



*Tuesday, 15 September 2020*  
Issue 41.0

## **1. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

### **Extension to Existing Worker Permits for Employees Working On-Site During Restrictions**

As part of the Victorian Government's Roadmap for Reopening announced on 6 September 2020, the current Stage 4 Permitted Worker Permit requirements that were initially introduced from 11:59pm on Wednesday 5 August 2020 in metropolitan Melbourne – have been extended until at least 25 October 2020.

Members who have eligible employees operating on-site in a permitted workplace, are therefore advised to ensure they have updated and reissued their permitted worker permits for the period commencing from 14 September 2020. The Victorian Government has confirmed that employers can use the original template for this purpose.

Businesses operating permitted work premises in metropolitan Melbourne are also reminded that they must continue to ensure they are operating in accordance with their COVID Safe Plan.

Note: An employee must not use a worker permit, even if they have been issued one, if they test positive to COVID-19 and are required to self-isolate; or, they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive.

Members needing further advice, or assistance in reissuing Permitted Worker Permits, are encouraged to contact VACC's Workplace Relations team on 03 9829 1123 or [ir@vacc.com.au](mailto:ir@vacc.com.au).

### **VACC Calling on Government to Increase Consideration of Automotive in Roadmap to Recovery**

VACC CEO, Geoff Gwilym spoke to 7NEWS Melbourne, addressing growing fears Melbourne's roads could become unsafe due to a ban on regular vehicle servicing during Stage 4 lockdown.

The Victorian State Government is risking the safety of motorists by dismissing industry advice. Automotive has adapted quickly to COVID-19 safety advice, with many businesses able to operate and service motorist needs in a contactless manner.

The Chamber is calling on government to review its roadmap to recovery plans, in the best interest of Victorian motorists and industry.

To view Geoff Gwilym's segment on 7NEWS, members can click [here](#).

## 2. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Victorian Roadmap to Reopening Announced

Effective from this week (starting Monday 14<sup>th</sup> of September) the Victorian State Government has announced that some COVID-19 restrictions will be eased across Victoria. [Regional Victoria](#) and [metropolitan Melbourne](#) have separate roadmaps, which will be informed by community case numbers.

For the sake of clarity, the government has structured the roadmaps into five steps.

- **First Step**  
Regional Victoria  
First step only applies to Metro Melbourne  
  
Metro Melbourne (13 September 11:59pm)  
Expanded social interaction
- **Second Step**  
Regional Victoria  
  
Developing today (Tuesday 15 September) The Victorian Government has announced Regional Victoria's easing of restrictions from 11:59pm tomorrow. These easing of restrictions include household members to visit one other nominated household (up to 5 people), outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people, and cafes will be able to seat up to 50 people outdoors.'  
  
Read more on these announcements as they develop today [here](#).  
  
Metro Melbourne (28 September subject to trigger points and public health advice)  
Social bubbles, phased return of some workforces and education.
- **Third Step**  
Regional Victoria (subject to trigger points and public health advice)  
Increased reopening for sport, recreation, ceremonies and special occasion.  
  
Metro Melbourne (26 October subject to trigger points and public health advice).  
  
Major industries return, increased reopening for education, sport, recreation, ceremonies and special occasions.
- **Last Step**  
State-wide (23 November subject to trigger points and public health advice)  
Increased numbers for gatherings and hospitality.
- **COVID Normal**  
State-wide (subject to trigger points and public health advice)  
No restrictions for gatherings, visitors, hospitality or sport.

'Trigger points' refer to a point for review by the public health team to consider any potential changes to the restrictions.

Members can read further on VACC's breakdown of the Government's Roadmap to Recovery announcement [here](#).

## **Business Survival and Adaptation Package**

The Victorian Government has announced a third round of the Business Support Fund to provide direct financial support to businesses impacted by restrictions in Victoria.

The grants available from this program range from \$10,000 to \$20,000 depending on the business' annual payroll. To be eligible for a grant from this program, applicants must:

- operate a business located within Victoria; and
- participate in the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper Payment scheme; and
- employ people and be registered with WorkSafe; and
- have had an annual payroll of less than \$10 million in 2019-20; and
- be registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST); and
- hold an Australian Business Number (ABN); and
- be registered with the responsible Federal or State regulator.

An eligible business will receive:

- \$10,000 if its annual payroll is less than \$650,000
- \$15,000 if its annual payroll is between \$650,000 and \$3 million
- \$20,000 if its payroll is between \$3 million and \$10 million.

For more information on these Business Support Funds, members can click [here](#).

## **Grants to Support Small Private Landlords Facing Hardship**

The Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund has been created in recognition of small, private landlords who may not have the capacity to provide rent reductions to their tenants under the requirements of the [Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme](#).

The fund will provide grants of up to \$3,000 per tenancy to eligible small private, individual, and joint-owner landlords, who are facing financial hardship after reducing rent for their tenants under CTRS requirements.

For information on other supports available to landlords, including additional land tax relief, please visit the State Revenue Office Land Tax Relief website.

This fund will be open for applications from 21 August 2020 for eight weeks or until funds are exhausted, whichever comes first.

For more details on the fund announcement, eligibility, further queries, members can read more [here](#).

### 3. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

#### Reduced Workcover Premium due to Covid-19 Impact on Business

VACC members are advised that WorkCover premiums are based on a number of different criteria, including history of claims performance, the workplace industry classification, and an employer's remuneration. Therefore, members are encouraged to update their remuneration estimates to accurately reflect any downturn as a result of COVID-19 impacts on their business. Where a member has experienced a decline in remuneration as a result of reducing staff numbers or staff hours in response to the pandemic, immediate premium relief could be provided to your business. In addition, employers can now certify their final 2019/20 remuneration which may also provide access to money in the form of a refund for overpaid premiums.

Members can use [WorkSafe's online employer portal](#) to update their remuneration directly.

Or alternatively members' WorkSafe Insurance Agent can assist in updating 2019/20 and 2020/21 remuneration declarations.

Eligible JobKeeper Payments will not affect the calculation of WorkCover premiums where employees are stood down or payments are above an employee's usual salary. Further detail of the impact of JobKeeper on an employer's premium can be found on the WorkSafe [website](#).

### 4. 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.*