

City of Ballarat's Update on COVID-19

The COVID-19 emergency is an unprecedented event in recent history. To protect the health of residents and staff, the City of Ballarat has instigated its Response and Recovery Pandemic 2020 Plan for its staff, ratepayers, residents and the broader community.

Evidence from around the world has shown that pre-emptive measures are extremely effective in containing the spread of the disease.

NOTE: This is an extremely fluid situation and events are changing daily.

All information listed below is correct as at 5pm, Friday 27 March but is subject to change. Please keep up-to-date by visiting ballarat.vic.gov.au

The City of Ballarat has a key role to play in all emergency management situations affecting the municipality.

The City of Ballarat's primary focus for the next six months is to ensure that we have the best chance of avoiding the major impacts of COVID-19.

Extension of final rate instalment for Ballarat businesses forced to close

The City of Ballarat will extend the final rate instalment due date from 31 May 2020 to 30 June 2020 without penalty for businesses directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The charging of interest on overdue rates has also been suspended indefinitely.

The decision will allow businesses directly impacted by COVID-19 extra time to pay their rates during this extremely difficult time and provide relief to resident ratepayers who have lost their jobs.

The City of Ballarat will also look at providing more measures in its budget process to help businesses.

Everyone in our community, indeed globally, is hurting right now and we want to do everything we can to help people cope now while the pandemic is on but also to recover once it is over.

The deferment of rate payments and the waiving of interest charges on outstanding rates will apply from 1 March 2020 for those businesses and resident ratepayers directly impacted.

This is not a blanket deferral, but a measure designed to assist those experiencing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ratepayers are asked to make contact with the City of Ballarat's Customer Service staff at info@ballarat.vic.gov.au or on 5320 5500 for more details.

[Read the full media alert here](#)

Mayor calls for COVID-19 financial assistance for Councils

The City of Ballarat Mayor Cr Ben Taylor has written to the Minister for Local Government The Hon. Adem Somyurek asking for financial support for Victorian Councils which are offering rate relief to businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City of Ballarat, like so many other communities across the nation, has already been hit hard economically by the fallout from COVID-19.

Cr Taylor told the Minister for Local Government that hundreds of Ballarat residents have lost their jobs and some businesses have closed because they cannot afford to continue to trade in a rapidly contracting market.

In the letter, Cr Taylor wrote: "I know this situation is not unique to Ballarat or to my Council, but as we move to support our community by offering rate relief to businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19, additional direct financial support from your government is essential. Without this support it will make it extremely difficult for us to provide rate relief to the degree we would wish to."

"We are doing exactly what every other level of government and the banks are doing and trying our absolute best to help Ballarat through these unprecedented times. Your support is urgent."

[Read the full letter here](#)

City of Ballarat's Update on COVID-19

Calls for the Ballarat Animal Shelter to be classified as an essential service

The City of Ballarat's CEO Justine Linley has called on the state government to classify the Ballarat Animal Shelter as an essential service in the event further restrictions are put in place to help reduce the spread of the virus.

The Ballarat Animal Shelter, which is managed by the City of Ballarat, is a crucial resource for the community.

Every year more than 3000 animals are brought through the shelter's doors.

In addition to the Ballarat community, she wrote to the state's leaders that the shelter also supports adjoining municipalities.

Right now, the City of Ballarat is continuing to manage – at a reduced capacity – the number of animals currently in its care.

The CEO stressed to the community that while the animal management team continues to care for the city's animals, Council will continue to advocate strongly that the shelter is classified as an essential service in the event that further controls are placed on public movement as part of the COVID-19 response.

Animal foster carers needed

The Ballarat Animal Shelter is currently home to a number of animals requiring special assistance right now.

So, we're calling on community members with time to commit and space at home to foster a dog, cat or kitten.

Our foster program plays an essential part in ensuring the shelter's animals get the love and care they need while awaiting a permanent home, and it's important more than ever we continue this service.

If we band together, we could make a difference to a lot of furry lives.

Anyone interested should email the Ballarat Animal Shelter team at animalshelter@ballarat.vic.gov.au to request an application.

Customer Service Call Centre to remain open on weekends

Emergency response and recovery goes well beyond the working week and are making sure we're available to support our community through this process.

Our Customer Service Call Centre will remain open and operational on weekends in response to COVID-19.

If you need to reach the City of Ballarat, please call 5320 5500, Saturday and Sunday from 8.15am–5pm.

City of Ballarat skateparks close

In accordance with COVID-19 Pandemic state and federal government guidelines on social distancing and limits on outside gatherings, access to all City of Ballarat skating facilities is temporarily closed.

Failure to adhere to the closure may result in fines and/or further penalties.