

**30 March 2020**

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## ***Support Package for local business***

Ballina Shire Council has announced a business package to support local business and residents during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Federal and State Governments are working together to provide support to residents and business financially impacted. Now it's Local Government's turn to lend a hand.

"We all have a role to play in supporting our community and I am pleased Council is in a position to offer some financial relief to struggling businesses. We understand the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted business, and we are committed to doing everything we can to assist during this uncertain time," said Mayor David Wright

The package is estimated to provide \$800,000 in financial relief across a range of rent, fees and charges. This includes the waiving of some fees, commercial rent relief, facility refunds and reducing the overdue rates and charges interest rate to 0% for 15 months.

The majority of these measures are designed to support the business community, which will in turn support employment and our local economy.

We understand some ratepayers would like to see their rates and charges waived across the board. This would have considerable financial implications and Council is not in a financial position to offer this to residents. However, under this relief package ratepayers who cannot pay their rates will not be charged interest on late payments for 15 months until 30 June 2021.

"Our hope is this help will support businesses and local employment, but what will have a bigger impact is locals supporting locals. Once we come through this challenging period I urge all Ballina Shire residents to buy local before looking elsewhere," added Cr Wright.

This package was presented in a Mayoral Minute to the 26 March Council Meeting, receiving unanimous support

The package includes:

**Interest rate on overdue rates and charges** – The current rate is 7.5% and will decrease this rate to zero for the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2021, a period of 15 months

**Community Facility Hire Fees** – refund of bookings

**Flat Rock Tent Park** – refund of bookings

**Northern Rivers Community Gallery** – three month fee waiver for exhibition and Ignite Studio Tenants

**Commercial Use of Footpaths** – no fees for a period of 15 months from 1 April to 30 June 2021 to allow businesses to re-establish when they open

**Community Groups** – tenancy rental relief for Lennox Head Community Sports and Recreation Club for 15 months.

**Commercial Surf Schools** – 50% waiver on annual licence fees for 2020/21

**Parking Fines** - focus on education and information for the period to 30 June 2020, with fines only issued for safety, health and disability access reasons

**Health Inspections (food, skin penetration etc) and Public Pool Inspections** – waive registration and inspection fees for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020

**Market Fees, including Farmers Market** – waive fees for period 1 April to 30 September

**Ferry Casual Fees** – Casual fees for the Burns Point Ferry have been waived until 30 June 2020. The Burns Point

**Commercial Tenants** – provide significant rental relief for our commercial tenants in the Wigmore Arcade and other Council-owned facilities.

**Ballina Byron Gateway Airport** – provide significant rental relief for the operators in the airport

Further details on this support provided will be provided in the coming days and made available on Council's website or call Council on 1300 864 444

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