

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 13 September 2020

SUPPORTING VICTORIAN BUSINESSES ON OUR ROAD TO COVID NORMAL

A massive new support package will see \$3 billion in cash grants, tax relief and cashflow support delivered to Victorian businesses as we work together to drive coronavirus cases down and progress along our roadmap to COVID Normal.

Premier Daniel Andrews today announced the multi-billion package to help businesses survive and keep Victorians in jobs – taking the Government's total business support to over \$6 billion.

Over \$1.1 billion in cash grants will support small and medium sized businesses that are most affected by coronavirus restrictions including \$822 million as part of the third round of the Business Support Fund. Around 75,000 eligible businesses with payrolls up to \$10 million will receive grants of \$10,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000 depending on their size. More than 108,000 businesses have already shared in \$1.47 billion from the first two rounds of Business Support Fund grants.

Victoria's hospitality businesses are the bedrock of our economy, but right now, many are going through a tough time. To support our bars, restaurants, pubs, clubs, hotels and reception centres, the Government will establish a \$251 million dedicated Licenced Venue Fund, with grants of between \$10,000 and \$30,000 for licenced venues of all shapes and sizes. The Government is also providing further relief by waiving liquor license fees for 2021.

Trips to Victoria's ski fields haven't been possible for thousands of families this year, so the Government will give businesses in our alpine resorts the support they need with grants of up to \$20,000 to help cover their resort fees, saving them a combined \$4.3 million.

The Government will also partner with local business groups and chambers of commerce, with grants of up to \$20,000 so they can help their members adapt and find their feet in a COVID Normal world.

To date, almost 20,000 Victorian businesses have received payroll tax refunds in the last financial year worth more than \$540 million – and thousands more received a full waiver. To provide a much needed \$1.7 billion cashflow boost for businesses, the Government will now defer payroll tax for businesses with payrolls up to \$10 million for the full 2020-21 financial year.

Building on that support, the Government will also provide a further \$137 million in waivers and deferrals of charges including liquor licence fees, the congestion levy and increases to the landfill levy. The 50 per cent stamp duty discount for commercial and industrial property across all of regional Victoria will be brought forward to 1 January 2021 and the Vacant Residential Land Tax will be waived for properties that are vacant in 2020.

Even after we reach COVID Normal, many businesses will be required to change the way they do things, so we can keep cases low and protect our hard-won gains. That's why the Government will invest \$44 million to equip businesses with the support they need to thrive under a COVID Normal. It includes \$20 million for small businesses to access off-the-shelf digital programs such as Shopify or Squareonline, training and workshops designed to help businesses adapt to online operations.

For information about coronavirus visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or call 1800 675 398.

Victoria is home to some of the best fresh food, wine, galleries and homewares in the world – but the pandemic has hit many small producers hard. The Government has already rolled out *Click for Vic*, a new website and campaign aimed at encouraging Victorians to support these hard-working local businesses. Already the website has generated 211,000 leads to businesses featured – now we'll boost that effort with \$8.5 million for more marketing and advertising, and expanding the digital platform and its partnerships with third-party e-commerce providers to sell these strengths far and wide.

Exports are vital to Victoria's economy – contributing 12 per cent to Victoria's GSP and 330,000 Victorian jobs. That's why we're launching a \$15.7 million export recovery package to address logistics and supply chain issues caused by the pandemic, and establish new export channels. Businesses will be connected to international markets through virtual trade missions as well as assistance to adapt their export strategies to respond to the rapidly changing global market.

Additional details about support for businesses will be made available at www.business.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"For our state to recover, we need our businesses to recover too. As we take our first safe and steady steps towards COVID Normal, this support will help make sure we get through this together"

"We'll continue meeting with and listening to businesses, so we can do everything we can to support them and their workers."

Quote attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas

"As we drive down case numbers and reach COVID Normal – we're providing billions of dollars in support to make sure businesses make it through to COVID Normal."

Quote attributable to Minister for Industry Support and Recovery Martin Pakula

"We're helping business to endure during these difficult times, and then to rebuild on the other side. This package comes on the back of extensive consultation with businesses in every sector."