



Friday, 17 April 2020
Issue 18.0

As week four of the coronavirus restrictions comes to close, it seems returning to our previous way of life is still some way off, with the Prime Minister announcing a four-week deadline for reviewing the next steps on restrictions.

Of note in today's Update is the state government's recent announcement of additional funding for TAFE and training, along with an additional \$24.5 billion in emergency funding. These measures will be tabled under a general appropriations Bill that will be introduced to Parliament next Thursday. We will keep you updated.

Members are also advised that as of next week our COVID-19 UPDATE will scale back to a bi-weekly update. We understand you are often inundated with information and as large-scale government announcements are likely to slow over the coming weeks, we feel this is a sensible approach. Relevant bulletins will continue to be circulated in a timely manner based on the issue at hand.

As always, feel free to reach out to VACC at any time– we're here to help.

1. VACC WEBSITE

Dedicated COVID-19 Dashboard

A reminder to members that VACC has made it easier for you to locate COVID-19 information on our website. 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 via the following link: <https://vacc.com.au/News/COVID-19> or under the News tab. If the below dashboard doesn't appear, hit Ctrl and F5 together to refresh the page.

2. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Government fast tracks changes to pay and conditions

The Morrison government has dramatically reduced the time required to consult over changes to pay and conditions in enterprise agreements to allow for rapid responses to the coronavirus crisis. Industrial Relations Minister Christian Porter authorised amendments to Fair Work regulations on Thursday to cut the minimum notice for staff ballots on proposed agreement changes from seven days to just 24 hours.

Read the full story in the Australian Financial Review [HERE](#).

3. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Additional state government funding for TAFE and training system

The Victorian Government has today announced \$260.8 million in additional support for the state's TAFE and training system with student numbers expected to drop. This includes a \$191.9 million guarantee to lock in funding at expected pre-COVID-19 levels and an additional \$68.9 million in crisis support to ensure Victoria's public training system can respond and recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

The package will provide TAFEs, dual sector TAFEs, Learn Local providers and AMES Australia across Victoria funding certainty until at least the middle of the year.

Read the Premier's media release [HERE](#).

New Funding from the Victorian Government to fight coronavirus, support jobs and set up recovery

The Victorian Government has announced they will put aside an additional \$24.5 billion in emergency funding to fight coronavirus, support jobs, and prepare for recovery from the pandemic over the next two years.

The emergency funding is on top of a range of measures the government has already announced to slow the spread of the virus and help workers and businesses during this crisis.

Read the full media release [HERE](#).

4. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

CSIRO supporting business

Amidst the challenges presented by COVID-19, CSIRO is reminding businesses they are here to help. Business may not be aware they can tap into the resources of the CSIRO to assist with business growth and innovation.

If you think CSIRO could support your business now, or in the future as you consider a return to operations in a different environment, contact the CSIRO team on 1300 363 400.

More information can be found [HERE](#).

Dispute support

[Dispute Support](#) is an online referral tool that makes it easy to find the most appropriate low cost dispute resolution service to help you resolve your business dispute.

A list of common disputes include:

- Recovering unpaid invoices
- Retail lease disputes
- Resolving a dispute with another business
- Resolving a dispute with government

The most appropriate service for your dispute may be the the [Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman](#) (ASBFEO) or it may be a specialised or state-based service.

If you have difficulty using the Dispute Support tool, or the tool does not cover your issue, please contact the ASBFEO Assistance Team by calling 1300 650 460 or submitting an online form [HERE](#).

Running your business from home?

If you need to work from home due to coronavirus, there are tools and resources available to help. Learn about the tax deductions you can claim, how to set up an online business and ensure you are still meeting your legal obligations.

Visit Business.gov.au [HERE](#) for more information.

Business.gov.au can answer your questions

Business.gov.au, a dedicated hub for all government business services, has a coronavirus business support line with a team of dedicated customer representatives who can help you if your business has been affected by the coronavirus.

Their team is available between 7am - 9pm across Australia, seven days a week.

Call **13 28 46**, send an [email](#) or use webchat on their website.

5. NEWS

Prime Minister's pro-business growth agenda

Tax and industrial relations reform, deregulation, and fast-tracked infrastructure are back in the mix after Scott Morrison said an aggressive pro-business investment strategy must be pursued if the country was to claw its way out of the coronavirus-induced recession. After being advised by the Reserve Bank of Australia and Treasury that the current economic policy framework was inadequate for the monumental task ahead, the Prime Minister left open the option of breaking election promises if need be.

Read the full story in the Australian Financial Review [HERE](#).

Long road to life without COVID-19

A three-step process involving wider testing for COVID-19, enhanced tracing of cases and expanded capacity to control outbreaks will decide whether social restrictions can be relaxed from next month. Revealing a four-week deadline for reviewing the next steps on restrictions, Scott Morrison said that despite a sharp decline in new coronavirus cases across Australia, easing measures too quickly could trigger a new wave of infections.

Read the full story in The Australian [HERE](#).

Australia's CSIRO part of global team for COVID-19 vaccine

CSIRO has started pre-clinical trials for two vaccine candidates. Vaccines usually take 10-15 years to develop, but researchers are hoping to streamline this process. CSIRO is working as part of a global alliance to speed up the vaccine development to have one ready within 12-18 months.

Read the full story [HERE](#).

6. 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.*