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Media Release

Friday, 1st May 2020

New toolkit to help businesses get back to work safely

As the Australian economy gradually reopens, a new online toolkit has been launched to provide detailed guidance for businesses and workers on how to stay safe from COVID-19.

The Safe Work Australia (SWA) website has been transformed into a centralised information hub, which can be easily searched using a handy content filter to find work health and safety guidance relevant to 23 specific industries.

Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, Christian Porter, said the gradual easing of restrictions meant it was essential to have access to the most accurate and up-to-date information about how to stay safe in the workplace.

“The SWA website brings together all the information businesses and workers need into one centralised hub, providing users with fast and easy access to detailed guidance that is directly relevant to their specific industry,” Mr Porter said.

“That includes guidance about physical distancing, personal protective equipment, worksite cleaning, how to conduct risk assessments and design emergency plans, as well as providing case studies to help explain how to manage the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace.”

Developing the toolkit was a key recommendation of the National Cabinet which recently released a set of national guiding principles to help get the economy up and running again safely.

Minister for Small and Family Business, Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash, said that while regulations may differ between individual states and territories, it was important for small business operators to think about their particular circumstances and how they will operate when they reopen.

“We know the devastating impact Covid-19 has had on lives and the economy, which is why it’s so critical that businesses start to prepare now for how they will operate safely as lockdown restrictions ease,” Minister Cash said.

“Each industry and business will be different, so I would encourage every business to think about their unique circumstances, consult their peak body, check out SWA’s new website and start preparing now.”

Development of the SWA guidance involved extensive consultation with SWA Members, comprising State and Territory workplace safety bodies, employer groups and unions.

The website will be regularly updated with new guidance as current restrictions are gradually eased to ensure a smooth transition for Australian workplaces.

Minister Cash also reminded Australians that one of the best ways to help ensure the economy could reopen quickly was for as many people as possible to download the COVIDSafe App.

“If you want to again go to the pub, go to your gym or sit down in a local restaurant for a meal or in a café for a coffee; download the COVIDSafe app: that is our ticket to re-opening Australia.”

The Safe Work Australia website can be accessed at www.swa.gov.au/coronavirus

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