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22 August 2021

Support for businesses in regional Victoria

Joint media release with

Mr Tim Pallas

Victorian Treasurer

The Hon Martin Pakula

Victorian Minister For Industry Support And Recovery

A package of automatic cash grants jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments will provide regional Victorian businesses with the support they need following the extension of the Victorian lockdown to the whole of the state.

Lockdown directions commenced at 1:00pm on Saturday, 21 August in regional Victoria and will continue until 11:59pm on Friday, 2 September, aligning with restrictions in metropolitan Melbourne.

Grants to be paid through the new \$146.6 million initiative will be made automatically without the need for regional businesses to make an application.

The package comprises a \$100.9 million allocation to the Business Costs Assistance Program, \$34.5 million for regional premises that have previously received Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund grants and \$11.2 million for the Alpine Resorts Winter Support Program.

These programs will support 20,000 business throughout regional Victoria, joining more than 110,000 businesses in Melbourne to be paid cash grants for the two-week lockdown extension under a \$807 million metropolitan support package announced by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments last Thursday.

Business in regional Victoria that do not qualify for this new support and have experienced a reduction in revenue of at least 70 per cent are encouraged to apply for the \$252 million Small Business COVID Hardship Fund, which provides grants of \$14,000 to successful applicants.

Commonwealth COVID-19 Disaster Payment arrangement will apply to workers and eligible sole-trader businesses in regional areas, as they do in metropolitan areas. Since 1 July, almost \$640 million in COVID-19 Disaster payments has flowed to Victoria supporting the incomes of more than 350,000 Victorians.

The Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said since the start of the crisis the Morrison Government has delivered more than \$45 billion in direct economic support to households and businesses in Victoria.

“Whether in metropolitan or regional Victoria, businesses have had to deal with so much over the last year and half of the pandemic, the Treasurer said.

“While we cannot replace the bookings, the patrons or the work lost as a result of the lockdowns, this support package will help businesses to survive and get to the otherside.”

“For many, it will be hard to see right now but there is light at the end of the tunnel with more than 51 per cent of the Australian population aged 16 years and over having now had a first dose of the vaccine.”

“The Morrison Government will continue to work closely with the State Government to continue to support Victorian businesses through this difficult and challenging time.”

Since the start of the pandemic the Victorian Government has provided more than \$9 billion in direct economic support, including more than \$1.8 billion since June alone.

Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas said that this support package will provide assurance to business in regional Victoria when they need it most.

“No-one wanted to be in this position, but the rapid spread of the Delta strain and the emergence of cases in regional Victoria meant there was no choice,” Mr Pallas said.

“We are acting quickly, decisively and on public health advice to get ahead of this outbreak so we can start our return to conditions more like we remember them before the pandemic.”

“This package is about helping regional businesses at a really tough time as we continue to battle this current outbreak.”

Victorian Minister for Industry Support and Recovery Martin Pakula said automatic payments were important to provide swift support.

“Direct payments allow us to get money to businesses across the state without needing to go through any additional applications – cutting red tape,” Mr Pakula said.

“This package matches the support provided to metropolitan Melbourne as well as providing further support to the alpine region, recognising the particular impacts on businesses in the middle of the ski season.”

More information about the business support programs is available at business.vic.gov.au.

Business Costs Assistance Program

Around 18,000 businesses in regional Victoria will automatically receive payments of \$5,600 (2,800 per week) if they have previously received grants under the Business Costs Assistance Round Two or July Extension programs.

The \$100.9 million Business Costs Assistance Program Round Three – Regional Top Up assistance will allow businesses across multiple sectors to continue paying overheads and other costs while they are unable to operate.

Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund

Automatic payments of \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$20,000 per week will be made to more than 2,000 licensed hospitality premises in regional Victoria that have previously received grants under the Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund 2021 or July Extension programs. A total of \$34.5 million has been allocated to this new licensed hospitality venue initiative.

Payment amounts will be tiered according to premises capacity: \$5,000 for a capacity of up to 99 patrons, \$10,000 for a capacity of 100 to 499 patrons, and \$20,000 for a capacity of 500 patrons or more.

Alpine Resorts Winter Support Program

Victoria's alpine region attracts more than 1 million visitors in a standard year but has been significantly impacted by lockdown restrictions and border closures during the peak winter period.

This targeted program will provide payments of \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$20,000 per week depending on business type and location, with a total of \$11.2 million allocated to the program extension.

COVID-19 Disaster Payments

Eligible workers across Victoria who lose hours of work due to the lockdown will be able to access the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Disaster Payment, as will individuals who are sole-trader business owners who lose work and that do not qualify for Victorian Government support programs.

The COVID-19 Disaster Payment is administered through Services Australia, with the Federal Government funding the areas declared a Commonwealth hotspot and the Victorian Government assuming responsibility to fund payments in the rest of the state.

The payment is set at \$450 for people who have lost from eight to 20 hours work or a full day of work (over seven days), and \$750 for 20 hours or more of work lost. People who receive certain Commonwealth income support are eligible to receive a \$200 payment where they have lost eight hours or more of work due to the lockdowns.

Victorian micro-businesses and sole trader business owners who wish to apply for the Commonwealth COVID-19 Disaster Payment can access the Business Victoria Concierge Service on 13 22 15 and schedule an appointment that will provide them with assistance to make an application.

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