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Fairer Contract Terms for Small Business to Start from 1 January

Adapted from media release, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash MP, Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, 27 November 2020

Large businesses with an annual income exceeding \$100m will have to report on their use of questionable practices to small business suppliers with the release of the Payment Times Reporting Scheme Rules and Guidance Material according to Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Michaelia Cash.

Under the Morrison Government's Payment Times Reporting Scheme large businesses will have to report publicly on how and when they pay their small business suppliers.

The Rules will require large businesses to detail their small business supply chain financing arrangements, such as reverse factoring.

This will ensure small businesses are fully informed about the large businesses that use these types of arrangements.

Minister Cash said small businesses will for the first time have the opportunity to find out how large businesses pay their small business customers and will allow small businesses to make informed decisions about who they do business with.

She said shining a light on large business payment performance will lead to fairer and faster payments for Australia's small and family businesses.

Minister Cash said that after an initial 12-month transition period, civil penalties will apply to reporting businesses that fail to report or give the Payment Times Reporting Regulator a false or misleading report.

More information is available at www.industry.gov.au/regulations-and-standards-payment-times-reporting-scheme.

The Scheme commences on 1 January 2021.

First Annual Population Statement Shows Fall in Population Growth Rate

Adapted from media release, Hon Alan Tudge MP, Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure, 4 December, 2020

Australia's first annual Population Statement, produced by the federal government's Centre for Population, has shown that population growth has declined sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 1.1 million fewer people making up our population by 2031 than previously expected.

The Statement shows population growth in 2020-21 will be the slowest since World War I and that negative net migration is also forecast in 2020 and 2021 for the first time in 75 years.

Australia's population growth is not projected to rebound strongly till 2023-24 and not return to previously expected levels of growth until 2027-28.

Australia's population is expected to reach 28 million in 2028-29, three years later than would have been reached in the absence of COVID-19.

Melbourne is forecast to overtake Sydney as Australia's largest city in 2026-27, primarily due to Sydney's continuing slowing population growth, with negative growth now forecast for the first time since 1952-53.

The Statement finds that whilst Sydney and Melbourne will have the sharpest fall in population growth in the short term due to the slowing of overseas migration, population growth will pick up again.

There is early evidence that more people are choosing to call regional Australia home, disrupting long-term trends.

Capital cities had a net loss of 10,500 people to regional areas in the quarter to June 2020, the largest net quarterly move to the regions on record.

The Statement also shows that COVID-19 will be partially responsible for the faster ageing of Australia's population, as Australians put off having children and fewer young migrants enter Australia in the short term due to international border restrictions.

The slower population growth and faster ageing will directly impact our economic growth.

The first annual Population Statement is available at www.population.gov.au.

Local Council Wins Approval for Female-Only Truck Driver Training Program

Article Courtesy 'Workplace Express', 8 December 2020

A tribunal has approved an employer's plan to assist women to obtain heavy vehicle licences through a female-only waste truck driver training program.

Ipswich City Council applied to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission for an exemption under s113(1) of the State Anti-Discrimination Act from certain provisions of the Act for their training program.

The council said it lodged the application "to address identified barriers to female drivers by linking this with a training program whereby successful female applicants are supported to obtain their [heavy rigid (heavy vehicle)] licence while employed as a trainee driver, rather than the usual pre-requisite of already holding a HR licence".

It identified socio-economic barriers to meeting the HR licence prerequisite, such as the significant costs of obtaining a licence, including specialised lessons, the time involved for the lessons, and the cost of the licence.

The council aims to improve attraction and retention rates for female drivers by expanding its job criteria and training opportunities to include transferable skills and experience from any industry, developing a cohort of female drivers who can support each other, and implementing targeted support and cultural change programs.

It currently has only two female drivers from a cohort of about 50 drivers.

The council referred to the Women Driving Transport Careers initiative, a similar program that achieved an almost 300% increase in female driver participation.

To demonstrate discrimination against women in the transport industry, the council quoted statistics from Driving Change: Transport Industry's Gender Equality Gap Revealed in which the transport industry rated as one of the lowest in Australia for gender diversity, with women comprising just 26.4% of the workforce, far lower than the all-industry average of 46.9%.

Another survey of the transport industry, Working Women in Transport – A Snapshot: The Follow Up – found that of the respondents, only 17.5% of those working in the transport industry were women, and of those, only 6.5% were women in driving roles.

Survey respondents gave examples of discrimination in the industry, including their "capabilities questioned & not taken seriously", "[being paid] less than a male in the same position", and "males assuming you are the office girl".

In reference to the socio-economic barriers to obtaining a licence, the council cited the WGEA's Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistic 2020, which found that on average Australian women were paid 14% less than men.

Candidates disadvantaged by stereotyping: IRC

Deputy President John Merrell found that women seeking employment in trucking are disadvantaged because "the stereotyping of women in the transport industry, by being seen as only being able to perform administrative/office roles, constitutes direct discrimination".

He confirmed that the exemption sought fell under s15(5) of the Human Rights Act (Qld), which provides for affirmative action.

Deputy President Merrell found that as the training program would assist women who had been disadvantaged by discrimination, an exemption should be granted, in accordance with the tribunal's obligation to make a decision compatible with human rights under s58 of the Human Rights Act.

The council won a three year exemption for its training program from ss14, 15, 124 and 127 of the Anti-Discrimination Act, sections which cover work, pre-work and advertising.

[Re: Ipswich City Council \[2020\] QIRC 194 \(17 November 2020\) \(austlii.edu.au\).](#)

Reminder: Electronic Work Diaries Now Available

A reminder that heavy vehicle drivers now have a choice in how they record their work and rest hours, with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator approving the first Electronic Work Diaries.

An EWD is an electronic recording system, approved by the NHVR, used to record the work and rest times of a driver as a voluntary alternative to the Written Work Diary.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack congratulated Step Global and Teletrac Navman on meeting the strict requirements to provide an alternative to a Written Work Diary.

Mr McCormack said the EWD cuts red tape enabling drivers to record their work and rest hours by simply pressing a button, rather than spending time ruling lines and counting multiple time periods on multiple pieces of paper.

NHVR Chair Duncan Gay said the EWD will enable companies and drivers to more effectively focus on managing their fatigue, rather than managing the book – which is an important step forward in delivering improved fatigue safety outcomes.

For more information please visit www.nhvr.gov.au/ewd.

TCA Announces V-DAQ as New Telematics Monitoring Application Service Provider

Adapted from media release, Transport Certification Australia, 4 December, 2020

Transport Certification Australia has announced V-DAQ as a new service provider offering the Telematics Monitoring Application through the National Telematics Framework.

According to TCA, V-DAQ is an Australian company providing intelligence and connectivity to vehicles using its type-approved plug-and-play telematics device and data distribution platform.

It says V-DAQ already offers the Road Infrastructure Management application and builds upon its success by becoming certified to offer applications up to Level 2 Assurance through the NTF.

TCA says certification recognises V-DAQ's ability to satisfy its performance-based functional and technical requirements to provide the level of assurance sought by stakeholders.

As a Level 2 application, TMA is in use across the country to improve the productivity of freight transport.

TCA says TMA provides a lower-cost alternative for regulatory telematics applications, making it more accessible and affordable for a wider range of transport operators to take advantage of the productivity benefits being made available by authorities.

Details of productivity-enhancing schemes available to transport operators through TMA are available on our website at www.tca.gov.au/tma-schemes.

V-DAQ's certification extends to the type-approval of its telematics device, which can be used with both RIM and TMA applications.

"V-DAQ makes it easy for transport operators to benefit from data across a range of applications and services, including software providers for asset tracking, job allocation, compliance management, and fuel tax credits," said Paul Fenech, Director at V-DAQ.

"At V-DAQ, our goal is to make telematics compliance simple, affordable and more accessible for operators. We're excited to now be able to offer TMA, as well as RIM."

"We look forward to working with transport operators who are seeking to use TMA or RIM – it's easy to get started, we'll handle the enrolment process for you," said Mr Fenech.

TCA Approves Airtec Corporation's Smart On-Board Mass System

Adapted from media release, Transport Certification Australia, 2 December, 2020

Transport Certification Australia has announced Airtec Corporation has obtained type-approval for a smart on-board mass system.

On-board mass systems measure the mass of axle groups and calculate the gross vehicle mass of a vehicle.

TCA says smart OBM systems use digital technology to collect mass data from vehicles in a standardised way through the National Telematics Framework and are future-ready with Intelligent Mass capability.

New road access arrangements (schemes) that rely on the availability of mass data collected through the use of smart OBM systems have potential to drive renewed productivity and safety reforms.

David Hewett, Managing Director of Airtec Corporation, said, "Airtec is a leading supplier and manufacturer of digital tyre inflators, inflator accessories and mass management systems around the world."

He added, "We're pleased to have obtained type-approval for a smart OBM system, which allows transport operators to take advantage of new initiatives currently being introduced."

Mr Hewett said, "We're also proud of our efforts to ensure there is backward compatibility. It means that vehicles already fitted with the 89AXM Series can easily be upgraded to a smart OBM system."

Details of OBM systems approved by TCA are available at www.tca.gov.au/type-approved-obm.

Road Works Update

New Gunnedah Bridge to Improve Higher Productivity Vehicle Access

The new Gunnedah bridge, which connects the Oxley and Kamilaroi highways for higher productivity vehicles, is now open.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said the bridge linking the Oxley Hwy with Warrabungle St will coincide with the closure of the New St level crossing.

"Gunnedah has been a significant freight pinchpoint in the North West, and the \$61 million investment by the NSW Government in this bridge will fix that, allowing an uninterrupted flow of traffic for heavy vehicles through town in a big boost for productivity," Mr Toole said.

Changed Traffic Conditions, Hume Hwy and Conroy St, Bookham

Work will be carried out on the Hume Hwy and Conroy St, at Bookham between 7am and 5pm from Monday 7 December and is expected to be completed in three weeks, weather permitting.

On the Hume Hwy, one of two lanes will be temporarily closed to traffic for short periods during work times.

At Conroy St, temporary traffic changes will be in place while small sections of the road are being worked on which includes short delays on Conroy St West.

Traffic exiting Conroy Street East will be directed to use Illalong Rd for access to the Hume Hwy.

M4 Smart Motorway Trial Underway

A trial of the State's first smart motorway on the M4 is underway.

Minister for Transport and Roads Andrew Constance said the Smart Motorway will improve travel times for more than 150,000 vehicles using the M4 each day.

Overhead gantries are being progressively activated between Penrith and Parramatta to allow drivers to get used to the changes.

Transport for NSW Chief Operations Officer Howard Collins this technology will ensure less stop-start traffic and sudden braking at some of the most congested points along the motorway.

He said that once all systems are switched on, they will talk to each other and automatically adjust to incidents without manual intervention.

Mr Collins said that when the entire M4 Smart Motorway is operational, journey times along the M4 between Penrith and Parramatta are expected to be reduced by up to 15 minutes in the morning peak.

The M4 Smart Motorway is on schedule to be fully activated later this year.

Wells Crossing to Glenugie Pacific Hwy Northbound Lanes Open

New eight km long northbound lanes between Wells Crossing and Glenugie on the Pacific Hwy are now open.

Newell Hwy Upgrade between Mungle Back Creek and Boggabilla Open

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack has announced that an upgraded 27 km section of the Newell Hwy between Mungle Back Creek and Boggabilla is now open to traffic.

The upgrade includes 3.5-metre-wide lanes, intersection improvements, widening of shoulders and two new overtaking lanes.

Further work is being carried out till 18 December with final work, including a final seal to be carried out after the school holidays

Overtaking Lane on Newell Hwy Near Tocumwal Now Open

A new overtaking lane six kms south of Tocumwal is now open.

Work Underway at Testers Hollow

Work is underway to raise a flood prone section of Cessnock Rd at Testers Hollow, between Kurri Kurri and Maitland, by 1.5 metres to reduce closures due to flooding and improve connectivity across a growing part of the Hunter region.

Other Road Works

Suburb/ Town	Road	Date/s	No of Shifts	Work Times
Banksia	Princes Hwy between Subway Rd to Taylor Ave	2-18/12/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Bellevue Hill	Old South Head Rd eastbound between Penkivil St and O'Brien St	25/11-18/12/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Beverly Hills	King Georges Rd from Stoney Creek Rd to Forest Rd	30/10-20/28/2/21		7am-6pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat 9pm-5am Sun-Thu
Camperdown	Pymont Bridge Rd between Barr St and Cross St	25/11-18/12/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Caringbah	Taren Pt Rd turn into Kingsway	15/11-18/12/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Edgecliff, Double Bay	New South Head Rd from Henrietta St to Ocean St	6-18/12/20	4	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Glebe	Bridge Rd from Darghan St to Wentworth Park Rd	25/11-18/12/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Greenacre	Roberts Rd from Juno Pde to Norfolk Rd	29/11-18/12/20 6/1-12/2/21	12	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Landsdowne, Georges Hall	Henry Lawson Dr from Beatty Pde to Hynes St	6/1-17/3/21	17	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Maroubra, Randwick, Kingsford	Anzac Pde/Avoca St between Storey St and Burbong St	6/1-15/2/21	12	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Mascot, Alexandria	Botany Rd from Hughes Ave to Gillespie Ave	8-18/12/20 6-15/1/21	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Moore Park	Cleveland St from South Dowling St to Anzac Pde	6-18/12/20 6/1-2/2/21	9	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Penshurst	Forest Rd eastbound near Cambridge St	25/11-18/12/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri
Rose Bay	New South Head Rd from Bayview Hill Rd to Tivoli St	21/12/20-25/1/21	35 8	7am-10pm Mon-Sun 10pm-7am Mon-Sun
Rose Bay	New South Head Rd from Elanora St to Lyne Park Access Rd	6-22/12/20 5/1-7/2/21	15 30	7am-10pm Mon-Fri 8am-1pm Sat 9pm-5am Sun-Thu
St Peters	Campbell St, Campbell Rd from Unwins Bridge Rd to Burrows Rd	19/11-22/12/20	25	7am-6pm Mon-Fri
Zetland, Beaconsfield	Cnr Botany Rd and Hansard St	25/11-18/12/20	6	8pm-5am Sun-Fri

Economic and Industry Indicators

Indicator/Source ¹	As at	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Annual % Variation
GDP latest quarter (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	\$m	476,043	-3.8
CPI (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent		0.7
Cash rate (RBA)	Current	Per cent	0.1	
Household savings ratio (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent	18.9	304.8
Retail turnover (ABS)	Oct 2020	\$m	29,552	7.1
Actual new capital expenditure (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	\$m	25,850	-13.8
Inventories held by private business (ABS)	Sep 2020	\$m	163,905	-4.6
Dwelling unit approvals (ABS)	Oct 2020	Number	16,584	14.3
Manufacturers Income (ABS)	Sep 2020	\$m	86,304	-1.6
TEUs Port Botany (NSW Ports)	4 months to Oct 2020	Number	864,360	0.6
Employed persons (ABS)	Oct 2020	Million	12.774	-132.3
Unemployment rate (ABS)	Oct 2020	Per cent	7.0	1.7
Wage price Index (ABS)	Sep Qtr 2020	Per cent		
All employees				1.4
Transport, postal and warehousing				1.4
New motor vehicle sales (FCAI)	11 months to Nov 2020	Number	821,316	-16.1
Heavy commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	11 months to Nov 2020	Number	13,812	-22.0
Light commercial vehicle sales (FCAI)	11 months to Nov 2020	Number	8,934	-6.7
AIP Terminal Gate Price-Diesel-Sydney	8 Dec 2020	Cents/litre incl. GST	106.6	-28.0

Commentary

Australia's economic environment remains sluggish, notwithstanding a turnaround in economic activity since the June 2020 quarter.

The data above paint a gloomy picture with Gross Domestic Product down 3.8 per cent in the year ending 30 September, (7 per cent for the year ending 30 June), and the Reserve Bank's (RBA) official interest rate now sitting at 0.1 per cent, the lowest ever.

There are plenty of signs of excess capacity in the economy. The household savings ratio, which measures households' preparedness to spend what they earn, rose to 18.9 per cent in the September 2020 quarter compared to 6.2 per cent a year ago. Unemployment is up over the 12 months to 31 October to 7 per cent, compared to 5.3 per cent a year earlier.

These indicators underpin a low inflation rate of 0.7 per cent for the year ending 30 September, well below the RBA's target of two to three percent, and annual wages growth across the workforce as a whole and in the transport, postal and warehousing sector of 1.4 per cent, also well down on historical norms.

While there are signs of green shoots evident in the sharp growth in retail sales and dwelling unit approvals compared to a year earlier, other sectors of the economy remain sluggish. The fact that motor vehicle sales are down 16 per cent over the year is evidence that there is no consistent spending pattern.

The indicators in the table above also point to caution within the business community. Actual new capital expenditure remains weak and commercial vehicle sales, especially at the heavy end are quite depressed.

However, there are good prospects for a further rebound in economic activity driven by consumer confidence in the December quarter. This will be driven by the reopening of the Victorian economy and decisions taken by various states and territories to ease quarantine restrictions as well as restrictions related to the arts,

¹ ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics; RBA – Reserve Bank of Australia; AIP – Australian Institute of Petroleum; FCAI – Federated Chamber of Automotive Industries

entertainment, restaurant, café and hotel sectors. There will be beneficial flow on impacts to sectors such as domestic tourism and aviation in addition to those sectors directly affected by restrictions on visitation.

Given all the money Australians have saved this year and the fact they can't spend it on overseas holidays yet, further, more broadly based domestic spending growth is to be expected.

While these developments are welcome and likely, it will be some time before the excess capacity in the broader economy is used up and there is broadly based business investment growth.

The sharp drop in the rate of population growth will act as a permanent dampener on economic growth because the fall in the birth rate, the collapse in overseas university admissions and the collapse in immigration means fewer mouths to feed and people to shelter and clothe.

The industry can expect a gradual return to more normal economic conditions in the medium term.

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