



SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA
FOR THE
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

13 OCTOBER 2021



L OPERATIONS FINANCE AND RISK

L.1 Proposal to Waive Outdoor Dining Fees, Materials on Footpaths and Environment and Health Inspections as Support for Business during Covid19 Pandemic - Post Exhibition Report

Report Author: Acting Chief Financial Officer
Authoriser: General Manager

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the submissions received during the period of public exhibition for the proposed full fee reduction for outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections, in accordance with Section 356 of Local Government Act 1993.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council formally adopt the full fee reduction for outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections, for a period of 6 months, in accordance with Section 356 of Local Government Act 1993.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 11 August 2021, Council considered a report to support residents and businesses within the Shire who have been impacted by the most recent COVID19 lockdown measures applied to the Greater Sydney area.

At that meeting Council resolved (MN242/21):

THAT

- 1. Council adopt a six-month deferral period of rates and charges for affected businesses and residents who apply and meet the eligibility requirements of Council's adopted Financial Hardship Policy.*
- 2. Council adopt a full fee reduction for outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections commencing for a period of 6 months, commencing 1 August 2021, noting that the budget implications in relation to this measure will be considered as part of the September Review of the 2021/22 Budget.*



3. *Council undertake a 28-day public notification period in relation to the full fee reduction for outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections, in accordance with Section 356 of Local Government Act 1993.*
4. *Council provide a six-month deferral period for the repayment of interest free loans which are currently held with community and sporting organisations.*
5. *Council endorse the measures outlined in this report to support businesses and residents who have been impacted by the ongoing COVID19 Pandemic and lockdown measures imposed on the Greater Sydney and other areas.*

REPORT

The proposed full fee reduction for outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections was placed on public exhibition for 28 days.

During the exhibition period, there were 15 submissions received which were all in support of the full fee reduction for outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections. The submissions are included in the table below.



Submission	Response
1	The measures need to go further to include roadside signage especially sandwich board style or size to be exempt; this is signage that may not be directly outside a business address but is located enroute of public thoroughfare to direct the public to businesses that are accessed via feeder roads or roads that lead from main roads. COVID and particularly local road works have made this signage the only way to save some small businesses however the regulations between Roads (TransportNSW), WSC, private contractors and businesses owners are murky and difficult to navigate. Small Businesses affected by significant circumstances should be allowed to use signage to direct traffic to our place of trade even past COVID and discussion with council should be respectful and treated with confidence
2	I support the waiving of fees, but obstruction of footpaths to the detriment of the safety of pedestrians I don't agree with. The waiving or reduction of any reduction in environment and health inspections I strongly oppose.
3	Yep. Good idea
4	Agreed this is a good measure to keep the business doors open. Potentially could be extended to reduce rates for accommodation places as well, ie hotels and registered short-stay accommodation places as these to feed significant business into the towns.
5	This is a great idea to help the local businesses in the highlands I don't think they should be charged at all
6	This is a great idea. Our hospitality businesses are crucial community elements and employers in our community as well as being services that many of us enjoy. This initiative would show support for their businesses and give them an opportunity to inject some life into our streetscapes that have been, by necessity, so quiet and barren of late.
7	This is a great idea, there is so much regulation and cost from all forms of government, please proceed
8	I strongly support the measures described in the proposal.
9	agree with the waiving fees as outlined on page 1 in recommendations 1 to 6 as long as it is only for small businesses affected by the lockdown as stated in recommendation 6.
10	Great Idea
11	Small businesses need financial support during these times so I support the proposal to waive the fees until the Greater Sydney Area opens up again and visitors can return to the Southern Highlands.
12	Proposal to Waive outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths to encourage and stimulate the LGA economy as much as possible during and following the Pandemic.
13	I support the council decision.
14	I support Council's decision.
15	Considering the difficulties businesses are experiencing I think waiving any fees at this stage would be helpful, including outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspection fees.



COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

Community Engagement

Public notice of the proposed full fee reductions was advertised for the minimum 28-day period.

Internal Communication and Consultation

The relevant managers for Tourism, Economic Development, Corporate and Community and Organisation Development have been consulted.

External Communication and Consultation

Your Say Wingecarribee

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

- **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

- **Social**

The support measures outlined within this report are aimed at working with affected residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the recent lockdown measures introduced in the Greater Sydney Area.

- **Broader Economic Implications**

The support measures outlined within this report are aimed at working with affected businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the recent lockdown measures introduced in the Greater Sydney Area

- **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

- **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

If Council supports the recommendation to waive all outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections for a period of 6 months, this budget adjustment (approx. \$50,000) will be considered as part of the September Review of the 2021/22 Budget.

Most of the other measures outlined within this report do not have any direct budgetary implications. Resources to assist affected businesses and residents have been allocated within existing and approved budget allocations.



CONCLUSION

Submissions received during the period of public exhibition were supportive of the full fee reduction for outdoor dining fees, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments to this report.



L.2 Out of School Hours Care COVID-19 Gap Fee Waiver - Outcome of Public Exhibition

Report Author: Childrens Services Co-ordinator
Authoriser: Group Manager Corporate and Community

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback from the public exhibition for the waiving gap fees for Wingecarribee Out of School Hours and to seek approval to proceed with waiving fees for children not in attendance, backdated to 23 August 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council waive the child care gap fee, backdated to 23 August 2021 until the lockdown ceases or otherwise advised by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), for children not attending Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Service (WOOSH), under the conditions outlined by DESE.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

On Wednesday 8 September 2021 Council considered a report outlining a range of actions to support families who use Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Service and Family Day Care Service who are impacted by the most recent COVID restrictions impacting regional NSW.

At the meeting Council resolved to:

“undertake a 28-day public notification period in relation to waiving the “gap fee” for children not attending the Out of School Hours Service, in accordance with Section 356 of *Local Government Act 1993*.”

REPORT

Council’s proposal to waive the “gap fee” for children not attending the Out of School Hours Service was placed on public exhibition from Thursday 9 September until 9am Friday 8 October 2021.

Information on the public exhibition was promoted through:

- A project page on ‘Your Say Wingecarribee’
- Media Release – Council Highlights – 9 September 2021
- Councils Community Update 15 September 2021
- Wingecarribee Children’s Services Facebook page 10 September 2021
- Email to Out of School Hours families.



Community Response

A total of 14 submissions were received in relation to Council's proposal to waive the "gap fee" for children not attending the Out of School Hours Service. Of the 14 responses two were made by families who use the OOSH Service. All submissions were in support of Council waiving the "gap fee". No objections were received.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

Community Engagement

Council's proposal to waive the "gap fee" for children not attending the Out of School Hours Service was placed on public exhibition from Thursday 9 September until 9am Friday 8 October 2021. Community feedback was sought, with a number of methods utilised and opportunities provided for the community to comment, as outlined above.

Internal Communication and Consultation

The Executive team were consulted.

External Communication and Consultation

Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

- **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

- **Social**

Council's proposal to waive the "gap fee" aims to support the families currently enrolled with Councils Children's Services who may have been affected by the lockdown and stay at home orders.

- **Broader Economic Implications**

The consultation process and feedback from the community supports the recommendation to waive the "gap fee" for families not attending the Service with the aim to assist families enrolled during the COVID Pandemic by reducing fees for children not attending care.

- **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

- **Governance**

Council has undertaken a 28-day public consultation in relation to waiving the "gap fee" for children not attending the Out of School Hours Service, in accordance with Section 356 of Local Government Act 1993.



COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Through the process of waiving the “gap fee” and backdating to 23 August, Council is eligible for the Commonwealth Business Continuity Payment (BCP). Under the BCP criteria the Service receives separate fortnightly payments of 40% of pre-lockdown revenue calculated to the hourly cap based on attendances in the reference week of 17-30 May 2021. As a result, there are no negative financial impact affecting the Out of School Hours budget.

RELATED COUNCIL POLICY

NIL

CONCLUSION

This report outlines the community consultation that resulted from the report 13.2 tabled to Council on Wednesday 8 September 2021, as required under Section 356 of Local Government Act 1993. Response to the consultation confirms the community’s support to waive “gap fees” to enrolled families, who are currently not attending care, during the regional lockdown and measures in place by DESE.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments to this report.



L.3 Openness and Transparency Progress Update

Report Author: Acting Group Manager Organisational Development
Authoriser: Interim Deputy General Manager

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Council's efforts to improve openness and transparency with the community as part of our objective to restore trust in Council's decision making and governance.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council note the improvements to the provision of information and interaction with the community and continue to enhance openness and transparency where appropriate.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

With the appointment of the Interim Administrator in March 2021, he advised the community that it was his goal to restore the community confidence in Council, by ensuring a culture of open and transparent communication with the community.

Council undertook several independent reviews including, Finance, Planning, Governance Human Resources and Statutory Reporting, Procurement and Purchase Cards. The findings of these reviews highlight several areas for improvement and amplified the need for Council to be more transparent in its reporting of information to the community to "remove the mystery around the operations of Council".

REPORT

The appointment of the Interim Administrator, a new General Manager and Executive team has resulted in Council taking an enhanced approach to how it engages with the community and has seen a new era in openness and transparency in the information that is shared with the community.

- Changing the Code of Meeting Practice to ensure that all briefing sessions and standing committees are open to the community, with agendas and minutes easily locatable and searchable on Council's website.
- Ensuring that Council reports are open and available to the public, limiting the number of items that are dealt with in Closed Council.
- Publishing all previous service reviews, which were previously internal documents, on the website.
- Establishing and gazettal of the Wingecarribee Local Planning Panel.
- Tabling of public reports in Council on several key projects including Berrima Road, Station Street, and the Civic Centre Refurbishment to provide an overview of current status, direction and timeframes.



- Reintroducing, in September 2021, of a Public Forum prior to Council meetings to enable members of the public to speak on matters on the agenda.
- Commencing a dedicated time for members of the public to ask questions on any topic of the Interim Administrator or to raise any matters of concern.
- Adopting a new and expanded Terms of Reference for the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee with new independent membership.
- Engaging in an interim shared service agreement with a neighbouring Council to enable access to an Internal Ombudsman function.
- Creating a Public Inquiry website, providing proactive release of information and supplying the community with relevant information and easy links to appropriate bodies should they wish to participate.
- Proactive engagement by the Interim Administrator and Senior Staff making themselves available to the community and local community groups to meet and build strong relationships in order to understand different perspectives and negotiate solutions to complex and long-standing matters.
- Conduct of community meetings by the Interim Administrator in the towns and villages ensuring that everyone is offered to opportunity to meet with him and discuss future direction and raise any concerns.
- Initiating a Customer Request Management system which is due to go live late December/ Early January. This system will enable a centralised system for logging and tracking requests as well as assist in the streamlining of internal processes to support timely responses.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

Community Engagement

Council continues to actively use and promote the 'Your Say Wingecarribee' community engagement portal and provide a summary of all submissions received in Council reports.

In addition, Council has improved feedback mechanisms to respond to submissions and provide updates on all projects and policies exhibited on the site.

Further, Council has enhanced consultative mechanisms on individual projects through an increased focus on stakeholder engagement with affected residents and businesses and attempted to respond to issues and concerns raised.

This will continue to be an area of focus as we move forward.

Internal Communication and Consultation

Internal communication and support for external engagement has been supported through the provision of training and tools for all branches of Council to enable greater access and provide time and resources for improved consultative processes.

External Communication and Consultation

The Communications and Media area and the Community Engagement Coordinator have enhanced levels of service and the provision of information in regard to Council projects and decision-making processes to enable greater transparency into project prioritisation.



SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

- **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

- **Social**

Improved communication and engagement results in a more informed communication supporting greater engagement with Council's decision making processes.

- **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

- **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

- **Governance**

Changes to Governance codes and processes will embed this direction.

COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The items referred to in the body of the report have been supported by existing resources.

RELATED COUNCIL POLICY

Wingecarribee Council Code of Meeting Practice and Community Engagement Strategy

CONCLUSION

Over the past 6 months Council has placed increased importance on the need to more actively communicate and engage with our local community through a number of different mechanisms. By increasing the amount of information available online, proactively releasing documentation and more effectively engaging with our key stakeholders, Council aims to build stronger relationships with our community to increase trust and openness in our decision making, resource allocation and project delivery.

Over the next 12 months further actions will be implemented to strengthen communication and information availability including the implementation of the Customer Request Management System; further enhancement of Council's website, upgrade of the Development Application On-line Tracking system and improved mobility for works teams which will also assist in the provision of timely information to residents.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments to this report.