

# PRESS RELEASE



YARRIAMBIACK  
SHIRE COUNCIL

**TO:** ALL MEDIA  
**FROM:** JESSIE HOLMES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DATE:** 26TH MARCH 2020  
**RE:** IMMEDIATE COVID-19 RELIEF

## **2019/20 Council Rates and User Fees**

While Council rates contribute to the cost of maintaining and improving a wide range of essential community services and facilities, Council understands that the current Coronavirus pandemic is already having an impact on residents, businesses and community groups.

To immediately assist, Council has extended the due date for the 4th rates instalment to 30 June 2020 and will also defer interest application on overdue rates until 30 June 2020.

In addition, Council will compassionately review ratepayers' situations on a case-by-case basis and be as flexible as possible in extending arrangements during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Council has an existing process to support property owners with overdue rates and charges through which eligible ratepayers can request to enter into an arrangement with Council and apply for the interest to be ceased on the overdue balance whilst they honour their arrangement. Council will work with eligible ratepayers to support them with arrangements.

## **Food Packages**

Council is currently collating information on how to access Red Cross food parcels and communicating with local food suppliers to check on availability of local resources should we need them.

People requiring food assistance support should contact the Foodbank hotline on 1800 675 398. Council will set up local support as the need increases, details will be released on our Facebook and website pages and our next newspaper editions of Yarriambiack News.

If you are unable to be provided with assistance through Foodbank, please contact Council on 5398 0100.

## **Centrelink**

### **Coronavirus Supplement**

The temporary Coronavirus Supplement will be an extra \$550 a fortnight payment on top of income support payments from 27 April 2020.

You will automatically get the supplement if you're getting one of these payments:

- JobSeeker Payment, Partner Allowance, Widow Allowance, Sickness Allowance and Wife Pension
- Youth Allowance for Job Seekers
- Youth Allowance for Students and Apprentices
- Austudy for Students and Apprentices
- ABSTUDY for Students getting Living Allowance
- Parenting Payment partnered and single
- Farm Household Allowance
- Special Benefit.

If you're already getting one of these payments you don't need to do anything. Centrelink will pay you automatically from 27 April 2020. Centrelink will continue to pay you the supplement each fortnight if you're eligible for up to 6 months.

If you're not already getting a payment and you can claim one of the eligible payments and Centrelink approve your claim, you'll also get the supplement. You can claim online through myGov using a Centrelink online account, or phone Centrelink.

Centrelink have also temporarily expand eligibility for JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance for job seekers.

Centrelink will give you access if you're:

- a permanent employee who has been stood down or lost your job
- a sole trader, self-employed, a casual or contract worker whose income has reduced
- caring for someone who's affected by coronavirus.

Centrelink have waived asset testing for 6 months from 25 March 2020, except for Farm Household Allowance and Special Benefit. They have also waived the liquid asset test waiting period, newly arrived residents waiting period, and seasonal work preclusion period. Income testing will still apply.

On 12 March 2020 they started a 3 month waiving of the Ordinary Waiting Period.

This will continue while these temporary arrangements are in place.

Income maintenance and compensation preclusion periods will continue to apply.

If you get JobSeeker Payment or Youth Allowance for job seekers you can't access employer entitlements at the same time. This includes annual leave or sick leave, or income protection insurance.

Centrelink has also extend eligibility for the first \$750 Economic Support Payment to pay it from 31 March 2020. This is if you're getting an eligible payment on any day from 12 March to 13 April 2020.

They will also make a one off Crisis Payment available if you're in severe financial hardship and either:

- need to self-isolate
- are caring for someone self isolating.

A crisis payment is one week of your base income support payment rate.

Centrelink will also pay a second \$750 Economic Support Payment from 13 July 2020. This is if you're getting an eligible payment or have an eligible concession card on 10 July 2020. You won't get this payment if you're getting the Coronavirus Supplement.

### **Banking Assistance**

The big four banks have all released details about deferring mortgage repayments for up to six months for those impacted by Coronavirus. Please speak directly with your bank to determine eligibility and seek financial advice to ensure you make an informed decision.

In addition, Australian Banks have also announced the Small Business relief package which also includes;

- The deferral of loan repayments for six months for small businesses who need assistance because of COVID-19.
- Offering loans, including overdrafts, with no repayments for the first six months, at very low interest rates, supported by the Government, through an SME Loan guarantee.
- Other assistance can include fees waived, loans restructured, and further credit offered to get through the pandemic.

We are expecting information from the federal and state government in relation to assistance for the rental market and will update this information as soon as it is available.

Regards,

*Jessie Holmes*