



Tuesday, 19 May 2020
Issue 27.0

Earlier this week, Premier Daniel Andrews made a number of announcements regarding the easing of coronavirus restrictions in Victoria. Based on advice from the Chief Health Officer, businesses can begin planning for a phased re-opening as of 1 June.

This includes:

1 June – Cafes, restaurants and pubs will be able to reopen their doors to serve meals up to 20 customers at a time per enclosed space.

From 22 June – this could increase to 50 patrons.

During second half of July, up to 100.

The caveat is it all depends on how Victoria is tracking once each deadline approaches.

This may be welcome news to some members, particularly those in the Service Station division who have a café component to their business.

You can read the Premier's full media release [HERE](#).

VACC has also been maintaining an active media presence, constantly reminding consumers 'Auto is Open'. Our TV campaign will run until 9 June. Other communications remains open for all members to get involved [HERE](#).

You can also tune into my regular radio segment to Denis Walter on 3AW on Mondays at 9.45pm, which covers all things automotive, including our response to COVID-19. You can listen to past episodes [HERE](#).

1. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Changes to the Vehicle Manufacturing, Repair and Retail Award – interim changes during coronavirus

Last week, members were informed of temporary changes to the Vehicle Manufacturing, Repair, Service and Retail Award (VMRSR) as part of the response to coronavirus and its effect on workplaces.

VACC's IR department published a bulletin outlining the changes that can be accessed [HERE](#). The bulletin covers:

- Specific changes to the Award
- What businesses are covered by Schedule J of the VMRSR Award
- Change in duties under Schedule J of the VMRSR Award
- Changes in full-time and part-time employees' hours of work
- Employer requests to take annual leave
- Close down
- What it means for employees covered by an enterprise agreement

It is important you read this bulletin carefully as it outlines the necessary changes and procedures that will be implemented.

JobKeeper – additional resources

Advice from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is that if you've enrolled for the JobKeeper Payment, now is the time to identify yourself or your eligible employees. If you are a sole trader with no employees, you still need to take this step.

The ATO has released this helpful video on JobKeeper Payment: Step 2 – Identify and maintain. You can watch it [HERE](#).

Additional resources provided by the ATO include (each are hyperlinked):

- [JobKeeper Payment guides](#)
- [JobKeeper Payment for sole traders video](#)
- [JobKeeper Payment guide for employers video](#)
- [JobKeeper Payment for employers, not-for-profits and charities podcast](#)
- [Frequently asked questions about COVID-19](#)

As always, members can contact VACC's dedicated JobKeeper expert, Ms Andrea Chwalko achwalko@vacc.com.au for advice and assistance.

Sushi operators hit with record penalties

A sobering reminder to members that you must not provide any false records or misrepresent financials when accessing government support packages.

The Federal Court fined three sushi take-away outlets totalling \$891,000 for underpaying workers and providing false records to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Members can always contact VACC's Industrial Relations team for advice: (03) 9829 1123.

2. MENTAL HEALTH

Victorian Government to allocate additional resources to mental health programs

The Andrews Government recently announced an additional \$19.5 million in funding to deliver reform recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System interim report. The extra funding is said to address critical workforce shortages, support the continued roll out of suicide prevention programs and help those already suffering from mental illness.

VACC reminds members to take your mental health seriously and encourage you to access the three free counselling sessions with Psychology Melbourne as part of your membership. The service is completely confidential – with no identifying information required other than stating you are a VACC member. To find out more click [HERE](#).

3. TASMANIA

Tasmanian roadmap to recovery

The Tasmanian Government has recently announced its roadmap to recovery, detailing a staged approach for lifting restrictions that reduces the risk of COVID-19 to the community.

The document [Plan to Rebuild a Stronger Tasmania](#) has been developed specifically for Tasmania – in line with their situation and community. These processes are different to those in Victoria.

Further information and detail can be found [HERE](#).

4. GENERAL

COVID-19 Scams

There has been a significant increase in Australians being targeted with COVID-19 scams, fraud attempts and deceptive email and SMS schemes.

Learn more about the COVID-19 scams and how to protect your business [HERE](#).

Coronavirus business support line

Business.gov.au has a team of dedicated customer representatives who can help you if your business has been affected by the coronavirus. They're available between 8am - 8pm across Australia, seven days a week. Call 13 28 46, send an [email](#) or use webchat on their [website](#).

Planning tool to help businesses reopen and be COVIDSafe

If you have closed your business and now considering re-opening, the National COVID-19 Planning Commission has published an online planning tool. This is 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. You can access the tool [HERE](#).

5. NEWS

Coronavirus: Time ripe for urgent IR repairs, say employers

National employers have urged the Morrison government to capitalise on the co-operation between unions and business during the COVID-19 pandemic by legislating "immediate repairs" to federal workplace laws that cut labour costs and aim to drive employment, staggered start and finishing times without employers paying overtime and more flexible stand-down provisions through to March next year are among five changes being sought by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Read the full story The Australian [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.*