



FAQs for Companies with Employees or Interests in Australia

Insights

4.03.20

Australia, like many other countries, is amending its laws and regulations in light of the world-wide coronavirus pandemic. Here are answers to some common questions affecting employers with operations or interests in Australia. Please note that the situation changes daily if not hourly, so make sure to always check the latest information published by the national and local governments.

Are there any restrictions for traveling to and from Australia?

Yes. Australian citizens and permanent residents are restricted from traveling overseas with limited exceptions. Additionally, anyone entering the country will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. Lastly, non-citizens and non-residents may not enter Australia, subject to limited exceptions.

Has the government imposed any lockdown or shelter in place orders?

The government has ordered the closure of all pubs, clubs, gyms, and houses of worship. The government has stated that individual states and territories may issue further measures, including the closing of venues if: (i) the measures are risk-based and targeted at non-essential activities, and (ii) people must still be able to access “goods and services needed to safely and sustainably live their lives.”

Have any state governments imposed stricter measures?

Yes. Most states have imposed stricter measures, including New South Wales (NSW), which has issued new laws that impose fines of up to \$11,000 if violated.

Several states, including NSW, have provided that residents may only leave their homes for work (if it cannot be done remotely), school, shopping for essential items, seeking medical care, or exercise (if done alone or with one other person). More details regarding state-by-state orders may be found [here](#).

Is government assistance available to help businesses pay employees?

Yes. The government has launched a “JobKeeper Payment” to help retain jobs and support affected businesses.

Does this scheme include a wage subsidy for employers?

Yes. Significantly impacted businesses will be entitled to wage subsidies in the amount of \$1,500 per employee. Employees will be paid bi-weekly through their employer for a maximum of six months.

Is my business eligible?

Your business will be eligible if it meets the following criteria:

- It has a turnover of less than \$1 billion and that turnover has been reduced by 30% relative to a comparable period a year ago (of at least a month); or
- It has a turnover of \$1 billion or more and that turnover has been reduced by more than 50% relative to a comparable period a year ago (of at least a month); and
- It is not subject to the Major Bank Levy.

Are all of my employees eligible?

An eligible employee is an employee who:

- Is currently employed by the business;
- Was employed by the employer as of March 1, 2020;
- Is full-time, part-time or long-term casual (employed regularly for more than 12 months as of March 1, 2020; other casuals are not eligible);
- Is at least 16 years of age;
- Is an Australian citizen legally authorized to work in Australia, and
- Is not receiving a JobKeeper Payment from another employer.

What if my employee has a work visa?

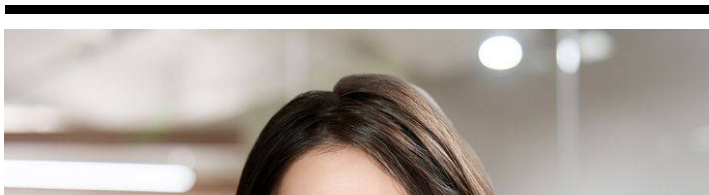
Employees are still eligible if they satisfy the above requirements and hold one of the following visas:

- Protected Special Category Visa; or
- Non-Protected Special Category Visa having resided in Australia continually for 10 years or more; or
- Special Category (Sub Class 444) Visa Holder.

Are more details about the implementation of the JobKeeper Payment forthcoming?

Yes, guidance and details on the implementation of these programs are expected in the coming days. The International Practice Group at Fisher Phillips will continue to monitor for new updates as they emerge.

Related People





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