

View from Canberra



May 2020

The Many Faces of Covid-19

We have found ourselves continually forced into the unknown of late. When will restrictions end? When will things return to a kind of normal? Will things be the same sort of normal? Is there light at the end the tunnel?

As the great Bob Dylan said “times, they are a changin’”, and the way we live, work and play looks like it will transform in some way in the long term. The whole nature of global trade, for example, will in my view change and see the whole issue of our national sovereignty brought into a much starker light and reality as government decides on the economic vision for our nation in the next 12 months and in the longer term.

As an industry we need to prepare for a changed world and get the economy back on the bus. Over the last month, reported new Covid-19 cases in each state and territory have steadied and the curve is flattening. The Prime Minister has already indicated that restrictions will be lifted and further reviewed within the next few weeks, and as they are relaxed, we will move into recovery mode.

The BIC and State Associations have been working closely with the federal, state and territory governments about the impacts of Covid-19 on public transport and schools, the tour, charter and express sector and bus manufacturers and suppliers, providing options on how to support the industry in this difficult period and what can be done as we recover.

The BIC has played a key industry information role through the Covid-19 landing page at www.ozebus.com.au/covid. All hands have been on deck and we hope it has been useful to your business.

On the BIC’s agenda right now is the development of industry health and safety standards compiled by Safe Work Australia. The standards raise issues such as returning students to school and the public to work, and at what capacities. Once restrictions relating to Covid-19 are revised and things begin to open, the industry will need to be prepared for the implications of regulations in each state and territory.

The BIC is working with relevant agencies including the National Covid-19 Coordination Commission (NCCC) to coordinate advice to the Australian Government on actions to minimise and mitigate the economic impacts of the Covid-19 and to facilitate the fastest possible recovery once the virus has been brought under control. The Commission will be working to ensure that the government receives advice and assistance from business to meet the challenges ahead to reduce the economic impact of Covid-19 and help build a bridge to recovery.



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The BIC supports the implementation of the COVIDSafe app. The health and wellbeing of individuals and the economy generally is paramount. The sooner we work together to stop the spread of Covid-19, the sooner restrictions will be lifted, and we can return to normality.

The COVIDSafe Contact app is a “digital handshake”, which notes the date, time, distance and duration of contact with an infected person and provides health officials with the ability to speed up the process of identification to quickly stop the spread and incubate carriers. It is important to recognise from a workplace point of view that downloading the COVIDSafe app is a matter of choice and is completely voluntary, however the BIC believes it is important to recommend the app to your teams as an ideal personal, employee and passenger health risk management tool.

Things are moving quickly and we are here to help, so any ideas you have about good work practices, new government support programs for your business or problems with existing programs, let us know so we can feed it in to the very wide consultation framework we are currently involved. Email us at enquiries@bic.asn.au.

Finally, it is with much regret that the BIC has come to the decision to cancel our planned national conference in Rotorua later this year. At this stage, the BIC is not able to engage speakers and participation for our usual plenary program, the development of which we take care to produce to ensure great value return for our delegates. We are of course also aware that normal business activities may take some time to resume once the immediate crisis is over. We are keeping options open to convene a small industry gathering, on local soil at the end of year to give Industry a chance to come together and chew the fat.

