

COVID-19 Workforce and Employer support



The current COVID-19 environment is highlighting numerous workforce and employment questions and challenges for businesses. To help you work through this unprecedented disruption, we have brought together a specialised workforce team and range of services to support your business develop the best response for your organisation and employees.

Addressed in the right way, there are high impact actions that you can take to sustainably support employees, minimise the negative impacts of the COVID-19 environment on your business and workforce and emerge stronger beyond the pandemic.

Leadership, inclusion and well-being

Supporting leaders to navigate through times of crisis, including:

- **Controls and processes:** establishing governance controls with clear responsibility for checking currency of Government advice and information.
- **Communication:** whatever decisions are made by leadership, supporting with techniques to quickly plan and apply clear, transparent and frequent communications to the business.
- **Diversity and Inclusion (D&I):** supporting leaders to maintain workforce diversity through periods of uncertainty and helping to build inclusive leadership capability.
- **Well-being:** providing businesses with the formal and informal tools to monitor and support the physical and mental health of their workforce.

Workforce planning and new ways of working

Utilising specialised digital tools to support businesses to prepare an effective COVID-19 workforce response, including:

- **Workforce planning:** flexing workforce up and down based on varied demand, identifying and mobilising talent to critical roles and remote onboarding.
- **New ways of working:** exploring enterprise agility so that teams feel connected to 'home base', while maximising virtual collaboration to maintain productivity.

Optimising organisation and HR models

Helping businesses think through their organisation models in response to COVID-19 and the response afterwards, including:

- **Minimum structured organisation:** identifying a minimum viable organisation model, ensuring there is a healthy structure and aligned workforce delivering the core business.
- **Optimised organisation model:** reviewing business capabilities and identifying a series of immediate 'no regrets' initiatives for unlocking latent value, and realising a more efficient organisational structure.
- **Enterprise agility design:** designing contemporary organisation and HR models with a focus on enterprise agility to allow for more adaptive scaling down and up.
- **Optimising HR:** reviewing how effectively HR has led the business through this 'people' crisis, and identifying how HR can be better set up to partner with the business in a world where disruption is the new normal.

Skills and redeployments

Supporting businesses to establish upskilling programs and enabling targeted redeployment, including:

- **Capability building:** using 'unproductive' time to upskill the workforce. In the current environment, focus on building digital literacy, virtual collaboration, building rapport, displaying empathy, and impactful communications.
- **Cross-sector mobilisation:** upskilling individuals who can apply similar skills into a new environment, prioritised to an in-demand area.
- **Career shifting:** reskilling individuals and cohorts who are temporarily shifting into a completely new role.

Reward and performance

Supporting businesses with forming effective reward & performance frameworks which respond to changes in the workplace due to the COVID-19 environment:

- **Executive remuneration:** the executive remuneration framework should have the necessary flexibility and governance process to support discretion, whilst remaining aligned to the workforce and shareholders.
- **Workforce reward:** articulating or enhancing the Total Reward proposition rather than just financial remuneration, and ensuring the reward framework is sufficiently flexible to recognise and motivate talent.
- **Managing performance:** creating a performance and development framework for new ways of working, including setting and evaluating new objectives, focus on team rather than individual contribution and a process that supports remote assessment and calibration.

Tax and government incentives

Supporting businesses to access tax relief and Government support, including:

- **JobKeeper:** assessing eligibility and access to the Government's wage subsidy package.
- **Payroll and employment taxes:** assisting business to understand available payroll tax relief measures, changes to superannuation and supporting with emergency payroll delivery/business continuity.
- **Employee entitlements:** supporting business to disseminate information regarding Government initiatives to support employees, such as early access to superannuation.

Global mobility

Understanding and supporting businesses to respond to a rapidly changing COVID-19 environment for globally mobile employees, including:

- **Immigration considerations:** changes to visa conditions, extensions for imminent visa expiration, impact on skilled visa classes and implications for employees on stand down and other reduced wage arrangements.
- **Tax considerations:** impact on tax residency, double tax treaty relief and managing unexpected tax outcomes.
- **Entitlements:** use of leave in non-local jurisdictions and workcover obligations.
- **Policy Considerations:** ensure mobility policies address flexible work arrangements to ensure consistency, transparency and management of costs.

Legal compliance and obligations

Helping businesses to respond to COVID-19 in a compliant way, including in relation to:

- **Wage cost reduction measures:** capacity for unilateral stand-down, furlough, redundancy processes and agreed unpaid leave, reduced hours, deferred payment or other arrangements.
- **Minimum entitlements:** understanding changes to Modern Awards and other instruments, employee access to personal, and other leave under temporary rules, introduction of pandemic leave under some Modern Awards and interaction with JobKeeper benefits.
- **Work Health and Safety (WHS):** managing ongoing WHS obligations to reduce risk of infection, or in relation to working from home arrangements.

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