



Tuesday, 23 June 2020
Issue 33.0

1. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Fair Work Commission awards annual wage increase to be phased in over three separate operative dates

On 19 June 2020, the Fair Work Commission awarded a 1.75 % increase to **all** minimum award rates of pay based on a 38-hour week. In taking account of the current economic circumstances due to the pandemic crisis, the Annual Wage Bench departed from its normal approach of awarding a minimum wage increase across all awards effective from a common operative date of 1 July. In this decision the Annual Wage Bench split the 1.75% minimum wage increase across three award groupings to become operative on three separate dates.

For the automotive industry the relevant operative dates of the increase are:

- **Clerks - Private Sector Award 2020** - the minimum award wage increase applies from the first full pay period commencing on or after **1 November 2020**.
- **Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award 2020** - the minimum award wage increase applies from the first full pay period commencing on or after **1 November 2020**
Note: this award **ONLY** applies to businesses which prior to 29 May 2020 were covered in Section 2 of the Vehicle Manufacturing, Repair, Services and Retail Award 2010.
- **Vehicle Repair, Services and Retail Award 2020** - the minimum award wage increase applies from the first full pay period commencing on or after **1 February 2021**.

The Federal Minimum Wage will increase as set out below:

Current Federal Minimum Wage	New Federal Minimum Wage
\$19.49 per hour	\$19.84 per hour
\$740.80 per week	\$ 753.80 per week

All other minimum award rates of pay will also increase by 1.75% per week from the above dates.

As the wage increase will apply to minimum award rates of pay only, the minimum wage increases will be fully absorbed into any existing over-award rates of pay. Proportionate increases will flow on to junior employees and employees to whom training arrangements apply (apprentices and trainees), employees with a disability and casual employees. Members can click [here](#) to read more.

COVID-19 contact tracing information and Privacy Laws

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) has developed a range of resources to support compliance with the law and best privacy practice during COVID19. The information covers:

- Unauthorised collection, use or disclosure of COVIDSafe App data, or requiring someone to download or use the App,
- Guidance for individuals, businesses and employers in relation to the [handling of personal information](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- [Guidance for Businesses Collecting Personal Information for Contact Tracing](#)

2. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Update to Victorian COVID restrictions in response to state outbreak of cases

On Saturday, the Premier of Victoria announced several changes to current COVID restrictions from 11.59pm on 21 June 2020.

From 11:59pm on Sunday, 21 June:

- The number of visitors in a home will reduce to five (from the current limit of ten).
- Outside the home, families and friends can meet in groups up to ten.
- Restaurants, pubs, auction halls, community halls, libraries, museums and places of worship – will all stay at a maximum of 20 people in any one space until 12 July.
- Businesses that were set to open on Monday like gyms, cinemas, theatres and TABs can do so – but again, only with a maximum of 20.
- Community sport for kids and non-contact competition for adults can proceed as planned.
- Ski season and accommodation facilities with communal spaces will also open, but with increased screening and safeguards in place.
- The Premier also announced a new \$1500 payment for those who have a confirmed case or are a close contact and who can't rely on sick leave. This has been done to make sure there's no financial reason for people not to isolate and to go to work instead.
- Those who can work from home are instructed to continue to do so at least until 31 July. Having a zero-tolerance approach to sickness is required. Having symptoms must mean the employee/employer goes home and gets tested.

Members can read more on the Premier's statement [here](#).

Multilingual COVID Fact Sheets and Information on Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme

The Victorian Small Business Commissioner (VSBC) has created new fact sheets developed for small business tenants and landlords in response to coronavirus (COVID-19), with leasing advice in [Simplified Chinese](#), [Arabic](#) and [Vietnamese](#).

These resources include information about supports under the Victorian Government's [Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme](#) (the Scheme), which has been introduced to ease financial hardship faced by some tenants and landlords as a result of the pandemic.

The digital materials offer:

- information on how to access free mediation through the VSBC to resolve a rent dispute
- the steps tenants and landlords can take under the Scheme
- access to a letter template for requesting rent relief and responses to FAQ
- practical scenarios showing negotiation of rent relief under the Scheme.

The VSBC is available to help small business tenants and landlords of diverse backgrounds to resolve their disputes, be it through:

- talking with them early on via the Translation and Interpreting Service
- bringing them together with an experienced mediator to support fair tenancy negotiations with the help of an interpreter, at no cost to them.

For more information, see the VSBC's [other translated resources](#) for people in small business.

3. GENERAL UPDATES

Warning on COVID-19 superannuation early-access scams

The ACCC is warning small business owners and employees about scams designed to steal superannuation under the disguise of the Australian Government's [early access](#) initiative.

Scammers try to find out personal superannuation information by cold-calling, sending emails and text messages, and impersonating well-known businesses and government agencies such as Services Australia or MyGov, the Department of Health and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), among others.

Tips to avoid superannuation scams

The following tips are designed to be shared with small business owners and their staff:

- Never give any information about personal superannuation to someone who has contacted you — this includes offers to help you access your superannuation early under the government's new arrangements.
- Hang up and verify the caller's identity by calling the relevant organisation directly — find the organisation's contact details through an independent source such as a phone book, past bill or online search.
- Check out the ACCC's [Superannuation early-access scams fact sheet](#) and [media release about superannuation scams](#).
- For more information on superannuation scams visit ASIC's [MoneySmart](#) website.
- You can also find information about [COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) scams](#) on the Scamwatch website.

To contact and to report a small business issue, please use the ACCC's [online form](#).

'Buy Australian' Campaign Suggested to Drive COVID Business Recovery

A key adviser to Scott Morrison's COVID-19 commission is calling for Australian workers and locally owned firms to get priority consideration for major infrastructure projects, in a bid to grow domestic manufacturing. Australian Manufacturing Workers Union national secretary Paul Bastian said the pandemic had shown up serious weaknesses in Australian supply chains and industry capability, and new activity was urgently needed to maintain and grow the sector.

[Click to read more.](#)

Police prepare to enforce Victorian coronavirus hotspot lockdowns if outbreak grows

It has been announced that Police will enforce strict stay-at-home directions in Victoria's coronavirus hotspots if the spread of COVID-19 cannot be suppressed before July 19, as epidemiologists warn a "severe regional lockdown" might be needed sooner to curb the outbreak. In response to Victoria's current coronavirus outbreak, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has publicly offered military assistance to enforce hotel quarantine - after infection-control breaches at two state-run quarantine hotels - and NSW residents have been warned not to visit Melbourne.

[Read more on the developing story 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.*