

August 24, 2021

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

TO BE HELD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA NO. 1

JAY NANKIVELL
GENERAL MANAGER

FURTHER BUSINESS

1. MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 8/21 - DATED AUGUST 20, 2021 - WAIVER OF FEES FOR USE OF CIVIC CENTRE BY NSW HEALTH AS A MASS COVID-19 VACCINATION CENTRE (11/117)..... 3

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

August 20, 2021

ITEM 1MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 8/21

SUBJECT: WAIVER OF FEES FOR USE OF CIVIC CENTRE BY NSW HEALTH AS A MASS COVID-19 VACCINATION CENTRE 11/117

Summary

NSW has been fighting an outbreak of the Delta variant of the COVID-19 pandemic since it was first detected in Sydney on 17 June 2021. Daily increases in cases were initially isolated to the greater area of Sydney, but as the spread escalated so did the risk that the virus would spread further than the Blue Mountains and into regional and rural NSW.

It is disappointing that my pleas along with those of our regional and rural counterparts to the NSW government to protect regional and rural NSW fell on deaf ears.

Broken Hill and our neighboring communities of Tibooburra, Wilcannia, Menindee, Ivanhoe etc. are largely reliant on the Far West Local Health District and Broken Hill Hospital services, and the added pressure of COVID-19 patients will really stretch our medical resources. It is imperative that we do all we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

As well as the Broken Hill community, I am particularly concerned about the community of Wilcannia as the positive COVID-19 case numbers continue to increase each day.

At the time of publishing this Mayoral Minute, Wilcannia has 38 positive COVID-19 cases and Broken Hill has 4 positive cases. All cases in Broken Hill are at home in isolation and are being monitored several times per day to ensure that their health is not deteriorating.

Since the detection of the virus in the Broken Hill sewage system on 13 August, 2021, the Broken Hill Local Emergency Management Committee was reactivated to plan for the emergency response to an outbreak of the virus in our community and the Far West region. Broken Hill City Council has a leading role on this Committee along with the NSW Police-Barrier District Command and the Far West Local Health District. Disaster Plans have been enacted and the local agencies are working well together to ensure the City is well placed to weather the pandemic and come out the other side.

The Government has acknowledged that Far West NSW has vulnerable communities that need their urgent assistance. Resilience NSW have been tasked to work with the Local Emergency Management Committee to provide disaster relief assistance to Wilcannia and Broken Hill through the provision of dry food hampers and essential items for those that are isolated and most vulnerable within the community.

In addition, the deployment of the Australian Defence Force has occurred in Wilcannia to assist with the COVID-19 testing program and vaccination program. They are also assisting the Wilcannia Police with the daily provision and distribution of essential food and medical supplies from Broken Hill to Wilcannia along with assisting the Police to enforce the Stay at Home Public Health Order and carrying out welfare checks on sick members in the community.

Given that vaccine supplies and capacity have increases for the local area in recent days, Broken Hill City Council is assisting the Far West Local Health District to coordinate a mass COVID-19 vaccination centre in Broken Hill.

Upon the request of the Far West Local Health District for a large venue to ensure maximum vaccination rates for Broken Hill, Council has offered the use of the Broken Hill Civic Centre which is an ideal venue given its size and facilities, its central location, its disability access, and availability due to the cancellation of all event bookings as a result of the current COVID-19 situation.

I propose that Council waives the hire fee and offers the use of the Civic Centre free-of-charge to assist in the emergency response to the spread of the Delta variant of the virus to the Far West region.

The daily auditorium hire fees are \$1,320 and \$1,650 for weekends. This results in a weekly waiver of fees to the Far West Local Health District of \$9,900. On the other hand, there is no loss of income or revenue opportunities as the Centre is currently closed due to the Public Health Order and there are no bookings scheduled in the auditorium in the short term due to the nature of the restrictions imposed prior to the statewide lockdown. Any staff, cleaning and other incidental costs will be recovered at cost.

I encourage our community to come along and receive their vaccination. As we have seen in other countries in the world, the Delta variant is extremely contagious and virulent. We do not want to see any lives lost in the Far West, and Council must do all it can to assist in the emergency response to stop the spread in our region and to keep our community safe.

Recommendation

1. That Mayoral Minute No. /21 dated August 20, 2021, be received.
2. That Council works closely with NSW Health to coordinate the use of the Broken Hill Civic Centre as a mass COVID-19 vaccination centre for Broken Hill.
3. That hire fees associated with the use of the Broken Hill Civic Centre by NSW Health (Far West Local Health District) from 25 August 2021 for the required duration of the operation of a COVID-19 mass vaccination centre in Broken Hill, be waived.
4. That Council supports the Far West Local Health District in promoting the vaccination centre to encourage the Broken Hill Community to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations.
5. That Council thank the frontline workers within our community and surrounding towns for their efforts in managing the COVID-19 pandemic and working to keep our Community safe, including NSW Health Workers, NSW Police, Council staff, Maari Ma, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Government Agencies, Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal Land Council, and all volunteer and charitable organisation.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.

D TURLEY AM
MAYOR