

Dear Members, happy Wednesday

First of all, did you know **you are the only person in your company or business** that receives Chamber emails? We only have one contact per company on our database. Please would you forward Chamber emails to your colleagues to share our news OR feel free to let us know who else should be added to our list. Enjoy the exclusivity while it lasts or let's expand!!

AND in Employer News, this was distributed by the NSW Business Chamber yesterday. FYI.

What is the Coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a virus that can cause respiratory illnesses. Symptoms of the virus can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Affected people may experience:

- fever
- flu like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and headaches; and
- difficulty breathing.

Stopping the spread of the Coronavirus

On 30 January 2020, the Australian Government updated its advice to Australians about the Coronavirus, based on the latest medical advice. That advice, taken directly from the Australian Government's Department of Health website is:

- People who have been in contact with confirmed novel coronavirus cases must be isolated in their home for 14 days after exposure; and
- Returned travellers who have been in Hubei Province of China must be isolated in their home for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province other than for seeking individual medical care.

Although more than 14,000 cases of Coronavirus have been confirmed worldwide, there are currently only twelve confirmed cases in Australia.

What do I tell my staff?

If a staff member tells you that they:

- are feeling unwell and may be suffering symptoms of Coronavirus; or
- have been in contact with someone who has or may have been in contact with someone who has Coronavirus; or
- have travelled to an area affected by the Coronavirus (such as Hubei province in China)

they should be directed to follow the above Australian Government advice and seek medical attention immediately.

Payment and Leave

The health and safety of staff and those they come into contact with must be an employer's top priority. This should dictate the approach any employer takes to responding to notification from employees that they may have come into contact with Coronavirus.

If an employee informs you that they may have contracted the Coronavirus, or have been exposed to someone who has the Coronavirus, they may use the following accrued entitlements:

- **Personal/Carer's (sick) Leave:** This leave is available for use where an employee is not fit for work. Employers can ask for a medical certificate certifying an employee's absence from work due to illness or injury if required by the employer.
- Employees will be unfit for work in circumstances where they should be isolated from others in accordance with the Australian Government advice outlined above.
- **Annual Leave/Long Service Leave:** This can be used by employees who do not have enough personal/carers leave, where they have accrued the relevant entitlement. Employees requesting to take this form of leave should be permitted to do so, unless refusing to grant the leave is reasonable in the circumstances.
- **Directing employees not to attend work:** If you have a reasonable suspicion an employee may be exhibiting signs of Coronavirus then you may direct an employee to leave work or not attend the workplace and attend a medical professional for assessment.
- However, in this event, the employer should pay for the employee to see the doctor as well as for their time away from the workplace if the employee does not agree to take paid leave. The employer will be responsible for paying the employee until such time as medical confirmation is obtained that the employee is unfit for work. Once an employee is certified as unfit, then the employee can be required to take a form of leave (whether paid or unpaid).

Returning to work

If an employee does report to you that they have had, or believe they may have been exposed to the Coronavirus, we strongly recommend that, before permitting the employee to return to work, you obtain a medical certificate from that employee certifying that they do not have the Coronavirus and they are fit to return to work.

Has your business been impacted?

Award-winning law firm Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors (ABLA) are running a free one-hour webcast about your obligations as an employer and what leave options are available during these extraordinary times on Tuesday 11 February. [Sign up now and submit your questions here](#)

The NSW Business Chamber is conducting a survey to gauge the extent to which

businesses in Australia have been financially impacted by the bushfire crises and the Coronavirus outbreak.

Take this one minute survey to share with us how your business have been impacted by the bushfire crises and the Coronavirus outbreak. [Click here](#) to start the survey.

For more information please go to <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov> or see your doctor.