



# 2020/21 BUDGET NEWS



Dear business community,

**In a short space of time, we have experienced significant challenge and change as we focus on our health during COVID-19.**

Together we have faced the public health challenge, as the economic impact of the pandemic still unfolds.

Local businesses have been on the economic frontline, with many closing doors and reducing operations. The impacts of lost revenue and concern for displaced employees has been a harsh reality.

In the face of this, the business response has been incredible, with innovative and new ways of working adopted at speed.

Vincent has seen the heaviest decline in revenue in our history. \$3.8 million was lost in the last

quarter of 2019/20 and a further \$10 million loss is forecast this year.

As we confront this difficult financial situation, support for our business community and local economy remains critical.

**This budget delivers a rates freeze for commercial ratepayers and a freeze on fees and charges. For the first time, you can use Rates Smoothing to pay your rates weekly, fortnightly or monthly. And for those in greatest need, support is available through a new financial hardship fund.**

We're backing economic rebound with priority capital works, town centre improvements and red tape relief to help local businesses adapt and diversify.

Planning applications can now be lodged and tracked online and our team continues to provide personalised health and planning advice.

The spirit, innovation and resolve shown by local businesses has been outstanding.

For those who have been able to, we are thankful for the lengths you have gone to in order to continue trading and operating in Vincent.

Our message to the Vincent community throughout this time has been clear: now more than ever, we need to support local.

Emma Cole **Mayor**

**MAYOR**



Emma Cole

**SOUTH WARD**



Cr Susan Gontaszewski  
(Deputy Mayor)



Cr Jonathan Hallett



Cr Ashley Wallace



Cr Joshua Topelberg

**NORTH WARD**



Cr Alex Castle



Cr Joanne Fotakis



Cr Sally Smith



Cr Dan Loden



# ECONOMIC REBOUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on local business. In response, we will deliver an Economic Rebound Plan to provide immediate and ongoing support for businesses to thrive, diversify and start up.

We are working in partnership with our Town Teams and will seek business input to create real actions that will be delivered over the next 24 months.

Actions will focus on easing the strain on business, further reducing red tape and support for community reconnection, including:

- More opportunities for businesses to diversify and adapt to the changing economy
- Extension of red tape relief on change of use applications
- Greater accessibility for customers in town centres and on main streets
- Expanding on the Open for Business in Vincent directory
- Streetscape revitalisation to ensure our town centres remain welcoming
- Making it easier to grow your business using public space
- Continuing to drive Support Local and Buy Local campaigns
- Partnering with inner city local governments to attract more visitors and tourism.

If you have ideas on how we can support economic rebound, we welcome your input as we develop this Plan and deliver on-ground actions.



# COVID-19 RESPONSE & BUSINESS SUPPORT

## Open for business in Vincent

To promote local business and encourage community members to buy local, we developed an online "Open for Business in Vincent" business directory. We have been sharing your stories and highlighting how local businesses have adapted in response to COVID-19. The aim is to ensure that the Vincent community gets behind their local businesses and understands how important it is to support local.



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## Car parking cash injection

Our cash-in-lieu parking reserve can be drawn on to provide transport-related infrastructure in town centres and main streets.

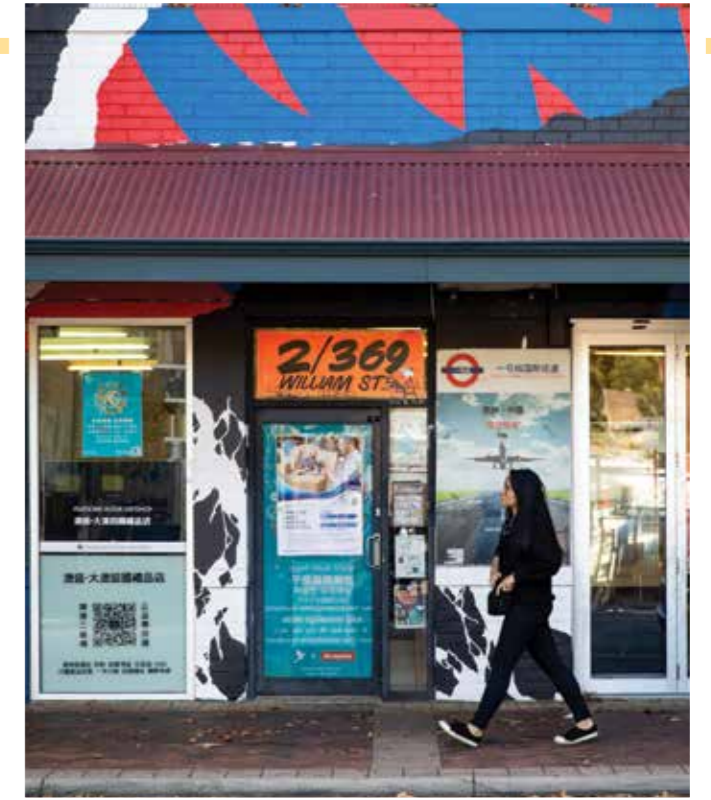
In this budget, we are using reserve funds to deliver additional car parking bays and bike parking across Vincent, and better access and way finding between transport connections. Our focus will be on delivering projects as quickly as we can to support economic rebound.

## Local purchasing power

We are prioritising our spending with local Vincent businesses and contractors through Vendor Panel Marketplace – a local economic development tool that will assist Vincent to easily identify businesses in our area and invite them to quote on our projects.

We strongly encourage businesses within the City of Vincent to register, so we can support our business community by buying your services and products. Registration with the platform is easy and free.

[pages.vendorpanel.com/workwithlocalgov](https://pages.vendorpanel.com/workwithlocalgov)



## Streamlined planning

Helping businesses to adapt their operations to the changing economic and public health environment has been a priority for us. We streamlined planning to provide immediate relief to businesses. Changes of use have been permitted without planning approval, allowing dine-in restaurants and cafes to easily convert to takeaway venues and businesses to diversify quickly.

We have also streamlined the development application process, delivering faster approval times and providing online lodgement and tracking of planning applications.



Debra Hayes Floral

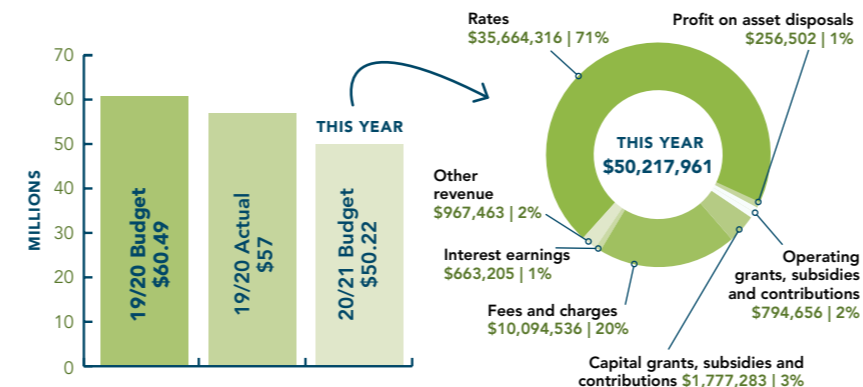
## COVID Safe support

Our health team has offered on-ground support to help businesses adapt to evolving public health restrictions, supporting business to become COVID Safe. From March to June, the team visited more than 300 businesses to provide advice and support.

For more information on support available, please visit [portal.vincent.wa.gov.au](https://portal.vincent.wa.gov.au)

## REVENUE

We lost \$3.8M in the last quarter of 2019/20 due to COVID-19. Revenue is conservatively expected to drop by \$10M this year.

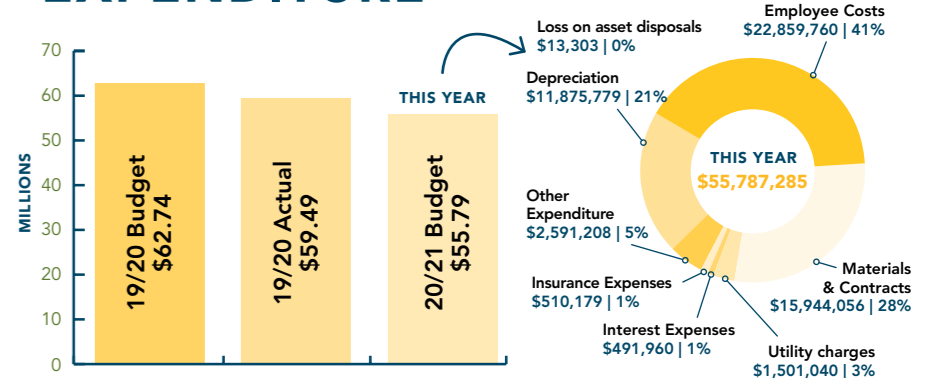


## RATES REVENUE

Rate revenue has been cut by \$291,464 compared to last year (excluding any rates adjustments made during 2020/21 from new property development).



## EXPENDITURE



# BUDGETING DURING COVID-19

This is the most challenging budget in Vincent's history. Our residents, community groups and businesses have experienced the harsh realities of living through the COVID-19 pandemic. Vincent's finances have been heavily impacted.

We have reduced spending whilst focusing on community support and hardship measures. Quarterly budget reviews will assist us to adjust to changing community needs throughout the year and we are starting the year with a small budget deficit.

## Saving money as revenues fall

- Reduction in expenditure by \$6.8M
- Freeze on salaries and wages
- Restricting use of consultants
- Capital renewal works prioritised to aid local economy
- Discretionary spending cut, including events and sponsorships

## Supporting ratepayers and community groups

- Overall decrease in total rates revenue
- Zero increase in fees and charges
- Rent waivers for community groups
- Support for our most vulnerable through \$1M charitable grants
- COVID-19 support for local clubs and groups
- Community Support Network established

## Ramping up financial hardship provisions

- New \$250,000 financial hardship fund
- \$135,000 towards interest and fee waivers
- \$50,000 to implement rates smoothing with weekly, fortnightly and monthly payments
- Interest rate reductions on payments

## Supporting local business

- Rates freeze for commercial ratepayers
- Prioritising Economic Rebound Plan
- Lease support for commercial tenants
- Simplified change of business use
- COVID Safe support for local businesses

## SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

### \$1 million support via Local Charities

Using purpose-specific funds from the Leederville Gardens Trust, we've distributed crisis funding to Public Benevolent Institutions to support the most vulnerable in our community – including seniors and people experiencing homelessness, domestic violence and food insecurity. Support is available via the YMCA, People Who Care, RUAH, St Vincent de Paul, Uniting WA, Foodbank WA and Derbarl Yerrigan Health Services.

### Backing the Arts Industry

The pandemic has been particularly devastating for our local arts industry, with events and projects cancelled en masse. Arts Relief Grants, funded by developer contributions specifically provided for public art, are being distributed to local artists to provide a diversity of public art across Vincent. This will aid economic rebound and add vibrancy to our recovering town centres.



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR RATES

## Rates Freeze

Understanding the financial pressures felt by local businesses and property owners during COVID-19, the City of Vincent has maintained a zero increase in your rates, fees and charges. You will pay no more than you did in 2020/21 and, for those who need it, we have strengthened our hardship measures to assist.

## Financial Hardship Support

Vincent has invested \$435,000 in financial hardship measures to provide additional assistance to ratepayers at this difficult time.

We have introduced a \$250,000 Financial Hardship Fund for those in greatest need. \$135,000 has been provided towards interest and fee waivers and \$50,000 has enabled us to introduce Rates Smoothing.

If you need assistance with paying your rates, please contact us to discuss your options.

## Introducing Rates Smoothing

We understand that you may need more flexible payment options to choose from. You can now use Rates Smoothing to make direct debit payments throughout the year.

To set up a direct debit, please complete the form on our website or call us for assistance.

For more information visit [www.vincent.wa.gov.au/rates](http://www.vincent.wa.gov.au/rates)



## STAY IN TOUCH



### In Person

Located inside the Vincent Library,  
99 Loftus Street, Leederville



### Experts on Demand

Planning, Building & Health  
244 Vincent Street, Leederville

P: 9273 6000

W: [vincent.wa.gov.au](http://vincent.wa.gov.au)

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