

Latest financial support for businesses and individuals

Since our last newsletter Victoria has seen another two lockdowns during June and July as businesses continue to adapt and remain flexible in the face of a COVID-19 environment.

Along with the lockdown the federal and state governments have announced new funding options for businesses and individuals.

We continue to bring timely updates of these announcements to our clients to provide peace of mind. These items focus on Victorian and some national funding available after the latest lockdowns.

As information is regularly changing, at the time of writing this not all funding applications are open but we regularly update our blog as new information comes to hand. To view it, [click here](#).

If you have any questions regarding any of the support, or would like assistance determining your eligibility, please contact us.

Funding now available:

Business Costs Assistance Program round two July extension

This extension provides eligible businesses that had not previously applied for the Program in June, or have since become eligible, with the opportunity to apply for \$4,800 in support.

Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund 2021 July extension

This extension provides eligible businesses that did not apply for the program in June 2021 with the opportunity to apply for \$7,200 in support.

To receive this funding, venues will need to have received or been eligible for the [Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund 2021](#).

Newly announced funding:

Small Business COVID Hardship Fund

A new fund will be established to support small businesses who have not been eligible under existing business support funds.

Small businesses with a payroll of up to \$10 million who have experienced a 70% or greater reduction in revenue will be eligible for grants of up to \$5,000.

Business Continuity Fund

This new fund will provide \$5,000 grants to businesses that remain impacted by capacity limits placed on businesses per restrictions. 24 eligible sectors are covered by the fund.

Businesses located in the Melbourne CBD who continue to be impacted due to restrictions on the number of staff allowed in office buildings, will be eligible to receive an additional \$2,000.

All recipients must have received or been eligible for the previous [Business Cost Assistance Program](#).

Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme and Landlord Hardship Fund

The reintroduced Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme will provide rent relief for eligible tenants, while separate support will be provided to landlords who offer rent relief.

COVID-19 Disaster Payment

The COVID-19 Disaster Payment is a national payment and will be increased for Victorian workers in future lockdowns.

People who have lost more than 20 hours a week will receive \$750 and the people who have lost between eight and 20 hours of work will receive \$450 a week.

For the vast majority of microbusinesses not registered for GST, they will be eligible for the COVID-19 Disaster Payment.

Managing volunteers and the COVID-19 vaccine



As Australia rolls out the COVID-19 vaccine, some organisations are thinking about whether they can require their volunteers to be vaccinated as a condition of engagement. Organisations that work with vulnerable groups or have direct contact with the public might have a greater sense of urgency to vaccinate their team.

[Justice Connect](#) has created a [fact sheet](#) for employers which covers key questions regarding COVID-19 and the vaccine. The fact sheet covers the following key questions:

Can our organisation make a COVID-19 vaccination mandatory?

There are currently no laws that require anyone to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The federal, state and territory governments have indicated that the COVID-19 vaccination will not be compulsory, however, they strongly encourage people to be vaccinated.

Some state and territory health agencies may still pass public health orders that make it compulsory for people working in high risk workplaces (such as aged care, travel and border security) to be vaccinated. These orders may apply to volunteers, and organisations must comply with public health orders that are issued.

Can our organisation end a volunteer relationship if a volunteer refuses to be vaccinated?

If you are required by law or a public health order to have your volunteers vaccinated, you should act in accordance with the law and end the volunteer relationship if a volunteer refuses to be vaccinated. There are some things you can consider before reaching this point which you can read about in the fact sheet

Could our organisation be responsible if an unvaccinated volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19 in the course of their volunteering?

If a volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19, the organisation could be held responsible if it failed to take reasonable precautions to manage this risk.

Under negligence and work health and safety laws, all organisations are required to take reasonable steps to protect the safety of their volunteers. If your organisation has followed these laws it is unlikely it will be directly responsible.

For more information on the above, and to view the full fact sheet, [click here](#).

UK trade deal provides boost for exports

A new Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United Kingdom (UK) will deliver more Australian jobs and business opportunities for exporters.

Both Australia and the UK will benefit by gaining greater access to a range of high quality products made in the other country as well as greater access for businesses and workers, all of which will create additional employment and drive economic growth.

Tariffs on 99% of Australian exports to the UK will be phased out over a decade, providing a significant boost to the Australian agriculture industry.

The key industries in the FTA include:

Meat trade

Tariffs on beef and lamb will be gradually removed over the course of 10 years. During the transition period, exporters will receive large quotas for tariff-free shipments into the UK.

Sugar producers

Tariffs on sugar will be fully abolished in eight years. Like producers in the meat industry, Australian sugar producers will be able to export goods tariff-free as soon as the agreement comes into effect.

Dairy industry

Australian dairy exporters will be able to ship goods to the UK tariff-free in five years, with immediate access to a duty-free quota for cheese of 24,000 tonnes, rising in instalments to 48,000 tonnes over five years.

Wine producers

Tariffs on Australian wines entering the UK will also be completely removed, with a duty-free arrangement starting as soon as the agreement enters into force.

Foreign workers

Many Australian industries will have access to a larger international talent pool, with the trade deal expanding the working holiday visa program to include adults aged up to 35. In the past, UK citizens could secure a visa up to the age of 30.

Professionals are expected to benefit from greater recognition of qualifications between the two countries, making it easier for some skilled professionals to enter the Australian labour market and vice versa.

If you or your business operates in importing or exporting you are likely to be impacted. Please contact us if you have any questions about your circumstances in relation to the FTA.

How COVID-19 has changed work related expenses



COVID-19 has changed many people's work situations, and the Australia Taxation Office (ATO) expects work related expenses will reflect this during tax time in 2021.

The ATO will be paying extra attention to unusually high claims this tax time and will look closely to anyone with significant working from home expenses, that maintains or increases their claims for things like car, travel or clothing expenses.

The ATO does know that some "unusual" claims may be legitimate, and wants to reassure people who have evidence to explain their claims that they have nothing to fear.

Remember, to claim any work related expense you must have spent the money yourself and not been reimbursed by your employer. The expense needs to be directly related to earning your income (not a private expense), and you need to keep relevant records.

Working from home

The temporary shortcut method for working from home expenses is available for the full 2020–2021 financial year. This allows an all-inclusive rate of 80 cents per hour for every hour people work from home between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, rather than needing to separately

calculate costs for specific expenses.

All you need to do is multiply the number of hours you worked at home by 80 cents, keeping a record such as a timesheet, roster or diary entry.

Remember – the shortcut method is temporary. To claim part of an expense over \$300 (such as a desk or computer) in future years, you still need to keep your receipts.

The temporary shortcut method can be claimed by multiple people living under the same roof and (unlike the existing methods) doesn't require you to have a dedicated work area at home.

The shortcut is all-inclusive. You can't claim the shortcut and then claim for individual expenses such as telephone and internet costs and the decline in value of new office furniture or a laptop.

Personal protective equipment

If your specific work duties involve physical contact or close proximity to customers or clients, or your job involves cleaning premises, you may be able to claim personal protective equipment items such as gloves, face masks, sanitiser or anti-bacterial spray.

This includes industries like healthcare, cleaning, aviation, hair and beauty, retail and hospitality.

Car and travel expenses

If you're working from home due to COVID-19 but need to travel to your regular office sometimes, you can't claim the cost of travel from home to work, because these are still private expenses.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding what you can claim in your tax return.

Beware: phishing and investment scams on the rise

Cyber security scams are becoming increasingly common as more businesses move to a cloud-based workspace. The more we work online, the more content there is for hackers to steal.

The ATO and Services Australia have issued a warning about a new email phishing scam doing the rounds. The emails claim to be from "myGov" and include screenshots of the myGovID app.

This scam is all about collecting personal information rather than gaining access to live information via myGov or myGovID.

The ATO and myGov do send emails and SMS messages, but they will never include clickable hyperlinks directing you to a login page for online services.

The best way to check if the ATO or another government service has actually sent you a communication is to visit the [myGov website](#) directly (without clicking an emailed link) or to download the myGovID app.

Phishing scams are the easiest scams to spot as they're usually in the form of an email, SMS or social media message. While they can look extremely authentic, there are a few things to look for to see if the communication is a phishing scam. Ask yourself:

- > Does the link in the message look legitimate?
- > Can I find the mentioned website when I manually search for it?
- > Can I find contact details of the sender?
- > Do I have an account with the company or know the person contacting me?

If you answered no to any of these questions, you may have been targeted by a cyber security scam.

If you've received a suspicious email and mistakenly clicked a link, replied and/or provided your myGov login details or other information, change your myGov password and if you've provided your banking details, contact your bank.



Cryptocurrency trading is subject to tax

Over 600,000 Australians have invested in crypto-assets in recent years.

The ATO has recently issued a reminder that although many people may believe that gains made through cryptocurrency trading are tax-free, or only taxable when the holdings are cashed back into "real" Australian dollars, this is not the case as Capital Gains Tax (CGT) does apply to crypto-asset gains or losses.

While it may appear that cryptocurrencies operate in an anonymous digital world, the ATO does closely track where these assets interact with the "real" financial world through data from banks, financial institutions and cryptocurrency online exchanges, following the money back to the taxpayer.

This year the ATO will write to around 100,000 people with cryptocurrency assets explaining their tax obligations and urging them to review their previously lodged returns. It also expects to prompt 300,000 taxpayers to report their cryptocurrency capital gains or losses as they lodge their 2021 tax returns.

Alongside these communications, the ATO is beginning a new data-matching program focused on crypto-asset transactions. It will acquire account identification and transaction data from cryptocurrency designated service providers for the 2021 financial year through to the 2023 financial year inclusively. The ATO estimates that the records relating to approximately 400,000 to 600,000 individuals will be obtained each financial year.

Please give us a call if you have any questions regarding tax and your cryptocurrency assets.



ATO data-matching targets rental property owners

The ATO has announced it will run a new data-matching program to collect property management data for the 2018–2019 to 2022–2023 financial years, and will extend the existing rental bond data-matching program through to 30 June 2023.

Each year the ATO conducts reviews of a random sample of tax returns to calculate the difference between the amount of tax it has collected and the amount that should have been collected – this is known as a "tax gap". For the 2017–2018 year the ATO estimated a net tax gap of 5.6% (\$8.3 billion) for individual taxpayers, with rentals making up 18% of the gap amount.

The new and extended data-matching program is intended to address this gap, making sure that property owners are reporting their rental income correctly and meeting their related tax obligations.

The program aims to contribute to the ATO's vision of a more streamlined and integrated client experience. There will be improvements to services such as real-time messaging as well tools for taxpayer self-service. This will make it easier for property owners to interact with the tax system and manage their affairs.

If you're not sure whether you've included the right amount of rental income in your return give us a call and we can help you make any necessary amendments to your lodgement.



New regulations on the way for Directors

All directors will soon be required to have a director identification number (Director ID).

The Director ID is being introduced to help prevent fictitious director identities and make it easier for government to trace directors' relationships with companies over time, including identifying involvement in unlawful activity such as phoenixing.

The Australian Government has announced the implementation of the Modernising Business Registers program which will be implemented by the Australian Taxation Office and establish Australian Business Registry Services (ABRS). The ABRS is expected to streamline how you register, view and maintain business information with government.

The ABRS will bring together the 31 registers currently managed by the Australian

Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) and the Australian Business Register (ABR). Director IDs will be introduced as part of this program.

The Director ID will be a unique identifier that a director will keep forever. It is anticipated that each person who is currently a director will need to obtain a Director ID by 30 November 2022. Anyone wishing to become a director after 20 November 2022 will need a Director ID before being appointed.

Directors will be able to access the ABRS using their myGovID and supply identity documents to acquire their Director ID.

We will be in touch to assist you once the ABRS is available to directors, expected late 2021. In preparation, you can check that your personal details held by ASIC match your identity documents.

Please contact us if you have any questions.



Personal use assets and collectables in SMSFs



Would you like to hold a wine collection, artworks, or a classic car in your Self Managed Superannuation Fund (SMSF)? Well, you can if you follow some strict rules.

Firstly, the investment in collectables or personal use assets must be for genuine retirement purposes and not to provide any present day benefit to either the members of the SMSF or related parties. Secondly, the assets cannot be used by members or related parties in any capacity. Thirdly, the asset must be insured in the fund's name within seven days of acquisition.

The rules mean that any collectable or personal use asset owned by your SMSF can't be stored at the private residence of any member or related party. However, the asset can be stored – not displayed – in non private residence premises owned by a related party.

For example, an artwork can't be displayed in the business premises of a related party where it would be visible to clients and employees, but it could be stored in a cupboard. It could also be leased to unrelated parties on arm's length terms.

The ability to insure must also be considered where your SMSF is investing in collectables or personal use assets. The items must be insured within seven days, under either separate policies or one collective policy. The owner and beneficiary of the policy must be the SMSF itself. If the SMSF has already made the investment but cannot to obtain insurance, the ATO must be notified.

If you have any questions regarding personal use assets and collectables in your SMSF, please contact Venture Financial Advisers on **03 5434 7600**.



Team building day

We recently took a day out of the office to enjoy some time participating in fun activities and strengthening the relationships of our team.

The first half of the day involved learning more about ourselves and one another through the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator tool, understanding the differences in how we all perceive the world and make decisions.

We then spent the afternoon working in small teams using LEGO to construct the best creation possible based on a chosen topic. The day was a great opportunity to enjoy time away from work and get to know more people in our growing team.

Push-up challenge



Some of the team at AFS recently participated in the Push-Up Challenge. The goal was to complete 3,318 push-ups each over the first 25 days in June while raising funds for Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee.

The 3,318 represents the number of lives lost to suicide in Australia in 2019.

The team completed a total of 32,501 push ups and raised a combined \$1,209 which will go towards suicide prevention in the region.

The challenge was a good opportunity for some friendly competition in the office and provided daily motivation to do some physical exercise, all while raising funds for a great cause!

AFS insights



Immediate deductions available for investors

There is an immediate deduction available for some depreciable assets that investors can start claiming right away.

When a plant and equipment asset costs \$300 or less, it may be eligible for the immediate deduction meaning you can instantly claim the cost in the year of purchase.



New Victorian land tax measures introduced

The Victorian Government has introduced all details on the three new land transfer duty measures as part of the 2021-22 Victorian Budget.

These include a temporary land transfer (stamp) duty concession, off-the-plan duty concession and premium duty rate of land transfer for high value properties.



New changes to casual employment

There has been a recent amendment to the *Fair Work Act 2009 (The Act)* which changes the workplace entitlements and obligations for casual employees.

Employers should familiarise themselves with these changes to ensure they follow all policies set out in *The Act* when employing a casual employee and understand how these changes may affect their business.

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