

# VACC COVID-19 UPDATE

Friday, 27 March 2020  
Issue 5.0

As the impact of the coronavirus on business and society continues, it's important to take your mental health and the mental health of your staff seriously.

In [yesterday's Update](#), VACC [offered three free counselling sessions](#) with Melbourne Psychology and we encourage you to take advantage of this service. It is completely confidential and may provide a little peace of mind amongst the daily pressures I know you are all facing.

VACC also reminds members that the mental health of your staff is also important and Work Health & Safety laws apply in this area. In the sections below, you can access online resources to help you manage this requirement.

As we brace ourselves for Stage 3 announcements, VACC is continuously committed to assist members wherever possible and will keep you informed of updates as they become available.

I provide the following 1 minute video, discussing how VACC is here to represent your best interests in the midst of all this uncertainty.



## 1. Hibernation package announcement

Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison has announced a plan to “hibernate Australian business” during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation.

The aim is to allow small business owners to effectively hit the pause button, so that they can re-open later down the line and play their part in kick-starting a hard-hit economy. The Federal Government initiative appears to recognise the stresses many small business owners are currently under, and has taken this action to avoid permanent closures in the face of constant financial obligation – such as rental payments, payroll, and other liabilities – without the cash-flow coming in from customers.

Read more [HERE](#).

## 2. Coronavirus: Business survival package

The Victorian Government has established an Economic Survival Package to support Victorian businesses and workers through the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It includes:

- Payroll tax refund
- Business support fund
- Working for Victoria fund
- Land tax referral
- Fast-tracking outstanding supplier invoices
- Rent relief for commercial tenants in government buildings
- Mental health and wellbeing support

Find out more [HERE](#).



### Economic Survival Package

The Victorian Government has established an economic survival package to support Victorian businesses and workers through the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The \$17 billion Economic Survival Package complements the work of the Federal Government.

The package includes the following key programs.

#### Payroll Tax Refund

Businesses with annual taxable wages up to \$3 million will have their payroll tax for the 2019-20 financial year waived. This will support 24,000 businesses and up to 400,000 workers.

The State Revenue Office will directly contact eligible businesses to reimburse them for payroll tax already paid in the financial year.

Eligible businesses must continue to lodge returns but do not need to make further payments for this financial year.

These businesses can also defer paying payroll tax for the first quarter of the 2020-21 financial year.

More information about the administration of these relief measures will be sent directly to eligible businesses.

Visit [www.sro.vic.gov.au](http://www.sro.vic.gov.au)

#### Liquor licence fees waived

Renewable liquor licence fees for 2020 will be waived. Businesses that have already paid will be reimbursed.

The State Revenue Office will administer the reimbursement, regardless of whether the licence fee was paid to it or the Victorian Commission for Gaming and Liquor Regulation.

Visit [www.sro.vic.gov.au](http://www.sro.vic.gov.au)

#### Business Support Fund

The \$500 million Business Support Fund will support the hardest hit sectors, including hospitality, tourism, accommodation, arts and entertainment, and retail.

The Government will work with the Victorian Chamber, Australian Hotels Association and Australian Industry Group to deliver the Fund, which will help these businesses – which may not be eligible for payroll tax refunds due to their size – survive and keep people in work.

Visit [www.business.vic.gov.au](http://www.business.vic.gov.au)

#### Working for Victoria Fund

Under the \$500 million Working for Victoria Fund, displaced workers will be eligible to apply for different types of work. This presents opportunities for paid work and an opportunity to contribute to Victoria's ability to manage this event and support the community.

Some displaced workers will have skills that can be readily transferred to new roles. The Government can also assist skills development or help people in obtaining immediate accreditation to commence work.

The Government will work across the public sector, local government, the not-for-profit sector and key private sector employers to facilitate job matching.

Visit [www.vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria)

#### Land tax deferral

Landowners that have at least one non-residential property and total taxable landholdings below \$1 million have the option of deferring their 2020 land tax payment until after 31 December 2020.

The State Revenue Office will contact all taxpayers who are eligible for this deferral.

Visit [www.sro.vic.gov.au](http://www.sro.vic.gov.au)

### **3. Vehicle registration relief sought for LMCTs trading stock**

LMCT members are advised VACC has written to Minister Jaala Pulford, seeking a suspension in payment of registration on trading stock for LMCTs who are holding used car, motorcycle, truck and farm machinery stock in the event of a lockdown.

Thank you to Used Car Trader Executive Committee member Ray Parsons (Melton Toyota) for putting this forward.

VACC will keep you posted as to progress.

### **4. Message from Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp: Support package to help businesses and residents.**

Watch the video below from Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp. She outlines the support package approved yesterday for business and residents.



### **5. Tow trucks to operate from home in response to COVID-19 situation**

VACC has been advised that the Department of Transport has approved depots varying the opening hours during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

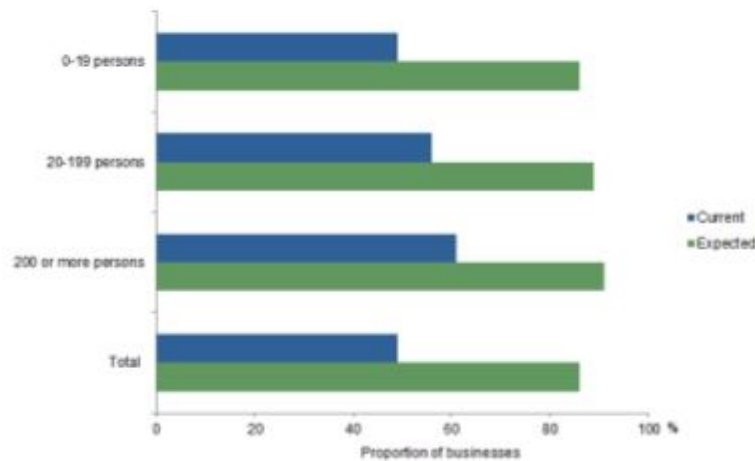
The department has stipulated that depots MUST remain contactable and be able to arrange times for the vehicles or personal belongings to be collected from towed vehicles.

### **6. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on the impact of coronavirus on business**

ABS has released analysis measuring the economic impact of the coronavirus on businesses. Unsurprisingly, their results found that around half of all businesses have been affected over the past 2 weeks, with 86 per cent expecting to be affected in the coming weeks/months.

Whilst the analysis is at a broad industry division level, automotive predominantly comes under Other Services, Retail & Wholesale Trade and Manufacturing. The full publication can be accessed [HERE](#).

Businesses adversely impacted by Coronavirus (COVID-19), current and expected, by employment size, March 2020



## 7. Businesses will need to register on new system myGovID

Businesses seeking access to government services, including COVID-19 cash flow support will have to register with a new digital identity system called [myGovID](#) over the coming weeks.

[myGovID](#) is a digital identity that makes it easier to prove who you are online - it's like the 100 point ID check but on your smart device.

The previous system, known as AUkey will be decommissioned as of Monday 30 March and turned off completely on Friday 3 April midnight.

## 8. Widespread reports of COVID-19 malicious scams being sent to Australians

The Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) is aware of a significant increase in Australians being targeted with COVID-19 related scams and phishing emails.

These phishing emails are often sophisticated, preying on people's desire for information and imitating trusted and well-known organisations or government agencies.

Clicking on these malicious links or visiting fake websites may automatically install computer viruses or malware and ransomware onto your device, giving cyber criminals the ability to steal your financial and personal information.

These scams are likely to increase over the coming weeks and months and the ACSC strongly encourages organisations and individuals to remain alert.

ACSC has produced a detailed report, including practical cyber security advice that organisations and individuals can follow to reduce the risk of harm. You can access the report [HERE](#).

## 9. Why managing risks to mental health is important in your workplace

Did you know that WHS laws apply to psychological as well as physical risks?

As a business owner, you have a duty under WHS laws to manage risks to your workers' mental health arising from their work.

[My Business Health](#) is a useful portal for helping businesses manage their responsibilities. You can access it [HERE](#).

Business.gov also has helpful resources [HERE](#).

## 10. Dr Norman Swan explains what steps we could take to combat coronavirus quicker.

Respected health professional Dr Norman Swan explains how we can take control back and shorten the disruption of the pandemic.



## 11. No Entry Pass Needed for Heavy Vehicles in Queensland

The Queensland Government has confirmed that freight vehicles will be waved through in relation to COVID-19 border restrictions without having to complete paperwork.

Police may continue to intercept any vehicle suspected of involvement in an offence, or as part of ongoing non-COVID-19 related Police operations.

However, persons driving a heavy vehicle through the border will not require an Entry Pass, as Police are waving all heavy vehicles through without the need for any paperwork.

## 12. National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to maintain full service levels

The NHVR is working with all governments to ensure the on-going movement of all heavy vehicles across state borders.

While a range of border restrictions are in place, all heavy vehicle movements are continuing, ensuring certainty for heavy vehicle operators, however members should be aware of some delays where border checks and border forms are in place.

All on-road staff have been provided with disposable rubber gloves and hand sanitiser to be utilised when conducting road-side activities to reduce any contact or spread of the virus.

What border restrictions are in place?

Western Australia, South Australian, Northern Territory, Queensland and Tasmania have border restrictions in place.

There are currently no restrictions in place for travel between Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

Despite these restrictions, all freight movements are continuing.

Additional information is available at:

- Queensland <https://www.qld.gov.au/about/newsroom/queensland-border-restrictions>
- South Australia [https://www.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/603843/Cross-Border-Travel-Directive-2020.pdf](https://www.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/603843/Cross-Border-Travel-Directive-2020.pdf)
- Tasmania <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/travellers-and-visitors/coming-to-tasmania>
- Northern Territory <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/community-advice/border-controls/exemption-categories-for-essential-travellers>
- Western Australia <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-and-transport-advice>

### 13. COVID-19 infection control training

The Department of Health is offering 30-minute online training module for health care professionals, however anyone can register.

It covers:

- COVID-19 – what is it?
- Signs and symptoms
- Keeping safe – protecting yourself and others
- Myth busting

Members can register [HERE](#)

### 14. Problems paying your mortgage

Government website, [moneysmart.gov.au](https://moneysmart.gov.au) details advice for people struggling to pay their mortgage. Like most things, the earlier you get help, the more options you have.

Their advice covers:

- Applying for hardship variation
- Steps a lender can take if you're behind on your mortgage.

You can access the information [HERE](#).

If you are requiring urgent help with money, feeling overwhelmed or don't know where to turn, contact the [National Debt Helpline](#) on 1800 007 007.

They are open Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm.

## **15. Victoria deploys Telstra-backed 'Whispir' app**

The Victorian Government has partnered with the communications provider 'Whispir' to use its technology to communicate with those who have been exposed to coronavirus cases. State Health Minister Jenny Mikakos said the app would enable greater interaction with close contacts, to more adequately ensure that they are observing quarantine requirements.

## **16. Virus places pressure on apprenticeship retention**

Trades Women Australia is hosting a live Q&A panel on Tuesday, 31 March at 5.30pm AEST.

They will talk through:

- Latest government initiatives
- Support for the business and the apprentice
- How to access financial support and information
- The true value of apprenticeships right now.

For more information and to register for the event [HERE](#).

## **17. Consumer Affairs Victoria – dedicated coronavirus webpage**

Consumer Affairs Victoria has set up a [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) page](#) on their website to provide information about the impacts on you or your business related to Victoria's consumer laws and the areas they regulate.

This includes:

- Housing
- Evictions
- Tenants in crisis
- Inspections and auctions
- Owners corporation annual general meetings
- Products and services
- Price gouging and resellers
- Event cancellations and refunds
- Sports memberships
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) scams

## 18. Previous Update Issues

- [Monday, 23 March 2020 - Issue 1](#)
- [Tuesday, 24 March 2020 - Issue 2](#)
- [Wednesday, 25 March 2020 - Issue 3](#)
- [Thursday, 26 March 2020 - Issue 4](#)

**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.*