



Tuesday, 21 July 2020  
Issue 38.0

## 1. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Mandatory face coverings required for residents of Metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire**

From Wednesday, 22 July 11:59pm people living in metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire will be required to wear a face-covering when leaving home, following an increase in coronavirus cases.

As per current Stage 3 restrictions in these areas, residents are permitted to leave their homes for only four primary reasons:

- Shopping for food or essential supplies or services (including automotive)
- To provide caregiving, for compassionate reasons or to seek medical treatment
- Work and study – if it can't be done from home
- For exercise (outdoor exercise only, with one other person or members of a household).

The penalty for not wearing a face-covering will be \$200 fine and there are only a few acceptable reasons for not doing so, including:

- Medical reasons
- A professional reason or it's not practical (e.g. running)
- Under 12 years of age.

However, those with a practical/professional reason will still be expected to carry a face-covering at all times, to wear when possible.

Face-coverings for people living in regional Victoria are strongly recommended (but not mandatory at this stage) however, visitors to metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire will be required to wear one.

For more information, read the Department of Health and Human Services announcement directly [here](#).

### **VACC OHS&E Unit advice on face coverings**

#### **What types of face covering can be used in the workplace?**

The advice from the DHHS states that a person must use a “face covering”. This is a broad term and can include other items such as a face shield, bandana, or scarf.

Where possible, WorkSafe have previously recommended a cloth mask or single-use disposable mask for use in the workplace.

If you need to travel through metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire for work, you can. You should plan your trip so that you don't need to stop unless it is for one of the four permitted reasons. If you are driving and don't leave your car, a face covering is not required.

### **What if my employee has a medical condition and can't wear a covering?**

It is recommended that anyone unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition seeks written advice from their doctor which exempts them from this requirement. The medical advice should be carried on their person or readily accessible at all times and a copy provided to their employer.

### **Do I need to supply my employees with a face mask?**

An employee is required to wear a face covering any time they leave their home for one of the four permitted reasons under the Melbourne and Mitchell Shire Stage 3 restrictions. This face covering can also be worn in the workplace. It is however recommended that members have a supply of disposable / single-use face masks available for employees to use, if their face covering gets damaged, soiled or wet and cannot be used. Employees should be encouraged to carry their own spare mask or face covering with them at all times.

### **Should I provide my employees with training on how to wear a face covering safely?**

Yes. In order for face coverings to be effective in the workplace it must be worn properly. Employers have a duty under the OHS Act 2004 to provide adequate information, instruction, training, and supervision to their employees. The DHHS website has helpful and simple information on correct use of face masks [click here](#) or refer to the World Health Organisation for online training videos.

### **What should I do if my employee refuses to wear a face covering?**

It is now a legal requirement to wear a face covering while outside the home unless an exemption applies. The individual as well as the employer can be issued hefty fines for non-compliance with this directive, without a valid reason.

### **What if my employee is doing a delivery or transporting a customer?**

The employee and any other person travelling in a vehicle for work purposes (i.e. as part of their work role) must be wearing a face mask / covering at all times. Please note this risk control must be done in conjunction with other higher-level controls such as providing hand sanitiser in the vehicle, maintain physical distancing in the vehicle as far as is reasonably practicable, open windows for increased ventilation etc...

### **Will a face mask protect me from COVID-19?**

Even with the additional physical barrier of a face mask / face covering, the most effective means of protecting against the COVID-19 virus is by strictly adhering to the following:

- Washing your hands regularly
- Avoiding touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose
- Maintain a distance of 1.5m from people (household members excluded)
- Coughing and sneezing in your elbow or a tissue (disposing of the tissue immediately and sanitising / washing hands afterwards)
- Regular cleaning of high touch areas such as door handles, kitchens areas, toilets etc...

Please note, VACC has been advised that WorkSafe will be releasing specific guidance to industry in the near future on the use of face masks / coverings. The advice in this bulletin is applicable as at the date of distribution, if this information changes VACC will update members accordingly.

## **JobTrainer skills package announced**

The Government will invest \$2 billion to give hundreds of thousands of Australians access to new skills by retraining and upskilling them into sectors with job opportunities, as the economy recovers from COVID-19m.

The JobTrainer skills package will also guarantee support for thousands of apprentices in jobs across the country by subsidising their wages to keep them employed and their training secured.

The new \$1 billion JobTrainer program will provide up to an additional 340,700 training places to help school leavers and job seekers access short and long courses to develop new skills in growth sectors and create a pathway to more qualifications.

Courses will be free or low cost in areas of identified need, with the Federal Government providing \$500 million with matched contributions from state and territory governments.

The package also includes an additional \$1.5 billion to expand the wage incentive to help keep apprentices in work. It builds on the initial \$1.3 billion package announced in March.

In addition to small businesses already covered, the wage subsidy will now be available to medium businesses with less than 200 employees for apprentices employed as at 1 July 2020. Around 180,000 apprentices and 90,000 small and medium businesses that employ them will now be supported, with the program extended by six months to March 2021.

## **JobKeeper and JobSeeker payment schemes extended but payment amounts to be reduced**

The Morrison government will extend the JobKeeper and JobSeeker emergency payments for another six months, but both payments will be reduced after a Treasury review found they could act as disincentives to work as the economy recovers.

The revamp and extension of the two schemes, which is set to run from October 2020 until the end of March 2021, will see the \$1500-per-fortnight JobKeeper wage subsidy replaced by two tiers of payment. The Job Keeper payment will be reduced to \$1200 per fortnight, or to \$750 per fortnight for recipients working less than 20 hours per week. Employers will also need to provide updated proof that their profits have declined by the required amount and reapply for the JobKeeper payment scheme.

The \$550 JobSeeker top-up, which took the total fortnightly dole payment to \$1124 for a single unemployed person, will also be reduced. The JobSeeker income threshold has been increased to \$300 (meaning recipients can earn up to \$300 a week before their JobSeeker payment is affected), with the JobSeeker Covid supplement reduced to \$250 per week. The JobKeeper payment will also reintroduce the mutual obligation ruling, meaning that recipients will need to apply for a minimum of four job advertisements a month, and to not refuse a job offer after a successful application.

Read more [here](#).

## 2. INDUSTRY RELATIONS

### Cross Border Travel into South Australia

Members are advised if travelling into South Australia by road or Adelaide airport, you will need to complete the cross border pre-approval form at least 72 hours prior to your arrival. VACC have received several enquiries from members who have been refused entry due to their essential traveller category. See table below for permitted traveller categories and evidence required. For more information visit the SAPOL website [here](#).

<b>Essential Traveller category</b>	<b>Type of evidence to present at border</b>
National and State Security and Governance	Letter detailing person is physically required to be present in South Australia with written approval of their manager (being of an executive level or higher) or an officer of a military or defence organisation.
Emergency Service Workers	Identification (fire fighters, paramedics, ambulance officers and police officers) and letter stating you are required to be physically present in South Australia in the conduct of their duties or left South Australia in the conduct of their duties and are returning to South Australia having conducted those duties.
<b>Commercial transport and freight services</b>	Letter from employer stating the duties required to be undertaken and details of the locations.
Remote or isolated workers	Letter from employer stating that the employer is applying risk mitigation strategies during periods of work and stating duties required to be undertaken and details of the locations.
<b>Cross border community members</b>	Identification that shows address or if applicable evidence of employment or education; or providing care and support to, or receiving care and support from, another person; or obtaining food, petrol or other fuel or medical care or supplies.
Health Services	Approval letter from the Chief Executive of the Department for Health and Wellbeing, the South Australian Chief Public Health Officer or a deputy Chief Public Health Officer
<b>Essential Skills (industries and businesses)</b>	Letter detailing that the person is required to conduct a service that is time critical and where the provision of the service requires that the person be physically present in South Australia.
Urgent medical, dental or health treatment	Approval letter from the Chief Executive of the Department for Health and Wellbeing, the South Australian Chief Public Health Officer or a deputy Chief Public Health Officer
Passing through	Itinerary documentation, bookings etc.
Compassionate grounds	Letter from Doctor/ Specialist / Funeral notice
Consular Employees	Identification of Consular employee and letter stating reason for travelling to South Australia to perform official duties.

### **3. TASMANIA CASE UPDATE**

#### **Tasmania records first COVID-19 case in more than two months**

A young woman who has been in hotel quarantine since returning to Tasmania from Victoria has broken Tasmania's two-month streak of no coronavirus cases. The woman is being treated at Royal Hobart Hospital, and her close contacts are being traced.

Read more [here](#).

### **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.*