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COVID-19 ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

A REFERENCE GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE - KELLIE NORTHWOOD	3
A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN - MATT AITKEN	4
COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STIMULUS SUMMARY	5
TAX PLANNING STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR FY2020 BASED ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S STIMULUS PACKAGES	9
STATES AND TERRITORIES ECONOMIC STIMULUS SUMMARY	
VICTORIA	11
NEW SOUTH WALES	15
QUEENSLAND	16
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	19
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	20
TASMANIA	22
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY	24
NORTHERN TERRITORY	27
FAQS / IR AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS	29
YOUR BUSINESS CHECKLIST	33
INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT	36
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES	37



A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The past weeks have had the most significant impact on our lives, livelihoods, mental and physical health as the hours of work seem to achieve little, it is difficult to not feel overwhelmed. I have felt overwhelmed. I have been frustrated, angry, fearful, confused, and sleepless. I have needed to lean on family, friends and most inspiringly, on you. We are a wonderful community, most of us have been in this community for many decades. If you are feeling overwhelmed reach out, share the load. It is important.

Conversations requiring me to do nothing but listen, understand, or others whereby I have been listened to as I too release the pressure valve. We all care deeply. We want this to change for our businesses and for the industry more broadly. Each and every conversation starts with a genuine 'how are you going today?' and ends with a 'take care, keep well'.

I've been filled with a sense of pride for the fight in us all, as I've had the opportunity to work on some solid pieces of intelligent, positive, future focused plans to present to Government, Industry Partners and Customers – there is a genuine sense of 'we are in this together'. The times are difficult, they are overwhelming, however there is a humanity amongst us that keeps us strong. I thank you all for that.

Following the announcement of the economic response by the Morrison government on 12th March 2020, the Australian States and Territories announced their respective economic stimulus packages to further support Australian households and businesses to survive the impact of COVID-19. It is important you are all well-armed, without being inundated with changing information. Understanding how these packages can provide relief for your staff, households and businesses to ensure our resilience is important.

The summary contained throughout this reference guide provides detailed information in relation to the measures introduced by the Commonwealth and each of the Australian States and Territories as well as how you can access the support. This information is not provided as advice and all Members, and non-Members, are urged to seek independent expert advice from a Chartered Accountant, Financial Adviser, your Banking Partner or Government Department to ensure full relevance to your specific needs.

The Real Media Collective also recognise this is a fluid situation with economic stimulus, restrictions and more being reviewed regularly. We will endeavour to update you as we proceed through this difficult time to keep our Members and broader industry informed with accurate information.

We will get through this. Our industry will endure and we are here to support you. Do not hesitate to reach out to either myself, the Board or our Collective Team with anything you feel we can assist you with. Most importantly, do not be complacent, keep healthy and be kind to yourselves. The rest we will rebuild together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kellie Northwood'.

Kellie Northwood
Chief Executive Officer
The Real Media Collective

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A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

These are unprecedented and uncharted times for all of us, not only as individuals and society, but even moreso in our businesses and across the broader industry.

Days have blurred together and I'm sure, like all of you, these past weeks have been relentless. Displaying and maintaining leadership whilst under enormous pressure is not easy for everyone - staff are fearful and confused, customers are harder to reach under remote working conditions and at times can appear less engaged or distracted by their own personal and business requirements, and with a changing environment we as Business Owners, Managers or Executives are left at times shifting from one gear to the next in rapid fire.

At the same time, I have seen fantastic support shown by Customers, Suppliers and Industry - as a community we are all working through a common ground. Communication is critical at this time as we navigate changing strategies for our businesses, implement new safety practices, manage risk mitigation requirements and explain future impacts and options to staff in these uncertain times. I encourage you to use the resources available from the Collective or from Government websites and other channels. Engage your Financial Advisors and Accountants, gain access to all economic stimulus opportunities you can, hunt aged receivables and work openly with your customers and suppliers. This is a solutions focused period and we must consider how we will remain sustainable and evolve into a new world.

The Collective has been having regular discussions to implement tools, access to resources and information to assist you through this period. We are in deep discussions with Australia Post exploring opportunities for even closer collaboration and support with industry, we have issued an Essential Services position to the NZ Government and will submit one for the Australian Government this week. We are drafting fact sheets and media announcements to ensure the myth that paper is a carrier of COVID-19 is managed with facts not fiction. We are here for all our Members and even non-Members, this is a time to think of the Industry, the community our industry provides and the resilience of an industry that has endured much. We will know a different world in the aftermath of this crisis, that is true, however I firmly believe we will have an Industry that will rebound and once again stand tall. I look forward to sharing a beer with you all in reflection and future hope when that time comes.

For now, myself, Kellie, the Collective Board and Team are available to any of you for any requirements. Do not hesitate to reach out if you need support, have a suggestion or simply want to chat.

Keep well and stay safe. Kia Kaha.

Cheers

Matt Aitken

Chairman - The Real Media Collective
(IVE Group, Chief Executive Officer)

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COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STIMULUS

On the 22nd March the Commonwealth Government has released the second stage of its economic plan to cushion the economic impact of COVID-19 and help build a bridge to recovery.

A total of \$189 billion is being injected into the economy by all arms of Government in order to keep Australians in work and businesses in business.

This includes \$17.6 billion for the Government's first economic stimulus package, \$90 billion from the Reserve Bank of Australia and \$15 billion from the Government to deliver easier access to finance, and \$66.1 billion in today's economic support package.

The economic support package includes:

- Support for households including casuals, sole-traders, retirees and those on income support,
- Assistance for businesses to keep people in a job,
- Regulatory protection and financial support for businesses to stay in business.

1. SUPPORT FOR WORKERS AND HOUSEHOLDS - COVID-19 SUPPLEMENT

The Government is temporarily expanding eligibility to income support payments and establishing a new, time-limited COVID-19 supplement to be paid at a rate of \$550 per fortnight. This will be paid to both existing and new recipients of the JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance jobseeker, Parenting Payment, Farm Household Allowance and Special Benefit.

- The COVID-19 supplement will be paid for the next Six (6) months. Eligible income support recipients will receive the full amount of the \$550 COVID-19 supplement on top of their payment each fortnight.
- An increase of up to 5,000 staff for Services Australia will assist to support delivery of new Government measures.

2. SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLD - PAYMENTS TO SUPPORT HOUSEHOLDS

In addition to the \$750 stimulus payment announced on 12th March 2020, the Government will provide a further \$750 payment to social security and veteran income support recipients and eligible concession card holders, except for those who are receiving an income support payment that is eligible to receive the COVID-19 supplement.

This second payment will be made **automatically** from 13th July 2020 to around 5 million social security, veteran and other income support recipients and eligible concession card holders. Around half of those that benefit are pensioners.

The first payment will be made from 31st March 2020 to people who will have been on one of the eligible payments any time between 12th March 2020 and 13th April 2020.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STIMULUS

3. SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS - EARLY RELEASE OF SUPERANNUATION.

The Government will allow individuals in financial stress as a result of the COVID-19 to access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation in 2019-20 and a further \$10,000 in 2020-21.

Eligible individuals will be able to **apply online through MyGov** for access of up to \$10,000 of their superannuation before 1st July 2020. They will also be able to access up to a further \$10,000 from 1 July 2020 for another three months. They will not need to pay tax on amounts released and the money they withdraw will not affect Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs payments.

4. SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS - TEMPORARILY REDUCE SUPERANNUATION MINIMUM DRAWDOWN RATES.

The Government is temporarily reducing superannuation minimum drawdown requirements for account-based pensions and similar products by 50 per cent for 2019-20 and 2020-21.

5. SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS - REDUCING SOCIAL SECURITY DEEMING RATES.

On top of the deeming rate changes made at the time of the first package, the Government is reducing the deeming rates by a further 0.25 percentage points to reflect the latest rate reductions by the Reserve Bank of Australia.

As of 1st May 2020, the lower deeming rate will be 0.25 per cent and the upper deeming rate will be 2.25 per cent.

6. ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESS TO KEEP PEOPLE IN A JOB - BOOSTING CASH FLOW FOR EMPLOYERS.

- The Government is providing up to \$100,000 to eligible small and medium sized businesses, and not-for-profits (including charities) that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000. These payments will help businesses' and not-for-profits' cash flow so they can keep operating, pay their rent, electricity and other bills and retain staff.

Under the enhanced scheme from the first package, employers will receive a payment equal to 100 per cent of their salary and wages withheld (up from 50 per cent), with the maximum payment being increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000. In addition, the minimum payment is being increased from \$2,000 to \$10,000. The payment will be available from 28th April 2020.

The payments are tax free, there will be no new forms and payments will flow automatically through the Australian Tax Office.

Small and medium business entities with aggregated annual turnover under \$50 million and that employ workers are eligible. Not for Profit entities, including charities, with aggregated annual turnover under \$50 million and that employ workers will now also be eligible. This will support employment at a time where Not for Profits are facing increasing demand for services.

- An additional payment is also being made from 28th July 2020. Eligible entities will receive an additional payment equal to the total of all of the Boosting Cash Flow for Employers payments received.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STIMULUS

7. REGULATORY PROTECTION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES TO STAY IN BUSINESS - COVID-19 SME GUARANTEE SCHEME.

- The Government will establish the 'Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme' which will support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to get access to working capital to help them get them through the impact of COVID-19.
- Under the Scheme, the Government will guarantee up to \$20 billion to support \$40 billion in SME loans ([View Here](#)).
- The Government is providing an exemption from responsible lending obligations for lenders providing credit to existing small business customers. This exemption is for six (6) months, and applies to any credit for business purposes, including:
 - new credit,
 - credit limit increases, and
 - credit variations and restructures.
- SMEs with a turnover of up to \$50 million will be eligible to receive these loans.
- The Government will provide eligible lenders with a guarantee for loans with the following terms ([View Here](#)):
 - Maximum total size of loans of \$250,000 per Borrower,
 - The loans will be up to three years, with an initial six (6) month repayment holiday,
 - The loans will be in the form of unsecured finance, meaning that borrowers will not have to provide an asset as security for the loan.
- Loans will be subject to lenders' credit assessment processes with the expectation that lenders will look through the cycle to sensibly take into account the uncertainty of the current economic conditions.
- As part of the loan products available, the Government will encourage lenders to provide facilities to SMEs that only have to be drawn if needed by the SME. This will mean that the SME will only incur interest on the amount they draw down. If they do not draw down any funds from the facility, no interest will be charged, but they will retain the flexibility to draw down in the future should they need to.

The Scheme will commence by early April 2020 and be available for new loans made by participating lenders until 30th September 2020.

The Scheme will complement the announcement the Government has made to cut red-tape to allow SMEs to get access to credit faster. It also complements announcements made by Australian banks to support small businesses with their existing loans. Providing temporary relief for financially distressed businesses.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STIMULUS

The Government is temporarily increasing the threshold at which creditors can issue a statutory demand on a company and the time companies have to respond to statutory demands they receive. The package also includes temporary relief for directors from any personal liability for trading while insolvent. The Corporations Act 2001 Cth will be amended to provide temporary and targeted relief for companies to deal with unforeseen events that arise as a result of the Coronavirus.

This builds on the support for business and business investment provided in the first economic support package, which included:

- increasing the instant asset write off,
- backing business investment by providing accelerated depreciation deductions, supporting apprentices and trainees,
- targeted support for COVID-19-affected regions and communities.

ELIGIBLE LENDERS LIST - AUSTRALIAN BANKING COUNCIL

AMP 1300 130 191	BENDIGO & ADELAIDE BANK 1300 652 146	NAB 1800 701 599
ANZ 1800 252 845	CITIBANK 1800 722 814	RABOBANK 1800 025 484
ARAB BANK 1800 64 64 84	COMMONWEALTH BANK 1300 720 814	RURAL BANK 1800 660 115
BANK AUSTRALIA 13 28 88	HSBC 1300 555 988	ST GEORGE BANK 1800 629 795
BANK OF SYDNEY 13 95 00	ING 1300 349 166	SUNCORP BANK 1800 225 223
BOQ 1800 079 866	MACQUARIE BANK 1300 363 330	SUNCORP BANK 1800 225 223
BANK SA 1800 679 461	ME BANK 1300 500 520	WESTPAC 1800 067 497
BANKWEST 1300 769 173	MYSTATE 13 80 01	

8. SUPPORT FOR THE AVIATION INDUSTRY.

The Government is also providing up to \$715 million in support for Australian airlines and airports.

TAX PLANNING STRATEGIES

TAX PLANNING STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR FY2020 BASED ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S STIMULUS PACKAGES

Based on the initial review of the economic stimulus package, consider your eligibility to utilise the below tax planning strategies for the year ending 30th June 2020:

1. BUSINESSES WITH TURNOVER OF < \$500 MILLION

- Bring forward purchase of business assets costing <\$150K prior to 30th June 2020, to claim the instant asset write off of up to \$150K per asset, ensuring that the asset is ready for use prior to 30th June 2020.
- Bring forward purchase of depreciable assets >\$150K prior to 30th June 2020, in order to claim a 50% accelerated depreciation deduction for the year ending 30th June 2020. This measure is also available for the year ending 30th June 2021.

2. BUSINESSES AND NOT FOR PROFITS, WITH TURNOVER < \$50 MILLION

- Claim credit for 100% of PAYG withholding (up to a maximum of \$50K over the period 1st Jan 2020 to 30th June 2020) with minimum payments of \$10K per activity statement. An additional payment equal to the total of all the initial cash flow boost payments, up to a maximum of \$50,000 will be made in the July - October 2020 period.

3. BUSINESSES WITH TURNOVER < \$50 MILLION

- Access new short-term unsecured loans up to \$250K, Loan term of 3 years with an initial 6-month repayment holiday.

4. BUSINESSES WITH < 20 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES

- Claim a subsidy up to maximum amount of \$21K over the 9 months ending 30th September 2020, if the business has hired trainees/apprentices as at 1st March 2020.

5. ALL BUSINESSES IRRESPECTIVE OF SIZE

- Claim a subsidy up to maximum amount of \$21K, if the business re-employs eligible out of trade apprentices and/or trainees.

TAX PLANNING STRATEGIES

6. ALL INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS

- Consider if eligible for income support payments and \$550 coronavirus supplement.
- Consider if eligible for stimulus payments from government.
- Ability to access super, \$10K super in 2020 and a further \$10K in 2021.
- Temporary reduction in minimum pension drawdowns by 50% for 2020 and 2021.

7. ALL TAXPAYERS (INDIVIDUALS AND NON-INDIVIDUALS)

Consider ATO tax and administrative relief as per below:

- Negotiate ATO obligations, such as payment deferrals of up to 4-6 months, if affected by the coronavirus outbreak.
- Vary GST cycles from quarterly to monthly to claim GST credits quickly.
- Vary PAYG Instalments for the quarters ended 30th Sep 2019, 31st Dec 2019 and 30th March 2020.
- Review payment plans with ATO.

VICTORIA

On the 21st March 2020, the Victorian government announced a three stage \$1.7 billion assistance **Economic Survival Package** ([View Here](#)) to help Victorian businesses and workers survive the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The package includes following key measures:

1. STAGE 1 – \$700 MILLION TOWARDS THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

\$550 million towards **full pay roll tax refund for the 2019-2020** financial year for businesses with a **payroll of less than \$3 million**. Businesses will be able to access the cash refunds by Friday, March 27.

- The eligibility threshold applies to each employer, so any member of a group that pays taxable wages of less than \$3 million per annum will be eligible for the relief.
- Eligible businesses must continue to lodge returns but do not need to make further payments for 2020 financial year.
- State Revenue Office (SRO) will directly contact eligible businesses in relation to reimbursement for payroll tax already paid in the financial year.

\$83 million towards **deferral of payroll tax for the first three months (July, Aug & Sep 2020) of 2020 – 2021** financial year until 1 January 2021, for the same businesses who are eligible for payroll tax refund for 2019-2020 year.

\$30 million support to hospitality sector by **waiver of 2020 liquor license** fees for affected venues and small businesses.

Deferral of 2020 land tax payments until 1 January 2021 for landowners who are due to pay 2020 land tax and have at least one non-residential property and total taxable landholdings below \$1 million. Tax will need to be paid in full by 31 March 2021.

- Non-residential property includes:
 - Commercial property,
 - Industrial property, and
 - Vacant land (excluding residential vacant land).
- If 2020 land tax has been paid, it can be requested to be refunded. However, the tax will need to be paid in full by 31 March 2021.
- State Revenue Office (SRO) will contact all eligible taxpayers in relation to this measure.

Rent relief for commercial tenants in government buildings. Government is also encouraging private landlords to offer rent relief as well.

VICTORIA



2. STAGE 2 - \$500 MILLION TOWARDS ESTABLISHING A BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND FOR HARDSHIP PAYMENTS, SMALL GRANTS AND TAILORED SUPPORT.

- The funds would be distributed in consultation with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Hotels Association, the Australian Industry Group and other industry representatives.
- The funds will go towards sectors (including hospitality, tourism, accommodation, arts and entertainment and retail);
 - that are doing it tough,
 - who may not be eligible for payroll tax refunds due to their size; and,
 - require more tailored support to survive and keep people in work.

3. STAGE 3 - \$500 MILLION TOWARDS ESTABLISHING WORKING FOR VICTORIA FUND, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND VICTORIAN TRADES HALL COUNCIL. THE FUND WILL BE USED FOR:

- Helping workers, who have lost their jobs, find new opportunities including work in cleaning public infrastructure or delivering food;
- Providing vital contributions to the state's response to the pandemic and affording those Victorians security when its needed most;
- Facilitating job matching to help Victorians find short-term or casual roles.

FURTHER SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENT

Further to the above measures, the government will make **payment of all outstanding supplier invoices within 5 business days**, which will **release up to \$750 million cash in the economy earlier**. The private sector is urged to do the same where possible. The Government will announce further support over the coming weeks and months, in consultation with the Commonwealth, as the impacts of the coronavirus continue to evolve.

Due to the ongoing economic uncertainty the pandemic is causing, the 2020-21 Victorian Budget will be deferred – in line with all other Australian Governments and agreed by National Cabinet. The Government's base review outcomes will also be deferred.

The Government will continue to work closely with business and unions, and will announce further support over the coming weeks and months, in consultation with the Commonwealth, as the impacts of the coronavirus continue to evolve.

VICTORIA

BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND

ONE OFF \$10K GRANT FOR ELIGIBLE VICTORIAN SMALL BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

KEY INSIGHTS

- \$500 million business support fund was announced by the Victorian government as part of \$1.7 billion Economic Survival Package.
- Main purpose of the fund is to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19 and keep people in work.
- Eligible businesses can apply for a one-off \$10,000 grant which can be used towards costs such as utilities, rent and salaries, and activities to support business continuity planning.
- Applications opened today on 30 March 2020 and will close on 1 June 2020.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Businesses are eligible to apply for a grant through the Fund if they meet the following criteria:

- Have been subject to closure or highly impacted by [shutdown restrictions announced by the Victorian Government to-date](#)
- Employ people; and
- Have a turnover of more than \$75,000; and
- Have payroll of less than \$650,000; and
- Hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and held that ABN at 16 March 2020 (when the [State of Emergency](#) was declared); and
- Have been engaged in carrying out the operation of the business in the Australian State of Victoria on 16 March 2020.

The fund is **targeted at small businesses that may not be eligible for 2019-20 refunds and waiving of payroll tax**, which applies to businesses with wages bills of \$650,000 or above.

The Business Support Fund is open to businesses that have employed staff during 2019-20. If your business has had to let staff go as a result of closure or being highly impacted by shutdown restrictions announced by the Victorian Government to-date, you still may be eligible to apply for this grant.

Businesses with a wages bill between \$650,000 and \$3 million will have their payroll tax refunded and waived for the 2019-20 financial year under the Victorian Government's \$1.7 billion economic survival package.

VICTORIA

A light blue silhouette map of the state of Victoria, Australia, is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page. The word "VICTORIA" is printed in a large, blue, sans-serif font, partially overlapping the top edge of the map.

While owners of businesses that do not employ people (*non-employing businesses*) are **not eligible for funding through this program**, they can seek support through the Commonwealth Government's [Job Seeker Payment Program](#).

EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must certify in writing that they meet the eligibility criteria.
- Applicants will be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and will be required to produce evidence, such as payroll reports to demonstrate impact, at the request of the Victorian Government for a period of four years after the grant has been approved.
- If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or grants are not applied for the purposes stated in the terms of funding and application, the grant will be repayable on demand.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applicants must submit an application online via the 'Apply now' button on this page. Apply Now
- Applicants are required to provide a copy of their most recent Business Activity Statement (BAS). Other supporting materials can also be provided.
- All questions in the application must be completed and any requested documentation attached to ensure timely assessment and grant payment.

NEW SOUTH WALES

On the 17th March 2020, the NSW Government *announced a \$2.3 billion health boost and economic stimulus package* ([View Here](#)), to help to protect communities and jobs in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak over the next six months. The package includes two key components:

\$1.6 billion for business support and jobs

1. WAIVER OF PAYROLL TAX FOR BUSINESSES WITH PAYROLLS OF UP TO \$10 MILLION FOR THREE MONTHS (THE REST OF 2019-20). WHILE IT IS NOT CURRENTLY CLEAR, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE PAYROLL TAX EXEMPTIONS WILL BE APPLIED AUTOMATICALLY.

2. BRING FORWARD THE NEXT ROUND OF PAYROLL TAX CUTS BY RAISING THE THRESHOLD LIMIT TO \$1 MILLION IN 2020-21.

3. WAIVE A RANGE OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES INCLUDING BARS, CAFES, RESTAURANTS AND TRADESPEOPLE.

- It is not yet clear exactly which fees will be waived, or for how long; and
- This measure will be administered through Service NSW, and the waiver will be communicated via that channel.

4. EMPLOY ADDITIONAL CLEANERS OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS TRANSPORT ASSETS, SCHOOLS AND OTHER PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

- This measure will provide job opportunities as well as make travelling safe for people.

5. BRING FORWARD MAINTENANCE ON PUBLIC ASSETS INCLUDING SOCIAL HOUSING AND CROWN LAND FENCING. BRING FORWARD CAPITAL WORKS AND MAINTENANCE.

- It's unclear how these contracts will be managed;
- The measure is intended to provide opportunities "for businesses of all sizes," and to create employment.

6. \$700 MILLION IN EXTRA HEALTH FUNDING. THIS MEASURE WILL ASSIST IN;

- Boosting ICU capacity;
- Preparing for additional COVID-19 testing;
- Purchasing additional ventilators and medical equipment;
- Establishing acute respiratory clinics; and
- Bringing forward elective surgeries to private hospitals.

QUEENSLAND

On 24 March 2020, The Queensland government unveiled a new range of stimulus measures and an additional \$4 billion will be invested to support Queenslanders' health, jobs and businesses. The second stimulus package is in addition to recently announced initiatives on 17 March 2020, including the dedicated small business hotline (1300 654 687) which has seen around 2000 business contacts so far.

Please find below a snapshot of measures as per the two stimulus packages:

MEASURES AS PER SECOND STIMULUS PACKAGE ANNOUNCED ON 24 MARCH 2020

1. SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

Payroll tax support:

- For employer (or part of a group of employers) who pays \$6.5 million or less in Australian taxable wages,
 - refund of your payroll tax for 2 months.
 - payroll tax holiday (i.e. no payroll tax to be paid) for 3 months.
 - You can also apply for a deferral of payroll tax for the 2020 calendar year. (If you have already applied for a deferral, you do not need not reapply - it will be extended. This measure was announced on 17 March).
 - If you do not receive an email, or you are unsure about your eligibility, complete the refund/holiday application form.
- For employer (or part of a group of employers) who pays more than \$6.5 million in Australian taxable wages and have been negatively affected (directly or indirectly) by coronavirus, you can apply for a:
 - deferral of payroll tax for the 2020 calendar year (If you have already applied for a deferral, you do not need not reapply - it will be extended. This measure was announced on 17 March).
 - refund of your payroll tax for 2 months.
- You must continue to lodge returns in OSRconnect - without paying them - during this time.
- Waiver of liquor licencing fees for venues that have had to close their doors.
- Rent relief for businesses who rent premises from the state government.
- \$500 rebate on power bill for this year for sole traders and small and medium businesses that consume less than 100,000 kilowatt hours. This will be automatically applied to electricity bills.

QUEENSLAND

2. SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS

\$300 million household relief package, which will give Queensland households \$200 off their utility bills. This will be automatically applied through household electricity bills.

\$2.5 billion into protecting Queensland jobs and businesses.

- This includes package of up to \$500 million to assist workers who lose their job or income and to help them find jobs in the industries that are vital to getting us through this crisis – health care, agriculture, food production, transport, cleaning and mining.

3. SUPPORT FOR HEALTH SECTOR

Extra \$1.2 billion to expand:

- fever clinics;
- emergency department capacity;
- acute care services; and
- regional aeromedical services for our remote communities.

MEASURES AS PER FIRST STIMULUS PACKAGE ANNOUNCED ON 17 MARCH 2020

On 17 March 2020, the Qld Government announced their first stimulus package to support businesses and manage the impact from COVID-19. The package includes the following key measures:

1. A \$500 MILLION LOAN FACILITY WILL BE CREATED TO SUPPORT QUEENSLAND BUSINESSES TO HELP THEM RETAIN EMPLOYEES AND MAINTAIN THEIR OPERATIONS. KEY FEATURES OF THE LOAN FACILITY INCLUDE:

- Low interest loans of up to \$250,000 for carry on finance, with an initial 12-month interest free period for businesses to retain staff.
- The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) is responsible for the administration of these concessional loans and is currently taking expressions of interest in the lead up to rolling these loans out as soon as possible.
- Businesses are required to Register interest through QRIDA or phone 1800 623 946. QRIDA will contact the businesses when the scheme is open to applications shortly.

QUEENSLAND

2. COVID-19 SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT TO BUILD RESILIENCE, GROW AND SUCCEED. THIS INCLUDES,

- Workshops in partnership with local bodies to build financial resilience;
- Business mentoring to provide targeted advice to impacted small businesses; and
- Dedicated small business hotline (1300 654 687) to access information and referral to support services.

3. DEFERRAL OF PAYMENT OF PAYROLL TAX RETURNS UNTIL 31 JULY 2020.

This would apply if,

- You are an employer (or part of a group of employers) who pays \$6.5 million or less in Australian taxable wages, and
- current turnover, profit, customers, bookings, retail sales, supply contracts or other factors-compared with normal operating conditions-have been directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19.

Payment for all 2020 payroll tax returns, (whether monthly, quarterly or annual returns), can be deferred until 3 August 2020).

The employers are required to complete payroll tax payment deferral application form.

Employers must continue to lodge returns in OSRconnect - without paying them - during this time. Employers can resume paying returns at any time during the deferral period.

4. A \$27.25 MILLION IMMEDIATE INDUSTRY RECOVERY PACKAGE TO MANAGE THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON QUEENSLAND TRADE. THE PACKAGE AIMS TO:

- Provide targeted financial support and advice;
- Promote Queensland through marketing and media activities; and
- Provide counselling and support to businesses and students.

5. INDUSTRY SPECIFIC SUPPORT, INCLUDING:

- A \$3.66m commercial fishing industry assistance package;
- Market diversification and resilience grants of up to \$50,000 for agriculture, fishing and food exporters; and
- Temporary fee relief for commercial tourism operators and hospitality businesses.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



On the 11th March 2020, the South Australian Government announced an *unprecedented response and economic package* ([View Here](#)) worth \$350 million in the wake of the ongoing impact of bushfires, drought and coronavirus. The package includes:

1. BRING FORWARD MAJOR NEW INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE PROJECTS INCLUDING ROAD AND HOSPITAL UPGRADES;

2. \$22 MILLION INJECTION IN NATURE-BASED TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE TO BOOST EMPLOYMENT AND THE LONG-TERM VISITOR ECONOMY IN HARD-HIT REGIONS; AND

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EXPANDED ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS GROWTH FUND TO SUPPORT LOCAL INDUSTRY.

4. PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED UNDER THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE MUST MEET CERTAIN CRITERIA, INCLUDING:

- The ability to start works within a short period of time;
- They must be labour-intensive; and/or
- Require significant local purchasing of materials, services and supplies.

The Government will release further details in relation to the stimulus package in the coming weeks.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

On the 16th March 2020, the Western Australian State Government announced a \$607 million *stimuluspackage* ([View Here](#)) to support Western Australian households, pensioners and small businesses in the wake of COVID-19.

The package includes the following key measures:

\$114 MILLION PAYROLL TAX SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

1. \$1 MILLION PAYROLL TAX THRESHOLD BROUGHT FORWARD BY SIX MONTHS TO JULY 1, 2020.

- Businesses with payroll of less than \$1 million will become exempt from payroll tax.
- Employers who cancel their registration as a result of the increase will need to wait until the annual reconciliation function is available in August 2020 for adjustments to be made to their tax liability.

2. A ONE-OFF GRANT OF \$17,500 FOR PAYROLL TAX PAYING BUSINESSES WITH A PAYROLL BETWEEN \$1 MILLION AND \$4 MILLION, TO ASSIST THEM TO MANAGE THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19.

- For a group of employers, a single grant will be payable to the designated group.
- Grants will be paid automatically by cheque from July 2020, businesses do not need to apply for grants.
- There may be delays for businesses whose tax status changed during 2018-2019 year or who became liable for payroll tax during 2018-19 or 2019-20 assessment year.
- Eligible businesses should log in to Revenue Online to ensure that their postal addresses are up to date.

3. DEFERRAL OF 2019 – 2020 PAYROLL TAX PAYMENTS UNTIL 21 JULY 2020 FOR BUSINESSES (THAT PAY \$7.5 MILLION OR LESS IN WAGES AND HAVE BEEN IMPACTED BY COVID-19).

- A business will be eligible if they are an employer (or part of a group of employers).
- A business is 'affected' if turnover, profit, customer numbers, bookings, retail sales, supply contracts, or other factors have seen a negative impact, because of the coronavirus outbreak.
- To secure the deferral, business owners have to fill in a [form](#) ([View Here](#)), and describe how their business has been affected.
- If the application is approved;
 - payments will be deferred from the March return (due 7 April 2020) or the first return period after the date in which the business is affected;
 - business may continue to lodge returns in Revenue Online without making payment; and
 - for all deferred months, payroll tax returns must be lodged and payroll liability paid by 21 July 2020.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

\$493 MILLION TO SUPPORT HOUSEHOLDS

4. FREEZE ON HOUSEHOLD FEES AND CHARGES UNTIL AT LEAST 1 JULY 2021 (WHICH WERE EXPECTED TO GO UP BY 2%).

Freeze will apply to entire 'household basket, including electricity, water, motor vehicle charges, emergency services levy and public transport fares.

5. DOUBLE THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (EAP) FROM \$300 TO \$600 TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE WESTERN AUSTRALIANS, INCLUDING PENSIONERS.

Western Australia Government's COVID-19 economic stimulus package builds on more than \$760 million announced in the past few months to stimulate the Western Australian economy and comes on top of the \$12.85 million local tourism package announced following the China travel ban.

TASMANIA

On the 17th March 2020, the Tasmanian Government announced a **\$420 million package** ([View Here](#)) comprising stimulus measures targeted at the hospitality, tourism, seafood and exports sectors. Measures include:

1. ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

- **Payroll tax waivers for the last four months of 2019-20 for hospitality, tourism, seafood and exports sectors.** Other businesses with payrolls of up to \$5 million, will be able to apply for payroll tax waiver for April to June 2020, based on the impact of virus;
- Introduction of youth employment scheme, which provides **a payroll tax rebate for one year, to businesses that employ a young person aged 24 and under, between April and December 2020;**
- **Bring forward the Targeted Small Business Grants Program, providing a \$5,000 grant for businesses** that hire an apprentice or trainee in the tourism, hospitality, building and construction, and manufacturing industries;
- **Interest-free loans for three years,**
 - to the hospitality, tourism, seafood and exports sectors;
 - to be made available to businesses with a turnover of less than \$5 million;
 - to purchase equipment or restructuring business operations;

Government agencies will reduce payments terms from 30 days to 14 days and pay bills sooner, unless otherwise required by contractual arrangements. This will assist with small business cash flow;

\$50 million in maintenance on public buildings brought forward to provide an injection into local trades around the state and continue to support confidence in local communities;

\$80,000 provided to **Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to provide human resources and industry relations assistance** associated with the coronavirus to businesses.

2. ASSISTANCE FOR HOUSEHOLDS

- Emergency relief package to Salvation Army, Red Cross & Rural Business Tasmania to support Tasmanians who are self-isolated;
- Emergency one-off relief payment of \$250 for individuals and \$1,000 for families who are required to self-isolate. Eligibility includes those with Health care card or pensioners concession card and those on low income; and
- Accommodation support for those placed on home quarantine.



TASMANIA

3. TARGETED INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE: TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & FISHERIES

- Waiver of a number of Lease, License and Park Entry Fees for tourism operators for April to June 2020;
- 50% discount on liquor licensing fees and a waiver of all application fees for 2020, back dated to 1 January 2020;
- Waiver of fees and levies for 12 months for certain fisheries;
- Establish Tourism and Hospitality Training Fund; and
- Develop Holiday at Home Campaign.

4. \$4 MILLION ASSISTANCE FOR PRIMARY HEALTH AND MENTAL SECTORS

- **Support for primary health care providers**, including GPs to ensure they have sufficient resources to look after the community;
- **Accommodation support for frontline workers**, if they need to stay away from home, in cases where their family members are sick; and
- **Mental health support programs** by community organisations.

5. ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- \$50 million in interest-free loans for local governments to upgrade, renovate and to do necessary maintenance to improve tourism and other assets, so when visitor numbers bounce back, Tasmania is ready.



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The Australian Capital Territory has released a \$137 million ACT Economic Survival Package. A business liaison phone line has been created to assist businesses understand the support available to them through the ACT Economic Survival Package and practical advice for businesses operating through changed arrangements due to COVID-19. The number businesses can call is: (02) 6205 0900.

1. CANBERRA ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Small businesses impacted can gain access to an Advice and Support Service with one-on-one business management advice. Business owners can receive up to four hours of fully subsidised, face to face tailored advice and access online business development resources.

This service will be available from 23rd March 2020. From this date, bookings can be made by calling (02) 6297 3121. The office is located with the Canberra Business Chamber at Level 3, 243 Northbourne Ave, Canberra ACT.

2. FOOD BUSINESS REGISTRATION, OUTDOOR DINING, AND LIQUOR LICENSING

Licensed venues will receive a 12-month waiver of their food business registration and on-licence liquor licencing fees from 1st April 2020 and outdoor dining fees for 2020-2021 will be waived.

In cases where food business registration has been prepaid for more than one year in advance, an additional 12 months will be added to the license.

Businesses do not need to contact Access Canberra or the Health Protection Service for this waiver to occur. This support will be applied automatically as part of the normal annual fee licencing process.

3. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SKILLS

The ACT Government is providing support for the Vocational Education and Training Sector by increasing subsidies for apprenticeships and traineeships and other VET students to access nationally recognised training in areas linked to skills needs across a range of industries.

Subsidies are provided directly to Registered Training Organisation and skills Canberra will make these adjustments automatically. No application is required.

4. ACT COMMUNITY CLUBS PACKAGE

An additional payment of \$1.5 million will be made, as well as the existing \$1.8 million in the Clubs Diversification Fund freed up to support clubs to keep staff employed at the award rate.



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

5. ELECTRICITY REBATES

Small business owners with electricity usage below 100 megawatts per year will see rebates of \$750 **automatically applied to their next electricity bill in around June or July 2020**. The rebate will apply regardless of whether customers are on standing or market offers.

You do not need to contact your electricity supplier as this will be automatically applied.

6. RIDESHARE AND TAXI VEHICLE

The Rideshare vehicle licence fee will be waived for 12 months for rideshare operators from 1st April 2020 as part of the normal licencing processes.

In cases where licences have already been prepaid 12 months in advance, an additional 12 months credit will be added to the license at the next due date.

The ACT Government will also waive all government leased taxi plate fees, including wheelchair accessible taxis to help support this vital service. This initiative will help to keep taxis on the road.

These fees will be waived automatically. Contact does not need to be made with Access Canberra on these fees.

7. SIX (6) MONTH WAIVER OF PAYROLL TAX

Hospitality (cafes, pubs, hotels, clubs and restaurants), creative arts and entertainment industries will receive a one-off, six-month waiver of payroll tax from April to September 2020.

Businesses will need to complete a simple online application form to confirm their eligibility by visiting the ACT Revenue Office website (available soon) at: www.revenue.act.gov.au

For those who lodge their payroll tax assessment monthly, the first credit will be applied to the April payroll tax liability, which is usually payable by 7th May.

For those who lodge their payroll tax assessment annually, the credit will be applied to their account when their assessment is received at the end of the 2019-20 financial year.



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

8. PAYROLL TAX DEFERRAL

All ACT businesses with Group Australia-wide wages of up to \$10 million can defer their 2020-21 payroll tax, interest free until 1st July 2022. **Businesses will need to complete a simple online application form (which will be available soon on the ACT Revenue Office website [Here](#) to confirm their eligibility.**

Eligible businesses will need to **lodge their payroll tax returns as normal** but will not be required to make the associated payment at the usual time.

If the deferred amount is paid before 1st July 2022, no interest will be charged. Interest will be applied to any outstanding deferred amounts from 1st July 2022.

For those who lodge their payroll tax assessment monthly, deferral can commence for their July 2020 payroll tax liability, which is usually payable by 7th August.

For those who lodge their payroll tax assessment annually, they can defer payment of their full 2020-21 payroll tax liability, which is usually payable in July 2021.

9. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNERS

Commercial property owners with an Average Unimproved Value below \$2 million on their property are eligible for a rebate on their commercial rates fixed charge. Commercial rate payers will receive a credit of \$2,622 (equivalent to the annual fixed charge) to their 2019-20 general rates, in quarter four.

This will be applied automatically.

Where rate payers have paid in full or have a quarter bill less than the credit, they will be eligible for a refund. **Businesses will need to complete a simple online application form (which will be available soon on the [ACT Revenue Office website](#)) to apply for a refund.**

Commercial property owners will also not receive an increase on their 2020-21 Fire and Emergency Services Levy.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

On the 18th March 2020, the Northern Territory Government announced a \$65 million coronavirus *stimulus package* ([View Here](#)) to encourage spending on home renovations and business upgrades in an effort to prevent widespread job losses across the NT.

1. \$30 MILLION ON HOME IMPROVEMENT SCHEME.

- Scheme operates on a voucher system;
- Homeowners will get vouchers worth \$6,000 for renovations if they spend \$2,000;
- Homeowners will get vouchers worth \$4,000 for renovations if they spend \$1,000;
- Renovations should relate to physical improvements to land and/or building and repairs and maintenance services; and
- Registrations for businesses to provide services open on 30 March 2020. **Applications for homeowners open on 6 April 2020.**

2. \$20 MILLION ON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT, INCLUDING:

- \$10,000 grant for all territory businesses;
- An additional \$10,000 grant if the business contributes \$10,000 of their own;
- Each business is only eligible to receive one grant and it can be used to complete one or two different jobs on their premises; and
- Grant can be used to purchase goods and services, to make physical improvements to a business (land and building) that help to improve efficiency and customer experience.

3. \$5 MILLION IN IMMEDIATE WORK GRANT TO NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

To engage local businesses to do repairs, renovations and upgrades to their property and facilities. Grants of up to \$100,000 will be given as per below:

- The first \$50,000 will be paid as a grant;
- NT Government will also match any renovation costs that exceed \$50,000 on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to a maximum of \$100,000 in total; and
- Registrations for businesses to provide services open 30 March 2020.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

4. \$5 MILLION FOR STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PACKAGE;

To provide direct support for cafes, restaurants and other venues who serve to the public. The program will help businesses to,

- Install partitioning to meet requirements for gatherings of less than 100 people; and,
- Develop online ways of doing business.

5. FREEZE INCREASE IN ALL GOVERNMENT FEES AND CHARGES INCLUDING ELECTRICITY COSTS.

6. PAYROLL TAX EXEMPTION FOR HIRING TERRITORY EMPLOYEES EXTENDED TO 30 JUNE 2021.

The schemes are expected to be up and running within the next few weeks.

FAQS / IR AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS AS AN EMPLOYER?

You have an obligation to provide a safe workplace and educate staff on how to reduce the likelihood of disease, as a preventive measure (irrespective of the COVID-19 threat).

Some precautionary measures for you as an employer:

- Print out the infographics from State Government on “how to wash your hands properly” ([Download Here](#)) and “cover your cough and sneeze” ([Download Here](#)) and distribute around your workplace.
- Put hand soap and sanitisers at your employees’ disposal in the kitchen and reception areas, in the bathrooms, on work stations – and inform your staff where they can find them.
- Wipe handles to all common areas and commonly used surfaces daily with antibacterial wipes, and increase the frequency of cleaning services.
- Replace tea towels in common (kitchen) areas to paper towel.
- Think of organising flu shots for your employees.

Some tips for your employees:

- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, or carry hand sanitiser and use it as needed.
- Wash hands before coming into the office for the day and after leaving the building (to avoid spreading germs from PT, lift buttons, etc.).
- Avoid touching eyes/nose/mouth with unclean hands.
- Wipe down your desk/keyboard/mouse/chair handles with antibacterial wipes at least once a week.
- When washing hands in the kitchen, use paper towel to dry.
- Cover your mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing with flexed elbow or tissue (NOT your hand) – dispose of the tissue into a bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever or cough.
- Do not come into the office and see a health professional if you start to feel unwell.

FAQ'S / IR AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

WHEN IS AN EMPLOYEE CONSIDERED AT "HIGH RISK" OF GETTING CORONAVIRUS AND WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT THEM AND THE STAFF?

The authorities have defined the following as **High Risk Criteria**:

- been in contact with someone who has recently visited or transited through a high-risk country or region;
- visited or transited through a high-risk country or region;
- been in contact with someone with a confirmed case of the Coronavirus.

If an employee is found to satisfy one of the above **High Risk Criteria**, they must be **self-quarantined for 14 days**, and work from home or take Personal/Sick Leave (for those unable to work from home).

The employer can utilise their right to require the employee to visit a health practitioner and seek medical clearance before returning to work.

If the employer directs the employee to self-quarantine (without working from home), the employee would be entitled to be paid while subject to the direction, i.e.: the days prior to the employee getting medical clearance would be (Paid) Personal Leave.

If the employee is subject to 14 days (or more) of quarantine at a hotel or medical facility overseas, the employee will have to take up Annual Leave (or any other leave available to them, such as long Service Leave). If the employee has no Annual Leave left, further Paid/Unpaid Leave can be agreed between employer and employee.

If an employee runs out of their Paid Leave entitlements, employers do not have an obligation to continue paying the employee – but, of course, may choose to do so if they wish.

WHAT DO I DO IF AN EMPLOYEE SUSPECTS THEY HAVE THE CORONAVIRUS?

Advise the employee to call (not visit) their GP or the national Coronavirus Health Information Hotline on **1800 020 080**.

If the employee does not meet the High Risk Criteria, normal Sick Leave procedures apply.

If the employee feels sick or believes to be unfit for work, normal Sick Leave procedures apply.

CAN I ASK AN EMPLOYEE TO SELF-QUARANTINE, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT SICK?

If an employee is not sick with Coronavirus, but you want them to see a doctor or stay at home, they should follow your directions. However, you cannot ask them to take Personal/Sick Leave (nor can you ask them to take Annual Leave).

You need to pay them to stay away from work. In this scenario, you should explore whether they can work from home or remotely during this period and be paid as normal.

FAQ'S / IR AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF AN EMPLOYEE IS SICK WITH CORONAVIRUS?

The employee should not attend work and enter self-quarantine. They can access their Personal/Sick Leave during this period – the same way they would for any other illness or injury.

WHAT IF AN EMPLOYEE NEEDS TO LOOK AFTER A FAMILY MEMBER SICK WITH CORONAVIRUS OR WHO HAS BEEN QUARANTINED?

The employee can use their Personal (Carer's) Leave to support or take care of a member of their immediate family or household. If they don't have enough Personal Leave, or if they are a Casual employee, they are entitled to 2 days of Unpaid Carer's Leave.

You may also explore the option for working remotely during this period.

CAN I PREVENT MY EMPLOYEES FROM TRAVELLING OVERSEAS FOR PERSONAL REASONS?

No, you cannot prevent your employees from travelling overseas for personal reasons. However, your employees are encouraged to make a well-informed decision weighing up the need for personal travel against the risk of exposing themselves to infection whilst in transit to and from Australia, or whilst spending time in another country.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR EMPLOYEE IS REQUIRED TO SELF-QUARANTINE AND CANNOT WORK FROM HOME DUE TO THE NATURE OF THEIR ROLE?

- If your employee is taking the risk of travelling overseas, they must understand that they will need to access Personal/Sick Leave when in quarantine, and when they cannot work from home. If they don't have enough Personal Leave accrued, they will need to access Annual Leave and once that is exhausted, they will be able to access Leave Without Pay.
- Your employees should follow the government's travel advice on: [Smartraveller website](#).

WHAT IF THE SCHOOL OF YOUR EMPLOYEE'S KIDS IS CLOSED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS?

Your employee will need to determine whether they will be responsible for the care of their child and if so, they will be required to access Personal Leave. As an employer, you need to understand that parents may be required to self-isolate with their children during this time.

FAQ'S / IR AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

IF THE BUSINESS ACTIVITY IS SLOWING DOWN, CAN I STAND EMPLOYEES DOWN? WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES OR THE EMPLOYEE'S ENTITLEMENTS?

A stand-down is when an employer sends employees home if there is no useful work for them to do, out of the employer's control.

- The employer is not required to make payments to employees for the period of a stand-down, but may choose to do so.
- Employees continue to accrue leave as normal.
- The employer should exercise this option cautiously, as the availability of this option is very fact dependent (employers cannot generally stand down an employee because of a deterioration of business conditions) – also, other factors should be taken into consideration, such as reputation of the firm.
- Verify if your employees have a stand-down clause in their employment contract that says they could be stood down during any period that their services cannot be fully deployed.
- Other options to consider instead of a stand down:
 - seeking employees' agreement to take paid (or unpaid) leave for a period;
 - in limited circumstances, directing employees to take paid annual leave;
 - in limited circumstances, negotiating with employees to change regular rosters or hours of work;
 - terminating an employee's employment (in which case the employer may have to provide redundancy pay).

YOUR BUSINESS CHECKLIST

BUILD A CASHFLOW FORECAST FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS AND KEEP UPDATING EVERY MONTH AS YOU GET MORE DATA.

- Get your last 12 months of trading from your accounting software and work out your average monthly cash flow.
- Factor in a drop in revenue of between 20-60%, or more, depending on your business offering to market – non-essential print providers will drop less, pure print marketing indicators that this will drop more. Consider diversification.
- Ensure your variable expenses are adjusted with your revenue.
- Understand what the drop in revenue impact will have on your current trading conditions.

REVIEW ALL OF THE EXCESS EXPENSES IN YOUR BUSINESS AND DECIDE WHICH NEED TO BE CUT.

- Go through every expense account and remove any non-essential expenses.
- Find ways to negotiate and reduce other expenses.

REVIEW YOUR WAGE STRUCTURE AND ENSURE YOU ARE MAXIMISING THE \$100,000 CASH RELIEF FROM THE STIMULUS PACKAGE.

- If your payroll is not structured correctly you will miss out on this benefit. Get in touch with your Accountant before completing your monthly or quarterly BAS to ensure you maximise the benefits under this cash relief package or if you are unsure about your payroll structure.

APPLY FOR THE \$250,000 LOANS ANNOUNCED BY THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AS PART OF THE STIMULUS PACKAGE.

- Even if you don't need the loan just yet, apply and put it to the side in case you do need it in the coming months. The criteria to qualify for the loan hasn't been specified and will likely be treated differently by the different banks. What we do know is the Government is trying to remove the red tape to make it as easy as possible to obtain these loans.
- - Upon application speak with your Bank and identify clearly the interest rate from draw down after the six (6) months to fully understand your position. There has been no ruling on this as yet and the big four banks have outlined 10%+ interest rates.

YOUR BUSINESS CHECKLIST

MANAGE ATO PAYMENTS THROUGH THE ANNOUNCED SERIES OF PAYMENT DEFERRAL CONCESSIONS FOR BUSINESSES DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY COVID-19.

The payment deferrals are:

- Deferring by up to 4 months the payment date of amounts due through the business activity statement (including PAYG instalments), income tax assessments, fringe benefits tax assessments and excise duty.
- Allowing businesses on a quarterly reporting cycle to opt into monthly GST reporting in order to get faster access to GST refunds they may be entitled to.
- Allowing businesses to vary Pay as You Go (PAYG) instalment amounts to zero for the March 2020 quarter. Businesses that vary their PAYG instalment to zero can also claim a refund for any instalments made for the September 2019 and December 2019 quarters.
- Remitting any interest and penalties, incurred on or after 23rd January 2020, that have been applied to tax liabilities.
- Allowing affected businesses to enter into low-interest payment plans for their existing and ongoing tax liabilities.

PLEASE BE AWARE: Payment Deferrals are not a reduction in the debt but just a delay of the payment. Therefore, any cash flow saving should be put aside, where possible, to be used if needed to keep the business afloat or to pay back to the ATO once you have navigated through this issue.

The ATO assistance is not automatic, contact your Accountant and they will approach the ATO to request assistance. If eligible, the ATO will 'tailor' the assistance package for you.

REVIEW ALL CURRENT DEBTS AND NEGOTIATE WITH BANKS TO REFINANCE OR STOP REPAYMENTS WHERE APPLICABLE.

- As mentioned, this is not a reduction in debt but merely a delay of the repayments so do not spend this money unnecessarily, instead keep it aside to assist in navigating the current situation. Once you are in a secure position you can make the additional repayments back to the bank if possible.

YOUR BUSINESS CHECKLIST

TOUCH BASE WITH YOUR LANDLORD AND TRY TO NEGOTIATE A RENT-FREE PERIOD OR A REDUCED RENT PERIOD.

- Ensure the landlord is aware the government is supporting the banks in freezing loans so they can contact the bank and freeze the loan for a period, so they are not feeling the pain also.
- Each landlord will have a different situation so you will need to work to their individual circumstances to get a result that works for both of you.
- Keep aside any rent saving here that you can avoid spending. Once you are in a secure position you can make the additional rent repayments back to the landlord if possible.

REVIEW YOUR TEAM AND ROSTER TO ENSURE YOU ARE NOT OVERSTAFFED.

If you do have under-performing staff who don't necessarily align with the business culture, now is the time to let them go. The reason the government has announced so many initiatives is because they want you to keep as many staff employed as possible. It takes a lot of time and investment to build a good team and organisational culture so try to prevent disrupting that by letting go of employees too quickly.

- Communicate early and communicate often. Remember your team is going to be facing the same fears you are in the current climate so try to help them through.
- Where possible try to hold on to as many people as possible and try to split the burden, e.g. reduction of wages.

UNDERSTAND THE OTHER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES THAT HAVE COME FROM THE FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE AS WELL AS WHAT INITIATIVES ARE AVAILABLE AT A STATE LEVEL AS EACH STATE HAS TAKEN A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

CREATE A MARKETING PLAN FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS AND EXECUTE.

- While everyone in your industry is on the defence, you have an opportunity to get on the offence and try to win market share during these challenging times.

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Some organisations will be working with Federal, State or Local Governments across a myriad of projects, grants or other opportunities. Provided here is a current and accurate Industry Snapshot for you to use if this is required for your communications. Additional data is available through the Collective's Industry Metrics, please contact hello@thermc.com.au for any specific information you may require.

KEY FIGURES

ANNUAL TURNOVER:



\$18.9BN (AUD)

EMPLOYEES:



258,999

NO. OF BUSINESSES:



17,756



INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION:

The industries represented above include paper, print, publishing, mail and distribution, all represented under The Real Media Collective in partnership with Australasian Paper Industry Association and the Australian Forest Products Association. The Real Media Collective membership represents \$15.88BN of the \$18.9BN industry.

INDUSTRY OUTPUTS INCLUDE:

Books, Magazines, Home Delivery Packaging, Government (Federal, State, Local) Notices and Communications, Medical Packaging and Labelling, Food Packaging and Labelling, Community Notices, Signage, Catalogues, Envelopes, Finance and Insurance Essential Notices, Transactional mail and more.

RELATED INDUSTRIES INCLUDE:

Marketing, Design, ATL Media, Communications, Newspapers and more.

EMPLOYMENT BREAKDOWN BY SECTOR



60,820

of which

18,000

are direct employees.



38,761

DESIGN (30%) + PRINT



4,287

PUBLISHING



155,131

POSTAL SERVICES, MAIL
PROCESSING & LETTERBOX
DISTRIBUTION



258,999

TOTAL AUSTRALIANS EMPLOYED

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