

Critical COVID-19 Response Information for Employers in the Northern Territory

Current as at Monday 22 June 2020

The following information is intended to assist businesses to navigate the unprecedented changes arising out of enhanced responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information about Government Response measures were current at the time of publication however, given the rapidly evolving situation, businesses should monitor reliable news sources for updated information.

What is the Current Stage Response?	<p>Stage 3 easing of restrictions commenced at 12pm on Friday 5 June 2020.</p> <p>All businesses still restricted were able to recommence from noon on 5 June 2020.</p> <p>Physical distancing of a minimum of 1.5 metres between people who aren't known to each other.</p> <p>All businesses must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan to show how they will meet the requirements around the key principles of physical distancing and hygiene practices.</p> <p>Events and public gatherings may recommence. For events and gatherings of over 500 people, a COVID-19 Event Safety Plan must be submitted, and formal approval given by the NT Chief Health Officer prior to the event proceeding. For events and gatherings of less than 500 people, a COVID-19 Event Safety Plan must be submitted prior to the commencement of the event.</p> <p>Additional information for particular industries can be found on the NT COVID-19 website.</p>
Are the borders closed?	<p>People entering the NT from interstate or overseas are required to quarantine for a period of 14 days.</p> <p>From Monday 15 June 2020 people entering the NT from interstate will be able to undertake the quarantine period in their own home, in private accommodation, or in appropriate commercial accommodation at their own expense.</p> <p>People entering the NT from overseas will continue to be required to spend 14 days in forced quarantine in mandatory monitored commercial accommodation at their own expense.</p> <p>There are no plans at this point to change the existing strict border closures.</p> <p>Essential personnel exemptions continue to apply.</p>
Do I need to keep paying workers?	<p>If your workers can work safely from home (discussed below), then they may do so.</p> <p>In the circumstances that businesses impacted by either the Stage 1 Response are subject to a stoppage of work and all paid leave has been exhausted, there may arise the basis to</p>

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implement a stand down without pay, however legal advice should first be sought.

If your workers can work safely from home (discussed below), then they may do so.

In the circumstances that impacted businesses experience a stoppage of work and all paid leave has been exhausted, there may arise the basis to implement a stand down without pay, however legal advice should be sought first.

In all cases, where an eligible business has experienced a drop in turnover of 30% or more (or 50% for a business with an annual turnover of \$1billion or more), full time, part time and casual employees (provided the casual employee has at least 12 months service) who were employed at 1 March 2020 may be eligible to receive a flat \$1,500 per fortnight JobKeeper Payment for a 6 month period.

The \$1,500 JobKeeper payment will be payable irrespective of whether the employee is continuing to perform some paid work or whether they have been stood down without pay.

The JobKeeper payments are being administered through the Australian Taxation Office and compliance monitored through the single touch payroll system. Employers received payments from the start of May 2020, backdated to 30 March 2020.

Eligible employers can enrol for JobKeeper [here](#).

Territory business that demonstrate financial hardship (businesses with less than \$50 million turnover who have experience a reduction of turnover of more than 30%) will be eligible to apply for reduced payroll tax from 1 May 2020. Reductions include:

- for small or medium-size businesses – payroll tax abolished for six months;
- for large businesses – payroll tax deferred for six months
- 50% reduction of power, water and sewerage bills for six months.

There are additional measures relating to commercial tenancies and negotiation for rent relief as well as a Job Rescue and Recovery Plan.

Grants and funding may be available for business in the tourism, creative industries, and sports and active recreation sectors.

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What should I be thinking about in implementing working from home arrangements?

Kingston Reid has developed a [Working from Home Checklist](#), to which employers may refer in preparing employees to work from home.

This Checklist is not exhaustive, and employers should have regard to any particular safety, information security and other considerations that may be unique to the work undertaken by particular employees.

What are other safety measures that I should be considering right now?

The nature of the Response measures and the effect of isolation will invariably have an impact upon the mental health of all workers. Check in regularly with employees at home and ensure that all are reminded of Employee Assistance Programs.

Employers should remain mindful that, if employees are directed to undertake non-essential work, and they become infected, there will foreseeably arise exposure to workers' compensation and potentially negligence claims under the workers' compensation scheme.

Christa Lenard

Partner

Sydney

+61 2 9169 8404

christa.lenard@kingstonreid.com

Katie Sweatman

Special Counsel

Melbourne

+61 3 9958 9605

katie.sweatman@kingstonreid.com

Michael Stutley

Partner

Perth

+61 8 6381 7060

michael.stutley@kingstonreid.com

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