



Thursday, 14 May 2020
Issue 26.0

This week saw the relaxing of some state wide restrictions – which includes the reopening of auction houses. Members and the public will now be able to run and attend, in-person vehicle auctions with up to 10 people plus those facilitating the process.

I would also like to draw your attention to the work being done by our Industrial Relations and Policy teams regarding temporary amendments to the Vehicle Manufacturing, Repair Services and Retail Award. Its focus is to assist businesses who do not quality of the JobKeeper package. You can read more about it in the segment below.

Please also regularly check in on VACC's dedicated [COVID-19 website](#) and [news pages](#). These are regularly updated and provide many useful resources for members.

As always, VACC is here to help. Please contact us with any questions.

1. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Please read carefully:

Application to vary the Vehicle Manufacturing, Repair Services and Retail Award

Earlier this week, the Fair Work Commission approved a joint application submitted to vary the Vehicle Manufacturing, Repair Services and Retail Award to help businesses stay open and workers stop in their jobs.

The award variation was the outcome of lengthy discussions between employers, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (known as SDA) involving Tamsin Lawrence from Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Bill Chesterman from VACC.

The agreed temporary **amendments to the award are aimed at preserving the viability of businesses and their employees not entitled to JobKeeper.**

The award variation provides employers with flexibility around the range of duties that employees can perform. It allows for a temporary reduction in working hours for full-time and part-time staff, as well as the ability for an employer to direct employees to take annual leave subject to certain condition.

It also allows employers to close down operations for reasons attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic or government initiative to slow the transmission of the virus and direct employees to take leave.

Documents related to this variation, including the decision of the Fair Work Commission can be found [HERE](#).

For further information, please contact the VACC Industrial Relations team on 03 9829 1123.

The VACC IR department will release more detailed information to members tomorrow via Bulletin.

2. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Targeted Support for Victorians Struggling With Energy Bills

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio announced a \$3.7 million package yesterday, which includes new financial counsellors and online training for more than 1,100 frontline community workers allowing Victorians experiencing hardship to access immediate support to manage electricity and gas bills.

The package includes:

1. Financial counsellors recruited and trained to help people one-on-one manage energy bills, as well as broader household financial difficulties.
2. Training to more than 1,100 frontline community workers, who will provide targeted advice on dealing with energy bills, how to get the best deal and what existing support is available.
3. The launch of a new energy brokerage program to give one-on-one support to around 3,000 households at risk of financial hardship to help them access the best value energy deal.
4. Victorians know their rights under the Payment Difficulty Framework. As a part of the Victorian Government's reforms, energy companies must assist any household that engages with them. This includes a payment plan or extending bill due dates while customers work towards paying for their usage.
5. No household engaging with their energy company can be disconnected from electricity or gas.

Members can read the full media release [HERE](#).

Summary of Victorian Step One easing restrictions

We understand there is still a lot to take in regarding the Victorian Government's recent announcement on easing restrictions.

To make it easy for members, please refer to the table attached [HERE](#) which provides a comprehensive and easy to read overview.

Auction houses allowed to resume with up to 10 participants

On Monday the Victorian Government announced an easing of restrictions for auction houses. Under the previous restrictions, no face-to-face auctions were allowed - including automotive retail auctions.

As of 11.59 Tuesday night, auction houses can now allow up to 10 people plus the minimum number of people required to facilitate the auction.

The operator is required to keep a record of names and contact details for each client serviced (to assist with tracing if required).

States & territories domestic travel restrictions and exemptions

All jurisdictions consider freight and logistics as essential services, so freight is still able to move across state borders. However, the arrangements for doing so may vary.

Click [HERE](#) for a full summary of all state and territory requirements.

3. MEMBER SERVICES

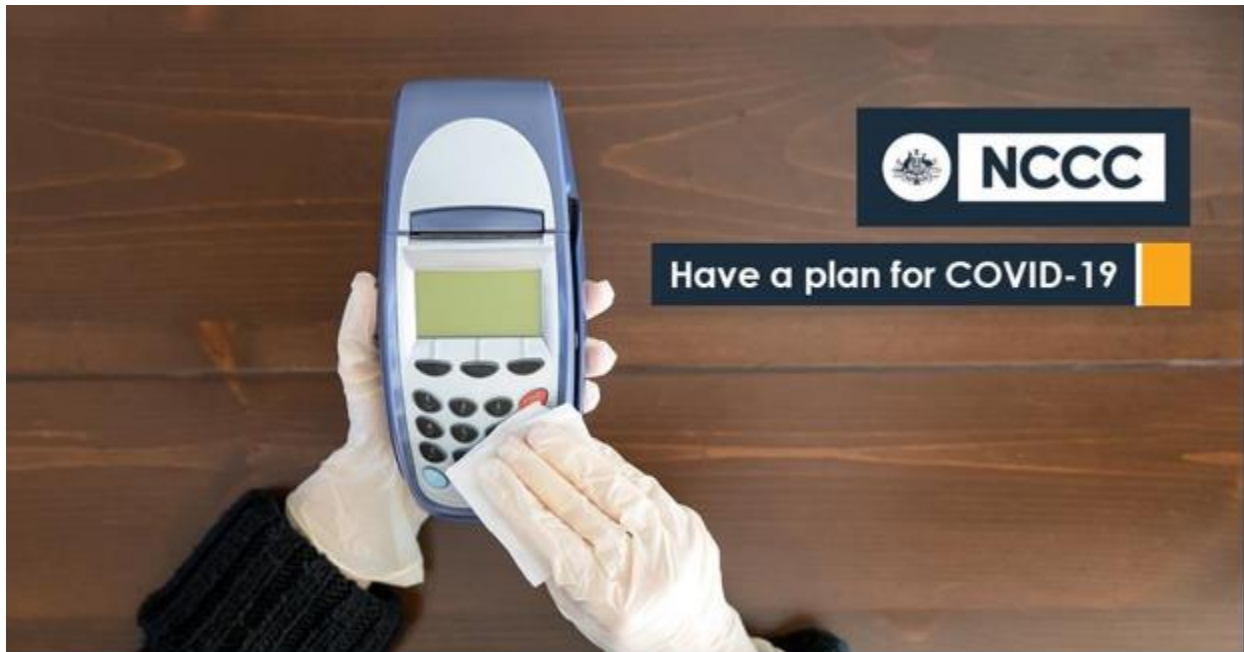
Planning tool to help businesses reopen and be COVIDSafe

The National COVID-19 Coordination Commission has created an [online planning tool](#) to help business develop a plan to keep their workers, customers and the community safe as they reopen or increase their activities in the weeks and months ahead.

The tool brings together information from across government on the range of help and assistance available to support businesses. This tool complements the [Safe Work Australia online hub](#), which remains the definitive source of information for businesses to understand their work health and safety obligations.

The online planning should take about 30 minutes to complete and leave businesses with a clear idea about what they will do to keep people safe, how they will get their business back up and running and how they might adapt their operating model.

The planning tool to help businesses reopen and be COVIDSafe can be downloaded from the NCCC website [HERE](#).



4. COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

New requirements for crossing the border into South Australia

As of 11 May 2020, the South Australian government has issued a new requirement for crossing the border into South Australia. Essential travellers (includes truck drivers) are required to keep records of close contacts for a 14 day period on the date of their arrival in South Australia.

For more information see:

[FAQs - Emergency Management \(Cross Border Travel No 4\) \(COVID-19\) Direction 2020](#)

[Ministerial notice - Emergency Management \(Cross Border Travel No 4\) \(COVID-19\) Direction 2020](#)

5. PREVIOUS UPDATE ISSUES

You can read previous Updates of COVID-19 [HERE](#).

Geoff Gwilym
Chief Executive Officer

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.*