Support may also be needed from Council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to be involved in site visits (due to their regulatory and compliance role), or alternatively tourism related officers could be considered for this activity with appropriate training.

Timeframe

It is hoped to be able to announce the development of COVID PREPARED as soon as possible. The website is under construction and could be available as soon as early next week.

Coverage

It was the original intention for COVID PREPARED to be a regional resource and tool, which is why LCLGA and RDALC were approached. Due to the suggested timeframes for response from these regional bodies, the steering group has opted to move ahead, to focus on Mount Gambier and region, but to design the site and promotional material in a manner that allows it to be expanded to across the region should communities in other parts of the region, the LCLGA or individual councils wish to participate.

Auspicings

LCLGA, RDALC and Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce / Tourism Mount Gambier were invited to consider auspicings the activity. At this time, no group has accepted that role. It is expected that if the City of Mount Gambier agreed to auspice the project that this would be acceptable to the steering group.

Liability

The steering group sought advice from 2 local solicitors on the question of liability. Both solicitors advised that there is little to no risk of liability for the auspicings body, provided that the site is only advice.

The steering group are developing wording for disclaimers, likely to be modelled on those in use by the WA government for their recently released program. The wording of the disclaimer would be referred to a solicitor for advice on its adequacy.



Resource Implications (beyond financial)

There has been discussion among the steering group about visits to participating business premises to verify that they have certain things in place, by way of example only, hand sanitiser available for customers to use at the store entry or counter, promoting social distancing by having markers on the floor, etc.

Rather than inspections, these would perhaps be termed 'visits' and would be to check that businesses are following through with actions as recommended by State and Federal authorities, and shared via the COVID PREPARED website.

Statewide Activity

Discussions on a statewide product similar to that available in WA occurred within SA Health on 5th May 2020 ready for Cabinet discussion. It is not known what the outcome of this meeting was. SATC advised Councils on 6th May 2020 that they were seeking expressions of interest for a statewide scheme and expected this to be up and running in two weeks.

Locally Special

The intended COVID PREPARED is currently regarded as a uniquely local product. It differs from the state activity because it is a grass roots initiative aimed at educating operators and their staff of the benefits of being COVID PREPARED, inspiring confidence among locals that their local business houses are doing their best to ensure to protect customers, their staff and the wider community from an outbreak of the virus, and to send the message to potential intrastate and interstate visitors as restrictions are lifted and people can move more freely, that the city/district/region is providing the safest possible environment for them to visit.

Financial Implications

COVID PREPARED DRAFT BUDGET	
Item	Amount
Register URL (p.a.)	\$70.00
Hosting for website/form (p.a.)	\$300.00
Brand design	\$250.00
Decal Stickers	\$280.00
Artwork	\$250.00
Potential other artwork / templates	
On-line Form designed	
Media release	
Marketing Campaign (social platforms and to boost existing)	\$500.00
TOTAL	\$1,650.00

CONCLUSION

A modest investment will help position the City of Mount Gambier as continuing to be at the forefront of activity in responding to the pandemic. There is a clear need to build and maintain confidence in our region and our businesses. Our consistent approach is to be ahead of the curve to enable a swift and strong recovery. This approach again, demonstrates how we are thinking through a three-pronged approach to help *Our People, Our Economy and Our Recovery*.

In the context of an expected announcement on Friday by the State Government as to adjustments to the current environment, there are indications from Safe Work Australia and the State Government of initiatives that may overlap with such a project. However, the local confidence building nature of this initiative is the differentiating element.



It is not considered feasible for the Council to auspice the product, given the current and future requirements in responding to the pandemic, particularly as there is scant EHO coverage for the region. Whilst it may be possible to accommodate an initial visit by an EHO, the project would then need to be self-regulating.

It is considered more appropriate that the Chamber of Commerce be offered the funding and for them (or Tourism Mount Gambier) to support this as a business helping business initiative.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 'COVID PREPARED' sticker example [↓](#)





5 MEETING CLOSE

