



State and Territory Government COVID-19 Stimulus Measures Updated Advice

SUMMARY

Each state and territory government has announced measures designed to stimulate activity in the face of the health crisis. This Advice provides an overview of the business elements in each state and territory's approach, together with links to further details.

Western Australia

The WA Government announced a number of stimulus measures on 16 March. For further details see [here](#).

The measures include:

Payroll tax relief

- The already-announced lift in the payroll tax threshold will be brought forward by six months to July 1, 2020.
- A one-off grant of \$17,500 will be available for employers, whose annual Australian taxable wages are more than \$1 million and up to \$4 million (assessed on a business group basis).
- Businesses that pay \$7.5 million or less in Australian taxable wages may be eligible for a deferral of current WA payroll tax liabilities (for 2019-20) until 21 July 2020 if they are directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19.

For further information see [here](#).

Queensland

On Tuesday 24 March the Queensland Government announced further measures to support industry and the economy in confronting the impacts of COVID-19.

For the full announcement see [here](#).

Payroll tax measures

The following payroll tax measures were announced:

- For small and medium businesses and large businesses specifically impacted by COVID-19, the Government will refund two months' worth of payroll tax.
- Small and medium businesses have been granted a three-month payroll tax holiday, and a further six-month payroll tax deferral.
- These additional measures come on top of the previously announced capacity for businesses adversely affected by COVID-19 to apply to defer payments of payroll tax in respect of the 2019-20 year until 3 August 2020.

More information and how to apply see [here](#).

Other measures

The 24 March measures also include a facility to assist workers who lose their job or income and help them find jobs in other industries.

Liquor licencing fees for venues that have had to close their doors have been waived.

Rent relief has been offered to small businesses who rent premises from the state government.

The government has announced a \$500 rebate on power bills for sole traders, small and medium businesses a \$500 rebate on their power bills for this year.

Other measures previously announced

For more information see [here](#).

Small business loans

The Government also announced a \$500 million concessional loan facility that will include low interest loans of up to \$250,000 for carry on finance with an initial 12-month interest free period for businesses to retain staff.

The details are not yet available although the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) which is responsible for the administration of the concessional loans is currently taking expressions of interest in the lead up to rolling these loans out as soon as possible. For more information on this loan program see [here](#)

Other programs

The Queensland Government is, in addition, ensuring that a range of existing programs will be administered in ways that extend support to businesses. See [here](#) for further details.

New South Wales

On the 27th March, the NSW Government announced an economic package to protect the community and jobs in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak. This package builds on the NSW Government's first stage health and economic stimulus boost announced on the 17th March.

The key business measures announced in the NSW COVID-19 Stage 2 package are set out below.

The full announcement is available [here](#).

Working for NSW Fund

This fund will be created to sustain business, create new jobs and retrain employees. This fund will comprise \$750 million in new funding and \$250 million for additional cleaning services.

Payroll tax measures

- Deferral of payroll tax for businesses with payrolls exceeding \$10 million for six months. (Businesses with payrolls of \$10 million or less received a three-month waiver on payroll tax in the first package).
- Under the new package, businesses with payrolls of \$10 million or less will receive an additional three-month deferral of payroll tax.

Other measures in the Stage 2 package

- Deferral of parking space levy for six months;
- Deferral of rents for six months for commercial tenants with less than 20 employees in all Government-owned properties; and
- Deferral of gaming tax for clubs, pubs and hotels, and lotteries tax for six months, (conditional on these funds being used to retain staff).

The 17 March measures announced by the NSW Government included the following:

Payroll tax measures (Stage 1)

- Payroll tax liabilities will be waived for the remainder of 2019-20 for businesses with payrolls of up to \$10 million.
- The already announced increase in the payroll tax threshold to \$1 million will be brought forward to 2020-21.

Fees and charges on some businesses

A range of fees and charges will be waived for small businesses including bars, cafes, restaurants and tradies.

Additional public sector spending

The NSW Government has announced that it will:

- Bring forward capital works and maintenance spending totalling \$750 million including on public assets including social housing and crown land fencing.
- Employ additional cleaners of public infrastructure such as transport assets, schools and other public buildings.

More information about the 17 March measures announced by the NSW Government can be found [here](#).

South Australia

On 26 March the South Australian Government announced a number of initiatives as part of its second economic stimulus package in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. These follow an earlier set of measures announced on 11 March. The new measures have five elements which are summarised below.

The full announcement is available [here](#).

Payroll tax measures

- 6-month waiver for all businesses with an annual payroll up to \$4 million (on a grouped basis)
- Employers with annual wages above \$4 million (on a grouped basis) can defer payroll tax payments for 6 months on demonstration of significant impacts on cash flow of coronavirus.

Land tax relief

- Individuals and businesses with outstanding quarterly bills for 2019-20 can defer payments for 6 months.
- For 2020-21, Land Tax Transition Fund relief (related to the new approach to Land Tax recently introduced) will be increased from 50% to 100% based on existing relief criteria guidelines – saving some investors up to \$50,000.

Waiver of liquor licence fees

Waiver of liquor licence fees for 2020-21 for those hotels, restaurants, cafes and clubs forced to close as a result of new social distancing restrictions

Business and Jobs Support Fund

The Government has established this fund to support individual businesses and industry sectors directly affected by coronavirus.

Community and Jobs Fund

The Government has established this fund to support community organisations, sporting, arts and recreational bodies, non-profit organisations as well as some industry sectors whose operations have been impacted by the coronavirus.

This fund will also help with training of South Australians seeking new skills and employment and to assist organisations meet increased demand for services including emergency relief.

The measures above are in addition to these measures announced by the South Australian Government on 11 March:

- Undertake major infrastructure maintenance projects including road and hospital upgrades;
- Invest in new tourism infrastructure; and
- Expand the Business Growth Fund to support local industry.

These measures are themselves in addition to an earlier injection in nature-based tourism infrastructure to boost employment and the long-term visitor economy in regions hit hard by the summer's bushfires.

The full announcement of 11 March is available [here](#).

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government has announced several measures to support industry and employment in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Payroll tax measures

- Payroll tax liabilities will be waived for hospitality, tourism and seafood industry businesses for the last four months of 2019-20.
- Other businesses with payrolls of up to \$5 million will be able to apply, based on the impact of virus, to have their payroll tax waived for April to June 2020.
- In a Youth Employment measure a payroll tax rebate will be available for one year, for businesses that employ a person aged 24 and under between April and December 2020.

Assistance in employing apprentices and Trainees

The already announced Small Business Grants Program to provide a \$5,000 grant for businesses that hire an apprentice or trainee in the tourism, hospitality, building and construction, and manufacturing industries has been brought forward.

Interest free loans for small business

Businesses with a turnover of less than \$5 million in the hospitality, tourism, seafood production, and exports sectors will be able to apply for interest-free loans to assist them purchase equipment or restructure their operations.

Small business cash flow measures

The Tasmanian Government has indicated that, subject to contractual commitments, it will reduce payment times to small businesses from 30 days to 14 days and extend payment terms for small businesses from 30 days to 90 days.

Maintenance programs

Maintenance on public buildings will be fast tracked over the next 12 months. This will provide an injection into local trades around the state and continue to support confidence in local communities.

Waiving or reducing a range of fees and charges

- Waive application fees for liquor licensing and reduce ongoing liquor licensing fees by 50 per cent for calendar 2020.
- Waive a number of lease, license and parks' entry fees for tourism operators for the period from 1 April to 30 June.
- Annual Fisheries fees levies for the rock lobster, giant crab, fin fishers and for abalone divers, will be waived for 12 months.

Northern Territory

On 19 March the Northern Territory Government announced a Business Improvement Scheme under which eligible businesses:

- Will be able to receive \$10,000 to spend on reinvigorating their premises.
- In addition, the Government will provide a further \$10,000 under the scheme to finance an upgrade with a total value of \$30,000 if the businessperson contributes \$10,000.

The Government is limiting the scheme to upgrades and purchases supplied by another Territory business and could include the purchase of new equipment and shop fit-outs.

For further details see [here](#).

Australian Capital Territory

On 20 March the ACT Government announced its "initial" stimulus measures including the following measures for small and medium-sized businesses:

- An interest free deferral of payroll tax liabilities for the period commencing 1 July 2020 for businesses with a payroll level of \$10 million.
- A \$750 rebate for small business owners to help with power bills.
- A six-month waiver on payroll tax for hospitality, creative arts and entertainment industries.
- A rebate on the fixed charge for 2019-20 on commercial rates for small businesses.
- A waiver of fees for food business registration and liquor licencing fees (excluding off-license) and outdoor dining fees.

The Government also indicated it would set up a business liaison team to assist local businesses access these measures.

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

Victoria

The Victorian Government has announced a set of measures to support businesses and employees.

The package includes full payroll tax refunds for the 2019-20 financial year to small and medium-sized businesses with payroll of less than \$3 million. Payments will begin in the week commencing 23 March.

Businesses of this size will also be able to defer until 1 January 2021, any payroll tax for the first three months of the 2020/21 financial year.

Commercial tenants in government buildings can apply for rent relief with private landlords encouraged to replicate.

Land tax payments for 2020 will be deferred will be deferred for eligible small businesses.

The Government will accelerate payment of outstanding supplier invoices within five business days and is encouraging private sector businesses to do the same to the extent possible.

Liquor licensing fees for 2020 for affected venues will be waived.

The Victorian Government has established a *Business Support Fund to support the hardest hit sectors* (including but not limited to hospitality, tourism, accommodation, arts and entertainment, and retail). Ai Group, the Victorian Chamber and the Australian Hotels Association have been asked to help guide the administration of the fund.)

The Government has also established a *Working for Victoria Fund* to assist workers who have lost their jobs find new opportunities and to facilitate job matching to help Victorians find short-term or casual roles.

The full announcement is available [here](#).

Do you require further advice?

Ai Group has set up a special [section on our website](#) to provide access to Ai Group advice and assistance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For information or assistance, please contact the **Ai Group Workplace Advice Line** on 1300 55 66 77.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Burn'.

Peter Burn

Head of Influence and Policy

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or assistance, please contact the Ai Group Workplace Advice Line on 1300 55 66 77.