

INFORMATION FOR SOLE TRADERS DURING COVID-19

FACT SHEET

Current at: 7 August

Key contacts

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Guide for Business – Stage 4 Restrictions – [Department of Health and Human Services](#)

STAGE 4 RESTRICTIONS ON BUSINESS

Operations

Sole operators must work in accordance with the published directions of the Victorian Government.

The restricted activity directions appear to provide no specific distinction between sole traders and other forms of businesses.

In the metro Melbourne ‘restricted area’, businesses should take note of their Stage 4 obligations under the:

- the [Restricted Activity \(Restricted Areas\) Directions](#), and
- the [Stay at Home \(Restricted Areas\) Directions](#), and
- the [Workplace Directions](#), and
- the [Permitted Work and Childcare Permit Scheme Directions](#).

A list of ‘[Permitted Work Premises](#)’ that may operate with on-site operations during the restricted activity period in metropolitan Melbourne (to the extent permitted within the above directions) is available on [the Department of Health and Human Services website](#).

Specific industry sector guidance on the operation of Permitted Work Premises can be found on the [Business Victoria website](#). The Victorian Government continues to develop and update information on this page, so it’s recommended to periodically check the site for updates and changes.

In the rest of rural and regional Victoria, businesses should take note of their Stage 3 obligations under the:

- the [Restricted Activity Directions \(Non-Melbourne\)](#), and
- the [Stay at Home Directions \(Non-Melbourne\)](#).
- the [Workplace Directions](#), and
- the [Permitted Work and Childcare Permit Scheme Directions](#).

Worker permits

From 11.59 pm on Wednesday 5 August, in most circumstances workers – including sole traders – who are permitted to operate will require a signed permit to be produced on request of law enforcement.

Permit requirements apply to persons who:

- Ordinarily reside in the metropolitan Melbourne and are required to attend a Work Premises located within metropolitan Melbourne; and
- Ordinarily reside in regional Victoria and are required to attend a Work Premises located within metropolitan Melbourne.

Employers can issue a worker permit to their employee if:

- The organisation is on the list of permitted activities
- The employee is working in an approved category for on-site work, and
- The employee cannot work from home.

Eligible sole traders must issue a worker permit and sign the worker permit as both the employer and employee. More information is available through the [Department of Justice website](#).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SOLE TRADERS

Victorian Government programs

Victorian Government Business Support Fund

Grants from the Victorian Government's Business Support Fund remain unavailable to sole traders. It is a requirement of this fund that the businesses that it supports employ people.

The Victorian Government indicated to the media on 4 August 2020 that offering support grants to sole traders through the Business Support Fund would be too costly and [sole traders are looked after by the Federal Government through JobSeeker and JobKeeper](#).

On 3 August, Shadow Minister for Small Business and Leader of the Opposition, Michael O'Brien, told the media "sole traders, in particular, have been left behind. The smallest of small businesses deserve extra support, not being ignored".

The Victorian Liberal Nationals have called on the Andrews Labor Government [to urgently step up and provide support to all Victorian businesses hit by these restrictions](#), including sole traders, before even more lives and livelihoods are ruined.

Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme

Business eligible for the CTRS are those with a turnover up to \$50 million and who have experienced a decrease in turnover of at least 30 per cent due to COVID-19.

The Scheme consists of a six-month moratorium on commercial tenancy evictions due to the non-payment of rent and a freeze on increases to rent during the six-month moratorium. It also includes

a waiver or deferral of rent paid to the landlord that is proportionate to the reduction in turnover experienced by the business.

This will obviously differ from business to business, so business tenants should negotiate with their landlord and come to an agreement in writing.

You do not need to do anything to keep from being evicted or to keep your rent rate frozen, other than being able to document that you meet the above eligibility criteria. Visit the [Business Victoria website for further information](#).

Australian Government programs

JobKeeper payments

A [JobKeeper Payment](#) is available to provide businesses impacted by COVID-19 with access to a wage subsidy from the Federal Government.

Sole traders may be eligible for this payment. More information related to this scheme on [this Federal Government fact sheet](#).

Early access to superannuation

As sole traders may be experiencing reduced income to their business as a result of COVID19, they may require access to an additional income stream. Sole traders are able to self-certify that their turnover has reduced by 20 per cent or more and apply to access a fixed amount of the superannuation, as above. This is only optional, not compulsory. For more information, please see [this Federal Government fact sheet](#).