

NECA MEMBER COVID-19 UPDATE

LATEST FEDERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. NATIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE UPDATE

SME Guarantee Scheme – supporting up to \$40 billion of lending to SME businesses

The Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme will provide small and medium sized business with timely access to working capital to help them get through the impact of the Coronavirus.

The Government will provide eligible banks and non-bank lenders with a guarantee for loans with the following terms:

- SMEs, including sole traders, with a turnover of up to \$50 million.
- Maximum total size of loans of \$250,000 per borrower.
- Loans will be up to three years, with an initial six month repayment holiday.
- Unsecured finance, meaning that borrowers will not have to provide an asset as security for the loan.

Under the Scheme, the Government will support up to \$40 billion of lending to SMEs, with the Government guaranteeing 50 per cent of new loans issued by eligible lenders until 30 September 2020.

For more information: <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/sme-guarantee-scheme>

Hardship provisions for energy, water and rates

The National Cabinet has agreed to a nationally consistent approach to hardship support across the essential services for households and small businesses including energy, telecommunications, water utilities and local governments.

Businesses eligible for the JobKeeper payment will automatically be considered to be under 'financial stress' for the purposes of accessing hardship arrangements.

The government will work with the organisations supplying essential services to apply the principles recently released Statement of Expectations. These include:

- Offering flexible payment options to all households and small businesses in financial stress – including small businesses eligible for the JobKeeper Payment;
- Not disconnecting restricting supply/services to those in financial stress;
- Deferring debt recovery proceedings and credit default listing;
- Waiving late fees and interest charges on debt; and
- Minimising planned outages for critical works, and provide as much notice as possible to assist households and businesses during any outage.

2. RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESS

My Business Health web portal

The *My Business Health* web portal has been re-designed to walk small business owners and sole traders through the practical steps they need to take to keep their businesses afloat.

My Business Health in partnership with mental health organisation Beyond Blue is providing support to small business owners struggling to cope with the COVID-19 crisis.

For more information: <https://www.asbfeo.gov.au/my-business-health/home>
Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service:
<https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/>

3. NATIONAL REGISTER TO CONNECT APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES WITH EMPLOYERS

Apprentices and trainees from small businesses who recently lost their jobs are now able to connect with prospective employers through the Apprentice and Trainee Re-engagement Register.

The Register will support apprentices and trainees displaced as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, by connecting them with a network of employers across the country. The register enables apprentices and trainees who were in a training contract with a small business at March 1 to upload details such as qualifications, work experience and resumes.

The register is hosted by the National Apprentice Employment Network (NAEN) and supported by the Australian Government, as part of the economic response to the coronavirus.

Employers who re-engage apprentices or trainees displaced from a small business may be eligible for a wage subsidy of 50 per cent of the apprentice's or trainee's wage, under the government's Supporting Apprentices and Trainees initiative.

For more information: <https://naen.com.au/apprentice-and-trainee-re-engagement-register/>

Supporting Apprentices and Trainees wage subsidy: <https://www.employment.gov.au/supporting-apprentices-and-trainees>

4. NORTH WEST TASMANIA LOCKDOWN

NECA Tasmania members will be aware of the lockdown in North West Tasmania due to the breakout of coronavirus in two separate hospitals.

NECA has been advised by the Tasmanian Government that if you are not one of the 5,000 people required to self-isolate and if your job is not at any of the sites that require deep cleaning, then you can still proceed with your jobs. However, the Government reminds us that procedures for social distancing and hygiene are equally applicable for worksites. NECA is also advised that many hardware and supply shops should still be open for the trades.

For further information: contact Suresh Manickam on 0438 196 800

LATEST STATE AND TERRITORY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Contact your local NECA Chapter website for regular updates.