



Burwood Inc.1874
Burwood . Burwood Heights . Croydon . Croydon Park . Enfield . Strathfield

ORDINARY MEETING

LATE ITEM

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Council of Burwood will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Conder Street, Burwood on Tuesday 26 July 2022 at 6:00pm

Tommaso Briscese
GENERAL MANAGER

Our Mission

**Burwood Council will create a quality lifestyle for its citizens
by promoting harmony and excellence in the delivery of its services**

AGENDA

GENERAL BUSINESS

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(ITEM 77/22) CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

File No: 22/26963

REPORT BY DIRECTOR PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE

Summary

This report outlines the proposed Christmas closedown period and the plans to ensure that an appropriate level of service to the Burwood community is maintained.

Operational Plan Objective

A.24 – Maintain a high-quality workforce that is committed to delivering on our community's and Council's vision and goals.

Background

Over the 2021/2022 Christmas and New Year period, Council introduced a close-down period from Saturday, 25 December 2021 to Sunday, 9 January 2022. During this time appropriate staffing levels were maintained to meet the community's needs particularly in the Operations area and at the Enfield Aquatic Centre with specific hours of operations.

Customer Service

The Customer Service Centre was closed between 25 December 2021 and 3 January 2022. During this time calls were diverted to Council's after-hours call centre provider and an average of 26 calls per day were received. It is noted that a Council staff member was also monitoring the after-hours calls received during this close-down period to ensure any urgent issues were actioned appropriately.

From 4 January 2022 to 8 January 2022, Council had a skeleton staff in place working in Council's call centre. No face-to-face customer service was provided during this period, but community members were able to contact Council Officers via phone or through our online services. During this time, an average of 70 calls per day were received via the call centre.

During 2022, Council has received a daily average of 128 calls per day through the call centre.

Library and Community Hub

The Community Hub and Library were closed from 25 December 2021 to 9 January 2022. No services were provided during this time period.

From August to November 2022, Council will be offering expanded opening hours for the Community Hub as follows:

- Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday until midnight
- Three additional hours on a Sunday being 9am to 12pm (normal Sunday operating hours are 12pm to 4pm)

It is noted that Council did not receive any complaints from the community regarding the 2021/2022 close-down period.

Additional Leave (Concession) Days

For the close-down period from 25 December 2021 to 9 January 2022, it was agreed that eligible employees would receive up to an additional three paid leave (concession) days to cover this period in addition to the employee *Local Government (State) 2020 Award* entitlements. It is noted that these three paid leave (concession) days are not an employee entitlement and do not form part of the employees' terms and conditions of employment. Employees who were required to work

during this period received up to three 'time in lieu' days to take at a later date, pro-rata for part-time employees.

The provisions upon which the paid leave (concession) days were made available to staff in 2021/2022 Christmas/New Year period were as follows:

- All eligible employees who had more than 12 months of service were afforded three (3) paid leave (concession) days between the Christmas and New Year period on the condition that they reduced their annual leave balance to no more than 8 weeks by 30 June 2022.
- All eligible employees who had less than 12 months of service were afforded two (2) paid leave (concession) days between the Christmas and New Year period on the condition that they reduced their annual leave balance to no more than 8 weeks by 30 June 2022.

COVID-19

Burwood Council activated its Business Continuity Plan on 9 March 2020 in response to COVID-19. While COVID-19 related restrictions have eased greatly, the pandemic continues to impact Council's operations and the wellbeing of our employees. Staff shortages due to sick leave related to COVID-19 has impacted Council's operations and has added pressure to other employees who are not unwell. In order to ensure we continue to focus on employee wellbeing, and that our staff maintain a positive work/life balance, Council has been actively managing the leave balances of our employees and will continue to do so. Implementing a period of close-down over the Christmas and New Year period of up to and including two weeks will further support the rest and recovery of a workforce that has been essential to the community it serves, particularly as we work towards the recovery stage associated with the pandemic.

Proposal

It is proposed to once again implement an annual close-down for a period of two weeks in line with the *Local Government (State) Award 2020*. The close-down period is proposed as follows:

- Saturday, 24 December 2022 up to and including Sunday, 8 January 2023.

During this period, Enfield Aquatic Centre will be open as per normal operating hours except for public holidays and Christmas day where the Centre will operate as follows:

- Public holidays – 8am to 4pm
- Christmas Day – closed

Adjusted hours of work will be implemented for the Community Safety and Operations Teams.

Council's after-hours service will take calls from the community between Saturday, 24 December 2022 and Monday, 3 January 2023 inclusive. The after-hours service will also take calls from the community on Saturday, 7 January and Sunday, 8 January 2023.

The Customer Service team will operate Council's call centre from Tuesday, 3 January 2023 to Friday, 6 January 2023. The Customer Service desk will be closed during this time, but customer service will be provided via phone or Council's online services.

All other support functions will review their minimal requirements over this period.

It is proposed that Council resolve to provide eligible employees with up to an additional three paid leave (concession) days on the following basis:

- All staff on our payroll who have accrued leave and have more than 12 months' service will be afforded three (3) paid leave (concession) days during the close-down period on the condition that they reduce/maintain their annual leave balance to no more than 8 weeks by 30 June 2023.

- All staff on our payroll who have accrued leave and have less than 12 months' service will be afforded two (2) paid leave (concession) days during the closedown period on the condition that they reduce/maintain their annual leave balance to no more than 8 weeks by 30 June 2023.

If these recommendations are resolved, notification and consultation will commence with employees and the relevant Unions to allow for forward leave planning.

Consultation

Council will provide suitable notification to the community of the operational hours for Council services and facilities during the 2022/2023 close-down period through its website, social media channels and appropriate signage at all of its Service Centres.

Notification of Development Applications and Planning Proposals during Christmas/New Year Period

Notification of development applications and planning proposals over the Christmas/New Year period will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

In this regard, for any development application that is submitted between 20 December 2022 and 10 January 2023 (inclusive), the public notification period will be extended to exclude this period from the notification timeframe.

For any planning proposal that is on exhibition over the Christmas/New Year period, the timeframe for notification will exclude the calculation of the period between 20 December 2022 and 10 January 2023 (inclusive).

A period of notification and consultation will commence with employees relating to *Local Government (State) Award 2020* Leave Provisions.

Planning or Policy Implications

No Planning or Policy implications.

Financial Implications

The closedown period will result in an approximate leave liability reduction of \$268,000.

Conclusion

This proposal is an extension of the previous Christmas close-down period and any service delivery impact will be adequately managed through suitable notification to the community. Employee impacts will be managed through the extensive notification period and consultation options as per the *Local Government (State) Award 2020*.

Recommendation(s)

1. That Council endorse the Christmas close-down period from Saturday, 24 December 2022 to 8 January 2023.
2. That Council resolve to provide eligible employees with up to an additional three paid leave (concession) days during this close-down period as per the conditions set out in this report.
3. That the General Manager ensures suitable notification is provided to the community of the operational hours for Council services and facilities during the 2022/2023 close-down period.

4. That the General Manager ensures suitable consultation and notification is provided to employees as per the requirements set out in the *Local Government (State) Award 2020*.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.