

# VACC COVID-19 UPDATE

Thursday, 9 April 2020  
Issue 14.0

Last night, Parliament passed the Federal Government's Jobkeeper legislation, which has made significant and helpful amendments to the Fair Work Act, enabling businesses to introduce operational changes to counter the downturn caused by the coronavirus crisis.

We are pleased to provide additional commentary and advice on what this means for members in the segment below.

I would also like to advise members that we have updated the VACC website to make it easier for you to find COVID-19 information. Members can simply click on the coronavirus banner on the Home Page and you will be taken to the dashboard displayed below. Alternatively members can access the dashboard on the following link: <https://vacc.com.au/News/COVID-19>



Finally, as week three of pandemic induced business and societal changes draws to a close, I would like to wish all members a safe and happy Easter break. Please take this time to refresh and take care of yourselves and remember VACC is here to help.

## 1. GOVERNMENT UPDATES

As members will be aware, the JobKeeper legislation passed Federal Parliament last night.

VACC provides a summary of key changes as they relate to:

- **Stand down**
- **Pay**
- **Duties**
- **Location of work / working from home**
- **Days of work**
- **Annual leave**
- **Secondary Employment**
- **Conditions**
- **Disputes**

Access the summary bulletin [HERE](#) for full details.

A 3rd Edition JobKeeper Payment - Employer Guide will be made available to members shortly - please look out for it in your inbox.

### **Update: Temporary Visa Changes**

Acting Immigration Minister, Allan Tudge has made several announcements concerning temporary visa holders and the impact of COVID-19.

Despite calls for temporary migrants, particularly from business, to have access to either the JobKeeper payment or Jobseeker allowance, the Government affirmed the position that with the exception of New Zealanders, these migrants will not have access to either support payments.

**The key message of the announcement was that migrants not able to support themselves in Australia should make arrangements to return home.**

There were a few changes announced that could assist temporary migrants remaining here:

1. International Students who have been here longer than 12 months who find themselves in financial hardship will be able to access their Australian superannuation.
2. Students working in aged care and as nurses can work longer than the 40 hours per fortnight, but the same extension granted for working in supermarkets will be discontinued on 1 May.
3. Temporary graduate visa holders will also be able to access their superannuation if needed for support.
4. Holders of either the 2 year or 4 year temporary skilled visa who have been stood down, but not laid off, will maintain their visa validity and businesses will have the opportunity to extend their visa as per normal arrangements. Businesses will also be able to reduce the hours of the visa holder without the person being in breach of their visa condition. These visa holders will also be able to access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation this financial year.
5. Working holiday makers who are working in health, aged and disability care, agriculture and food processing, and childcare will be exempt from the six month work limitation with the one employer and eligible for a further visa to keep working in these critical sectors if their current visa is due to expire in the next six months.

The Department has updated their website to make it easier to find out information about how the [COVID-19 crisis impacts visa holders](#). You can access it [HERE](#).

### **Update: ACCC Interim authorisations to support businesses affected by COVID-19**

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has been approached by companies from a number of industries and sectors who want to be able to support small business in these difficult times. These include banks, shopping centre owners and managers, and insurance companies.

Companies in these sectors want to be able to work with their competitors to support small business. However, they must seek authorisation from the ACCC to do this, as certain conduct would

ordinarily risk breaching the *Competition and Consumer Act*.

The ACCC has granted a number of interim authorisations to assist small to medium-sized Australian businesses experiencing unprecedented financial hardship.

This includes:

1. Granting an interim authorisation for insurance companies and brokers to work together to implement relief measures for certain small businesses.
2. Existing eligible business customers suffering hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic can avail of the measures.
3. These measures include deferring of insurance premium payments for up to six months, and credit or refunds for any unused travel premiums, without administration or cancellation fees.
4. The authorisation applies to Suncorp, Allianz, and QBE Insurance, as well as any other insurers or insurance brokers who choose to take part, as long as they notify the ACCC.

You find out more [HERE](#).

### **National business hotline**

The Government's business hotline provides support to small and medium businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with specialist advisers and extended support hours.

Operation hours: seven days per week, answering calls from 7am to 11pm AEST.

13 28 46 - Contact Centre

For more information on Coronavirus and the Government's response, please visit: [www.treasury.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.treasury.gov.au/coronavirus) or [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au)

## **2. ADVOCACY**

### **VACC calls for rent assistance for all businesses**

In the last three weeks, staff at VACC, are hearing stories from automotive retail participants regarding landlords who are not willing to negotiate on the terms of current rental agreements. Simply put, these businesses cannot hope to survive if no rental relief is granted.

Many businesses who have elected to close for health or economic reasons cannot hope to ever consolidate or grow their businesses if they are burdened with an extended period of unpaid rent.

VACC also has members who are landlords, and we must make sure that there are sufficient protections for them as they have invested heavily in their property portfolios.

VACC has urged the National Cabinet and the Victorian Crisis Council of Cabinet (CCC) to immediately introduce short-term protections for both landlord and tenant that will lead to positive outcomes.

VACC has further called on the CCC to assist landlords who have negotiated with their commercial tenants for rent reductions or rent pauses by having that rental amount credited to their future land tax assessments. Not just on businesses who have shut their doors, but all businesses who can show a 30 percent financial downturn (compared to the same period last year).

Read the full story [HERE](#)

## **3. DEALERSHIPS**

### **Dealerships sending the message they're still open for business**

It's great to see Victorian Automobile Dealers Association (VADA) members continuing to reach out to their local politicians to convey the message that dealerships are open and ready to go!

Dealers are encouraged to get political and contact their local member to push the message that automotive retail is open for business.

With thanks to Grant Harrison, Dealer Principal and Ray Parsons from Melton Toyota.



#### 4. MEMBER OPPORTUNITY

##### Manufacturer Response Register

The Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC) has created the [COVID-19 Manufacturer Response Register](#) to capture **expressions of interest from Australian based manufacturers and individuals looking to assist with supply of goods, services or knowledge** in tackling the current COVID-19 outbreak in Australia.

The AMGC aims to contact all interested parties should any of the detailed capabilities fit with a project or initiative.

Contact AMGC [HERE](#).

#### 5. PREVIOUS UPDATE ISSUES

- [Monday, 23 March 2020 - Issue 1](#)

- [Tuesday, 24 March 2020 - Issue 2](#)
- [Wednesday, 25 March 2020 - Issue 3](#)
- [Thursday, 26 March 2020 - Issue 4](#)
- [Friday, 27 March 2020 - Issue 5](#)
  
- [Monday, 30 March 2020 - Issue 6](#)
- [Tuesday, 31 March 2020 - Issue 7](#)
- [Wednesday, 1 April 2020 - Issue 8](#)
- [Thursday, 2 April 2020 - Issue 9](#)
- [Friday, 3 April 2020 - Issue 10](#)
  
- [Monday, 6 April 2020 - Issue 11](#)
- [Tuesday, 7 April 2020 - Issue 12](#)
- [Wednesday, 8 April 2020 - Issue 13](#)

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**Disclaimer:** *The information gathered has been drawn from a number of sources and VACC strongly recommends that members revert to the primary source of information for any clarification.*