

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE NOW TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS SURVIVE

Make sure you are complying with government directives on COVID-19 and your WHS obligations

You need to do everything you can to protect the health and safety of you, your staff, and your customers. Stay up to date with government directives at [Australia.gov.au](https://www.australia.gov.au). Other relevant sites are [Safe Work Australia](#), [Department of Health](#) and your [state/territory WHS body](#).

Look after yourself

Take action to protect your own physical and mental health. The [My Business Health](#) portal has resources to help. A [Business Continuity Plan](#) will also help if you or key staff have to take time off.

Think about how you can do things differently

Can you change your business model to better operate? For example, providing takeaway or delivery services? Can staff work remotely? Think about what you can do to keep cash flow coming in. Consider what you can do now to improve your business's recovery once the crisis is over, such as how you use digital capabilities.

Do a cash flow statement

A cash flow statement will give you a picture of how much money your business has and is going to have coming in and going out. Although there may be uncertainty around revenue, your costs should be clearer. This will help you understand your position and inform your discussions with government, your bank, and others about support. To complete your cash flow statement, you can use this [guide](#).

Seek advice and stay up to date

Talk to your accountant or trusted advisor, including about your eligibility for government support and ability to ride out the crisis. Look at advice available from [small business support organisations](#). Useful resources include this [financial guidance](#) for businesses in distress and free counselling from the [national debt helpline](#) and the [bushfire financial counselling](#) service. You can also [find a financial counsellor near you](#).

Look into government support

There is support available to businesses, including sole traders, from federal and state government. In particular, the government has announced its [JobKeeper Payment](#) to support employers to continue paying their staff. Sole traders are also eligible. For all government assistance, go [here](#) for more information or call the new hotline on 13 28 46. If you are a sole trader, [this video](#) from Ombudsman Kate Carnell helps explain what's available, and continue to monitor announcements.

Talk to your bank

Banks are taking [measures to support small businesses](#). You can apply for a deferral of business-related repayments for up to six months and apply for business loans at discounted rates. Banks are also

providing deferrals for home mortgage payments. Talk to your bank's relationship manager or hardship team now.

Talk to the Australian Tax Office (ATO)

The ATO is offering payment deferrals and variations of instalments. See the ATO's [COVID-19](#) and [Bushfire support](#) pages or call 1800 700 724 (bushfires) and 1800 806 218 (COVID-19).

Talk to your landlord

The Federal Government has announced a mandatory [Commercial Tenancy Code](#). The code applies to commercial tenancies where the tenants are eligible for the JobKeeper Payment and have an annual turnover of up to \$50 million. The Code will come into effect through relevant state and territory legislation or regulation and will apply for the period during which the Commonwealth JobKeeper program remains operational. Under the Code:

- You can negotiate rent reductions, through a mix of waivers and deferrals, with your landlord.
- Your landlord must not terminate your lease due to non-payment of rent during the COVID-19 pandemic period (or reasonable subsequent recovery period).
- Where landlords and tenants cannot reach agreement on leasing arrangements (as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic), the matter should be referred and subjected (by either party) to applicable state or territory retail/commercial leasing dispute resolution processes, including Small Business Commissioners/Champions/Ombudsmen where applicable, for binding mediation.
- You also have obligations as a tenant that you should make yourself aware of.

Talk to your suppliers

Businesses in supply chains need to work together to support each other. Talk to large suppliers and ask about extended payment terms. Also, talk to small business suppliers and see what they may be able to do.

Talk to your staff

No one wants to have this conversation, but the earlier you do it, the better. First, look at the [Fair Work Ombudsman's](#) site and watch these [videos](#). Also make sure you check your staff contract or enterprise agreement and the relevant award, if applicable. Some variations to awards are being made – keep an eye on the Fair Work Ombudsman's site for updates. Then discuss with your staff how you can help each other get through this together, including by working remotely, reducing hours, completing training courses, or taking leave. Other options available may be standing down staff or making staff redundant.

My office is here to listen to what you are going through and do what we can to help. If you need support, you can contact the ASBFEO Assistance team on 1300 650 460 or info@asbfeo.gov.au.