

my strath bogie

Autumn Bulletin



Strathbogie
shire



RATE RELIEF

Your Questions Answered

Strathbogie Shire Council has introduced measures designed to assist ratepayers and business owners who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our community has been hard-hit by the standing down of employees, job losses and mandatory closure of businesses. This follows drought, fire and storms in recent times, putting a strain on household budgets.

On 5 April 2020, Council announced some changes to help our community through this unprecedented situation.

What relief is Strathbogie Shire Council offering?

The initiatives are:

- An extension of the due date of the fourth Rate Instalment on property rates to 30 June 2020 (instead of 31 May 2020).
- No overdue/outstanding interest to be added to assessments for the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.
- The refund of any previously paid business registration fees for this financial year to become a registered premise, which includes food business, hairdressers, etc.

As part of its 2020-21 Budget deliberations, Council will consider a no fee arrangement for business registrations and footpath trading.

Who does the extension of rates payment to 30 June 2020 apply to?

The extension applies to all current Strathbogie Shire ratepayers. The fourth instalment rates notice, to be issued soon, will reflect the new payment due date of 30 June 2020.

Why do I need to pay rates?

Strathbogie Shire Council provides an extensive range of services to the community. This includes waste collection, playgrounds, community facilities, parks and gardens, roads, animal services, planning and building services,

and much more – in total, there are more than 130 services which are provided for via rates.

If the community doesn't pay rates, these services cannot continue. Council is one of the major employers in the region through the provision of this wide range of services.

I am having trouble paying my rates – what should I do?

The first piece of advice is not to panic – we are here to work with you through this.

Council has a range of ways in which we do this – we have a Hardship Policy and can arrange payment plans to help people reduce their rates debt.

The updated Hardship Policy was adopted at the March 2020 Council meeting and is designed to assist ratepayers in:

- The payment of rates and charges, including the Fire Services Levy;
- Applications to enter into special payment arrangements;
- Applications for financial hardship;

Rates will not generally be waived but can be deferred.

Upon request, an application form will be sent to you and will need to be completed. This will allow you to demonstrate how you are experiencing undue and unusual hardship.

I am currently on a payment arrangement agreement but have been impacted by job loss – what can I do?

We understand that people's financial circumstances have significantly been changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For those who are on existing payment plans, we are happy to

discuss other arrangements which may better suit their new financial situation.

I am a business and paid my registered premises fee – how do I get a refund?

Council is currently working on processing refunds for fees paid in registering premises. We will provide further information on how you will receive this and we are working on ensuring this reaches you as soon as possible.

Will further financial assistance be available?

While our first round of rate relief is more immediate, Council is currently preparing its 2020-2021 budget and is aware of pressures being experienced by many people., which will be taken into consideration. Together with other Councils, we are also appealing for Federal and State governments to provide financial assistance, which would in turn be passed on to ratepayers.

What is Council doing now the doors are closed?

One of our major priorities has been ensuring staff are safe – many staff are currently working from home. In some circumstances, larger teams have been split in half, rotating between working from home and coming into the office to reduce the overall number of people in the

office at one time. Our teams are focusing on delivering services which are innovative and in line with current Government restrictions.

Some examples of this are where youth services and maternity services are looking at running group activities via weblink so that social interaction can occur in an environment that meets social distancing requirements.

All Council departments have been required to be agile and adaptable to their new working arrangements.

For many departments there has been an increased workload as they try to do all they can to support their community and provide services that are valued.

We are all in this together and our work has focused very much on providing support mechanisms and timely communications for community and staff.

We have put on hold recruitment of all but the most critical roles. To respond to community requirements, some current roles have been redeployed to other positions to provide services most in need at this time.

Our customer service staff continue to provide a high level of service, although we have closed our doors to protect members of the public and staff. Customer service staff are available via phone, email and Facebook to answer your queries. Face-to-face appointments with staff are also available via appointment.

We're here to help

Our Customer Service Centres are open for telephone and email enquiries. Please phone us on 1800 065 993 or info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au. If you wish to talk to someone in person, please phone us to make an appointment.

Freecall
1800 065 993

Email info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au
www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au

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COVID-19 Update

Strathbogie Shire Council is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and senior management and relevant staff are regularly meeting to review business operations and service delivery.

Council undertakes regular business continuity planning to ensure we are well prepared to respond to a range of situations, including pandemics.

We are currently working closely with the Department of Health and Human Services as the lead agency responsible for the COVID-19 response.

The best source of information about Council services is our website, which is updated daily at strathbogie.vic.gov.au

Our Facebook page also includes regular updates:

You can contact us for information on:

- ✓ info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au
- ✓ 1800 065 993
- ✓ [facebook.com/StrathbogieShireCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/StrathbogieShireCouncil)

The best sources of Coronavirus information are:

- ✓ [dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)
- ✓ [health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov](https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov)
- ✓ [who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)
- ✓ Department of Health COVID-19 app downloadable from App Stores



SOCIAL Distancing

One way to slow the spread of Covid-19, is social distancing. The more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread.

Things you can do are:

- ✓ stay at home and only go out if it is absolutely essential;
- ✓ keep 1.5 metres away from others;
- ✓ avoid physical greetings such as handshaking and hugs;
- ✓ use tap and go instead of cash;
- ✓ travel at quiet times and avoid crowds;
- ✓ avoid at risk groups like older people
- ✓ practise good hygiene.

Council will continue to review operations as the situation evolves but at the time of going to press, the following services were impacted:

FACILITY	STATUS
CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES	The centres are closed for face-to-face inquiries, but phone, email or Facebook inquiries are most welcome.
VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES	Euroa Hub and Nagambie VIC both closed to the public.
EUROA COMMUNITY CINEMA	Closed.
MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES	By appointment only.
COUNCIL MEETINGS	Council meetings will proceed with videolink services available to watch.
COMMUNITY FUNDING PROGRAMS	On hold.
KERBSIDE WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES	Occurring as normal.
TRANSFER STATIONS	Open.
CAPITAL WORKS	Proceeding.
ROAD WORKS	Proceeding.
BUILDING AND PLANNING APPLICATIONS	Proceeding.
PUBLIC TOILETS	Open but some shortage of toilet paper supplies being experienced.
LIBRARIES	Closed
SALEYARDS	Open but general public not permitted. Buyers and key personnel only.
YOUTH SERVICES	Changes can be found at https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/youth/youth/recent-events . The L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program is on hold. Find out more at https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/youth/youth/l2p-learner-driver-program
PLAYGROUNDS	All public playgrounds have been closed until further notice.
WATERWAYS	All boat ramps and access points to Lake Nagambie and surrounding waterways are closed until further notice.
IMMUNISATIONS	By appointment only.



POZI ONLINE MAPPING

For Better Communication

Strathbogie Shire residents have been embracing the new online mapping service Pozi since its roll-out.

Strathbogie Shire Council Chief Executive Officer Julie Salomon said Council had begun using the public web map system after researching its success across other local government areas.

She said the mapping service enabled residents to have free access to an interactive and location-based communication platform displaying geographic information from multiple sources that can be viewed by the general public, and be used as a tool for local business.

“The system is easy to use, it’s a matter of logging on to the Shire website home page and clicking on the Pozi – Online Mapping button and following the prompts,” she said.

Ms Salomon said the types of information available through the Pozi website included Property Information, Parcel Details, Planning Zones and Overlays, Waste Collection Routes and Zones, Council Wards and aerial imagery of the shire.

“The Pozi system also has the capacity to allow users to share a map, print a map, draw on a map and measure distance and area on a map,” Ms Salomon said.

“Residents can also use the platform to provide feedback on council projects that require location based and transparent community feedback.”

The roll-out of Pozi Online Mapping at Strathbogie Shire was a project that increased the recent score in the LGSRG GIS Good Practice Framework to above the State average for Community Engagement.

“This was great news for us as a Shire but also our Geospatial team, who work hard to ensure the Pozi platform has up-to-date information and is user-friendly,” she said.

“This included a fantastic A rating for the area of property and rates integration,”

She said the results of the report indicated Strathbogie Shire Council had achieved the following ratings:

- ✓ Spatial capability B (State average C)
- ✓ Core Vicmap Data Maintenance B (State average B)
- ✓ Property and Rates integration A (Stage average B)
- ✓ Asset management to GIS C (State average C)
- ✓ Community engagement B (State average D)

To access the Strathbogie Shires Pozi – Online Mapping visit <https://strathbogie.pozi.com/>



COUNCILLORS

Elected

Strathbogie Shire Council has welcomed two new Councillors.

Robert Gardner (pictured left) has been elected as a councillor for Lake Nagambie Ward within Strathbogie Shire Council, after the Victorian Electoral Commission conducted a countback of votes on 20 January 2020.

The Returning Officer, Phillippa Heskett, declared the result after a countback of votes from the general election held in October 2016.

Only those candidates who were unsuccessful at the general election and who were still eligible to be elected were included in the countback process.



The extraordinary vacancy arose due to the resignation of Councillor Debra Bower (formerly Swan).

Chris Raeburn (pictured right) is Honeysuckle Creek Ward’s new representative, after a by-election was held to fill an extraordinary vacancy.

He was among five candidates standing for the by-election, and he will represent Honeysuckle Creek Ward on Strathbogie Shire Council until the next general council election in October 2020.

The Returning Officer, Christine Chadwick, declared the result on 27 March 2020.

The extraordinary vacancy arose due to the resignation of Kate Stothers.



PARKING

At Nagambie

Visitors and Nagambie residents can now take advantage of new and improved parking limits within the High St precinct.

Visitors and Nagambie residents can now take advantage of new and improved parking limits within the High St precinct.

The new two-hour parking limits were introduced to make the main street more accessible.

Strathbogie Shire Council consulted with both residents and business owners and received feedback to help resolve the parking issue many were facing.

The two-hour parking restriction has solved inconsistencies with the different parking limit times around the city.

Nagambie has seen a marked increase in the amount of people coming into the central business district to shop, as well as an influx in visitor numbers.

Mayor Cr Amanda McClaren said the two-hour parking limits would be put in place from 8am to 5pm, seven days a week.

“This means that visitors enjoying the tourism accommodation in Nagambie will be able to legally park their vehicles overnight,” she said.

Signs indicating the new parking arrangements have been erected around the CBD.



TELL US WHY YOU LOVE STRATHBOGIE SHIRE!

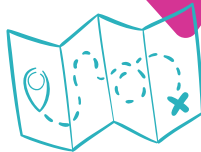


Enter our competition & WIN!

While we are all being advised to stay home in these current times, we are still busy working behind the scenes to get as much information online as we can to help others discover, while they're 'surfing the net', what an amazing place it is that we live in - but we can't do it alone, and we need your help!

We need your stories, ideas, photos and tips to help promote our beautiful region to all of those who are also stuck at home and looking for inspiration on where they can go and what they can do once we are allowed back out into the world again.

Where do you take visitors when they are here?



What amazing story from the past can you share about our region?

What is your favourite place to visit?

What is a great day trip itinerary that you would suggest?

Where are the best natural assets that you like to visit in our Shire?

Do you have a family connection to someone famous (or infamous) from history?



What is your favourite 'time out' spot or walk to get back to nature?



Competition Categories

We are offering prizes of complimentary Euroa Cinema tickets (to be used once we are able to go to the cinema again!) and complimentary Transfer Station passes to give away for the best entries as judged by the Tourism, Arts and Culture Advisory Group of Council in the following categories:

1 Favourite Special Spot and why?

2 Best Day Trip Itinerary

3 Great Local Story

4 Family Fun Day Out

5 Cool Local Art

6 Best Natural Asset

7 Most Impressive Local Photo

So start writing down your ideas, and go to our website for full details on how to enter. Competition closes Friday 26 June 2020, with winners announced on Wednesday, 22 July 2020.

Freecall
1800 065 993

Email info@strathbogievic.gov.au
www.strathbogievic.gov.au

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