

24 March 2020

## **PRACTICAL WAYS TO SUPPORT BUSINESS DURING CRISIS**

The state's peak business organisation, **Business NSW**, has formally written to the State's Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet seeking urgent changes to the legislation governing the accessing of Long Service Leave during the coronavirus pandemic.

Under the current Act, a worker starts accruing Long Service Leave after 5 years of service, but cannot access that accrued leave until they hit 10 years of continuous employment.

"As part of our proposed changes, to operate only during the pandemic, staff will be eligible to take any accrued leave as a way of potentially keeping their job," said Business NSW Chief Executive Stephen Cartwright.

"In my correspondence with the Treasurer, I told him that many of our members are keen to access accrued long service leave provisions by asking staff to take that leave rather than having to stand them down or make them redundant," Mr Cartwright said.

"Based on expert advice from leading workplace relations law firm **Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors**, it is clear that a simple amendment to Section 4 of the Act could be developed to achieve this change.

"It is important to note that the amendment Business NSW is seeking from the Government is intended to be temporary, and this amendment would cease to operate at the end of the global pandemic.

"This proposed legislative change is aimed at giving businesses additional options to draw down on their existing provisions, maintain some cash flow, and keep employees in on-going employment during these unique circumstances.

"Some businesses may even be able to keep people employed if they can come up with an arrangement to work for say 3 days a week and then have their employee take the rest of the week as part of their long service leave.

"We know these are extraordinary times and the Government is under enormous pressure to keep finding magical solutions. The Treasurer and Premier have been strong in their delivery of support packages for businesses so far, but this is one initiative that won't actually cost the taxpayer anything but could save thousands of jobs," Mr Cartwright said.

### **About Business NSW**

Formerly the NSW Business Chamber, **Business NSW** is the peak policy and advocacy body which has been representing businesses in NSW since 1826.

### **Media Contact:**

Damian Kelly 0401 773 825