



Shelley Hancock
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 17 April 2020

REGULATORY CHANGES TO TAKE PRESSURE OFF RATEPAYERS, BUSINESSES AND COUNCILS

The NSW Government has today made a series of regulatory changes to ensure council resources continue to be focused on frontline COVID-19 response efforts and allow councils to provide financial relief to businesses and residents.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said the changes acknowledge that councils are redirecting resources to ensure the delivery of essential services to their communities across the State.

“Councils are playing a vital role in supporting and protecting local communities during these unprecedented times,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The changes provide councils with the flexibility to adjust to rapidly shifting circumstances.

“Importantly, they also give ratepayers more time to pay their rates notices and allows councils to provide financial support to businesses suffering from reduced cashflows or forced closure by waiving or reducing fees.”

Amendments to local government regulations include:

- Allowing councils to delay sending out the first quarterly rates notice for 2020-21 and extend the payment deadline by one month;
- Enabling councils to immediately waive or reduce fees for services such as food premise inspections and footpath usage for COVID-19 affected businesses, without the need to provide 28 days public notice;
- Providing councils with a one-month extension to adopt their 2020-21 operational plans and budgets and submit their 2019-20 audited financial statements and annual reports. Councils will also have an extra month to submit their last quarterly budget review statement for 2019-20;
- Removing the requirement for documents to be made available for inspection at council offices, if the document is published on the council’s website or available electronically; and
- Removing the requirement for council notices to be advertised in newspapers and instead allow the relevant notice to be published on the council’s website.

“The NSW Government will continue to work with local councils to identify, develop and implement more measures to support them and their local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Mrs Hancock said.