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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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COVID-19: ATO Advice on JobKeeper Payments

The following advice has been provided by the Australian Taxation Office in relation to the JobKeeper Payment scheme:

Enrolment is now open for the government's \$130 billion JobKeeper Payment scheme. The scheme supports businesses significantly affected by the coronavirus to help keep more Australians in jobs.

The JobKeeper payment is open to eligible employers, sole traders and other entities to enable them to pay their eligible employee's salary or wages of at least \$1,500 (before tax) per fortnight. You can enrol for the JobKeeper payment through the ATO's Business Portal, in ATO online services using myGov if you are a sole trader, or through a registered tax or BAS agent.

Eligible employers will be reimbursed a fixed amount of \$1,500 per fortnight for each eligible employee.

Employers need to pay all eligible employees a minimum of \$1,500 (before tax) per fortnight to claim the JobKeeper payment. This will be paid to the employer in arrears each month by us. The first payments to eligible employers will commence in the first week of May 2020. JobKeeper payments can be made for the period beginning 30 March 2020.

If employers do not continue to pay their employees for each pay period, they will cease to qualify for the JobKeeper payment.

To be eligible for the JobKeeper payment, employers and their employees must meet a range of criteria.

Keeping the system fair

We are committed to tackling any illegal JobKeeper behaviour to protect honest businesses and the community. If you are concerned that you or someone you know is doing the wrong thing related to JobKeeper payment, you can tell us about it. To report illegal or behaviour of concern, visit <https://www.ato.gov.au/General/Gen/Making-a-tip-off/>.

Information on support for employers and businesses related to COVID-19 is available on the ATO website at <https://www.ato.gov.au/General/COVID-19/Support-for-businesses-and-employers/>.

Further Information

Further information is contained in a comprehensive guide on the JobKeeper Payment scheme prepared by barristers Ian Neil SC, David Chin SC and Christopher Parkin which was emailed to Members on 21 April.

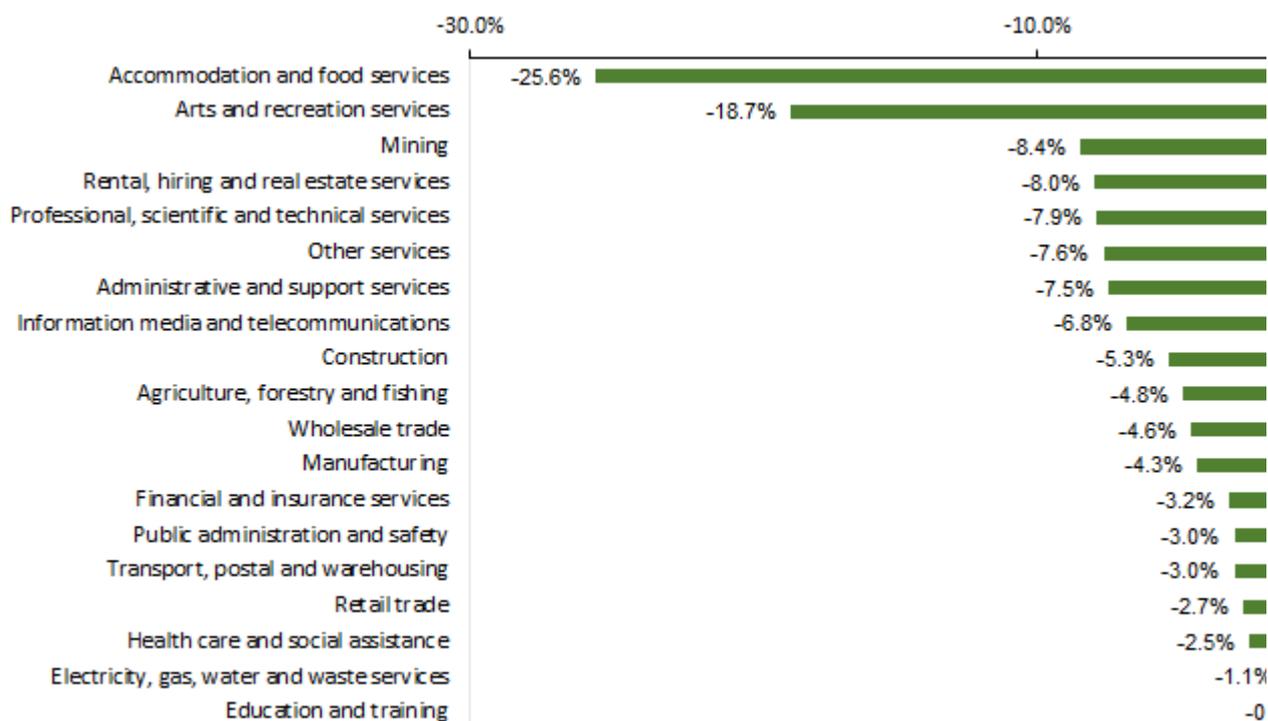
COVID-19: ATO Payroll Data Provides Further Insight into Economic Impact

Adapted from media release, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 21 April, 2020

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has provided an early snapshot of the impact of COVID-19 on the Australian economy by analysing Single Touch Payroll data from the Australian Taxation Office's *Weekly Payroll Jobs in Australia*.

According to the ABS, Single Touch Payroll data covers 99 per cent of businesses employing 20 or more employees and 71 per cent of businesses employing 19 or fewer employees.

Changes in jobs between 14 March and 4 April, by industry



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6160.0.55.001 - Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, Week ending 4 April 2020

The ABS found that between 14 March and 4 April, the number of Australians in jobs fell by 6 per cent while wages paid fell by 6.7 per cent, pointing to a reduction in hours worked for some of the workforce.

As the table on the previous page shows, declines were particularly noticeable in the accommodation and food services sectors (-25.6 per cent), and in arts and recreation (-18.7 per cent).

The number of jobs in the transport, postal and warehousing sector fell by 3 per cent.

Job losses were greatest in Tasmania (down by 7.3 per cent), Victoria (down 6.8 per cent) and NSW (down 6.4 per cent).

Wages paid in the transport, postal and warehousing sector fell by 3.4 per cent.

COVID-19: Fines Rise to Protect Workers

Adapted from media release, The Hon Brad Hazzard MP, Minister for Health, 19 April, 2020

The Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard has said that anyone coughing or spitting on any worker will face a \$5000 on-the-spot fine with tough measures introduced to protect health care staff and police now extended to all workers.

Mr Hazzard said fines have been raised following recent incidents involving retail and transport workers.

'This \$5,000 on-the-spot fine sends a clear message that our community will do whatever it takes to protect these essential workers.' Mr Hazzard said.

The expanded direction commenced on 20 April 2020.

COVID-19: Regulatory Changes to Administration of Workers Compensation and Motor Accidents in NSW

Changes to regulations and guidelines have been made affecting the administration of workers compensation and motor accident guidelines in NSW:

To relieve pressure on general practitioners and the overall health system during the COVID-19 pandemic, treating physiotherapists and psychologists can now provide certification of an injured person's ability to work.

These changes will also make it easier for injured people to continue to receive their weekly benefits, without needing to visit their treating doctor.

However, general practitioners must continue to issue the initial certificate of fitness or certificate of capacity to an injured road user or worker so that the person's full health needs can be assessed.

Thereafter, the treating physiotherapist or psychologist can issue second and subsequent certificates to an injured person if the injury relates to their area of expertise.

The amendments took effect from 17 April 2020 and will be in place for 12 months, unless repealed earlier.

Further information is available from:

- For workers compensation: https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/resources-library/list-of-sira-publications/coronavirus-covid_19/workers-compensation/treating-physiotherapists-and-treating-psychologists.
- For motor accidents: https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/resources-library/list-of-sira-publications/coronavirus-covid_19/motor-accidents/treating-physiotherapists-and-treating-psychologists.

New Notice Provides Alternative to IAP to Enrol HML Vehicles in NSW

The gazettal of the *New South Wales Higher Mass Limits Declaration 2020 (No 1)* allows transport operators operating under Higher Mass Limits in NSW to now use telematics devices already fitted into their vehicles rather than an Intelligent Access Program device.

This Notice replaces the *New South Wales Higher Mass Limits Declaration 2015*. Conditions are unchanged except for updated references to network maps and IAP provisions.

This means HML vehicles operating in NSW can now either be enrolled in a Telematics Monitoring Application with Transport Certification Australia or the IAP with Transport for NSW.

A copy of this Notice is available from <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2020G00278>.

NHVR Amends National Roller Brake Testing Procedure

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has revised Vehicle Standards Guide 21 (VSG-21) which relates to the National Roller Brake Testing Procedure Revised April 2020 to provide guidance on calibration schedules during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NHVR says that revisions have been made following moves by States and Territories to slow the spread of COVID-19 by advising people to stay at home and to limit their travel.

It says there is no way of knowing when these restrictions may be lifted.

The NHVR says it recognises that this will have an impact on an operator's ability to carry out calibrations of their RBT machines in accordance with the VSG-21.

This is because calibration of RBT machines requires a trained technician using specialised equipment to physically attend the machine.

For this reason, the NHVR, in consultation with RBT manufacturers, is extending the date by which the calibration is required by 12 months.

Further information is available at <https://www.nhvr.gov.au/files/201801-0762-vsg21-national-rbt-procedure.pdf>.

Australian Government to Acquire Oil Reserves for Storage in the USA

Adapted from media release, The Hon Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, 22 April, 2020

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction Angus Taylor said the Australian Government has taken steps to boost Australia's long-term fuel security.

He said the Government is taking advantage of dramatic falls in global oil prices and building on its agreement with the United States to access their Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR).

Under the new measures, Australia will establish its first Government-owned oil reserves for domestic fuel security.

This will include storage of Australian Government owned crude oil in the US SPR.

Mr Taylor said the Government would also work with the private sector to consider options for improving domestic fuel security.

He also said the Government will soon launch a process to work with the private sector to identify the best options for further strengthening fuel security in Australia.

Terms of reference will be released in due course and will focus on investment options, supporting the refining sector and assessing the most effective stimulatory options.

Fatality Free Friday: Take the Pledge

ARTIO NSW is pleased to support the Australian Road Safety Foundation's call to 'take the pledge' as part of Fatality Free Friday.

The ARSF invites all Australians to be a part of the digital campaign to encourage the community to 'Choose Road Safety'

The ARSF is looking to create a mosaic theme, with 1,194 images of everyday people, families of road trauma victims, first responders, community road safety advocates and supporters and those directly affected by road trauma.

The number, representing the 1,194 Australians died on our roads in 2019.

Further information is available from <https://arsf.com.au/supporting-road-safety/>.

Sydney Harbour Tunnels Closed from 24 April

ARTIO NSW reminds Members that the Sydney Harbour Tunnels will be closed in both directions for major resurfacing works between The Domain Tunnel and the Warringah Freeway, North Sydney from 8pm Friday 24 to 6am Monday 27 April 2020.

Extended Clearway Hours: Blaxland Rd between Ryde and Epping

Transport for NSW has announced that extended clearway hours are now operational on Blaxland Rd between Devlin St, Ryde and Epping Rd, Epping.

The extended clearway hours are from 6am to 10am and from 3pm to 7pm, Monday to Friday and apply in both directions.