



Tuesday, 6 October 2020

Issue 44.0

1. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Extreme Hardship Support Fund

An initiative from the Victorian Government and Australian Red Cross, the [Extreme Hardship Support Program](#) may assist members who have employees on temporary or provisional visas.

The program provides financial assistance, information and referrals to Victorian residents experiencing significant hardship as a result of COVID-19 and who are unable to access other forms of government income support.

Temporary and provisional visa holders with little or no income, savings or community support during the pandemic can apply for a payment of up to \$800, to go towards food, medicine or housing. Those who have already received a payment under the program may now be eligible for a top-up on the original payment.

For more information members can click [here](#).

Victorian School Students to Return to On-Site Learning

Yesterday, the Victorian Government announced Years 7-10 students will join their peers back in the classroom with the final stage of the return to face-to-face learning to occur this month, providing relief for parents juggling work and schooling from home.

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Education James Merlino announced that, subject to final health advice, Year 7 students in metropolitan Melbourne will resume face-to-face learning from Monday 12 October. Students in Years 8 to 10 will return from Monday 26 October. Students in rural and regional Victoria are returning to the classroom in a staggered approach from today, their date depending on their year level and local circumstances.

The staggered return will also allow for schools to work together with parents to support the safe return of students to on-site learning and enable schools to review the implementation of risk-mitigation measures as all students return.

Read more on the return to on-site learning roadmap [here](#), and more on the Government's announcement [here](#).

2. INDUSTRY RELATIONS

Extended supports for Victoria's commercial tenants and landlords

The Victorian Government has announced extensions to the Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme (the Scheme) until the end of this year.

Under these changes, an eligible tenant who is seeking rent relief must apply to their landlord in writing [with evidence](#) to show that they are eligible for the Scheme as soon as possible. This is important as rent relief is only available from the date a tenant applies between 29 September 2020 and 31 December 2020.

Further changes include the following:

- Commercial landlords will be required to provide rent relief in proportion to the fall in turnover being experienced by eligible tenants from the date a tenant makes a written application to their landlord within the period 29 September 2020 to 31 December 2020 (for example, if a tenant's turnover has fallen by 40 per cent, the required rent relief is at least 40 per cent of the tenant's current rent, with at least 50 per cent of the rent relief offered made up of a rent waiver).
- Sole traders will be eligible for the Scheme.
- Tenants can now apply to us for a binding order for rent relief if their landlord fails to respond to us or does not engage in mediation in good faith.
- [The Victorian Small Business Commissioner](#) (VSBC) will keep offering free mediation to tenants and landlords who cannot reach an agreement.

For more on this extension announcement, head to the VSBC site [here](#).

Federal Government Commits \$1.2bn to Support Thousands of New Tradies

The federal government will inject \$1.2 billion into the economy to support the employment of 100,000 new apprenticeship and trainee schemes across Australia.

Ahead of Tuesday's Federal Budget, the Morrison government says it will introduce a 50 per cent wage subsidy for businesses which take on a new apprentice.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the package forms part of the federal government's recovery plan from the economic recession sparked by the coronavirus pandemic.

Employers will be able to subsidise apprentice wage by 50 per cent, or \$7000 per quarter until 30 September 2021.

Read more on this announcement [here](#).

3. 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.*