



AGENDA

ECONOMIC AND SMART COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Economic and Smart Communities Strategic Reference Group will be held remotely via TEAMS.

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2020

Beginning at 6:00pm for the purpose of considering matters included in this agenda.

Committee Members

Mayor Michael Regan (Chair)

Cr David Walton

Cr Sue Heins

Cr Stuart Sprott

Saul Carroll

Andy West

Stuart White Microsoft Australia

Drew Johnson Manly Business Chamber

Peter Middleton Newport Residents Association

Ngaire Young Northern Beaches Campus, TAFE NSW

Geri Moorman

Gordon Lang

Alexander Coxon

Stephen Pirovic International College of Management

Matthew Aderton

Chris Wilcocks

Council Officer Contacts

Karen Twitchett Director Workforce & Technology

Kath McKenzie Executive Manager, Community Engagement & Communications

Naren Gangavarapu Chief Information Officer

Tamara Lukic Governance Officer

Quorum

A majority of members including the Chair or one of the elected Councillors.

Agenda for Economic and Smart Communities

Strategic Reference Group Meeting

to be held on Wednesday 20 May 2020

remotely via TEAMS

Commencing at 6:00pm

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NEXT MEETING Wednesday 19 August 2020

1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

As a sign of respect, Northern Beaches Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands on which we gather and pays respect to Elders past and present.

APOLOGIES

All members are expected to attend the meetings or otherwise tender their apologies to the Chair and Governance at councilmeetings@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Members should disclose any "**pecuniary**" or "**non-pecuniary**" interests in matters included in the agenda. The [Northern Beaches Council Code of Conduct](#) (the Code) provides guidance on managing conflicts of interests.

A **pecuniary interest** is defined in Section 4 of the Code as:

A pecuniary interest is an interest that you have in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to you or a person referred to in clause 4.3.

A **non-pecuniary conflict of interest** is defined in Section 5 of the Code as:

A non-pecuniary conflict of interest exists where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that you could be influenced by a private interest when carrying out your official functions in relation to a matter.

If you required further information or guidance about disclosing an interest please contact Governance at councilmeetings@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

4.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 MINUTES OF ECONOMIC AND SMART COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP MEETING HELD 19 FEBRUARY 2020

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Economic and Smart Communities Strategic Reference Group meeting held 19 February 2020, copies of which were previously circulated to all Members, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

5.0 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

ITEM NO.	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	DUE DATE
Item 6.3	A workshop be organised for group members to provide feedback and input on Smart Beaches Next Steps	K Lewis / T Lukic	12 March 2020

6.0 AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM 6.1	IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND BUSINESSES - DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK
REPORTING OFFICER	DEB KEMPE
TRIM FILE REF	2020/238839
ATTACHMENTS	NIL

ISSUE

To inform Council's response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and advocate to State and Federal Government for support, Council needs to understand the localised impacts on our economy and business community. Whilst there is limited data, Council has been able to pull together a range of data sources to help understand the current impact on our local economy and monitor change as we move towards economic recovery.

BACKGROUND

The declaration of the COVID-19 global pandemic and subsequent lockdown of non-essential services from 23 March 2020, has had a significant impact on our local businesses and economy.

The impact of COVID-19 has been particularly catastrophic for the tourism and hospitality industry and the thousands of supporting businesses that underpin it. This in conjunction with the bushfires, has continued to impact the travel and tourism sector on the Northern Beaches.

To understand the implications of COVID-19, sound evidence on how the local economy and businesses are being impacted by current events is required. Most businesses are likely to be impacted by COVID-19, either directly or indirectly, and the increased economic uncertainty and risk may have significant financial implications.

Currently, there is limited sound data available at the local level to track how businesses are performing during COVID-19 and what impacts this will have into the future. However, Council does have access to some data that can provide insights into how COVID-19 is playing out across different sectors and locations throughout the Northern Beaches. This includes town centre audits, available pedestrian counts, car parking and ferry patronage data and economic outlook for change in local jobs / Gross Regional Product (GRP).

Understanding the changing impact on business conditions is vital in shaping Council's and other levels of Governments' response to help businesses adjust and to continue to monitor change as we move towards economic recovery.

DISCUSSION

We would like to share with you some initial insights from available data and to seek feedback on the value of this information. We would also like to hear from with you about any other potential data sources Council could use to measure and monitor impacts of COVID-19 on our local economy and its recovery over coming months.

1. .ID LGA Job and Economic Outlook forecasts (June Quarter)

COVID-19 has had a substantial negative impact on economic activity since restrictions on social gatherings came into effect in March 2020. As a subscriber to .ID (Informed Decisions), who provide demographic and economic data to Northern Beaches Council, we have been provided with forecasts of job and productivity (GRP) changes at the LGA level for the quarter to June 2020. This is what is considered the "impact" phase.

Headline estimates

Impacts refer to June Quarter 2020 compared to 2018/19 4-quarter average and data is based on information from National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)

GRP change	Local job change	Employed resident change
-11.9%	-7.6%	-9.3%
(NSW -13.6%)	(-12.2 inc JobKeeper recipients)	(-14.3% inc JobKeeper recipients)

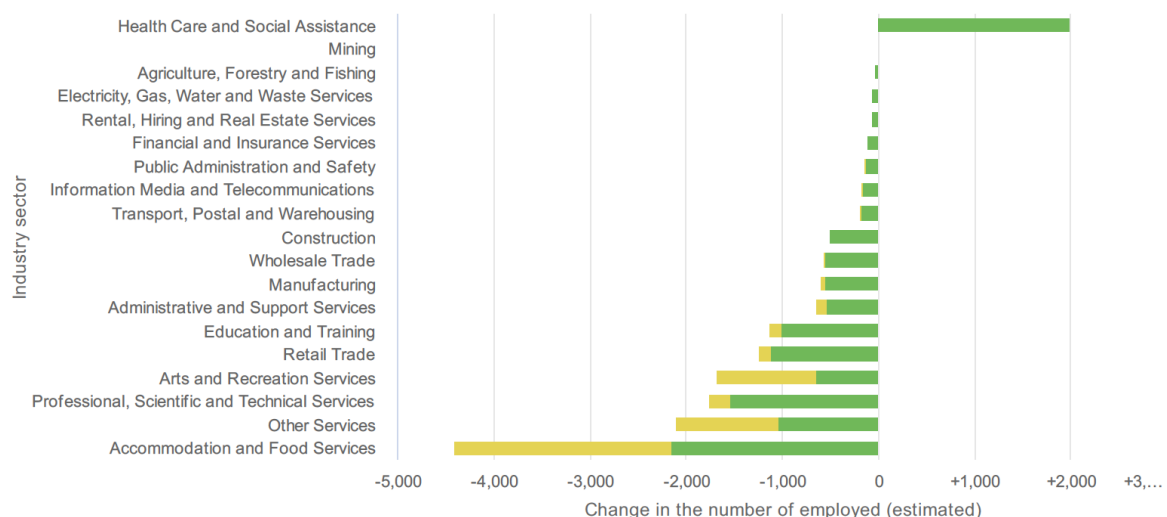
Key Insights

- Gross Regional Product is forecast to fall by -11.9% in the June Quarter 2020. This fall was lower than the state average (13.6%).
- Local Jobs, which is people working on the Northern Beaches, are forecast to fall by -7.6% in the June Quarter 2020. This equates to a fall of 8,260 local jobs.
- If JobKeeper recipient impacts are included then the employment fall is estimated at -12.2% (13,319 jobs).
- The impact on employed residents, which is people who live on the Northern Beaches and work locally or outside the LGA, is forecast to be even higher at -9.3% of all resident workers and increasing to 14.3% if JobKeepers is included.

Employment impact in June Quarter 2020 (compared to 2018/19 quarter average)

Northern Beaches Council area

■ JobKeeper Component ■ Not on JobKeeper



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) Version 1.1 (May 2020) ©2020 Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id the population experts. Impacts have been split into: (1) not on JobKeeper – unemployed as defined by the ABS; and (2) JobKeeper – performing reduced hours or not working (i.e. 0 hours). Many will not be contributing to economic activity.

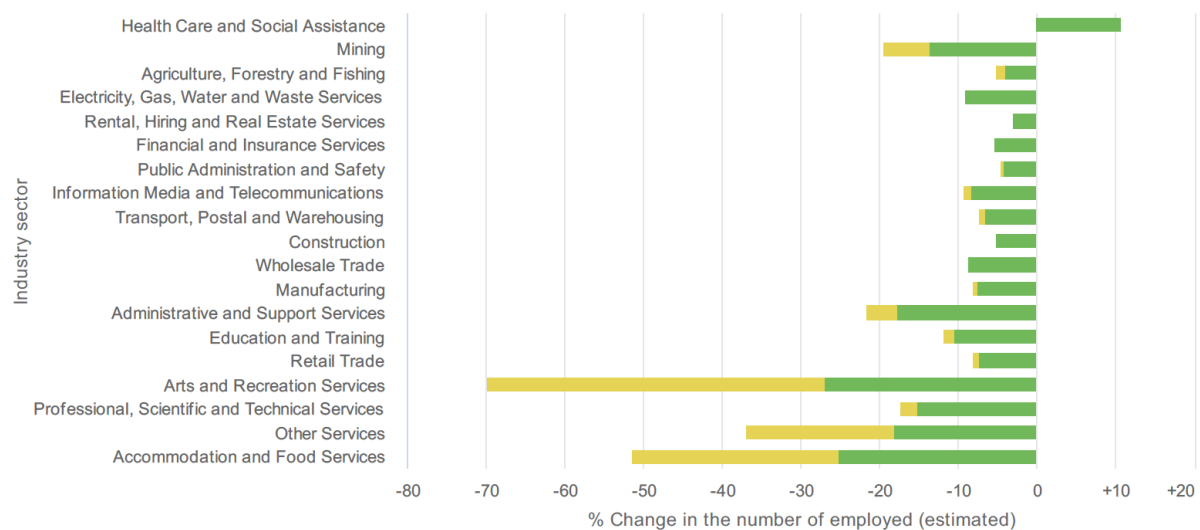
There are strong differences in how the job losses play out across the industry sectors. The sectors that are forecast to be most impacted are:

- Accommodation and Food Services: -2,151 (non-JobKeeper) and -2,254 (JobKeeper). This equates to **51%** of all jobs in this sector compared to levels at June 2018/19.
- Other services: 1,029 (non-JobKeeper) and -1,072 (JobKeeper). This equates to **37%** of all jobs in this sector compared to levels at June 2018/19.
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services: -1,529 (non-JobKeeper) and -219 (JobKeeper). This equates to **17%** of all jobs in this sector compared to levels at June 2018/19.
- Arts & Recreation: -649 (non-JobKeeper) and -1,042 (JobKeeper). This equates to **71%** of all jobs in this sector compared to levels at June 2018/19.
- Retail Services: -1,115 (non-JobKeeper) and -125 (JobKeeper). This equates to **8%** of all jobs in this sector compared to levels at June 2018/19.
- Education and Training: -996 (non-JobKeeper) and -133 (JobKeeper). This equates to **11%** of all jobs in this sector compared to levels at June 2018/19.

Employment impact in June Quarter 2020 (compared to 2018/19 quarter average)

Northern Beaches Council area

■ JobKeeper Component ■ Not on JobKeeper



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) Version 1.1 (May 2020) ©2020 Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id the population experts. Impacts have been split into: (1) not on JobKeeper – unemployed as defined by the ABS; and (2) JobKeeper – performing reduced hours or not working (i.e. 0 hours). Many will not be contributing to economic activity.

Accommodation & Food services, which largely represents tourism and hospitality businesses, are expected to see the greatest job losses (4,405 or over half of all jobs). This is probably the most visibly impacted sector.

The second largest number of projected job losses is in the Other Services sector which covers a broad range of personal services, such as hairdressers. This sector is expected to decline by nearly 2,100 jobs and over one-third of workers.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services is the third largest in projected job losses but is also one of our largest employing sectors. This includes a range of business services (architects, project management, accountants) that underpin other sectors like hospitality.

The Arts and Recreation sector, while a smaller number of job losses, is projected to have the highest proportion of losses with an estimated 71% of local jobs made redundant or stood down.

Retail, which is the third largest employer on the Northern Beaches, is only forecast to lose 8% of its jobs. This may reflect continued demand for food retailing and that some retail jobs are also “office-based”, such as those in sales and marketing.

Around 11% of Education & Training sector jobs are also expected to be impacted, especially those related to international students and projections have been revised following the recommencement of schools.

The Health & Social Services sector, which is currently the largest employer on the Northern Beaches, is forecast to increase by around 2,000 jobs in response to COVID-19. This offsets some of the jobs losses in other sectors.

.ID will continue to review these job forecasts, as new information emerges on the lifting of restrictions and services changes. As we move towards a recovery phase, .ID may be able to provide further insights on industry outlooks over the following six months.

2. Town Centre Business audits

2.1 Avalon

At least 16 stores have temporarily closed including a number of chain brands e.g. Witchery, Decjuba, and five have closed permanently due to COVID-19. There has been a significant decrease in foot traffic around the village. Mostly adults have been observed around the centre with the majority congregating around cafes and restaurants.

Parking is at approximately 40% occupancy. Cafes are still trading with takeaway options and other businesses are opening with temporary hours. Click and collect 10P parking space has been installed at the centre.

2.2 Newport

There are eight shop vacancies and these were pre COVID with three businesses closed permanently due to COVID-19. Cafes and restaurants continue to trade with takeaway options. There are not many people out and about and those who are, are mainly exercising and visiting coffee shops.

Car parking is at approximately 40% and is slightly lower in the afternoon. Two ‘Click & Collect’ 10P parking spaces have been installed at Newport.

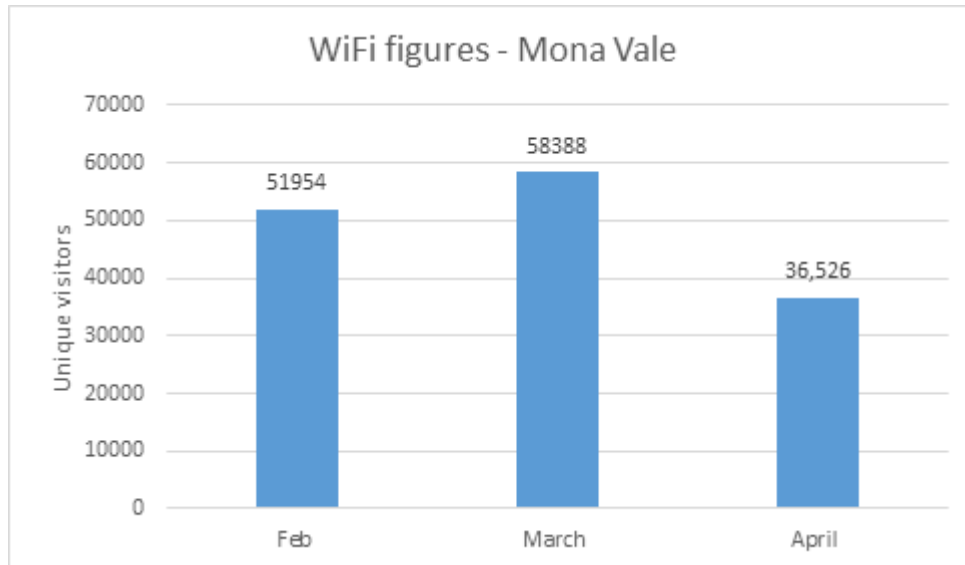
2.3 Mona Vale

Mona Vale has seven vacancies pre COVID, one permanently closed due to COVID and 40 businesses closed temporarily, with cafes and supermarkets continuing to trade well. The area is unusually quiet. The younger demographic is shopping for essential services. Not many of the older generation were observed.

Parking is at approximately 30% across the centre. Three Click & Collect sites have been activated with feedback from businesses very favourable. More recommendations for Click & Collect sites are being discussed.

Wi-Fi data for Mona Vale

Location points – Bungan and Waratah Street, Village Park and Mona Vale Library



2.4 Narrabeen

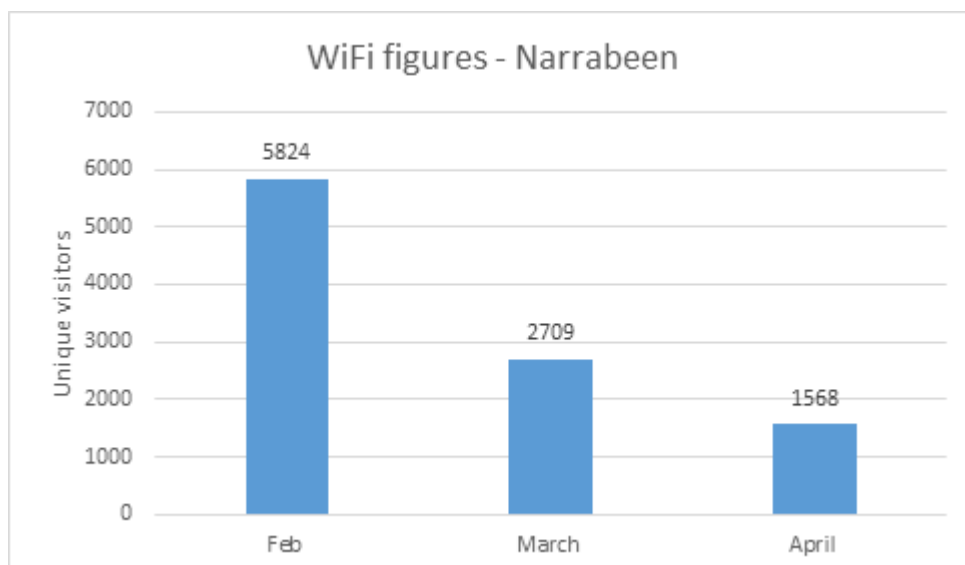
Approximately 13 businesses have temporarily closed with one permanently closed.

There has been a steady increase in foot traffic in Narrabeen Town Centre since the shutdown commenced. Most people are waiting outside the cafes and restaurants with Woolworths supermarket being a drawcard. There is a mix of age groups in Narrabeen with the large proportion of visitors being middle aged. Narrabeen Town Centre has suffered particularly in the morning peak trade as it is a B-Line stop.

Narrabeen is experiencing a consistent turnover of parking. The supermarket car park continues to be busy but the Tramshed carpark is mostly empty particularly the dedicated carpark for the bus commuters. There have been three click and collect parking spaces installed at Narrabeen.

Wi-Fi data for Narrabeen

Location points – Tramshed and Lakeside Holiday Park



2.5 Collaroy

Approximately nine businesses have temporarily closed at Collaroy since the beginning of the shut downs including the cinema, the Collaroy and the Beach Club.

Most of the people visiting Collaroy are using the beach for exercise with a few people waiting outside cafes and restaurants for takeaways and waiting for buses.

Along Pittwater Road, the turnover of parking is good, enabling people to stop quickly to get their takeaways. Collaroy again is a popular commuter centre with the B-Line stop and as expected the commuter car park remains empty. There has been one Click and Collect parking spot installed at Collaroy.

2.6 Freshwater

Freshwater Village had high ground floor vacancies prior to COVID-19. Vacancy rates have been around 25% for the first quarter of 2020 and include the absence of a supermarket since November 2018. No businesses have permanently closed during Australia's COVID-19 exposure.

From 23 March until and including the Easter long weekend, the majority of retail and professional services were closed and food and dining services pivoted to delivery and takeaway models. There have been nine temporary closures, three of which are by appointment only.

There has been a reduction in foot traffic and parking space demand, and businesses are reporting reduced sales. The bottle shop, pharmacy and medical practice continue to attract customers, and the weekly fresh produce market continues to operate on Sundays (largely positive reception, some initial concerns regarding social distancing).

In the last week of April and beginning of May there has been cautious reopening of some retail shops, while respecting social distancing requirements.

Two Click & Collect parking spaces installed in Freshwater.

2.7 Dee Why

Businesses in Dee Why town centre and The Strand have been affected by COVID-19. During the peak of restrictions, more than half of ground floor businesses had temporarily closed or altered their mode/hours of operation. Since Easter, some businesses have reopened in the town centre, including food/beverage venues (takeaway and delivery) and some retail stores. Venues that cater to vulnerable clientele or are reliant on volunteers are predominantly still shut (e.g. charity shops). Supermarkets, medical centres and pharmacies are key anchors, and bring a steady – albeit reduced – consumer base to the centre.

As a premier eat street, businesses on The Strand have been hit hard by COVID-19 restrictions. Despite challenges, the majority have been quick to modify their business models to generate savings and maintain their customer base.

Despite the pressure on businesses, at this time fewer than five businesses have indicated they will close permanently.

As a COVID-19 transmission hotspot, Dee Why continues to be monitored closely. One hour parking limits, beach closure, and police surveillance are detracting out-of-area visitors. Locals are still visiting the beach and reserve to exercise – on warm days over 100 people have been at the beach at any given time.

Four Click & Collect parking spaces have been implemented in Dee Why.

2.8 Brookvale

Prior to COVID-19 there was a concentration of vacancies on Pittwater Road, Brookvale, with 250 metres of vacant frontage between Sydenham and Winbourne Roads. Since the pandemic hit, fewer than five businesses have confirmed permanent closure.

Large format stores in the town centre that cater to the construction industry, home improvement and recreation have continued to attract customers – both individuals and companies. Takeaway lunches and coffee spots continue to be supported by the workers in the industrial area.

Centrelink is a key attractor in the town centre at present as well as the industrial type trades which continue to do well. Typically, the line-up to enter Centrelink runs along Pittwater Road and wraps around onto Chard Road.

2.9 Forestville

There have been 11 temporary closures at Forestville. The cafes in the centre all adapted very quickly to offering takeaways and deliveries. Visitation dropped significantly with one café advising they dropped as low as 15% of their usual coffee trade and they were relying on their produce business.

Weekly visits have shown an increase in foot traffic in the centre as time goes on. At first people were visiting the centre for the supermarket, chemists and the cafes but towards the end of April people were slowly entering other businesses.

The car parks at the centre are nowhere near capacity with one click and collect parking space installed at the Centre.

2.10 Killarney Heights

Killarney Heights town centre has been very quiet with visitation increasing during the school holidays. The area relies on the before and after school drop off and pick up trade hence the centre has been impacted significantly during this time.

Killarney Heights centre has two permanent shopfront closures with both being up for lease prior to Covid-19. There are also six shopfronts temporarily closed due to COVID-19.

2.11 Manly CBD

In the Manly CBD, the majority of stores are closed apart from essential services. This includes 90% of retail, professional services, pubs and restaurants. The only stores that are open include the pharmacies, news agencies, supermarkets (controlled by security), health food stores, banks and cafes for takeaway drinks and meals. One bakery has reported being down 70% in trade, while other food and beverage businesses are down 35-50%.

NRMA Fast Ferries have reported they are receiving 5% in normal patronage and are still operating a full timetable to Circular Quay. The Pyrmont, Darling Harbour, Barangaroo and sight-seeing services have been temporarily suspended.

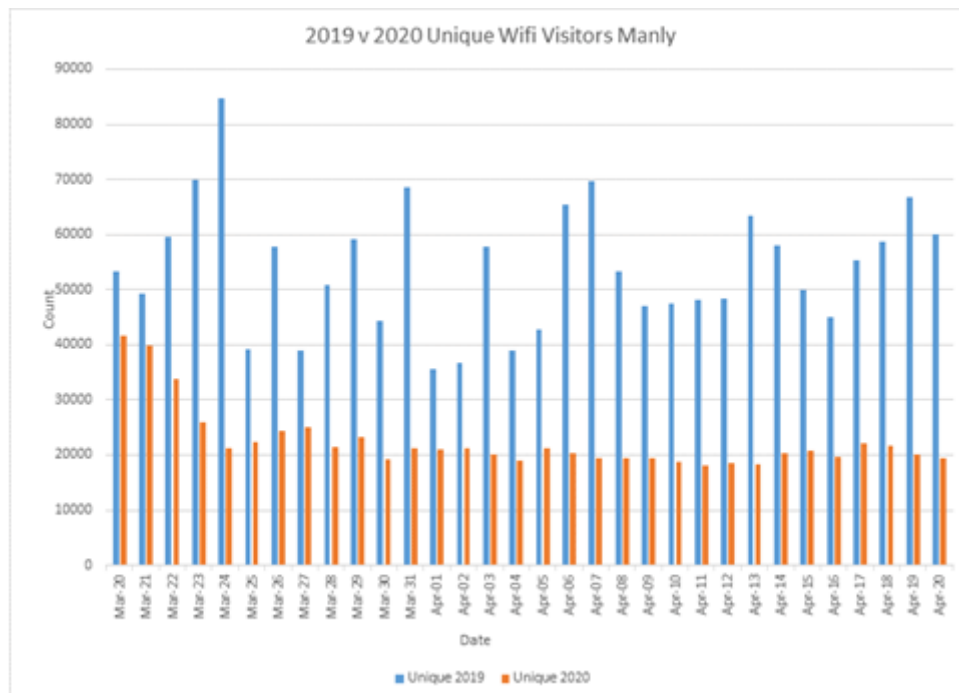
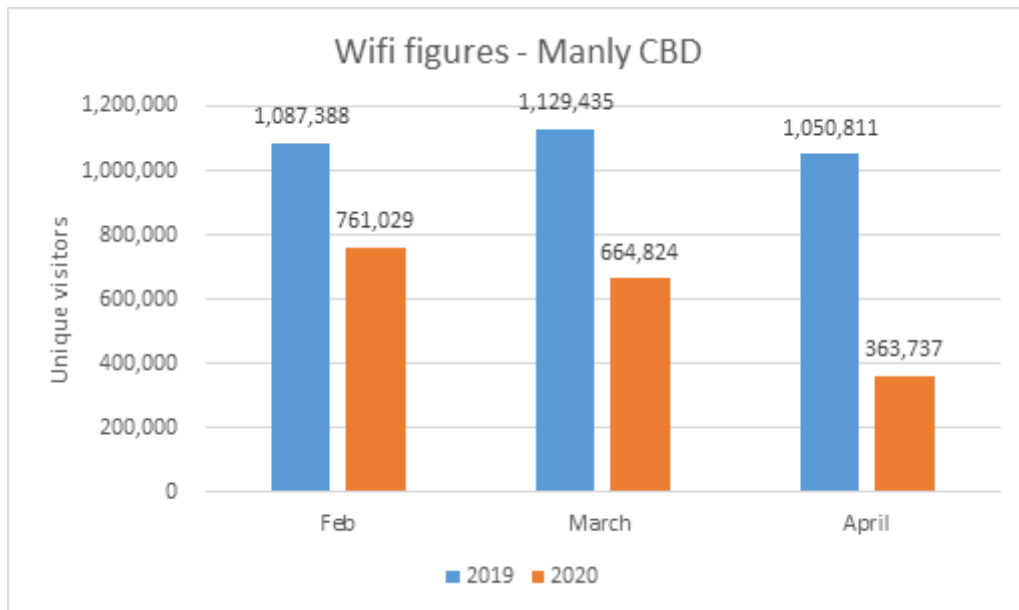
A number of operators have closed 100%, including Novotel, Garfish (temporary) and Café Ora and Bun Bar (permanent). The town centre is noticeably quieter, but people are still walking around picking up essential services, walking the dog, taking the kids for a scooter ride, picking up a coffee and exercising along the beachfront.

There is a very limited number of tourists visiting the area, and this is impacting tourism based businesses. Manly Wharf is very quiet as there are limited patrons using public transport. Bike racks are still being used occasionally.

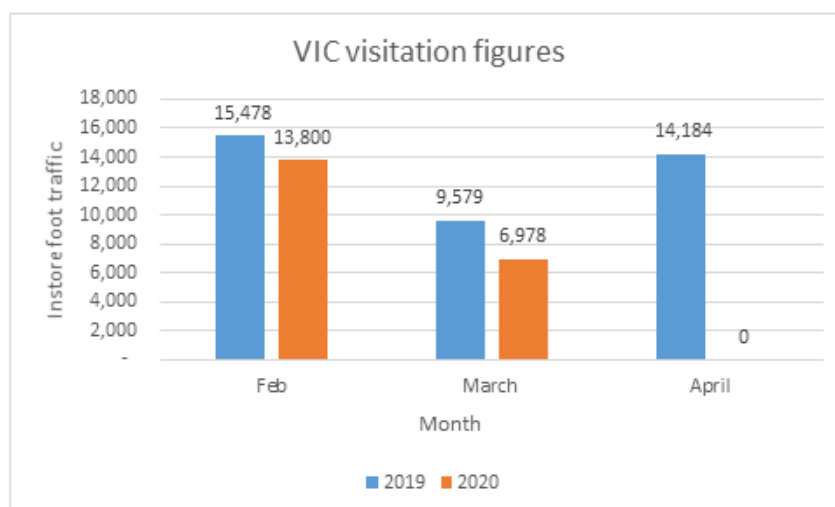
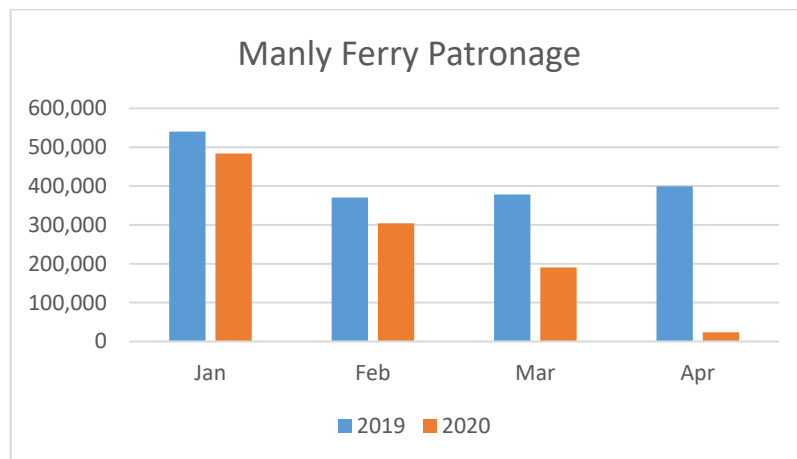
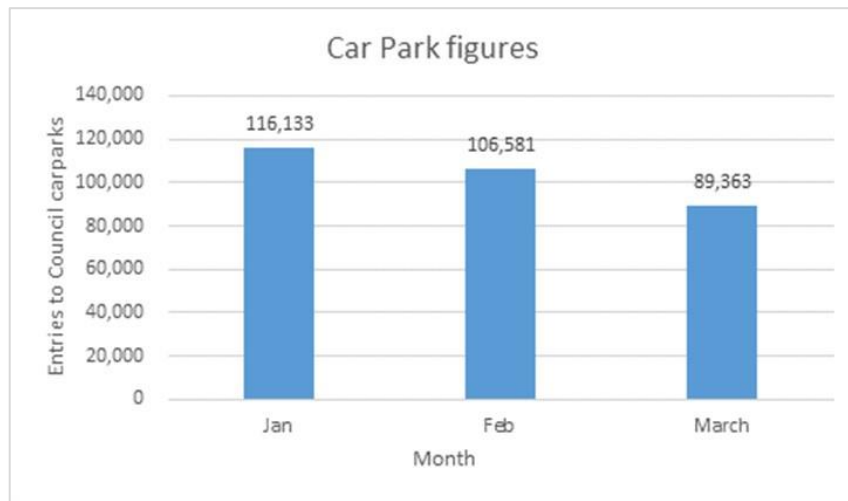
Parking stations are noticeably quieter, and there is on street parking available. While the Arts and Craft market has been temporarily suspended, the fresh produce market continues to operate on a Sunday.

Parking was consistently at about 30% capacity on all visits. There have been five Click & collect parking spaces implemented in Manly.

Wi-Fi data for Manly CBD



Travel data to Manly



**** Manly Visitor Information Centre temporarily closed its doors due to COVID-19 on 16 March 2020.**

2.12 Balgowlah

Balgowlah town centre is noticeably quieter but not deserted. People are focused on their destinations – not browsing. Mostly adults and older people (50+) have been observed. Most people were observed around Balgowlah Plaza and Stockland, with many using the public domain to wait for appointments or takeaway food. Parking is consistently about 40% capacity.

Balgowlah town centre has seven permanent shopfront closures with all up for lease or sale pre COVID-19. 15 businesses have closed temporarily because of COVID-19 with two operating by appointment.

One Click and Collect parking space has been installed at Balgowlah.

2.13 Manly Vale

Manly Vale is operating as usual. There are 11 vacant premises along Condamine Street, several of these are either awaiting development or have been recently completed. One business – Snowboards and Ski – has closed since the COVID-19 outbreak. The community is visiting the large superstores e.g. Woolworths, Aldi, Bunnings etc.

Parking along Condamine Street has not had a lot of change during this time.

2.14 Seaforth

There are six vacant premises in Seaforth (pre COVID-19) and a large development is under construction at the centre. There are 15 temporary closures of businesses at Seaforth due to COVID-19. Businesses are finding alternative ways to operate e.g. Art Smart art supplies is making home deliveries and putting together care packs of “new things to try” for their regular customers.

The village is a lot quieter than normal with most people out and about sourcing the takeaway cafes and restaurants or hairdressers.

Parking is around 70% capacity along the main road and the carparks are about 20% capacity.

3. How businesses are adapting their offering in response to COVID-19

COVID-19 is one of the biggest disruptors of the 21st century and with the situation evolving each and every day, it can be difficult for businesses to remain agile and adapt to the new normal. We take a look at some of the creative new ways Northern Beaches businesses have adapted to the COVID-19 crisis.

3.1 Medical manufacturing

With the growing demand of essential products such as hand sanitiser, Manly Spirits Co Distillery and Nomad Brewing Co have adapted their manufacturing sites to produce these items. Manly Spirits have produced a hand sanitiser with Gin Aroma to help with the short supply in the local community. Nomad Brewing Co in Brookvale made a one-off 50litre batch of hand sanitiser and offered it to the community for free. People were able to visit the business with their own dispensers to collect 100ml.

3.2 Hospitality heroes

Arguably one of the hardest hit industries, hospitality businesses are rallying together to adapt to the changing circumstances as part of a desperate attempt to stay afloat. With food sourced from restaurants, cafes and take out venues accounting for nearly 40% of all food consumed by Australians each week, businesses are now turning to different delivery offerings to ensure customers keep coming back.

Busta, an Italian restaurant and bar located in Manly, is now offering fresh pasta kits, take home wine and spirits and dinner packs available for pick up or delivery. Ruby Lane, a wholefood café

located in Manly and Mona Vale, is now offering ready-made meals, organic fruit and vegetables and essential supplies delivered. Ruby Lane and Pure Wholefoods are some of the first cafes in Manly to reintroduce the use of BYO Cups for takeaway hot drinks in a contactless way.

Predominately a tourism operator, bicycle hire and rental company, Manly Bike Tours is now hiring out its e-bike stock to delivery drivers to cope with the increased demand of food delivery services.

RECOMMENDATION

That members of the Economic and Smart Communities SRG:

1. Note the information available to date on the impacts of COVID-19 on the Northern Beaches' local economy and businesses.
 2. Provide feedback on the value of this information and discuss what other potential data sources Council could use to measure and monitor impacts of COVID-19 on the local economy and its recovery over coming months.
-

ITEM 6.2	NORTHERN BEACHES BUSINESS SUPPORT PLAN - OVERVIEW AND FEEDBACK ON IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE
REPORTING OFFICER	TEAM LEADER, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
TRIM FILE REF	2020/243005
ATTACHMENTS	1 COVID-19 Business Support Plan

ISSUE

The Economic & Smart Communities SRG to provide feedback on Northern Beaches Council's response to the local economic challenges arising from COVID-19 and discuss ideas to assist businesses towards a road to economic recovery.

BACKGROUND

Following the announcement of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Northern Beaches Council was quick to put together an initial Business Support Plan (the Plan). This plan was presented to the presidents of the five Business Chambers on 17 March and adopted by Council on 24 March. A copy of the Business Support Plan is attached.

Our first priority was to ensure the local business community feels supported, is well informed and knows where and how to access advice, financial support and practical resources.

The Plan includes a package of measures, which will bring cost savings to local businesses of approximately \$1.2 million. These include:

- fee waivers for six months on outdoor dining and footpath merchandise
- fee waivers for six months on inspections of food and other health premises and fire safety
- more flexible and pragmatic arrangements for supplier deliveries to supermarkets and parking for take-away pickups, including installing series of Click and Collect parking spaces
- establishing a streamlined dedicated COVID-19 Rates & Annual Charges Hardship application form, applying to both business and resident ratepayers.

Since adopting the initial Business Support Plan, the Mayor and Council's CEO have continued weekly catch-ups with the five business chamber presidents, to check in on local business sentiment and share ideas for a coordinated response.

A major issue raised has been the impact of rental costs on small businesses. Consequently, the Mayor has written letters to businesses and respective landlords, seeking that they work together to achieve mutual benefits of enabling our small businesses to survive, referencing the Mandatory Code of Conduct for commercial leases.

Through a dedicated business e-newsletter (with 16,000 registered businesses) and 'COVID-19 Local Business Support' webpage, Council aims to keep local businesses informed of Federal and NSW Government support and information, including access to NSW Small Business Grants, business support webinars, and free business advisory services.

Council has also coordinated and promoted an array of community and business initiatives to assist local businesses pivot to changing conditions, most noticeably digital platforms for enabling cafes and restaurants to change to take-away and delivery services and promote buy local campaigns. We ran an initial *Stay Home and Shop Local* campaign to identify the range of initiatives out there.

Council is looking at how it can support one of these initiatives, “Back Your Local” initiated by the Member of Parliament for Manly, James Griffin and Manly Business Chamber, to enable this to roll out across the Northern Beaches as one more centralised platform.

During May Council will host a series of webinars to assist businesses as they adapt and survive during these challenge times, starting with a short series of webinars on: How to access NSW Small business grants (Service NSW); How to stay connected with your customers (Hullabaloo) and Food safety for home food businesses (Council’s Environmental Health team).

We will continue to develop ‘bite-size’ live webinars or pre-recorded interviews on topics such as mental health in the workplace and economic outlook for the Northern Beaches. We are also looking to feature interviews with inspiring local businesses to share their stories on how they are adjusting during COVID-19.

As discussed in the corresponding SRG Item ‘Impact of COVID-19 on the local economy and businesses – discussion and feedback’, Council’s Place and Economic Development team has been developing a local understanding of how the changing conditions are affecting different town centres and sectors of the economy. This includes town centre audits, available pedestrian counts and car parking data and economic outlook for jobs/GRP. This work is invaluable in connecting with local businesses, as well as helping inform Council’s ongoing response.

DISCUSSION

Council would like to hear feedback from the Economic & Smart Communities SRG on the approach and initiatives Council has undertaken to date to support local businesses during this challenging time.

As Federal and State Governments are looking at how we can start to ease some restrictions on social distancing and how we can commence the journey on the road to economic recovery, we also want to hear how we can help our local businesses along that journey.

We will run a short workshop session to seek feedback and ideas about how best council and its partners can help businesses continue to adapt during COVID-19 and onto the road to economic recovery.

RECOMMENDATION

That members of the Economic & Smart Communities SRG:

1. Review the Business Support Plan and actions to date to provide feedback.
 2. Workshop ideas and ways forward to support local economic recovery.
-

COVID-19
Business Support Plan

Council recognises the pressure and uncertainty local businesses are experiencing right now. There is a whole of Government response to enabling local businesses to continue providing vital services to our communities and importantly helping them stay in business.

Our priority is making sure local businesses feel supported, are well informed and know where and how to get the best advice about funding and practical resources. Council's plan includes \$1.2 million in savings to local businesses, that offers the following:

Waiving of small business fees

Council is directly assisting small businesses struggling with financial uncertainty by waiving some of the fees and charges for approximately six months, effective from 25 March 2020:

- Environmental Health Inspection fees (no annual fees or first inspection fees) – (saving \$401,059)
- Fire Safety fees (no annual fees) (saving \$147,169)
- Outdoor Dining and Footpath Merchandising fees (no fees) (saving \$695,084)

Flexible and pragmatic enforcement and compliance

We are adopting a flexible and pragmatic approach to enforcement and compliance action. This will enable business operations to adapt to the changing consumer demand.

We aim to limit enforcement action to matters that are only of an imminent public or environmental safety risk, ensuring there is no increase to public risk and community impacts and expectations are managed. A dedicated planner has been allocated to respond to all business planning and compliance queries. Council's plan includes:

Restaurants/ take away businesses

We are allowing restaurants which don't currently have development consents to undertake a take away service to provide this service to the community.

Relaxing timed parking requirements to allow for increased take-away pickups in shopping areas.

Supermarkets and food/ beverage premises

We are not enforcing trading or delivery hours for food/beverage premises and grocery stores.

Outdoor dining lease areas

Due to current restrictions, outdoor dining fees are being suspended for a 6 month period with effect from 1 April 2020.

Affected business will not receive invoices from Council during this period.

To help the public understand and adhere to restrictions, please remove all furniture from outdoor dining areas. We appreciate your cooperation.

Environmental Health Inspections

We are waiving charges for Council's proactive routine inspection program that will continue fee-free.

Our Environmental Health Team will also continue to investigate urgent and critical matters relating to public health and environmental impact but they will not incur fees or charges outside of enforcement action.

Rates and Annual Charges Hardship Policy

We are applying the Rates and Annual Charges Hardship Policy to help impacted eligible small business ratepayers and/or other ratepayers suffering financial hardship. This can provide payment arrangements and waive associated interest charges to help relieve the burden.

Actively co-ordinate business chambers and local networks

We are supporting open and consistent communication and have committed to regular weekly meetings with our local Chambers of Commerce through digital platforms, this is in addition to using our existing channels to continue to work together in responding to this evolving situation.

Provide regular updates to our local businesses

We encourage businesses to contact their relevant Chambers of Commerce and subscribe to Council's Business Newsletter by contacting economy@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Northern Beaches Chambers of Commerce

Manly Business Chamber manly.org.au

Warringah Chamber of Commerce warringahchamber.com.au

Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce monavalechamber.org

Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce newportbeach.org.au

Avalon Palm Beach Business Chamber avalonpalmbeachbusinesschamber.com.au

With a growing database of local businesses, we will continue sharing information on COVID-19 support programs, health information for employees and customers, as well as how to access financial support in the Federal and state economic stimulus packages.

Assist to build digital capability of businesses through social channels/webinars

With changes to the way we live and work that will flow onto the way we shop and spend, we will support local businesses to find new ways to connect with customers. Council's plan includes:

- Delivering social media and marketing workshops online
- Creating digital campaigns to promote shop local initiatives
- Establishing a series of webinars to assist businesses adapt to changing conditions.

Build on relationships with State Government Agencies

Council will continue working with NSW State Government agencies to provide advice and support to our local businesses, including:

- Realise Business
- Office of the Small Business Commissioner
- ServiceNSW "Easy to do Business"

With local economic conditions changing rapidly, Council will continue to look at new ways we can connect with our business community and continue to provide support, ensuring we can scale-up our response, where necessary.

Visit our dedicated "Supporting Local Businesses" section on Council's website for more details.

COVID-19
Business Support Plan**Government Business Stimulus Packages****Federal Government**

First package highlights:

- \$17.6 billion economic support package
- Increasing the instant asset write off
- Backing business investment by providing accelerated depreciation deductions
- Supporting apprentices and trainees
- Targeted support for Coronavirus-affected regions and communities

Second package highlights:

- \$66.1 billion second economic support package
- Up to \$100,000 for small and medium sized businesses, and not for-profits that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000 to help boost cashflow
- Accessing working capital under the Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme
- Providing temporary relief for financially distressed business temporarily increasing the threshold at which creditors can issue a statutory demand on a company and the time companies have to respond to statutory demands they receive.

Federal Government helpline for businesses Impacted by COVID-19

13 28 46, 7 days, 7am-11pm

NSW Government

The State Government announced a stimulus package to support businesses, which included:

- \$1.6 billion in tax relief for small businesses to help save jobs as the state braces for the dire economic impact of the virus.
- \$450 million to waive payroll tax for the next three months for businesses with payrolls of up to \$10 million.
- \$80 million to waive a range of fees and charges for small businesses including bars, cafes, restaurants and tradespeople.

Realise Business

Realise Business is the NSW Government Business Connect provider for Northern, Eastern and Southern Sydney. The Realise team of advisors can provide general and specialist business advice in all areas of business. Their advisory team consists of specialists in the areas of business disruption, retail, marketing, digital, finance and hospitality just to name a few.

Realise is holding regular webinars and workshops, including an upcoming webinar on Small Business Interruption from COVID-19.