

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update 7/4

JobKeeper legislation to be debated tomorrow

Federal Parliament will sit tomorrow to debate legislation regarding the proposed JobKeeper program. We will be closely watching and making sense of all the details for you as they emerge.

It is likely that this legislation will pass. If it does, the JobKeeper program will greatly assist eligible businesses in staff retention over the next six months by providing payments of \$1,500 per employee per fortnight. Where an employee's total remuneration is less than \$1,500 per fortnight (before tax), or has been stood down, the employer must provide the employee at least \$1,500 per fortnight (before tax). Where an employee earns more than \$1,500 per fortnight, employers can use the payment to subsidise the employee's wages.

You are encouraged to read the Federal Government's FAQs on the JobKeeper program by [clicking here](#) and registering for updates by [clicking here](#).

Return to Work (COVID-19) Injury Amendment Bill 2020

The South Australian Labor Party will introduce a Bill to State Parliament this week that seeks to amend the *Return to Work Act 2014 (SA)* to reverse the onus of proof so that employees who are diagnosed with COVID-19 are presumed to have contracted the disease from their employment, unless their employer can prove otherwise.

We have significant concerns with the Bill, in particular, the impacts that it will have on members who operate service stations and those in passenger transport such as bus and coach operators.

Recent local examples of employees from a western suburbs pharmacy and a supermarket contracting COVID-19 demonstrate that the virus can just as likely be acquired outside of these environments and that specific workplaces and occupations should not be used as the measure of proof.

We are strongly urging that the Opposition reconsider the passage of the Bill through Parliament and we have also written to SA Best and John Darley asking that they do not support the Bill.

Commercial Leases

Today the Prime Minister announced that a mandatory code will be legislated in each state and territory for commercial leases. While final details are to be revealed, it is expected that small and medium sized businesses with a turnover of under \$50 million will be eligible for relief if they have reductions in turnover which make them eligible for the JobKeeper Payment.

Under the scheme, waivers of rent must account for at least 50 per cent of the reduction in business and deferrals must be covered over the balance of the lease period and for no less than 12 months. There will also be binding mediation rolled out in each state and territory.

As always, we will keep you updated with all the developments in this space and will bring more information as it is made available to us.

Keep checking into our COVID-19 portal

Yesterday, we updated a large number of items on the Signage, Templates and Business Forms section of the COVID-19 portal including an interactive checklist and 'Open for Business' posters for you to use. You can access the portal by [clicking here](#).

Remember that the team is just a phone call away if you need on 8291 2000.

Stay safe and remember to keep up the social distancing! It is working.

Paul Uerkov
MTA CEO

