

SUMMARY OF AUSTRALIAN STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC RESPONSES TO COVID-19

Australian state and territory governments have announced a range of measures to assist small to medium-sized businesses manage through the COVID-19 crisis. These measures are in addition to the federal government's economic response to COVID-19.

The information below describes the support measures for small and medium sized business. Additional information regarding the measures announced in support of individuals and households can be found on the respective state government websites listed below.

Please call the VTA for any specific industrial relations advice or direction on managing the workplace under these very pressing conditions.

Victoria

The Victorian Government announced a \$1.7 billion economic survival package to assist in assuring business continuity and support recovery efforts. The major features of the package for business are:

- a full payroll tax refund for the 2019-20 financial year to businesses with a payroll of less than \$3 million. Payments will begin to be processed in late March and according to the Government, will save eligible business up to \$113,975 a year, with businesses saving an average of \$23,000. The same businesses will also be able to defer any payroll tax for the first three months of the 2020-21 financial year until 1 January 2021.
- A \$500 million Business Support Fund to assist small to medium businesses in the hospitality, tourism, accommodation, arts and entertainment, and retail sectors. To register interest in receiving this fund, visit the Business Victoria website [here](#).
- Small Business Victoria will be making low-cost mentoring services available to small to medium businesses to assist in the development of recovery plans.
- Commercial tenants in government buildings can apply for rent relief.
- the Government will pay all outstanding supplier invoices within five business days. Additional information about the Victorian government's stimulus package can be found [here](#).

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) will be introducing a \$137 million ACT Economic Survival Package which contains economic stimulus support and practical advice for businesses with changed operations as a result of COVID-19. Major features of the package for business are:

- all ACT businesses with group Australia-wide wages of up to \$10 million are eligible to defer their 2020-21 payroll tax, interest free until 1 July 2022. Businesses will need to lodge an application with the ACT Revenue Office to confirm their eligibility.
- businesses in the hospitality, creative arts and entertainment industries will receive a waiver from payroll tax from April to September 2020. Businesses will need to lodge an application with the ACT Revenue Office to confirm their eligibility.
- commercial property owners with an Average Unimproved Value below \$2 million on their property will automatically receive a credit of \$2622 to their 2019-20 general rates in quarter four.
- small business owners with electricity usage below 100 megawatts per year will receive a rebate of \$750 automatically applied to their next electricity bill in June or July 2020.
- licensed venues will receive a 12-month waiver of their food business registration and on liquor licensing fees from 1 April 2020, and outdoor dining fees for 2020-2021 will be waived.

- rideshare and taxi vehicle license fees will be waived for 12 months for rideshare operators from 1 April 2020. This will be applied automatically as part of the normal licensing processes.

More information about the ACT Economic Survival Package can be accessed [here](#).

New South Wales

The New South Wales (NSW) Government have announced a \$2.3 billion Health Boost and Economic Stimulus to protect communities and jobs affected by COVID-19. The major features of the stimulus for business are:

- a waiver of payroll tax for businesses with payrolls of up to \$10 million for the April to June quarter.
- bringing forward the next round of payroll tax cuts by raising the threshold limit to \$1 million in 2020-21.
- waiving a range of fees and charges for small businesses including bars, cafes, restaurants and trades. More information regarding the specific range of fees is to be announced.

More information on the support the NSW Government is providing to business can be found [here](#).

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory (NT) Government will deliver a \$65 million Jobs Rescue and Recovery plan to assist in economy stimulation and business recovery. Major aspects of that plan for business are:

- the current payroll tax exemption for hiring Territory employees has been extended to 30 June 2021.
- all regular increases to government fees and charges will be put on hold. This includes electricity costs.
- grants of up to \$20,000 for businesses to purchase goods and services to make permanent physical improvements to a business (land and/or building). Businesses will be able to access a \$10,000 grant, followed by an additional \$10,000 grant if they contribute \$10,000 of their own money.
- A \$50 million Small Business Survival Fund to deliver grants to business to help keep them alive. Further details on this fund will be released by the NT Government shortly.

More information about this plan and other services provided by the Northern Territory Government can be found [here](#).

Queensland

The Queensland Government has introduced several measures to support business affected by COVID-19. These include:

- offering a concessional loan of up to \$250,000 for carry on finance, with an initial 12-month interest free period for eligible businesses. Register your interest [here](#).
- eligible businesses may apply for a deferral from paying payroll tax returns until 31 July 2020. To be eligible, the business must pay \$6.5 million or less in Australian taxable wages, and it must have been affected by COVID-19.
- access to mentors who are available to provide tailored support including financial mentoring and business planning.
- access to workshops to assist small business learn about financial management, business planning and business resilience

Further information on the support available to Queensland business can be found [here](#).

South Australia

The South Australian Government has announced a \$350 million stimulus package to help drive the economy, secure jobs and support industry.

The stimulus package includes proposals to assist in upgrading roads and hospitals, as well as assisting the development of new tourism infrastructure and an expanded Economic and Business Growth Fund to support South Australian industry.

In addition, the South Australian government will offer businesses with 25 employees or less, up to \$5000 for every new apprentice or trainee hired in South Australia on a paid training contract. See [here](#) for further information.

More information about the package is available [here](#).

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government has announced a \$420 million Support and Stimulus Package to aid small businesses, including targeted assistance for the tourism, hospitality and fisheries industries. Key business measures in the package are:

- businesses with payrolls up to \$5 million, and who can demonstrate to the State Revenue Office that their business is affected by COVID-19, will have their payroll tax waived for April to June 2020.
- businesses that employ a person aged 24 and under between April and December 2020 will receive a payroll tax rebate for that person for one year.
- businesses in the hospitality, tourism and seafood industries will have their payroll tax liabilities waived for the last four months of 2019-20.
- interest free loans for businesses in the hospitality, tourism, seafood production and export sectors with a turnover of less than \$5 million. The loans are to be used to purchase equipment or restructuring business operations and will be interest free for three years.
- a \$5000 grant for businesses that hire an apprentice or trainee in the tourism, hospitality, building and construction, and manufacturing industries.
- the Tasmanian Government will pay bills within 14 days, from the current 30 days. More information about the Tasmanian Support and Stimulus Package can be found [here](#).

Western Australia

The Western Australian Government has announced a \$607 million Economic Stimulus Package to support households, pensioners and small businesses. The major features of the package for business are:

- small businesses with a payroll between \$1 million and \$4 million will receive a one-off grant of \$17,500.
- the payroll tax threshold will increase to \$1 million from 1 July 2020.
- small businesses will be eligible to defer payment of their 2019-20 payroll tax until 21 July 2020. This will be available to employers who pay \$7.5 million or less in Australian Taxable Wages and have been impacted by COVID-19.

More information about the support and changes that will be implemented by the Western Australian government can be found [here](#).