

# REPORT

## MORETON BAY REGION FEBRUARY 2022 WEATHER AND FLOOD EVENT: COUNCIL SUPPORT PACKAGE

Meeting / Session: 6 AN ENGAGED COUNCIL  
Reference: 63926874 : 6 March 2022 Refer **Confidential Supporting Information 63940342 & Supporting Information 63924560**  
Responsible Officer: GC, Chief Executive Officer

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### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to recommend a Council support package for ratepayers and community organisations who are recovering from the February 2022 weather and flood event in the Moreton Bay Region.

The unprecedented 2022 flood disaster surpassed most historical records, with more than 2,500 properties in the Moreton Bay region directly impacted ranging from minor water damage to being destroyed. The South East Queensland 'rain bomb' dumped its heaviest falls on Mount Glorious (nearly 2 metres of water in 2 days) and flood levels reached nearly 10 metres in Woodford. The Bruce Highway and some other major arterial roads were cut for some days including the D'Aguiar Highway, stranding communities to the west. The road connecting White Patch to Bribie Island was washed away completely.

The aim of this support package is to provide rates and charges relief to ratepayers, as well as grants to support community organisations to assist in the recovery from this event. It is envisaged that these initiatives will assist in the efficient and effective restoration of the region and will complement support packages announced by the State and Federal Government.

The supporting information #1 to this report is confidential to the extent that it contains information that is confidential to the Council and is made available to Councillors for the purposes of this meeting, in accordance with sections 254D(3) and 254D(5) of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council endorses the support measures outlined in this report to assist ratepayers, community organisations and small local businesses within the Moreton Bay Region in recovering from the February 2022 weather and flood event.
2. That Council is satisfied that the rates concessions outlined in recommendation 4 are appropriate as the payment of the rates or charges will cause hardship to landowners as they recover from the February 2022 weather and flood event.
3. That Council is also satisfied that the rates concessions outlined in recommendation 4 will encourage the economic development of the region as it recovers from the February 2022 weather and flood event.
4. That Council grant the following rates concessions, consistent with section 121 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, to eligible ratepayers (see recommendation 5):
  - a) extend the due date of the rates payments for the quarter ending 30 June 2022 by 30 days for all ratepayers; and
  - b) offer a \$250 one-off rates rebate for residential owner-occupied properties which have suffered significant damage from inundation (see **Confidential Supporting Information #1** for further information on what constitutes significant damage from inundation); and
  - c) offer a \$250 one-off rebate for owner-operated small business premises which have suffered significant damage due to inundation (see **Confidential Supporting Information #1** for a description of an owner-operated small business).
5. That for the purposes of the abovementioned rates concessions and in accordance with section 122(1)(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012, the following ratepayers are considered eligible for the concessions outlined in recommendation 4(b) and 4(c): Ratepayers required to pay rates on property in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area where:

- a) the property is in the R1, RA1, RV1 or U1O - U6O general rating categories - that is a residential property which is the principal place of residence of at least one of the owners; or a small business is operated at the premises by the owner of the property (see **Confidential Supporting Information #1** for a description of an owner-operated small business);
  - b) the property has been inundated and sustained significant damage (see **Confidential Supporting Information #1** for further information on what constitutes significant damage from inundation); and
  - c) the application for a rates concession (referred to in recommendation 4(b) and (c) above) is made by the property owner before 31 May 2022.
6. That pursuant to section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld), Council delegates to the Chief Executive Officer the right to determine a ratepayer's eligibility for the concession under section 120(c) of the Local Government Regulation 2012.
  7. That Council note that its Rates and Charges - Financial Hardship Policy (No. 2150-113) is still applicable to owner-occupied principal place of residences.
  8. That the eligibility criteria of Council's Rates and Charges - Financial Hardship Policy (No. 2150-113) be expanded to include owner-operated small business premises (see **Confidential Supporting Information #1** for a description of an owner-operated small business).
  9. That Community Grants Policy (No. 2150-030) is amended to include the February 2022 Weather and Flood Event Recovery Grant.
  10. That pursuant to section 195 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 Council adopts the Community Grants Policy as amended and appearing as **Supporting Information #2** to this report (amended Grants Policy).
  11. Pursuant to section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* Council delegates to the Chief Executive Officer the power under section 194 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 to:
    - a) determine whether Council is satisfied a grant will be used for a purpose that is in the public interest; and
    - b) determine whether the community organisation meets the criteria stated in the amended Grants Policy; and
    - c) give a grant consistent with the amended Grants Policy.
  12. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to take all action reasonably required (including reaching out to affected property owners) to give effect to the support package outlined in this report to assist ratepayers and community organisations recover from the February 2022 weather and flood event.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### **1. Background**

The aim of this support package is to provide rates and charges relief to ratepayers, as well as grants to support community organisations to assist in the recovery from the February 2022 weather and flood event. It is envisaged that these initiatives will assist in the efficient and effective restoration of the region and will complement support packages announced by the State and Federal Government.

### **2. Explanation of Item**

To follow are the components of Council's proposed support package.

#### **Rebate on Council Rates**

Council's 2021-2022 quarter four rates are due to be levied in early April. Rating revenue is a significant component of Council's revenue which is used to deliver its services to the community.

However, Council acknowledges the financial hardship faced by many ratepayers as a result of the February 2022 weather and flood event. It is proposed that Council undertake the following in recognition of this financial hardship:

- extend the due date of the rates payments for the quarter ending 30 June 2022 by 30 days for all ratepayers;
- offer a \$250 one-off rates rebate for residential owner-occupied properties who have suffered significant damage from inundation;
- offer a \$250 one-off rebate for owner-operated small businesses who have suffered significant damage due to inundation; and
- extend the eligibility of Council's financial hardship policy to owner-operated small businesses.

It is anticipated that this initiative will cost approximately \$750K.

In addition, other residential property owners experiencing financial hardship can apply to utilise Council's financial hardship policy and enter a repayment plan option to pay off their rates.

#### **Community Grants – February 2022 Weather and Flood Event Recovery Grant**

Council's Policy 2150-030 - Community Grants has been modified to enable Council to establish a new February 2022 Weather and Flood Event Recovery Grant.

Council recognises the significant impacts that the February 2022 weather and flood event has had on community organisations, as well as the important role that community organisations will play in supporting the recovery of Moreton Bay communities in the months following the event. Accordingly, Council has established the Moreton Bay Recovery Fund and will provide grants to:

- support the recovery of community organisations impacted by the February 2022 weather and flood event; and
- assist community organisations with the development and implementation of initiatives that support the recovery of Moreton Bay communities more broadly, from the February 2022 weather and flood event.

### **3. Strategic Implications**

#### **3.1 Legislative / Legal Implications**

##### **Rebate on Council rates**

The local government may make a resolution under section 122 of the *Local Government Act 2009* about rates concessions before the local government levies the rates or charges. The concession may be granted only to the ratepayers whom the local government is satisfied are eligible for the concession. The resolution may include conditions for granting the concession to the class of ratepayers.

A delegation to the CEO exists for decisions to be made about whether a ratepayer is eligible for the concession once the concession type is adopted by Council.

**Community Grants – February 2022 Weather and Flood Event Recovery Grant**

In accordance with sections 194 and 195 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, in order to award community grants a local government must prepare and adopt a policy about local government grants to community organisations (a community grants policy), which includes the criteria for a community organisation to be eligible for a grant from the local government.

3.2 Corporate Plan / Operational Plan

Strengthening Communities: Strong local governance - strong leadership and governance.

3.3 Policy Implications

As outlined above.

3.4 Risk Management Implications

Nil.

3.5 Delegated Authority Implications

As outlined above.

3.6 Financial Implications

The support initiatives will impact upon the current financial year and the forthcoming 2022/2023 Budget. Financial modelling undertaken indicates Council will remain within its long-term financial sustainability parameters.

3.7 Economic Benefit Implications

As outlined above.

3.8 Environmental Implications

Nil.

3.9 Social Implications

As outlined above.

3.10 Human Rights Implications

Under the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), Council must not make a decision which is incompatible with human rights. Council must also give proper consideration to any human rights relevant to its decision. Officers consider that there are no human right implications relevant to Council's decision in this matter.

3.11 Consultation / Communication

Relevant Directors and Managers has been consulted in the development of this report.