

memo

memo no: 783
to: All Lifebridge Staff and Volunteers
from: Bronwyn Mitchell
date: 9 April 2020
subject: COVID-19 Response Update – 9-4-2020

Dear Lifebridge Staff and Volunteers,

Thank you all for another busy working week under these very unusual and difficult circumstances. As we move into what I hope is a quiet and relaxing Easter at home for most, we take this opportunity to provide you the following updates and reminders:

JobKeeper Support Package

Overnight the Australian Federal Parliament passed legislation regarding the new JobKeeper support package. We are now waiting for the Australian Treasury and Australia Tax Office to update their websites and provide us the specific guidelines and details for how the scheme will operate.

Please be reassured that Lifebridge has registered with the ATO and we feel confident that we will meet the eligibility criteria for participating in the scheme.

We expect updated Fact Sheets will become available over Easter and we will provide these to you early next week. In the meantime, please find attached the JobKeeper Fact Sheet and FAQ from 5th April 2020.

Attached also is a fact sheet regarding temporary amendments to federal awards passed in the Senate overnight.

Changes to NSW Long Service Leave

Long service leave applies to most **NSW** employees who are full-time, part-time or casuals. If you have been working for the same employer for 10 years you are entitled to 2 months (8.67 weeks) paid **leave**, to be paid at your ordinary gross weekly wage under the **NSW Long Service Leave Act 1955** (the **Act**).

The NSW Parliament has recently passed changes to long service leave which will create greater flexibility for employers and employees to access leave during the COVID-19 crisis. The amendments to the Long Services Leave Act 1955 will allow employees to take leave in shorter blocks, such as one day a week, and without the traditional one-month notice period.

The key amendments include:

1. waiving the one-month notice period for taking leave (by mutual agreement between employee and employer),
2. greater flexibility for employees to take this leave in shorter blocks if they wish (rather than traditional monthly blocks).

3. The legislation will have effect for six months from 25th March 2020 with the possibility of an extension to one year.

Accessing Your Superannuation

The Federal Government has proposed temporary changes allowing some people early access to their superannuation. Individuals experiencing financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19, may be eligible to access up to \$10,000 of their super this financial year and a further \$10,000 in 2020/21.

Applications are open via your myGov account mid-April. To apply for early release of super, one or more of the below eligibility criteria needs to apply:

- you're unemployed; or
- you're eligible to receive a job seeker payment, youth allowance for jobseekers, parenting payment (which includes the single and partnered payments), special benefit or farm household allowance; or
- on or after 1 January 2020: you were made redundant; or your working hours were reduced by 20 per cent or more; or if you are a sole trader — your business was suspended, or there was a reduction in your turnover of 20 per cent or more.

General Update

- We are pleased to confirm that as we move into Easter there are no reported or confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst our staff, customer and/or carer population.
- Lifebridge executive team members are in regular contact with staff members who are identified as high risk (over 60's, chronic medical conditions) and staff who have chosen to self-isolate to ensure their ongoing health and wellbeing during these uncertain times.
- Disability and Aged Care Managers and the Rostering Team are in constant contact with our customers, carers and families to ensure their physical health and mental wellbeing during home isolation and limited community based supports. We are doing everything we can to ensure our customers and carers are receiving the services and support they need during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Our front-line support workers continue to do a magnificent job delivering services to our vulnerable aged and disability customers and their overwhelmed carers and families. Our gratitude and admiration is extended to you all – thank you for your professionalism and unwavering commitment towards others.
- Please remember your responsibility to adhere to all social distancing and hygiene protocols over the Easter long weekend. Please keep yourself, your family and your community safe during this period. By maintaining appropriate hygiene and social distancing practices we increase our chances of preventing exposure and infection in the community and in turn enable us to provide much needed supports to our aged and disability customers on an ongoing basis.
- Lifebridge have available all personal protective equipment and product to be used in the provision of supports for the protection of our customers, co-workers and families. PPE and products including gloves, face masks, waterproof booties, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and hand towels are available at our Kingscliff offices, Monday – Friday 8.30am – 3.30pm (excluding public holidays). Wherever possible, please bring your own dispensers to be refilled from the bulk products we have sourced.

A friendly reminder to continue monitoring your Lifebridge email address in the event of any significant changes that need to be implemented to services next week.

If you have any concerns, issues or questions regarding the above please do not hesitate in contacting myself or your Department Manager. We will be available over the Easter period and will continue to monitor and review all information published by our peak bodies, employer and employee associations, State and Federal government departments for release next week.

The Work, Health & Safety Committee continue to represent the interests of all staff and your Chairperson and HSR's are also an escalation point regarding any WHS and COVID-19 related issues or concerns.

A reminder to all staff of our Employee Assistance Provider, Kaye Laemmle who is available to provide confidential counselling services. If you are feeling overwhelmed or concerned, we encourage you to call Kaye on 0410 618 330.

Last but not least, and on behalf of the Executive Team and Lifebridge Board, we wish you all a very happy Easter. Take care, stay safe, keep positive, eat chocolate and be kind to each other.

Regards,



Bronwyn Mitchell
Chief Executive Officer