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industrial relations : human resources : employment matters : training

CIRCULAR: GEN/151/NAT/151/21
DATE: 15 July 2021
SUBJECT: NSW Covid Restrictions and Support
ATTENTION: Chief Executive Officer

CURRENT LOCKDOWN – RESTRICTIONS

As you will be aware, the lockdown for Greater Sydney (including the Central Coast, Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour) has been extended until **at least 11.59pm on Friday 30 July** due to the ongoing number of infectious cases in the community.

This means that the stay at home restrictions will remain in place and a person requires a 'reasonable excuse' to leave their home, specifically:

A 'reasonable excuse' is if you need to:

1. *obtain food or other goods and services*
 - *for the personal needs of the household or for other household purposes (including pets)*
 - *for vulnerable people*
2. *travel for work or education if it is not possible to do it at home*
3. *exercise and take outdoor recreation in Greater Sydney*
4. *go out for medical or caring reasons, including obtaining a COVID-19 vaccination*
5. *other reasonable excuses (see list at **Appendix A**)*

During the lockdown, employers must allow employees to work from home if it is reasonably practicable to do so

A range of businesses have been directed to close / remain closed during the lockdown. See **Appendix B**.

See here for further information:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/greater-sydney>

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

On 13 July 2021, the Premier released details of:

- an enhanced COVID-19 Disaster Payment; and
- 50 / 50 cost sharing arrangement for new business support payments.

a) *The COVID-19 Disaster Payment*

It has been announced that where there is a lockdown because of a 'Commonwealth Government declared hotspot' that enters 'week four', the COVID-19 Disaster Payment will increase to \$600 per week if a person has lost 20 or more hours of work or \$375 per week if a person has lost between 8 and less than 20 hours of work a week.

Hours lost – per wk	Weeks 1-3 of a lockdown	From week 4
8 to less than 20 hours	\$500	\$600
20 or more hours	\$325	\$375

Notwithstanding the above, from 18 July 2021, the COVID-19 Disaster Payment will be available to persons outside a Commonwealth declared hotspot in NSW, provided they meet the criteria for the payment (ie loss of hours of work in the context of a period of restricted movement for more than 7 days). This aspect is to be funded by the NSW Government, with the Commonwealth funding the payments made to persons in a Commonwealth declared hotspot.

It has been announced that the (Commonwealth funded) enhanced COVID-19 Disaster Payments will be available to any other state or territory that experiences an extended lockdown (ie into a fourth week).

b) The new business support payments

In relation to the business support payments, the Premier has announced that support will be available to entities with an annual turnover between \$75,000 and \$50 million who can demonstrate a 30 per cent decline in turnover.

In order to be eligible to receive the payment, the entity must maintain their full time, part time and long-term casual staffing level as of 13 July 2021.

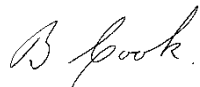
Eligible entities (which will include not for profit organisations) will receive payments between \$1,500 and \$10,000 per week based on the level of their payroll.

Sole traders (non-employing businesses) will be eligible to receive a payment set at \$1,000 per week.

The payments to businesses will be co-funded 50/50 between the NSW Government and the Commonwealth Government and is estimated to reach 500,000 entities employing more than 3 million people.

The above is not an exhaustive list of the support payments that may be available to businesses, rather it is a summary of recent announcements from the Premier on new measures of financial support available to those persons and business affected by the current lockdown in NSW.

If you have any questions or if you require further information, please contact the SIAG National Advisory Service on 03 9644 1400 or 1300 (SIAG HR) / 1300 742 447. The Information provided in this email is generic advice. For advice in respect of your specific situation please contact us.



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APPENDIX A – List of ‘other reasonable excuses’ to leave home

The below is an extract from <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/greater-sydney>, accessed on 15 July 2021, on the ‘other reasonable excuses’ to leave home:

It is also considered a reasonable excuse to leave your home if you need to

- *donate blood*
- *access childcare*
- *continue existing arrangements for access to, and contact between, parents and children*
- *attend a funeral or memorial service that complies with the rules for funerals and memorial services*
- *provide care or assistance (including personal care) to a vulnerable person or to provide emergency assistance*
- *only 1 person may visit a residence to provide care at any one time*
- *access social services, employment services, services provided to victims (including as victims of crime), domestic violence services, and mental health services*
- *move to a new place of residence, or between your different places of residence*
- *undertake legal obligations*
- *avoid injury or illness or to escape the risk of harm*
- *in case of emergencies*
- *for compassionate reasons, including where two people are in a relationship but do not necessarily live together*
- *to provide pastoral care if you are a priest, minister of religion or member of a religious order*
- *gathering at Parliament for the purpose of its normal operations.*

Taking a holiday is not a reasonable excuse.

APPENDIX B – List of places that are directed to be closed during the lockdown

The below is an extract from <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/greater-sydney>, accessed on 15 July 2021, on the places that must be closed during the lockdown in Greater Sydney:

The following places in Greater Sydney including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour are directed to be closed to the public.

- *Pubs and registered clubs except for*
 - *selling food or beverages for people to consume off-site and*
 - *providing accommodation, including allowing food and drinks to be consumed in a person's room.*
- *Food and drink premises, except for*
 - *selling food or beverages for people to consume off-site*
 - *selling food to be consumed in a person's room if in a hotel or motel*
 - *if the premises are part of a shopping centre, selling food or beverages for people to consume outside of the shopping centre*
 - *holding a funeral or memorial service that complies with the rules for funerals and memorial services.*
- *Entertainment facilities, such as theatres, cinemas, music halls, concert halls and dance halls.*
- *Amusement centres, such as places to play billiards, pool, pinball machines or video games.*
- *Micro-breweries or small distilleries holding a drink on-premises authorisation under the Liquor Act 2007 or cellar door premises, except for selling food or beverages for people to consume off the premises.*
- *Indoor recreation facilities such as squash courts, indoor swimming pools, gyms, table tennis centres, health studios, bowling alleys and ice rinks.*
- *Places of public worship, except for the purposes of conducting a funeral service or memorial service that complies with the rules for funerals and memorial services.*
- *Hairdressers, spas, nail salons, beauty salons, waxing salons, tanning salons, tattoo parlours, massage parlours.*
- *Auction houses*
- *Betting agencies and gaming lounges*
- *Markets, except for food markets*
- *Caravan parks and camping grounds, except for*
 - *permanent residents or other people who have no other place of permanent residence, and their visitors*
 - *people who were staying there on Friday 25 June 2021 and have not extended their booking*
 - *local workers and overnight travellers.*
- *Sex on premises services*
- *Sex services premises*
- *Strip clubs*
- *Public swimming pools (except natural swimming pools, which may open)*
- *National Trust properties and Historic Houses Trust of NSW properties (other than retail shops)*
- *Nightclubs*
- *Casinos, except for selling food or beverages for people to consume off-site and providing accommodation, including allowing food and drinks to be consumed in a person's room.*