



Tuesday, 22 September 2020
Issue 42.0

1. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Logbook and Scheduled Vehicle Servicing Now Permitted in Melbourne Stage 4 Restrictions

Stage 4 restrictions pertaining to logbook and scheduled vehicle servicing have been eased, after a long and collaborative discussion between VACC and the Victorian Government.

Any vehicle, be it for a permitted industry or a member of the public, can now have a routine service or scheduled service performed.

This advice is confirmed on the Business Victoria website, under Frequently Asked Questions: Routine maintenance (i.e. logbook or scheduled maintenance) is permitted as a standalone service for safety purposes only, including for repairs and product recalls. Under the current guidance, automotive, machinery and equipment repair and maintenance are permitted to operate:

- where service providers are providing support to a permitted service or industry or
- where it is required to maintain the health and safety of Victorians at home or at work (e.g. routine maintenance, vehicle repairs and critical maintenance including disinfection).

Business owners have adapted quickly in order to adhere to government COVID-19 safety advice, with many businesses adopting a contactless service model and implementing options such as key drop-off box facilities, contactless payment ('tap and go', online banking or over the phone payments), emailing of invoices and work authorisation via SMS or email.

The servicing announcement reflects the government's commitment to maintaining motorist safety and recognises the essential role that the automotive industry plays in the community and the economy.

For more on this announcement, members can click [here](#).

Victorian Government Announces new \$3 Billion Support Package to Support Businesses

The Victorian Government has [announced](#) a new [support package](#) worth more than \$3 billion to support businesses impacted by ongoing restrictions and keep Victorians in jobs. It includes cash grants, tax relief and support targeting businesses and sole traders.

Cash grants include but are not limited to:

- For small and medium sized business (\$822 million): The third round of the [Business Support Fund](#) will provide up to \$20,000 for business with a payroll of up to \$10 million. Grant applications open on Friday 18 September 2020.
- For business chambers and trader groups (\$3 million): A competitive grants program to support metropolitan and regional business chambers and trader groups.
- For alpine businesses (\$4.3 million): Grants of up to \$20,000 to help alpine businesses pay a service charge to Alpine Resort Management Boards.
- For sole traders (\$100 million): Grants of up to \$3,000 to more than 30,000 eligible sole traders who operate from a commercial premises or location to which the sole operator is the tenant or licensee.

Extra funding, tools and resources to help businesses adapt and prepare for COVID Normal:

- A landmark \$100 million fund to reshape Melbourne's CBD in partnership with the City of Melbourne, providing grants to city businesses, helping them to move outdoors with COVIDSafe events and rebuild Melbourne's vibrant CBD.
- A \$20 million voucher program to assist sole traders and small businesses in building their digital capability.
- A \$15.7 million package to help Victorian exporters get their products to market and establish new trade channels.
- An \$8.5 million expansion to the 'Click for Vic' campaign to encourage more Victorians to support local businesses.

More information about the above programs will be published on the [Business Victoria website](#) as it is available.

Tax relief and fee waivers and deferrals include but are not limited to:

- \$1.7 billion to defer payroll tax for businesses with payrolls up to \$10 million for the full 2020-21 financial year.
- \$41 million to bring forward the 50 per cent stamp duty discount for commercial and industrial property for Regional Victoria.
- \$33 million to defer the planned increase in the landfill levy for six months.
- \$30 million to waive 25 per cent of the Congestion Levy this year, with the outstanding balance deferred.
- \$6 million to waive Vacant Residential Land Tax for vacancies in 2020.

More information about the above initiatives is available on the [State Revenue Office website](#).

Business owners seeking guidance on managing the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19) can also visit the Business Victoria website business.vic.gov.au or call the Business Victoria hotline on 13 22 15.

2. INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Applications for Business Support Fund Open

Applications are now open for the Victorian Government's third round of the [Business Support Fund](#).

With applications remaining open until funds are exhausted or 23 November 2020 at 11:59pm (whichever is earlier), members are encouraged to review grant information.

To be eligible, businesses must already employ staff and have a payroll of up to \$10 million. Operations that meet [the criteria](#) will receive either \$10,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000, depending on annual payroll figures.

Launched in order to assist the more than 75,000 small and medium-sized businesses that – under state restrictions – must remain closed or reduce hours, the fund is part of the Victorian Government's \$3 billion Business Resilience Package.

Members can click [here](#) for more information.

Amendments to Retail Lease Conditions Announced

Changes to the Retail Leases Act 2003 are set to make it easier for small and medium-sized business owners to get security deposits back faster, while also making legal obligations easier to understand.

Key Act amendments include:

- Retail tenants must now be informed of the proposed rent amount before they extend a lease
- Tenants now have 14 days to consider the terms and conditions of a proposed lease (compared with seven days previously)
- A maximum 30day timeframe will be set for the return of security deposits to tenants.

“We’ve listened to Victoria’s small businesses and delivered fairer, more transparent and easier to understand retail leases – and less red tape,” said Minister for Small Business, Jaala Pulford.

Additionally, small-to-medium business tenants are reminded that the Victorian Government's Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme and the Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund remain in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme](#) enables rent reductions for small-to-medium business tenants whose income has been affected by COVID-19, and provides a freeze on evictions for non-payment of rent for businesses with an annual turnover under \$50 million (participating in JobKeeper).

The [Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund](#) offers grants of up to \$3,000 per tenancy to eligible landlords.

Members can read more on this announcement [here](#).

3. INDUSTRY RELATIONS

Learner Permit and Licence Testing to Resume in Regional Victoria

From Monday, 21 September learner permit and licence testing including drive tests, are set to resume across regional Victoria in line with the Victorian Government's roadmap to reopening.

The first priority under the staged resumption will be to re-book tests for those in regional Victoria whose appointments were postponed in March due to the initial coronavirus restrictions. These customers will be contacted by VicRoads directly to reschedule their test in the order of cancellation. New appointments will be available once the backlog of postponed tests is cleared.

Read more on this announcement [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.*