

COVID-19 Community Care Package



Overview

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has escalated world-wide over the last few weeks and has resulted in considerable and serious economic and social impacts on communities.

The Shire has taken significant steps to remodel its services to avoid face to face contact where possible to protect both staff and the community in an effort to prevent the spread of infection from the COVID-19 virus.

In addition to this, the Shire recognises the need to provide additional support to the community, particularly the most vulnerable members, noting that it is expected that there will be a significant increase in the number of people falling into this category, and this may continue for a significant period of time.

This COVID-19 Community Care Package has been prepared to provide a range of support mechanisms to assist the community while the pandemic continues.

Identification of those in need

The Shire recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has and will continue to affect every single member of the community, and that the continuation or remodelling of critical Shire services will not be enough to meet the various needs in the community that have been created and exacerbated by the pandemic.

It is noted that the Federal and State Governments continue to announce measures to support people in the community and that banks are now offering relief packages for business and personal customers.

The Shire can assist to support these measures by also reducing financial pressures where possible, and will also make significant funding available for groups and agencies who support the most vulnerable people in the community to enhance their ability to provide these critical services. This funding will not replace funding to community-based organisations from the Federal and State Governments, but will be an additional and fast way for the Shire to ensure community members can access the critical help they might need if they have compromised health, income and safety concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Shire may also consider deploying its own staff into community support and recovery roles at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Options available through the Care Package

Rates, Fees and Charges

- Zero rate increases for the 2020/2021 financial year;
- Waiving of all non-regulatory Shire fees and charges from 26/3/2020 onwards until 30 June 2020;
- Waiving of penalty interest charged on outstanding rates until 30 June 2020;
- Flexible payment plans for those in vulnerable situations or experiencing financial hardship;

In Kind Support

- Free before/after school care for workers in critical healthcare of community service roles while legally possible for the Shire to provide;
- Support will be provided by Shire staff to support recovery activities within the community where possible.

Funding

The Shire will make available a fund of \$2million which will be administered by the Chief Executive Officer with the support of the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Liaison Group.

As the extent of the pandemic is increasing daily and the full impact is difficult to predict, funding will be determined on a case-by-case basis and authorised by the Chief Executive Officer, taking into account government directives, evolving issues on a national and local level, numbers of people seeking assistance and any other relevant factors relating to the situation as it unfolds.

Support through funding will be provided to the community through the following mechanisms:

1. Community Care Funding

Quick access funding available to assist vulnerable people and those most affected by the pandemic. Such services may include, but not be limited to, the following types of support:

- Programs that connect neighbours and community members to assist and support each other;
- Enhancing people's access to critical information and resources;
- Transportation and delivery services;
- Provision of supplies ;
- Support for people who need urgent accommodation due to the impact of the pandemic;
- Access to mental health and counselling services;
- Technology to enable people to access information, resources and connect with other people and services;
- Any other support mechanisms that assist community members with the impact of the pandemic.

2. Business Support Funding

Funding may be accessed by the business community to undertake activities which will provide support to the business community in response to the pandemic. Such activities may include, but not be limited to, the following types of support:

- Continuation of business networks and associations;
- Toolkits and other support for business to assist them through the pandemic;
- Access to information resources for businesses
- Financial advice for the business community;
- Advice for businesses who are redefining their business model in response to the pandemic;
- Support for businesses who are providing a community service in response to the pandemic;
- Support for businesses when they are able to reopen through provision of funding for activation/marketing.

Review of Community Care Package

This Community Care Package is intended to support the community over the next 6 months, however, there are many unknowns and it may need to be reviewed and restructured as the pandemic continues to ensure it is effectively meeting the needs of the community.

How to apply

Organisations seeking funding as outlined above must email the Chief Executive Officer at recovery@amrshire.wa.gov.au with their proposal. Each proposal will be assessed quickly and on a case by case basis, taking into account the current circumstances at the time.