

10 July 2020

\$534 million lifeline has come at the right time for Victorian business

Thousands of Victorian businesses will see support when they need it most after the Andrews Government's announcement today of a \$534 million Business Support Package to assist those hit hardest by the latest COVID-19 restrictions.

The package, announced by Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas and Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, and Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Martin Pakula, and designed in consultation with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, includes:

- Expansion of the Business Support Fund to more than 80,000 eligible businesses with a new \$5,000 grant available to all areas under Stage 3 restrictions
- \$30 million fund for hospitality
- \$26 million in mental health support for small businesses
- \$10 million business mentoring program
- \$40 million capped fund for regional tourism businesses to cover the costs of refunds – up to \$225 per night for up to five nights for every room cancelled (as long as they provide a full refund), and marketing campaigns once restrictions are eased
- \$20 million CBD Business Support Fund
- More payroll tax relief – those up to \$10 million can defer liabilities for first half of FY20/21.

While welcome, the business support package cannot replace business trade, which will only come once the health crisis is brought under control and Victorians are once again able to work, shop and travel freely.

The Victorian Chamber acknowledges the close collaboration of the City of Melbourne, Australian Hotels Association, other industry associations and the business community in formulating this support package.

To be attributed to Victorian Chamber Chief Executive Paul Guerra:

"While nothing compares to normal trading conditions, the support announced today by the Andrews Government will help to stem business closures and job losses following the reintroduction of harsh restrictions across Melbourne and surrounding areas.

"It's fantastic to see the Andrews Government respond directly to the needs of local businesses. We made sure we knew exactly what is happening on the ground, and, on the back of member feedback, we presented recommendations that have been adopted.

"With state assistance now flowing, focus shifts to securing certainty on Federal support and an economic recovery plan to get Victoria and Australia back to work."

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