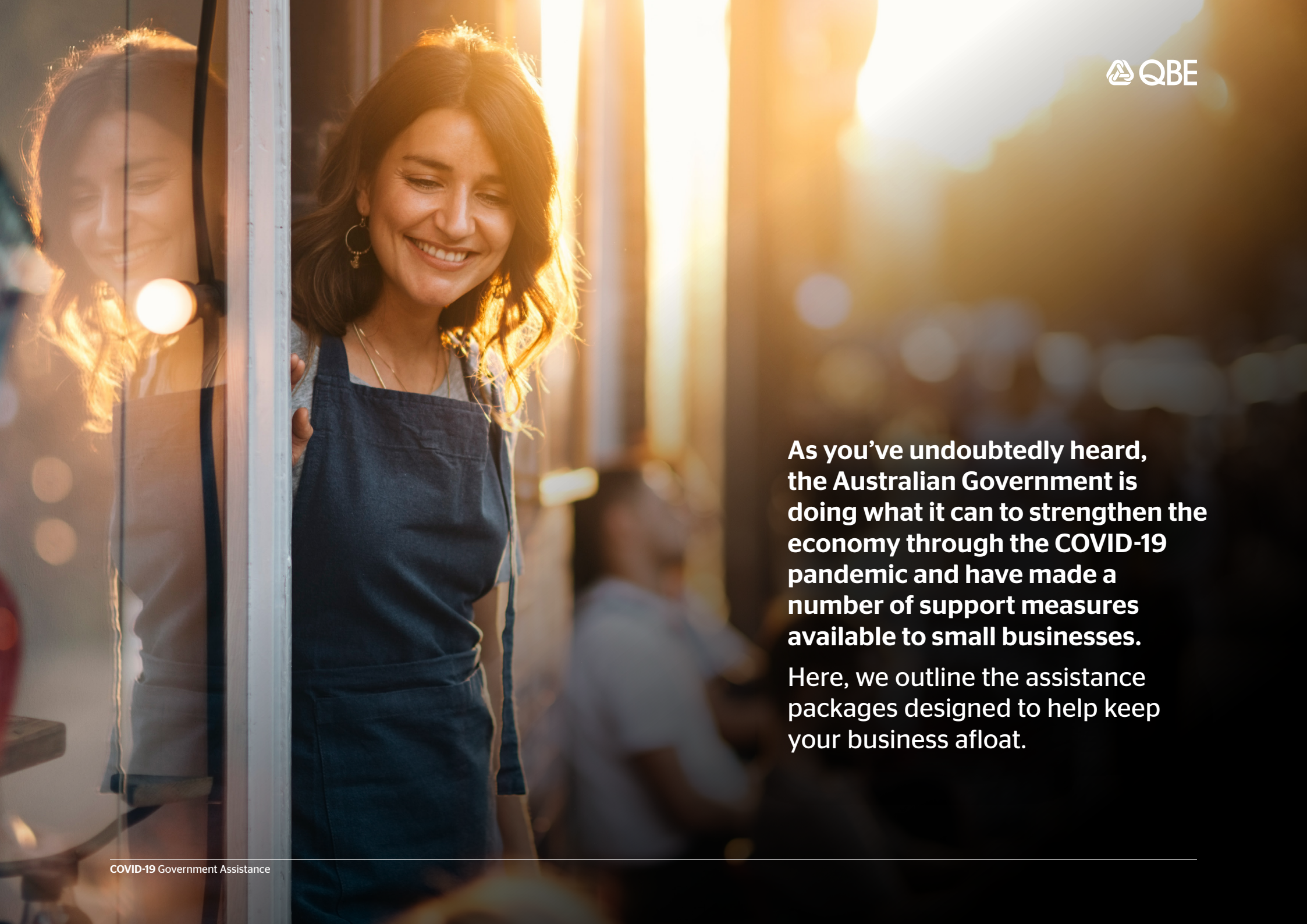


COVID-19 Government Assistance

SME Guide



As you've undoubtedly heard, the Australian Government is doing what it can to strengthen the economy through the COVID-19 pandemic and have made a number of support measures available to small businesses. Here, we outline the assistance packages designed to help keep your business afloat.



What support programs are on offer?

If you're looking for financial assistance during these unprecedented times, the government has a range of options, including:

- **JobKeeper Payment**
- **Boosting cashflow for employers support measure**
- **Apprentices and trainees support subsidy**
- **Local government assistance**

JobKeeper Payment

If your small business is significantly impacted by COVID-19, it's likely you'll be able to access the JobKeeper Payment. That means you can continue paying your employees and help them keep their jobs, so they'll be ready to re-start when the pandemic is over.

If your businesses' annual turnover is less than \$1 billion your estimated fall in turnover must be by 30% or more to be eligible. Your business must also not be subject to the Major Bank Levy to be eligible. Not-for-profit organisations, charities and sole traders that satisfy eligibility criteria can also access the payment.

For full details on the JobKeeper Payment, including full eligibility criteria, visit the government website [here](#).

How to apply and what's next?

If you're eligible for the JobKeeper Payment, enrol through the ATO [here](#).

You'll also need to let your employees know you've enrolled in the JobKeeper program, and confirm they're happy for you to remain their primary employer to receive the payments. Send them the [Employee Nomination Notice](#) to fill out and return to you, which you need to keep on file for five years.

If you're an eligible employer, you'll start receiving payments from the first week of May, to cover your employees' wages from 30 March 2020. Once the funds come through, you can pay each employee the minimum \$1,500 per fortnight.

JobKeeper Payment at a glance

Paid if you

Estimate your turnover will drop by 30% or more

Payment amount

\$1,500 a fortnight, per employee

Paid to

Employers, to pass on to staff employed for 12 months as at 1 March 2020

Paid for

30 March to 27 September 2020 (paid in arrears from the first week of May)

Boosting cashflow for employers support measure

For most small businesses, regular cash flow is the number one priority. That's why the government has introduced the boosting cash flow support measure.

If your business has a turnover of less than \$50 million and has made eligible payments you are required to withhold from (even if the amount is \$0), you could be eligible for two cash injections totalling between \$20,000 and \$100,000.

Eligible withheld payments include payments like salary and wages, and retirement and compensation payments. In practice, this means you keep the amounts you have withheld from payments for these periods, however, there are some **exceptions**.

For full details on the Cash Flow for Employers Payment, including all eligible payments and full eligibility criteria, [visit the government website here](#).

How to apply and what's next?

The good news is, you don't need anything extra. If your business is eligible, payments will be automatically credited to your account when you lodge your BAS statements.

Boosting cashflow for employers support measure at a glance

Paid if you

Eligible small and medium businesses, sole traders, not-for-profits, partnerships, companies and trusts

Paid as

Two tax-free cash flow boosts, as credits through the BAS system

Payment amount

From \$20,000 to \$100,000 (total)

Paid if you

Have made eligible payments you're required to hold (even if the amount is \$0)

Paid from

April-June, then June-September 2020, depending on when you lodge your BAS

Apprentices and trainees support subsidy

If you are a small business and employ apprentices or trainees, you can apply to receive a 50% subsidy of their wages from 1 January to 30 September 2020. If you satisfy eligibility criteria, you'll be reimbursed up to \$7,000 per employee, per quarter.

The subsidy will be available to most businesses employing fewer than 20 employees who retain an apprentice or trainee. For full details of the package, including full eligibility criteria, [visit the government website here](#).

How to apply and what's next?

To register, [find your local Australian Apprenticeship Support Network \(AASN\) provider here](#). Your AASN provider will then carry out an assessment and if you're confirmed as eligible you'll be able to access the payment.

Apprentices and trainees support subsidy at a glance

Paid to

Employers of apprentices and trainees
(or to new employers if they've been let go)

Payment amount

Up to \$21,000 per employee

Paid if you

Employ 20 people, and retain at least one
apprentice or trainee

Local government support

Each state or territory has its own grants and programs to support you through the COVID-19 pandemic. For a list of what's available in your area, [visit the government website here](#).

Local councils also have a number of initiatives to support small businesses, so it's worth contacting your council to see if you're eligible for more help.

Personal support

If your business is impacted by COVID-19, you might be struggling to prioritise what's most important – your personal mental health and wellbeing. The government's [Head to Health website](#) provides access to trusted information and digital support tools to help.

Beyond Blue is one of the recommended services and has a resource specifically designed for small business owners [here](#). You can also call their coronavirus helpline 24/7 on 1800 512 348.

R U OK also offers resources and useful information on staying connected in challenging times on their [website](#).

Staying updated

As you can appreciate, things are changing all the time, so keep up to date with the latest news and press releases. Helpful sites include:

- [Australian Government, Department of Health](#)
- [Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)

QBE support and resources

QBE has introduced a number of [measures](#) to support small and medium business (SME) customers experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. These include maintaining expiring premiums, deferred premium payments, continued insurance cover for vacant business premises and cover for commercial motor policies where vehicles are no longer on the road.

We've also developed a number of other useful business resources to help including:

- [Employer guide: Your Duty of Care](#)
- [Employer guide: Working from home, supporting your employees](#)
- [Tackling cashflow in a crisis](#)

Visit our [COVID-19 support page](#) to access to all our resources and find more about how can help.



The advice in this document is general in nature and has been prepared without taking into account your objectives, financial situation or needs.
You must decide whether or not it is appropriate, in light of your own circumstances, to act on this advice.