



Tuesday, 31 March 2020
Issue 7.0

The voice of VACC and other associations has been heard loud and clear by government with the announcement of a new Australian Government grants program designed to retain employees in the workforce, and to keep businesses viable. VACC has relayed to government major employment and labour challenges should businesses stand-down or make mass redundancies as a result of rapid downturns in business activity.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced an additional \$130 billion to be made available to employers and their staff over the next six months. It includes the introduction of a new JobKeeper payment, which will see businesses receive a flat rate of \$1500 per employee, per fortnight.

VACC, along with its national body, the Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA), has been in dialogue with policymakers since the government's original announcement of COVID-19 relief packages, representing the interests of both small and large businesses in the automotive industry.

Members are reminded that this *legislation is yet to be passed*. As such we are not in a position to confirm specific details other than what has been published via government websites to date.

The below provides access to available information:

- A Factsheet is available [HERE](#)
- Direct information for employers is available [HERE](#)
- Direct information for employees is available [HERE](#)
- To access the dedicated ATO website click [HERE](#)
- Read my dedicated Bulletin [HERE](#)
- Access more information [HERE](#)

As always, please contact VACC directly for any assistance. We will continue to update members as new details become available.

1. COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

Exemptions for heavy vehicle drivers at rest stops

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and the National Cabinet have tonight approved an exemption for roadhouses, dedicated truck stop facilities and truck driver lounges to remain open so Australia's heavy vehicle drivers have access to showers, restrooms and facilities to undertake their mandated fatigue management breaks.

Read the full Media Release [HERE](#)

2. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

COVID-19 Stage 3 restrictions – How does this impact the automotive industry?

The recent announcement of Stage 3 restrictions by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, on 29 March 2020 have now come into effect. These new restrictions prohibit the indoor / outdoor gathering of more than two people. VACC OHSE Unit has received many queries from members about how these new Stage 3 restrictions impact their daily operations and businesses.

Members are advised that these apply to all non-essential gatherings. Exemptions to this include members of your immediate household and for work or education.

Therefore, at this stage, there appears to be no significant impacts imposed on the automotive industry – with the exception of indoor / outdoor vehicle auctions, which are no longer allowed to take place (except online).

All safety related posters and useful links can be found on the [VACC website](#). For further information please contact the VACC OHSE Unit 03 9829 1265.

Read the full Bulletin issued by VACC's OHSE team that provides more detail [HERE](#).

For a broader summary of all health directives click [HERE](#).

Safe Work Australia COVID-19 Website information

Safe Work Australia (SWA) has updated their website over the weekend and produced a number of new fact sheets targeted at specific areas of concern. Below you will find the following:

- [Infographic](#): what to do if a worker has COVID-19
- Small Business [Factsheet](#)
- Minimising the risk of exposure in office workers ([webpage](#))
- [WHS advice](#) for workers

Further factsheets on transport and in-home services are planned for release on the website shortly. We will update you with information as soon as possible.

3. TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Yesterday, the Australian Government implemented a temporary prohibition on the non-commercial export of certain goods that contribute to controlling and preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The temporary prohibition applies to:

- personal protective equipment in the form of disposable face masks, disposable gloves, disposable gowns, protective eye wear in the form of goggles, glasses or visors, which can be worn by individuals to limit the transmission of organisms; and
- alcohol wipes and sanitiser.

Please note that this does not apply to commercial exports, to those that previously exported those types of goods in the course of their ordinary business, or to Australian manufacturers of the goods. A limited number of other exemptions also apply.

4. EXTRA RESOURCES

Coronavirus and changes to bankruptcy laws

On 25 March 2020, changes came into effect to support individuals and businesses.

The temporary debt relief measures include:

- [Six month Temporary protection](#)
- [Changes to Bankruptcy Notices](#)
- [Impacts to people who are currently bankrupt](#)

If you have been financially impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19), you may be eligible to receive financial assistance - see Services Australia website [Affected by coronavirus](#) for more information.

COVID-19 Webinar Series for Family Business

Family Business Australia has partnered with Australia's leading industry professionals to bring you a series of interactive webinars on topics such as stimulus packages, uncertainty and cashflow, minimising the impact from a legal perspective and employer response.

To register click [HERE](#).

Managing teams remotely

Some employees will be working from home for the first time, which means business owners will be having to implement new workflows for the first time too.

Regardless of business size or physical set-up, working remotely comes with challenges and opportunities. In order to remain efficient and reduce stress, here are some simple steps to follow:

- Select communication tools carefully
- Upskill team members
- Create routine check-ins
- Make time for social

More information on the above is available at the VACC website [HERE](#).

Google Resources

Google has developed a number of resources to help small business manage through uncertainty – including COVID-19 and bushfires.

Click [HERE](#) to access the list.

A one page Factsheet is available [HERE](#).

5. 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](#)
- [Friday, 27 March 2020 - Issue 5](#)
- [Monday, 30 March 2020 - Issue 6](#)

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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.*