



Thursday 30 April 2020

Dear colleague

I write to you as Chair of the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission to seek your assistance in the vital economic recovery work that lies ahead of us, and to draw your attention to resources and assistance that your members might find useful in restoring their businesses and services.

The role of the Commission is to coordinate advice to the Australian Government on actions to minimise and mitigate the economic impacts of the coronavirus and to facilitate the fastest possible recovery of lives and livelihoods, once the virus has been brought under control. The Commission will be working to ensure that the Government receives advice and assistance from business to meet the challenges ahead to reduce the economic impact of the coronavirus and help build a bridge to recovery.

While a range of businesses particularly in the services sector such as pubs, gyms, restaurants and cinemas have been closed by government directive (list attached at A), many more have chosen to suspend operations as a precaution in response to social distancing measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

The Prime Minister indicated last Friday that current restrictions will be reviewed within the next four weeks if certain conditions regarding testing, tracing and rapid response to outbreaks can be met. He also indicated that, over the next six months, Government will be working on an economic recovery plan, however, the world will not return to a pre-COVID-19 state quickly.

This means it is essential for businesses to start work now to plan a restructure and reconfiguration of their operations to get back to business as quickly and safely as possible. This is vital both for our economy and also our social wellbeing.

The purpose of this letter is to urge you to encourage those of your members who have suspended or substantially curbed their operations to consider how they can reconfigure or restructure their businesses to enable them and their employees to return to work. Of course, this needs to be accompanied by measures to ensure that appropriate health protections are in place for their workers and customers.

I would urge all of your members to develop arrangements which will enable them to resume business operations as quickly as possible when the opportunity arises including:

1. comprehensive plans to prepare so employees and customers know what to expect both in undertaking daily business but also in the event of a COVID-19 related incident or outbreak;
2. workplace and business models to prevent the spread of COVID-19 which incorporate measures such as physical distancing or barriers and hygiene as appropriate depending on the nature of the business and workplace operations;
3. plans to respond in the event of an incident involving an infected employee or customer including testing and isolation measures (as well as support for and information flow to employees and their families); and
4. plans and protocols to recover after incidents including cleaning and testing the workplace.

Developing the right mix of measures won't always be easy. However, it will be essential for employees, customers and the public to have confidence that, as businesses open up, arrangements are in place to minimise the risk of spread of the virus.

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It will also be important that businesses have clear and consistent guidance from government agencies on how to manage COVID-19 workplace health and safety risks in running and reopening their businesses. There will be discussions at the highest levels of government in the coming week about the principles which should apply.

I can confirm the Commission is already working with relevant government agencies, including Safe Work Australia, to help ensure as much practical and useful information as possible is available to support business to provide a safe and healthy operating environment for employees and customers.

I encourage your members to visit the Safe Work Australia website for guidance material. Business.gov.au also provides a range of information to support businesses to manage COVID-19. I have included a guide (attached at B) prepared by the Commission to help businesses find relevant advice and support from across government on COVID-19 issues.

Please contact me or my CEO Peter Harris ([peter.harris@pmc.gov.au](mailto:peter.harris@pmc.gov.au)) if you have any specific issues you would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely



**NEV POWER**

**CHAIRMAN**

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