

11.8 NAPIER STREET STREETScape WORKS - RETAIL TRADER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Approve the Napier Street Streetscape Works – Retail Trader Assistance Program as outlined in this report
2. Approve the Program Guidelines at attachment four
3. Note that through recommendation **[2019/68]** Council approved a budget of \$60,000 for this program
4. Update the 2018/19 Edward River Council Operational Plan to include an action 'To undertake a Retail Trader Assistance Program to assist retail traders in Napier Street, between George and Cressy Street, Deniliquin, throughout the Napier Street Streetscape works. That part of this program will involve the provision of retail trader assistance payments and that these payments will be undertaken in line with the Financial Assistance provisions of the Local Government Act 1993
5. Place the updated Operational Plan 2018-2019, on public exhibition for a period of 28 days in accordance with section 405 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

BACKGROUND

At the 4 April 2019 Extraordinary Council meeting Council passed a resolution for the appointment of a contractor and establishment of a project budget for the reconstruction of Napier Street between Cressy Street and George Street **[2019/68]**.

This resolution provided a total project budget for the project at \$1,510,260 (ex GST). \$60,000 of this budget was assigned for a 'business continuity program'.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Since this recommendation was passed by Council, officers have been working to further develop and commence implementation of the business continuity program. There are two parts to the program.

Business Support

The first part is a series of business support activities to assist the traders in the street and promote that whilst the works are underway all of the businesses are still operating. Attachment two and three of this report outline in detail the support being provided through this program. Implementation of this program has already commenced with officers working with the traders to get them to 'opt-in' to this program (attachment one).

Financial Assistance

The second part of the program and focus of this report is on a financial assistance program for the retail traders. While the works being undertaken will provide long term benefit to this section of Napier Street, it is acknowledged that when the works are being undertaken there may be some impact on traders.

In order to reduce this impact and provide a level of support, it is proposed that Council establish a financial assistance program for the retail traders in impacted section of Napier Street.

Attachment four of this report includes the proposed guidelines and application form for this proposed program.

A summary of the program criteria are below:

- The program allows Napier Street traders to apply for a grant up to the value of 50 per cent of the 2018/19 Council rates for the premises they occupy.
- Retail businesses trading on Napier Street in properties/premises fronting the green section indicated in the below map are eligible to apply for funding through this program.



- The program is not open to building owners with vacant premises not tenanted to a retail business. If a tenant is attracted to lease a vacant premise while the streetscape works are underway, the new tenant can still access this program on a pro-rata basis.
- Any Retail Trader Assistance payments would be made under the Financial Assistance provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, which requires Council to make public its intention to provide assistance to the applicants for a period of 28 days.
- The financial assistance payment will be made in two instalments:
 - **First instalment:** 50 per cent on approval of the application form; and
 - **Second instalment:** 50 per cent at the end of the construction program.
- Any retail traders who also own the building they occupy will only be eligible for this program if there are no outstanding rates on their property.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Streetscape works in Napier Street are expected to take up to five months to be completed. Throughout this timeframe it is expected that this section of Napier Street will be closed to traffic. As a result, the provision of support to assist traders is seen to be important to ensure a well-functioning CBD and local economy.

Following the completion of the streetscape works in Napier Street, streetscape works will be undertaken on Cressy Street. If Council provide this assistance for Napier Street it is expected that a similar program would also need to be undertaken in Cressy Street.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

This program aligns with Outcome 2, A prosperous and vibrant economy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined previously in the report, \$60,000 has been assigned through the Napier Street reconstruction project budget for a business continuity program.

The actions outlined in this report all fit within that budget.

If all premises in the eligible area applied for funding the program would cost approximately \$32,000.

LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Any Retail Trader Assistance payments would be made under the Financial Assistance provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, which requires Council to make public its intention to provide assistance to the applicants for a period of 28 days.

In order to meet this requirement, it is proposed that Council update its 2018/19 Operational Plan to include the provision of the Napier Street Streetscape Works – Retail Trader Assistance Program as an action for completion. Modifying the Operational Plan will require a 28-day notice period.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Business Promotion Program - Opt In Form**
- 2. Trading while Upgrading - Two Page Spread**
- 3. Trading while Upgrading - Business Support Activities**
- 4. Retail Trader Assistance Program - Draft Program Guidelines**