



Thursday, 26 March 2020
Issue 4.0

The current COVID-19 pandemic is understandably creating uncertainty and anxiety for many members. Managing our mental health and being aware of how we are coping is important to all of us – because we all react differently to pressure points. Being able to come out the other side is critical, as is building resilience.

To help our members, VACC would like to offer you our professional, *confidential* counselling service provided by Psychology Melbourne. This service can be accessed via phone or video link.

We would like to provide each member three (3) free sessions

Simply call 03 9629 1001 for an appointment or book online at <https://www.psychologymelbourne.com.au/appointments-opening-hours-fees-and-rebates>. *It is completely confidential.*

Full reception is open at their main office in the Melbourne CBD for six days a week from
Monday – Thursday at 8:30am – 7pm;
Fridays from 8.30am – 6pm;
and Saturdays from 8:30am – 1:30pm

Members will simply need to state they are a VACC member. No further identifying information will be recorded or asked for.

For urgent situations please call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

As always, please reach out to VACC staff at any point for assistance and stay updated via the VACC News portal: <https://vacc.com.au/News>

1. VicRoads Update

VicRoads still open for business – some services modified

VicRoads is assuring customers they are open for business, but understand some customers may not wish, or need, to visit our Customer Service Centres. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have set up a dedicated a one-stop shop of all the registration and licensing transactions that you can do online.

You can access this page [HERE](#).

Drive tests and computer-based tests for light vehicles (including hazard perception and learner tests) temporarily suspended.

From today, drive tests and computer-based tests for light vehicles (including hazard perception and learner tests) will be temporarily suspended.

VACC is advised this decision will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

VicRoads is contacting all customers affected by this change, but please also share with your networks.

2. National Heavy Vehicle Regulator Update

Updated working arrangements for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) PBS team

In response to the current COVID-19 situation, the NHVR PBS team will be transitioning to a work from home model **starting Monday, 30 March 2020**.

With these changes, there will be some potential minor impacts:

- Application processing
The NHVR will continue to receive and process applications for PBS approvals.
- Phone enquiries
All phone calls to the PBS team must be to **07 3309 8604** and will be answered by a single NHVR contact officer who will escalate these calls to the PBS team.
Calls to this number will be answered between 8:00am – 4:00pm AEST (Queensland time).
Individual PBS team members' phone lines may not be monitored during this time.
- Email
If you need to contact the PBS team, send your enquiry to PBS@nhvr.gov.au where it will be actioned by the appropriate team member.

Due to the alternate work location and single point of contact for calls, there may be slight increases in processing times.

Communication to all National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) participants

The NHVR is making some temporary changes to the NHVAS medical requirements and face-to-face audit requirements.

The following arrangements will be in place for the next six months.

These changes include:

- Heavy vehicle drivers operating under Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM) or Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) accreditations may continue to drive with an expired driver medical, until they can practicably obtain one
- Auditors can undertake all document and records validation and audits remotely, requesting electronic copies be emailed to them or by another suitable method and conducting conversations over the phone where applicable.

Please click [HERE](#) for more information on:

- Remote Auditing
- Expired BFM & AFM Driver Medicals
- Other general information

If you are experiencing any issues associated with meeting your accreditation requirements due to the current coronavirus situation, or require further advice regarding these changes, please contact the NHVAS Team on 07 3309 8770 as soon as possible.

3. Victorian Small Business Commission

Members are reminded that the Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) is still open and available to assist. However, there is a change to their provision of services. All VSBC mediations will move from in-person sessions to video conferencing or teleconferencing until further notice.

If you have a scheduled mediation coming up or are planning to apply for mediation, the VSBC team will provide you with information about your options and guidance in taking part.

For more information visit the [VSBC mediation website](#), call 13 8722 or email enquiries@vsbc.vic.gov.au

To request a mediation, apply [HERE](#).

4. Dealing with COVID-19 and responding to difficulty in paying rent

Advice taken from VSBC if a landlord and tenant are dealing with a situation where the tenant is having difficulty paying rent as a result of COVID-19 is to:

- Communicate as early as possible
This helps to make sure both parties are aware of, and understand, each other's position.
- The landlord or agent and the tenant arrange a meeting to discuss the situation or send an email or letter to the other party detailing the issue and their request.

If tenants intend to request rent relief, they might need to provide records to the landlord or agent. *VSBC recommend that tenants in this situation keep accurate business records to help show how trade has been affected.*

If a landlord, agent or tenant is unable to obtain a response from the other party, VSBC might be able to help through their mediation service (as mentioned above).

5. Medicare to cover telehealth consults

Bulk-billed telehealth consultations are set to become the new norm, with the government promising access to health practitioners from as early as next week.

With social distancing remaining a crucial aspect of combatting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) spread, telehealth will become a go-to in the healthcare sector, with Medicare covering phone and video mental health, allied health, as well as primary health consultations.

Previously only available to patients and doctors vulnerable to COVID-19, telehealth services will be expanded to all Australians in Stage Four of the service roll-out.

For more information, visit:

- Minister for Health media release: [Expansion of Telehealth Services](#)
- Department of Health: [Bulk Billed MBS Telehealth Services](#)

6. Health Fact Sheet Update

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (of which VACC is a founding member) has produced a [Health Headline Measures Fact Sheet](#) containing relevant information on social distancing measures, travel restrictions, self-isolation requirements, declared emergency status and school closures. They will update this regularly and VACC will advise of new editions in subsequent Updates.

7. Financial hardship: small business relief FAQs

The Australian Banking Association has provided an excellent resource page for businesses answering frequently asked questions.

For example:

- How can my bank help me exactly?
- Does it apply to sole traders?
- What is the definition of a small business?
- What evidence do I need to prove?

To access the information click [HERE](#).

It also provides easy clickable access to a multitude of banks



8. Useful Links

- Victorian Government's Media Centre: <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/media-centre/>
- VACC News Updates: <https://vacc.com.au/News>
- Australian Government's Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.au/>

9. Previous Update Issues

- [Monday, 23 March 2020 - Issue 1](#)
- [Tuesday, 24 March 2020 - Issue 2](#)
- [Wednesday, 25 March 2020 - Issue 3](#)

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.*