**Around the Bay – September**

**Budget 2020-21**

Hobsons Bay City Council has adopted its Annual Budget for 2020-21. Council listened and responded to feedback and has reshaped the Annual Budget 2020-21 to provide targeted support for the Hobsons Bay community impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It features $5.2 million in relief for our community, comprised of a $3 million Community Support Package, $2.2 million in rates relief, while also funding more than 100 vital community services and capital works improvements across Hobsons Bay.

**Community Support Package 3**

The budget will include a third Community Support Package featuring $3 million to support businesses and the community as they rebuild and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The package includes:

*Residents*

* COVID-19 Recovery Grants worth $500,000 has been added to Council’s existing Annual Community Grants Programs, totalling $1 million in grant funding available for the community
* incentives to use Council venues including the Williamstown Town Hall and Altona Theatre
* ‘loan to own’ libraries iPads program
* programs to support local connections and celebration

*Businesses*

* waiving of food registrations, health registrations , footpath trading permits and planning permit fees for local businesses for 2020-21. Businesses will still need to renew their registrations but no payment of fees will be required
* suspension of paid parking in Nelson Place until 31 December. Customers of businesses at Williamstown Beach will also be provided dedicated permits from vendors for free parking

*Sporting clubs and community groups*

* automatic waiving of summer sports ground rentals.
* strategic planning support to help build strong and sustainable clubs
* sports pavilion cleaning program
* waiving of food and health registration, permit fees where applicable

To view the 2020-21 Budget, visit [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/budget](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/budget)

**Rates adjustment**

The budget applies a 2 per cent rate increase in line with the Victorian Government’s Fair Go Rates System. While this would normally generate additional revenue of approximately $2 million, we are implementing a rate adjustment to redirect approximately $2.2 million in funds back to ratepayers. The adjustment is automatic and no additional paperwork is required. This means rates notices for 2020-21, when compared to the previous year, will on average decrease by:

* 0.17 per cent for residential properties
* 0.31 per cent for vacant residential properties
* 1.91 per cent for commercial properties
* 0.02 per cent for industrial properties
* 0.27 per cent for recreational properties

These rate decreases may include a rebate of $200 and $900 for eligible commercial and industrial properties, respectively. We are also providing a further $25 to existing pensioner rebates.

**Financial hardship**

If you are experiencing financial hardship, you can apply for financial assistance. Council’s Financial Hardship Policy has various options available from rate deferrals through to waivers. Apply at [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/financialassistance](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/financialassistance) or call 1300 179 944.

**Capital works**

The $67.566 million capital works program is the highest investment Council has ever committed for infrastructure projects and aims to strengthen our local economy, support local jobs and provide infrastructure that our community can enjoy and expects.

Highlights include:

$29.658 million buildings, including:

* $19.1 million sporting and recreation facilities
* $4.96 million civic and community facilities
* $1.39 million Building Renewal Program
* $3 million Solar Power Program

$16.333 million for recreation and open space, including:

* $8 million recreational, leisure and community facilities
* $7.982 million parks, open space and streetscapes

$15.605 million roads and drains, including:

* $6.307 million road rehabilitation
* $2 million road resurfacing program
* $1.488 million Blackspot funding
* $1.23 million Local Area Movement Plans
* $1.03 million drainage

$1.515 million for footpaths and cycle ways, including:

* $1.07 million footpath renewal
* $150,000 new footpaths

**Community services**

Council has remained committed to maintaining essential services and support but has needed to adapt in order to meet state and federal government requirements. Our COVID-19 response budget will include ongoing delivery of more than 100 vital community services including:

* Libraries $4.955 million
* Community Child Health $2.84 million
* Community Development $2.505 million
* Active Community Support $2.265 million
* Economic Development and Social Planning $2.031 million
* Youth Services $1.384 million
* Arts and Culture $1.201 million
* Early Years $1.139 million
* Events and Visitor Services $1.02 million
* Public Health $970K

**Hobsons Bay Community has Heart**

Council has developed Hobsons Bay Community has Heart – a program that will support people in need while empowering the community to also reach out and help others. Within the program is the Community Connector, which links people in need with a wide range of services, including food, medications, access to masks, social activities, employment information, CALD support, counselling, domestic violence support, aged care, family and library services.

Visit [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/hobsonsbaycommunityhasheart](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/hobsonsbaycommunityhasheart) for more information.