



GET AROUND WARRNAMBOOL

COVID-19 Business Support Plan



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GET AROUND WARRNAMBOOL



COVID-19 Business Support Plan Overview

Warrnambool City Councils COVID-19 Business Support Program (COVID-19 BSP) is designed to engage with local businesses and lessen the financial burden impacting them where possible, whilst planning for a rebuild of the important business community as restrictions are lifted.

Consultation with businesses, service providers, community and government key stakeholders to identify and drive the key strategies for the plan is vital to its success. The aim of the plan is to relaunch our business community creating a boost to the local economy, safeguard and create jobs and opportunities for business innovation, diversity and growth. Business and community feedback to council is vital at all stages...we are all in this together!

The COVID-19 BSP is not just about economic renewal. It also places an emphasis on the health and well-being and engagement of the community with the businesses and services they support and rely on after a prolonged period of isolation.

Business Support Plan Guidelines

- Where possible use local businesses and resources
- Be sensitive around the timing of parts of the plan
- Plan to be city wide and be aware of Warrnambool's regional role
- Consultation (Prior / During / Post)
- Be flexible, respond and adapt as restrictions are altered
- Measure Success: Community engagement and economic health



STAGE 1 – RESPONSE

Stage 1 to 3 Restrictions Initiatives

1.1 Communication

1.1.1 Get Around Warrnambool

The 'Get Around Warrnambool' (GAW) campaign was launched in March focussing on businesses with all subsequent stages and initiatives designed to be relevant to the timing of the reduction of the COVID-19 restrictions. The campaign and its communications, will be flexible and fluid as the restrictions and other circumstances evolve.

Our communications have and will continue to consider all key-stakeholders and their accessibility to the various communication mediums. To date these have included and will continue to include:

- City Assist Staff taking direct calls and responding to e-mails
- Direct contact with business (Phone and industry visits when permitted)
- Media releases – Print, Radio, TV and Social Media
- Social media (Facebook posts)
- Dedicated COVID-19 webpage
- TV Campaign
- Participation in COVID-19 working groups, including Economic Development Practitioners Group – All GSC LGA's, WCC COVID-19 Working Group, Warrnambool City & Moyne Joint Emergency Relief Committee.

1.1.2 Business Concierge

Warrnambool City Council created a central page on their website, which acts as a Business Concierge or first point of call for businesses seeking assistance. The page contains up to date information and links for financial assistance packages, managing staff, health and safety resources, webinars, marketing resources and much more. This webpage is designed to be a one-stop shop for up to date information in an environment where things

are changing rapidly. In addition to this a number of small short videos have been made which are branded with the GAW branding and aim to reinforce the messages provided through the concierge.

1.1.3 Contact with Business

As government restrictions began to be announced WCC reached out directly to a wide range of businesses in the first few weeks to show their support, gauge the initial impact, advise them of the business concierge website and begin capturing what business owners might foresee as vital council support moving forward.

Current information was e-mailed from Council's database and regular Facebook posts providing links to financial assistance packages and services as detailed on the business concierge website.

1.2 Council Resource Support

1.2.1 Free Parking

- Free parking across the city until June 30th.

1.2.2 Permit Fee Assistance

- Waiving Outdoor Eating Facility permit fees. Businesses still need to renew their permit and provide the applicable Certificate of Currency for \$20 million. Businesses which have already paid their fee for 2020 will have this amount automatically carried forward and credited to their 2021 permit fees.
- Waiving Display of Goods for Sale permit fees for 12 months. Businesses still need to renew their permit

and provide the applicable Certificate of Currency for \$20 million. Businesses which have already paid their fee for 2020 will have this amount automatically carried forward and credited to their 2021 permit fees.

- Waiving Advertising Signs (A-frames, etc) permit fees for 12 months. Businesses still need to renew their permit and provide the applicable Certificate of Currency for \$20 million. Businesses which have already paid their fee for 2020 will have this amount automatically carried forward and credited to their 2021 permit fees.

1.2.3 Rent and Lease Relief

- Sporting clubs and community groups leasing council owned properties - Waiver rent/fees for community and sporting groups for Council owned land/grounds from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- A reduction in rent for tenants of Council owned buildings or facilities from 1 March, 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- Reduction of rent on council based properties or eligible businesses - Businesses experiencing financial hardship may choose to defer their 2019-20 fourth quarter rates instalment to the 2020-21 financial year and spread the payment over that year. Businesses eligible for any of the current Federal and State Government funding schemes will automatically be eligible for rates deferral to 2020-21 under this initiative. Other businesses experiencing financial hardship are still encouraged to apply.

No interest will be raised on business rates from 16 March 2020, the date a State of Emergency was declared, until 30 June 2020

Each of these cases will be assessed on individual circumstances with outcomes customised according to the needs of each case. All landlords and tenants are asked to communicate with each other to ensure the benefits of this rate deferral for eligible businesses is passed on to the tenant.

1.3 Response Events

1.3.1 Lounge Fest

A Saturday night music event involving 22 musicians with ties to the south-west as part of the Get Around Warrnambool Campaign was held on April 11th. The event was broadcast through Facebook and radio and featured recorded performances with 22,000 views throughout the evening. Warrnambool City Council, ACE Radio and Fitz Media all collaborated to bring the event to life.

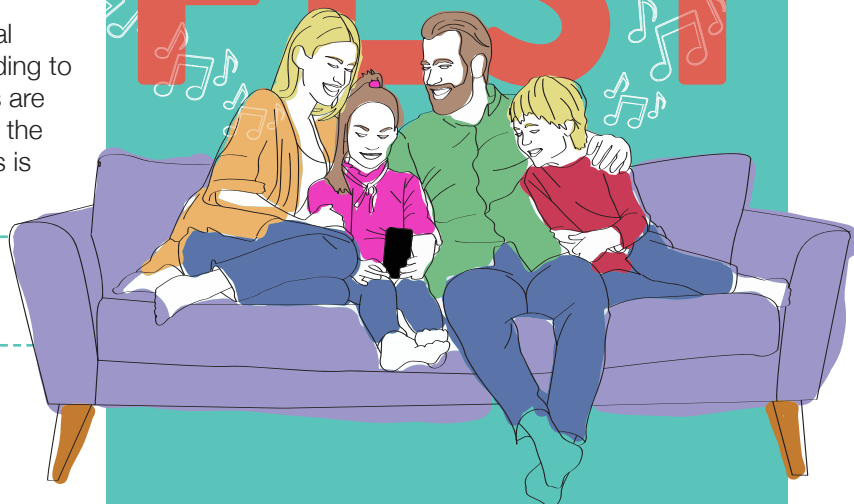
As a result of the popularity of Loungefest a second instalment will take place on the 30 June. This virtual concert will feature local musicians and comedians.

"There's a lot of people in a lot of industries that have been hit hard and while I can only speak from a music industry point of view, I know that pretty much 100 per cent of our work as we knew it has dried up."

**– Nancy Schipper
(Lounge Fest Performer)**



LOUNGE FEST



"This is an awesome idea to keep everyone connected and I'm stoked they thought of the idea".

**– Gabby Steele
(Lounge Fest Performer)**



RECOVERY

STAGE 2 – RECOVERY

Business support, consultation & planning during and post COVID-19

Our Commitment: The COVID-19 BSP approach to developing initiatives to assist businesses in Stages 2 and 3 is based on the following premise:

Consultation for the COVID-19 BSP is based on the belief that those who are affected have a right to be involved in the process and outcomes

2.1 Communication: Maintaining a dedicated COVID-19 webpage for businesses, direct business contact, social media campaign, newsletter and email updates and TV campaign.

2.2 Engagement:

Inform, consult, involve, collaborate & empower for a relaunch

Key Stakeholders

- Businesses
- Community
- Regional Development Victoria
- Accountancy Firms
- Consultants
- WCC

Inform

Communicate to key stakeholders the vision and intent of the Business Support Plan for Get Around Warrnambool (GAW). Provide key stakeholders with information to assist them in understanding the opportunities and/or solutions requesting them to be a part of it.

Consult

Obtain feedback from leadership groups such as Warrnambool City Council Economic Advisory Committee on proposed initiatives and seek alternatives.

Involve

Work directly key stakeholders throughout to ensure their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered

Collaborate

Partner with our key stakeholders in each aspect of the decisions including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Empower

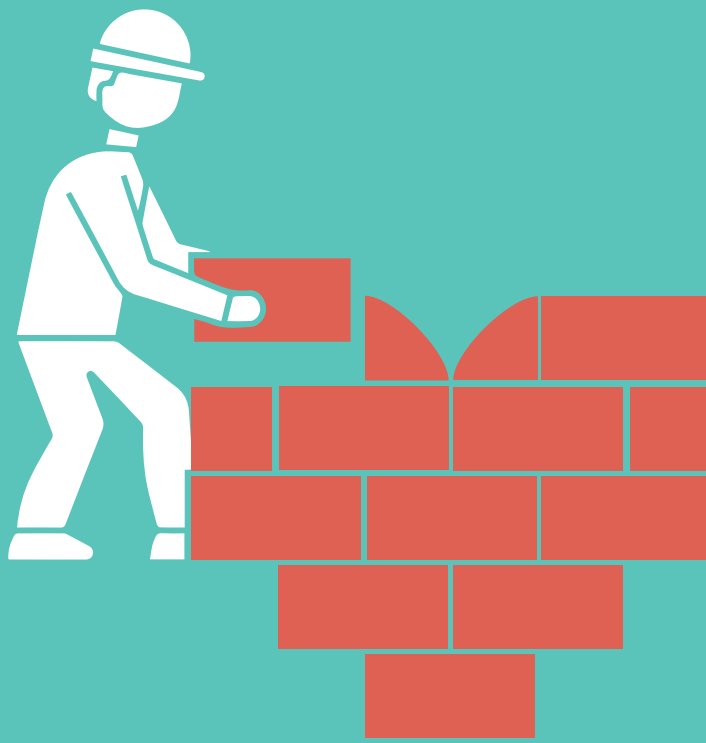
Place final decision making in the hands of the key stakeholders

Our Approach

- Individual approach – Phone Calls/Emails
- Meeting via technology or face to face (when restrictions permit)
- Survey – online via our website and followed up with a virtual dotmocracy.
- Webinars

2.3 Respond: We will continue to monitor, evaluate, maintain or adapt initiatives from stage 1 as the COVID-19 situation is evolving.





STAGE 3 – REBUILD

Implementation of initiatives as determined by the easing of restrictions

3.1 Business Growth

3.1.1 Business Grants

The establishment of a Business Initiative Grants Program (BIG) to work in conjunction with all businesses across the region. The Business Initiatives Grants Program would allow businesses to apply for grants with \$1:\$1 match funding up to \$3,000 per business to implement new ideas, projects or programs that will help organisations to diversify and grow. The BIG guidelines will have a set scope and principles which will encourage businesses to collaborate, be entrepreneurial and have mutual benefits for both the business and the community.

BIG grant criteria and preference are weighted towards businesses and sectors which have been the most adversely affected by the impact of COVID-19.

Funding	Business Initiative Grant (BIG)	Funding Ratio
Business funding application meeting BIG program criteria	50% of total cost to a maximum of \$3,000	BIG \$1 : \$1

3.1.2 Partnerships

Using the principles of inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower, Council will maintain, adapt or develop new initiatives as the COVID-19 impacts evolve and change.

- Economic Development, Visitor Economy and International Relations Advisory Committee structures to foster collaboration between leaders in the business community and provide advice on the recovery program;
- Encourage business input to a recovery program for local businesses;
- Seek business input to campaigns designed to support Warrnambool businesses;
- Engage neighbouring municipalities, State and Federal Government and other stakeholders as required and to encourage partnership working initiatives.
- Partnership projects and support to South West TAFE and Deakin University Warrnambool campus to encourage pathways to employment opportunities.

3.2. Business Support

A number of initiatives will be actioned with the intention of providing a range of business support of various levels to all industries across the city.

3.2.1 Personalised Business Concierge – Case Managers Program

A Case Managers Program (CMP) involving dedicated council staff to inform and guide businesses toward council, government and other financial, resources and available services relating to COVID-19 will be available for business to engage with. This has been occurring as the situation began to evolve through our dedicated website, direct business contact and other platforms but will become a more specialised and dedicated support for business.

3.2.2 International Support and Engagement.

Warrnambool City Council will aim to provide strategic and operational support that enables organisations and businesses across the city to provide the skills, connections, knowledge and solutions to help organisations engage internationally. Due to our geo political position the International Support and Engagement 2021/2022 program will have a strong ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) focus

This support will be offered through the following programs;

- Sister City Initiatives
- Collaboration with Brophy Youth Services on the Welcoming Cities Program.
- Development of an Asian Capable Region Program
- Market Growth Sprint Program – focused on building fast investment strategy and insight into ASEAN markets

3.2.3 Business Marketing

Raising the profile of businesses across the city through marketing support programs.

Businesses will have access to marketing mentors through workshops, networking opportunities and one on one consultations.

3.2.4 Mental Health Support

It is expected the impacts of COVID-19 will take an increasing toll on the community's mental health. Support in this area will include;

- Counselling support offered to service providers
- Mental Health focused area of the Get Around Warrnambool campaign
- Community Events with a well-being focus

3.2.5 Tourism Initiatives

As we emerge from restrictions our City's Festivals and Events program will rebuild community confidence. A Festivals and Events Grants program will assist activation of key precincts across the City. Community led place-making initiatives such as the continuation of the Beers and Ideas program to empower the community for input for street activation.

Council will engage in ongoing partnership projects with Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism on marketing campaigns such as:

- The Great Sleepover – targeted campaign encouraging local community to invite their friends and relatives to visit;
- Great Regional Famil – encourage businesses to familiarize and visit businesses in other areas
- Event marketing – Support the marketing and promotion of events as a catalyst to visit

Bring forward review and early implementation of the Warrnambool Destination Action Plan

Free listing for Warrnambool Visitor Economy businesses on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) – an online directory for tourism businesses across Australia – to get extra exposure for our local businesses.



3.3 Business Attraction and Investment

Investigate and identify opportunities to attract new business offering to the city.

3.3.1 The Better Approvals Project has been established as a one stop shop for new and existing businesses to relieve regulatory burden.

The project reduces the time it takes for a business to get regulatory permits as well as reducing Council's administrative time. The program is a suite of reforms that streamlines Council's processes and delivers value to the business community. The project team delivering this project comes from across various council departments including Economic Development, Planning, Local Laws, Environmental Health, City Assist and Communications.

3.3.2 City for Living campaign was a data researched, focus driven campaign.

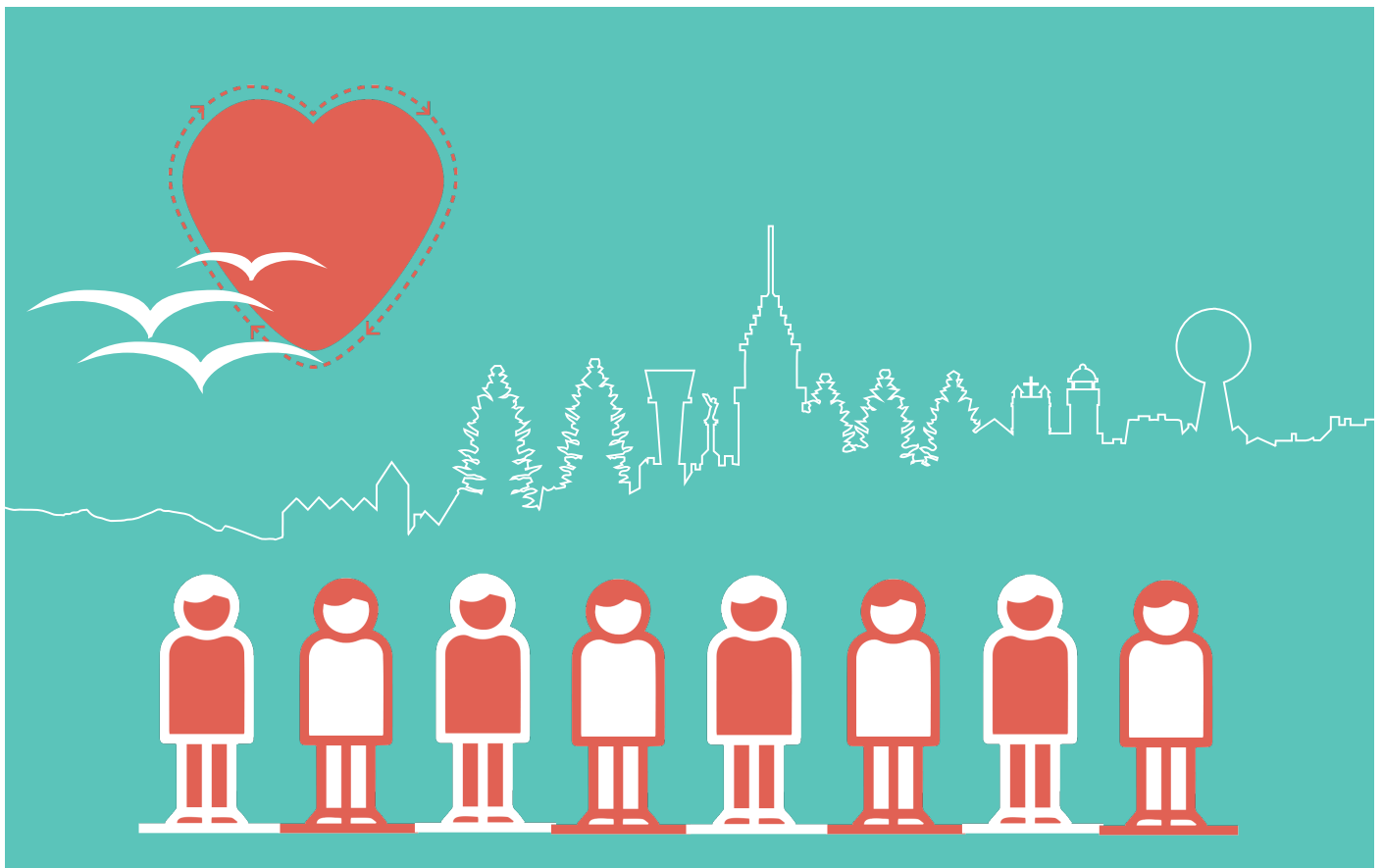
As the city rebuilds the City for Living Campaign will move its focus to promoting Warrnambool as a viable career

move option to skilled and semi-skilled workers who may be experiencing unemployment due to COVID-19 and have limited opportunities to recommence work in their current location. This demographic will provide valuable assets to the community through their areas of expertise and industry experience. Specific collateral and information will be developed off the back of the City for Living campaign and the Warrnambool Live website will be adjusted to reflect this.

3.3.3 Planning Approvals

Continue and where possible, accelerate the program of strategic land use planning work being undertaken to identify development opportunities to attract private investment and accommodate growth in our City.

Engagement occurring with State Governments Building Victoria's Recovery Taskforce regarding eligible projects that might be fast-tracked due to COVID-19 related impacts on the Victorian Planning System. Council is also seeking the advice of the Taskforce on initiatives that might further expand housing diversity options in the City.



3.4 City Wide Engagement

3.4.1 Get Around Warrnambool Campaign

To support local businesses across the city as a part of rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic an extensive 'Get Around Warrnambool' (GAW) campaign has been developed. The campaign's strategic objective is long term and has been designed to address the business communities needs through all three phases of the city's Business Support Program.

With positive branding guidelines the campaign will start as a 'virtual group hug' for the city, encouraging the community to look out for each other and then move onto become Warrnambool's longer term 'Think, Support, Spend Local' campaign. All marketing and communication in response to the Business Support Plan will be uniformly branded under the Get Around Warrnambool campaign.

The Get Around Warrnambool Campaign will include;

- Television Ads
- Radio Campaign
- Cinema Advertising
- Print news stories
- Social Media campaign
- Downloadable and printed collateral

At all major milestones relevant Press Releases will be distributed to the appropriate media outlets.

3.4.2 Festivals and Events

As we emerge from restrictions the importance of community events and festivals to rebuild the community confidence and connect businesses with consumers is paramount. Working in collaboration with the events team, a full program of events will be developed based on community consultations. The events will have the following aims;

- Branded Get Around Warrnambool
- Promoting a range of businesses and industries
- City wide activities
- Multi cultural community and connected events
- Well being and support events

3.4.3 Community Lead Placemaking

The continuation of the Beers and Ideas program which was established by Warrnambool City Council in 2017 as a key placemaking initiative to empower the community for input for street activation. The micro grants program offers funding and support to the entrepreneurial and creative

community of Warrnambool. Beers and Ideas is a popular community event which has had a number of positive outcomes and benefits across the city. For 2020-2021 Beers and Ideas to have a social entrepreneurial focus in its placemaking activities.

3.4.4 Mentoring programs and Workshops

A suite of mentoring programs and workshops will be developed to assist established businesses through to start ups to;

- develop business plans,
- identify trade and investment opportunities
- understand supply chains and markets
- identify emerging opportunities.

These will be held in the form of workshops, seminars, support programs, one on one sessions and networking events. The timing and delivery mode will be dependent on the timing of the reduction of the current restrictions.

The programs would be designed to target industries greatest hit by the pandemic.

3.4.5 Community Assistance

Council will take a role in collaborating with key agencies and stakeholders to provide information and opportunities to disperse information in regards to services and resources for the vulnerable in the community. Re-engaging and building on existing relationships with relevant service providers and volunteers will be a key focus to achieve this.

3.5 Economic Tracking

Periodic measurement of spending, worker numbers, and employment mix across all industries will provide an indication of general economic health and business growth in the city.

Use of services such as REMPLAN and Spendmapp to show economic state of the city prior and during the COVID-19 pandemic and the progress of rebuilding the local economy.

Data to be utilised from tracking community engagement and economic health of the city indicating;

- Active Spaces: Measure human interaction across the business sector
- Business Diversity: Measuring the new approaches to business operations
- Employment: Measure business health and economic strength across industry sectors

GET AROUND WARRNAMBOOL

