

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Friday March 27, 2019**



### **CITY INTRODUCES RATES DEFERRALS AND NEW PAYMENT OPTIONS**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the community, the City of Greater Bendigo has announced a series of immediate measures to reduce the financial burden and support our community, residents, businesses and sporting clubs.

There are a number of options that can support people depending on their individual circumstances and they come into effect today. These are:

- For ratepayers on quarterly instalments, the fourth rate instalment due date will be extended by one month to June 30, 2020
- For those experiencing financial hardship, flexible rate payment plans are available, including the ability to defer all payments on rates to September 30, 2020
- Interest will not be charged for overdue rates or other payments through to September 30, 2020
- There are financial hardship options available, which consider individual circumstances. Customers can contact the City via [ratesenquiries@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:ratesenquiries@bendigo.vic.gov.au) or call 5434 6000.

The City will also delay the release of the draft 2020/2021 Budget to enable additional work to be undertaken on the support that can be provided to the community in the next financial year.

Other measures introduced to help residents, businesses and sporting clubs:

- The City is paying all suppliers (regardless of payment terms) as quickly as possible in its weekly payment schedule
- Temporary stop to following up unpaid animal registrations
- A reduction of Council's commercial rents and ground leases for impacted sporting, community and hospitality venues until at least June 30, 2020.

City Chief Executive Officer Craig Niemann said COVID-19 was having a far-reaching impact on the community.

"We are committed to supporting the community through this time of uncertainty," Mr Niemann said.

"We have been working on ways to reduce the pressure on our community, businesses and sporting clubs. We want the community to know that there are a range of options available for those facing financial hardship. This includes the ability to enable flexible payments and defer payments. Please contact us so we can help.

"We know many businesses are facing cash flow challenges. We will also ensure we pay our supplier invoices promptly to support our suppliers.

"This is an unprecedented time that continues to change each day. The City will continue to review the situation and will provide updates to the community if further changes are put in place during this difficult time."

**Media Contact:**

Aleisha Verwoert North – 5434 6213 / 0407 797 479

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[www.bendigo.vic.gov.au](http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au)

T: 03 5434 6000



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