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National
COVID-19 Commission
Advisory Board

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My business's COVIDSafe plan:

Central Highlands Environmental Consultancy

Why is it important to have a COVIDSafe plan?

COVID-19 will be with us for some time, so it's important that your business has a plan - and continues to plan - to keep your workplace healthy, safe and virus-free.

All Australian Governments have agreed to a set of [National COVID-19 Safe Work Principles](#) to guide us and ensure that our workplaces are healthy and safe.

This planning toolkit will help your business prepare a plan for the different stages of the pandemic. You should **revise your plan frequently**, particularly as restrictions and conditions change.

The toolkit:

- will help you work out what resources are available and where you can go for support
- will help you develop a clear plan for trading through and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- takes about 30 minutes to complete. This planning toolkit has three sections:

Keeping people safe

- Understand how your WHS risks have changed
- How to make your business COVID-19 safe
- How to respond to a COVID-19 infection

1. Adapting my business

- How to get things up and running
- Adapt your business to a new operating environment

2. Accessing support and assistance

- Access Government and industry support
- Important contacts

This is a planning tool only – you should seek advice from your local [WHS authority](#), guidance from [Safe Work Australia](#), or contact the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) to ensure you meet all your legal obligations. Your industry association may also be able to provide advice.

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Start here: Important resources from Safe Work Australia and Work Health and Safety (WHS) authorities

There are a number of important work health and safety laws, obligations and duties your business needs to comply with. It's important you carefully review the guidance on the [Safe Work Australia website](#) to understand your obligations and ensure your business is properly prepared. What needs to be done to meet your work health and safety obligations will depend on your business's individual circumstances – these will have changed because of COVID-19.

You must **talk to your workers** to understand their concerns and work together to ensure your workplace is COVIDSafe.

It will also be important that you **continue to plan and adapt** as circumstances change, so make sure you stay up to date with current advice and guidelines.

WHS obligations must still be met by you, as the [person conducting a business or undertaking \(PCBU\)](#) (e.g. employers).

Safe Work Australia has developed an [online hub](#) with information on how to minimise the risk of COVID-19 exposure in your workplace.

The hub is updated regularly and includes information on:

[What are my duties under WHS law?](#)

e.g.: who do I owe a duty to?, facilities, identify and manage risks, training, emergency plans

[What can I do to keep workers safe?](#)

e.g.: health monitoring, physical distancing, hygiene, vulnerable workers, PPE

[Working from home](#)

e.g.: mental health, home station set ups, identify and manage risks

[What are my workers' rights?](#)

e.g.: consultation, discrimination, right to stop work

[Cleaning and protection](#)

e.g.: how to clean, what to use, PPE, masks, gloves

[Mental Health](#)

e.g.: looking after yourself and your staff, work related violence, family and domestic violence

Your business should regularly visit the website, review the information, complete relevant checklists and include the information in your plan.

If you are confused or need further advice, contact the [WHS authority](#) in your state or territory. They can help you work out how the WHS laws apply to you or what to do at your workplace.

Other helpful resources

This is a difficult time – we all need support. **Industry associations** and **Chambers of Commerce** have tailored advice and support which might help your business.

A range of resources, including guidance from Safe Work Australia, is available in **over 60 languages via the [COVID-19 information hub in your language](#)**.

It's also vitally important that you think about **mental health** – both for you and your workers.

Here are some resources that might be helpful:

- [My Business Health](#) is a one-stop shop for small businesses to find information about business and wellbeing issues.
- [Ahead for Business](#) hosted by Everymind is targeted at small businesses and includes podcasts and case studies to help support small business mental health issues.
- Beyond Blue has a targeted [Business Owners](#) portal that has practical tips to support business owners. Beyond Blue also has an online forum that often includes posts from small business owners in the community.
- [Head to Health](#) is a government resource that has links to trusted online and phone supports, resources and treatment options.

Download the [COVIDSafe app](#) and help protect yourself, your friends and your family.

To download, search the app store for COVIDSafe.

Part 1- Keeping people safe (you, staff, customers and the public)

Complete a risk assessment to understand how your business risks have changed because of COVID-19 and make a plan to manage them

The first step in preparing your business for operating in the COVID-19 environment is to understand how your WHS risks have changed. This is why it's critical your business completes a risk assessment and follows guidance from [Safe Work Australia](#).

Safe Work Australia's risk assessment guidance will help you identify how your business needs to prepare. You will need to know the current restrictions and how they apply to your business. You can also use this information to update your existing risk assessment plan for COVID-19 risks.

Below is a checklist you can follow to complete your business's risk assessment:

	Task	Completed on (date)
X	Read through the Safe Work Australia advice on how to undertake a risk assessment .	5/8/20
X	Read how to keep workers safe and limit the spread of COVID-19	5/8/20
X	Complete or update your risk assessment. Keep it somewhere safe and easily accessible. Review and update it regularly to make sure you keep on top of any new risks that may emerge or as public health advice changes. Setting a reminder in your phone can help make this a habit.	5/8/20

It's **critical that your business completes a risk assessment** and follows guidance from Safe Work Australia.

Remember to talk to your workers as soon as possible – they will also know where potential risks may exist and have ideas about how to make your workplace COVIDSafe.

Prepare and Prevent: making sure your workplace is safe and clean

After completing your business's risk assessment, you need to take to minimise the risks of COVID-19 in your workplace.

As per the [national principles agreed by Australian Governments](#), businesses and workers must actively control against the spread of COVID-19 while at work, consistent with the latest health advice, including considering the application of a [hierarchy of appropriate controls](#) where relevant.

Keeping your workplace safe and clean is likely to be one of the most important elements of managing COVID-19.

Key things to remember as you ramp up your business during and after the COVID-19 pandemic are:

Maintain Good Hygiene	Stay Physically Distant	Follow Advice
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Most importantly, **if any members of your staff are unwell with symptoms of fever or a respiratory tract infection** (such as sore throat, cold, cough, aches, or shortness of breath) **tell them not to come into work and encourage them to get tested** for COVID-19.

Over the coming pages, this section of the planning tool will help identify the guidance materials your business needs to:

1. Prepare and prevent COVID-19
2. Understand how to respond to a COVID-19 infection.

Sustainability is important – many of these changes, such as cleaning practices, will be part of your day-to-day business operations already, but you may need to do things more often or in different ways. Think about how you can make these new practices sustainable in the long term.

Your business and your operating environment are unique. We suggest you review, adapt and update your business's risk assessment and plans regularly.

Maintain good hygiene and cleaning

Safe Work Australia has lots of resources, tools and guidance to assist you. Your business's circumstances will determine what needs to be done to meet your work health and safety obligations. You should regularly visit the [Safe Work Australia website](#) for further information and continue to plan and adapt as circumstances change.

Think about how your business's hygiene and cleaning practices. Are there enough supplies? Are frequently used areas cleaned regularly? To maintain good hygiene and cleaning practices, please:

- X** Complete the Safe Work Australia [cleaning check list](#)
- X** Complete the Safe Work Australia [health, hygiene and facilities check list](#)
- X** Print [signs and posters](#) on good hygiene and hand washing practices
- X** Talk to your workers about how to maintain good hygiene and cleaning.

Once you complete these tasks, write down what your business needs to do:

What do you need to do?	How will you do this?	When will it happen?	What supplies do you need?	
e.g.: set up alcohol-based hand sanitiser stations at entry and exit points	e.g.: ask cleaners to refill stations	e.g.: ensure the stations are checked every 2 hours	e.g.: 1L/week of alcohol based hand sanitiser and 2 dispensers	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.g.: ensure all frequently touched areas and surfaces are cleaned several times a day	e.g.: identify high use areas, create a roster for cleaning these areas	e.g.: every two hours	e.g.: disinfectant wipes	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.g.: put up hand washing poster in the bathroom for staff and customers to follow	e.g.: stick in a clear and obvious place	e.g.: as soon as possible	e.g.: poster, blu-tac, sticky tape	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure that hand sanitiser stations are available in both work cars	Place a bottle in centre consol or on Door pocket	Immediately and checked each week	2 x Hand Sanitisers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure that hand sanitiser stations are available in both office places	Place a bottle near work stations	Immediately and checked each week	2 x Hand Sanitisers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure that Clean Masks are available in both work cars and in the Office	Place clean mask (inside a plastic sealed bag) in centre consol in car	Immediately and checked each week	2 x Clean Masks in zip locked bags (Plus 2 spare Masks in zip locked bags)	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>

Stay Physically Distant

Safe Work Australia has lots of resources, tools and guidance to assist you. Your business's circumstances will determine what needs to be done to meet your work health and safety obligations. You should regularly visit the [Safe Work Australia website](#) for further information and continue to plan and adapt as circumstances change.

Think about how people interact in your business. How will you keep everyone safe? To ensure your business has appropriate physical distancing, please:

- X** Review the Safe Work Australia advice on [physical distancing](#)
- X** Complete the [physical distancing check list](#)
- X** Print [signs and posters](#) on how to ensure physical distancing
- X** Talk to your workers about how to stay physically distant and safe.

Once you complete these tasks, write down what your business needs to do:

What do you need to do?	How will you do this?	When will it happen?	What supplies do you need?	
e.g.: provide social distancing markers on the floor where appropriate	e.g.: speak to my staff about where customers tend to queue	e.g.: discuss at next staff meeting	e.g.: markers to stick to the floor	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.g.: move work stations, desks and tables further apart to comply with social distancing	e.g.: facilities team	e.g.: before re-opening	e.g.: storage space for excess furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.g.: put up physical distancing posters in plain sight	e.g.: stick up in places that customers and staff can easily see	e.g.: as soon as possible	e.g.: poster, blu-tac, sticky tape	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure that a 1.5m gap is maintained at all times between co-workers and clients	By constant visual checks	Already existing	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
When physical distance cannot be maintained i.e. within a work car – Masks to be worn at all times	By constant visual checks	Already existing	2 x Clean masks (and 2 back up clean masks on standby)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other family members are not to be within the same room as work colleagues	Inform family members and constant reminders	Immediately	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>

Follow Advice: Additional changes for your specific business or industry

Think about what makes your business and your industry unique. What are the additional steps you need to take to keep everyone safe? How will you communicate with your customers, staff and suppliers? To help you prepare:

- X** Review Safe Work Australia [industry specific information](#) (this will be updated regularly so don't forget to come back)
- X** Complete the [what can I do to keep my workers safe at the workplace and limit the spread of COVID-19 checklist](#)
- X** Review the mandatory [public health directions](#) that apply to your business (these will change as time goes on)
- X** Talk to your workers about changes specific to your business.

Once you review industry specific information and consider your own business circumstances, write down what your business needs to do:

What do you need to do?	How will you do this?	When will it happen?	What supplies do you need?	
e.g.: communicate via website/social platforms about changes to your business practices/hours	e.g.: make a plan outlining all key messages	e.g.: two weeks prior to reopening	e.g.: will need to contact our website provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate via website / Social media about changes to your business practices	Make a plan outlining all key messages	Immediately	Facebook, Website and email platforms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where possible communicate with other businesses via Zoom	Outline policy to other businesses	Immediately	Computer with Zoom installed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure that a Tracker app for fellow work mates are installed on both phones	Track using "Find Friends" App	Already existing	2 x iphones	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meetings with clients at field locations (Stage 3)	Stay outside of any buildings & wear masks, keep 1.5m apart	Any field sites	Always have access to Masks and Hand Sanitiser in the both cars.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting with Clients at field locations (Stage 4)	Where possible ask client not to be present during inspection	If Stage 4 is announced in regional areas	2 x iphones for communication	

Your state or territory WHS regulator will also have advice and resources to assist you to meet your work health and safety duties in your particular state or territory.

[SafeWork NSW](#)

[Workplace Health and Safety QLD](#)

[WorkSafe VIC](#)

[WorkSafe ACT](#)

[SafeWork SA](#)

[NT WorkSafe](#)

[WorkSafe WA](#)

[WorkSafe TAS](#)

[Comcare](#)

Responding to a COVID-19 infection: Do you know what to do in the event of an infection?

You should plan for how to respond if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 associated with your business. Your plan will depend on the circumstances of your own business and whether the affected person has physically been in the workplace. It is important to take the time to plan now so your business is confident it can respond swiftly and easily.

First, you should consult [Safe Work Australia's website](#) on what to do if you are concerned about a worker in relation to COVID-19. It's important that you follow the guidance provided by Safe Work Australia and your state and territory public health authority.

Print off Safe Work Australia's [infographic](#) and put it in a visible location so that everyone is ready to act.

Now that you understand what to do, think about if you're prepared. Use the template below to create a plan that suits your business's needs and make sure it is communicated clearly with all workers.

Your plan should:

- outline what needs to change to ensure you can follow guidance swiftly
- outline what your first action will be if notified of a possible COVID-19 infection
- state how you will clearly communicate with staff and meet [privacy obligations](#)
- think about how you will clean your workplace after an infection
- outline how your business will continue to trade or reopen.

My business plan to respond to a COVID-19 infection:

What do I need to think about?	What needs to happen?	What supplies do you need?	
e.g.: how will we notify relevant authorities	e.g.: tell the manager on duty to call the hotline once infected person has been isolated	e.g.: none	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.g.: how can we get the office / workspace cleaned	e.g.: speak to the cleaning team about a new way of working		<input type="checkbox"/>
e.g.: how will we identify who has had contact with the infected person	e.g.: think about how we will keep track of people coming in and out of the business		<input type="checkbox"/>
If my fellow colleague is not well or has cold symptoms	Ask them to get checked for COVID-19 or stay at home for 14 days or until they are 100% well again	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
If my fellow colleague tests positive for COVID-19	They self isolate for 14 days, & get myself and close contacts checked	N/A	
During stage 3 restrictions, who can enter the office	Only my immediate work colleague can enter my office	Masks and Hand Sanitiser	

Restrictions and risks change constantly, you should review and think about ongoing health and safety regularly and update your plan appropriately.

Part 2 - Adapting my business now and in the future










COVID-19 will be with us for some time, so it's important to plan for changes in the operating environment. Your plan may need to adapt as restrictions are changed. Planning now will help you minimise the impact COVID-19 has on your business.

There are two parts to this section of the planning tool:

1. Identifying tasks to **get your business up and running**
2. Considering how your **business can adapt** to the changes in the operating environment.

Describe your business to help you plan

Currently, my business is: **Central Highlands Environmental Consultancy**

Situation		Staff		Operation	
	Partially online		Me & Jennifer Johnson		Open 6 days a week (Mon – Sat)
	N/A		2 x employees		Operating as normal in Stage 3
	Work from home or in field		If dealing with larger businesses, this will take place via webinar		All Services are still provided – there is no change.

Keep these aspects in mind as you complete this section.

Getting things up and running

What are some of the operational tasks that need to be done to reopen or scale-up your business?

There will be a range of tasks to get your business up and running. Consider things like:

- Contacting your **bank** (e.g. to reactivate merchant terminals)
- Reactivating **subscriptions and licences** (e.g. online booking systems, music licences etc.)
- Updating your **website** (e.g. with expected reopening details)
- Reaching out to your **employees** (e.g. organise a staff meeting to discuss reopening/scaling up procedures)
- Contacting your **suppliers** (e.g. to check what their lead times for production are and the impact there is on deliveries)
- Checking your **building and workplace** is ready to open (e.g. checking the heating, water, electricity are all connected)
- Reaching out to your **industry association** (e.g. for specific advice about reopening and recommended actions for dealing with restrictions)
- Checking your **legal obligations to your staff** under your new arrangements (e.g. Fair Work Act, award or enterprise agreement requirements) and **contacting the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#)** for advice if unsure
- Researching and registering for all of the relevant **support/stimulus/relief packages** available. Make sure you check out what assistance your local state government is providing, along with checking in with your bank and other organisations that provide a service for your business
- Checking your **insurance, including workers compensation**, to make sure it covers you if you change your business model or workers' duties
- Identifying your **critical resources and staff** (e.g. ensuring business continuity if staff get sick [winter is coming!!])
- Making sure your **Terms and Conditions** and other documents reflect your new arrangements – you might need to get legal advice.

Temporary JobKeeper provisions have been added to the Fair Work Act that enable qualifying employers, in certain circumstances, to change eligible employees' usual duties, location, and agree with their employee to change days and times of work.

This means you could ask employees to come in for a planning meeting, set up the workspace, or complete other important tasks, providing you meet all obligations and ensure the correct amount of pay for the hours worked.

For more information on how this might apply to your business, contact the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#).

If you are unsure how JobKeeper rules operate, contact the [Australian Tax Office](#).

Use the table on the next page to record the tasks required to reopen or scale-up your business.

Task	Who will do it	When it needs to be done	
e.g.: contact bank to reactivate merchant terminals	Office Manager	2 days prior to reopening	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate via website / Social media about changes to your business practices	Run Zoom meetings and organise meetings via email	Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please note – that we will not be shutting down during Stage 3 and even in Stage 4, we can still operate but at a more reduced capacity.			<input type="checkbox"/>
Also Please note – we do not have to meet clients onsite and can operate without them being present.			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

Adapting my business

The way your business operates, the products you sell and services you deliver, may need to change because of COVID-19. This transition will be challenging for many businesses.

You are probably already thinking about how your business could adapt. Follow the templates below to map out and implement options you are considering.

Spend some time thinking about the following questions. They should act as a starting point for what is possible for your business to do.

- Do physical and social distancing requirements **change the way your business engages** with customers? Are you able to change the physical setup/delivery of your service so it is safe for everyone?
- What **elements of your business model will be difficult to maintain** in this new environment? Is there an opportunity to minimise this (for instance, by moving online)?
- Can your business **temporarily change or expand** the range of goods and services it offers?
- Are there **opportunities to expand or change an element of your business** to respond to an opportunity in the current environment?

If you identified opportunities or things you can do now, write them down as tasks below:

e.g.: explore online store options	Marketing officer	Within the next month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Liaise with Environmental Consultancies in Stage 4 areas and enquire to if we can assist them with field work in Stage 3 areas.	Jennifer Johnson	Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there other people / organisations that can help you?

- Is your **relevant industry association or local government** providing any specific advice or guidance to assist businesses in your sector?
- Can your **accountant or bookkeeper** provide some modelling/projections of the impact reduced revenue will have on your bottom line? Are there opportunities to reduce any fixed costs?
- Are there other **businesses similar to yours** you can get in contact with to discuss different ideas? What are your competitors doing?

Make a list of the different people and organisations that may be useful to talk to:

Name/organisation	Number/email	When should we contact them?	
Town Planning Consultants	Via email	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Environmental Consultancies	Via email	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3 - Accessing support and assistance

COVID-19 is significantly impacting businesses around the country. Support is available from Federal, State, territory and local Governments.

If you need...	...then consider
A wage subsidy to help retain your employees	<p>Eligible businesses may access a \$1,500 per fortnight JobKeeper payment to assist with paying their staff. Register for the scheme with the ATO.</p> <p>The supporting apprentices and trainees wage subsidy provides eligible small businesses with up to \$21,000 per apprentice or trainee. To apply, talk to the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) in your area.</p> <p>If you're a sole trader or self-employed, you may be able to claim JobKeeper and other support. Visit business.gov.au.</p>
Additional cash to help manage your business	<p>The ATO will be distributing tax-free cash flow boosts between \$20,000 and \$100,000 for eligible small and medium-sized businesses and not-for-profit organisations. You don't need to apply. If eligible, money will be refunded when you lodge your activity statement.</p> <p>The instant asset write-off threshold has been increased to \$150,000 and now includes larger businesses.</p> <p>Business can also accelerate depreciation on certain items purchased before June 2021. Further details are available on the ATO's website.</p> <p>Check your local payroll tax requirements for exemptions and deferrals.</p>
Loans and other credit from your financial institution	<p>Small and medium sized businesses can get loans of up to \$250,000 (over a period of three years) from a range of lenders. These loans have an initial six month repayment holiday. Enquire with your lender. You should also ask what other support packages are available.</p>
Assistance with rent	<p>The Australian Government has introduced a hold on evictions and outlined a mandatory code of conduct for commercial tenancies. Talk to your landlord early.</p>
Information on workplace obligations	<p>See the Fair Work Ombudsman website for information on workplace entitlements and obligation including stand downs from work, flexible work arrangements, workplace health and safety, and pay and leave entitlements.</p>
Keep your business safe online	<p>Visit the Australian Cyber Security Centre's website for information on how to keep your business safe online.</p>
Look after your mental health	<p>Visit the My Business Health website. It helps business owners navigate the wealth of business and wellbeing information, and find the services they need to face challenges and identify opportunities to grow their business.</p>
Further assistance	<p>All state and territory governments are also offering support to businesses. Research what is available. Talk to you local industry groups for advice.</p>

Next Steps:

N/A	JobKeeper wage subsidy	Apply via the ATO
N/A	Supporting apprentices and trainees wage subsidy	Search for, then call your local AASN
N/A	Instant asset write-off	Check details via ATO , claim when you lodge your income tax return
N/A	Accelerated depreciation	
N/A	Loan (new or restructure my current arrangement)	Speak to your lender
N/A	State and territory government support package	Details for ACT , NSW , NT , QLD , SA , TAS , WA , VIC
N/A	Rent relief	Speak to your landlord. To assist, read Government's code of conduct for commercial tenancies
X	Reach out to my industry group	

Plan for re-opening

Consider what you will need to do in the coming months, weeks, and days, before you re-open in full or in part. Some tasks can only be done closer to time (like re-establishing Eftpos machines). It helps to have time to consider major decisions and map out all of the details.

Days to re-opening: _____

Task	Who will do it?	
N/A – Business will not close, but stay open.		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
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