

Southern Lakes Business Response Group

COVID-19 – Update 40 – Friday 19 February - 2:00pm

*Here's the latest update from the **Southern Lakes Business Response & Recovery team***

The official Government website covering all health-related matters is covid19.govt.nz/

All Government releases and updates on funding and support [can be found here](#).

All QLDC announcements and updates [can be found here](#)

The Business Response Group will provide regular updates as they are announced.

What's New?

This week's community cases serve as a reminder to us all that covid-19 is very much alive. Having flexible business processes in place to be able to quickly adapt and react to changing alert levels is key, including ways in which you can easily communicate with staff, customers and suppliers. Below you will find a useful template to have at the ready should you need it in the future.

Practicing good hygiene and displaying the QR Code and encouraging customers to check in are also some simple things you can do to keep everyone safe. Below you will find an update on covid-19 updates and support for businesses.

The next Business Response Group update will be in a fortnight on Friday 5 March unless there are more changes to alert levels or significant updates.

Employment

If you're interested in hiring someone, and they need support to gain the required job skills, there may be help available with in-work support, training or a wage contribution under the Government's new flexi-wage.

What's Flexi-wage

Flexi-wage is an employment programme that helps job seekers get the skills they need to meet the requirements of a job. Support can include training and in-work support (such as pastoral care) as well as a wage contribution. The job must continue after the Flexi-wage has finished.

You may be able to get Flexi-wage for someone you hire if:

- they meet the 'Who can get it' criteria outlined in [Flexi-wage job seeker information](#)
- the position is ongoing and will continue after the subsidy has finished

- you pay at least the minimum wage for the job
- you haven't dismissed anyone to make this position available.

You may be able to get Flexi-wage to support an employee at risk of redundancy who you are able to employ in a different role within your business, while they gain the skills required to do that job.

[Visit the website for more details.](#)

Connect your underemployed staff to extra work

We understand that there are uncertain times ahead for employers and employees within Queenstown Lakes.

As some employers are needing to reduce staff or manage fluctuations in demand, others are looking to recruit. In our neighbouring district of Central Otago employers require over 300 staff for the upcoming Apple harvest (Feb – May) and Grape harvest (Mar – May).

If you have staff that are on reduced hours, or know of people looking for work please encourage them to check out [Work the Seasons](#) and [Handpicked Crew](#). Tracey Mansfield is employed by Central Otago's horticulture sector and is dedicated to connecting potential employees with employers. Tracey is available to answer any questions you may have seasonalcoordinator@summerfruitnz.co.nz

By connecting your staff to other temporary employment opportunities in neighbouring regions we can help retain our workforce in the district.

Business Support

Legislation was introduced under urgency this week to set up a new Resurgence Support Payment for businesses affected by any resurgence of COVID-19.

The Government has a package of support available, in addition to this payment, including:

- A new ShortTerm Absence Payment to cover eligible workers needing to stay at home while awaiting a COVID19 test result. This is a one-off payment of \$350 to employers to pay workers who need to stay home while awaiting a test or while someone who is their dependent is doing so, in accordance with public health advice. **Further information about this payment is available on the MSD website.**

- The Leave Support Scheme helps businesses to help pay workers (including self employed) told to self-isolate because of COVID-19. It's paid as a lump sum and covers two weeks per eligible employee at the rates of \$585.80 for each employee working 20 hours or more a week and \$350 for each employee working less than 20 hours a week. **Information is available here.**

- The Wage Subsidy Scheme will also be available nationally when there's a regional or national move to Alert Levels three and four for a period of seven days. The support will be provided in two weekly payments for the duration of the alert level period, rounded to the nearest fortnight. The Wage Subsidy Scheme has been very effective in keeping people in work so far with more than \$14 billion paid out to protect 1.8 million jobs.

Other support includes the enhanced loan products Business Finance Guarantee Scheme, which is available to June 2021 and Small Business Cashflow Scheme.

[For more information visit the website here.](#)

Covid-19 Vaccine Guidelines for Businesses

The first shipment of the Pfizer vaccine is due to reach New Zealand by April and will be available to border staff and essential health workers in the first instance.

Current indications are that at least 70 percent of the population will need to be vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity.

[Some short pointers and guidance on the vaccine and employment related issues can be found here.](#)

Events

Digital Boost 101 Wanaka

Thursday March 4, 1.30-3pm - Wanaka Community HUB

[Digital Boost](#) is a new Government initiative to give businesses skills to launch and adapt to the digital world. As part of the rollout of the initiative, which offers free, self-paced learning, Digital Boost is running a series of in-person workshops for small businesses to help them embrace the digital world and grow their business.

Join us for this 90 minute Digital Boost session which will cover:

- How to market to your ideal customer using Facebook, Instagram, Google and Youtube
- How to increase customers through your website and learn how to build one yourself
- Q&A with a local business owner who has implemented digital tools
- Hear from case studies that have increased their business profits by 300% or more using digital tools in the last six months
- How to sign up for the free online Digital Boost platform to teach yourself at your own pace whenever you want

If you've ever thought about taking any component of your business online here is the chance to ask an expert in person and then join the free program online. [You can jump on and register here.](#)

About the presenter:

The session is delivered by Kale Panoho who is the partner of K&J Growth and Rugby Bricks. His companies have worked with local businesses like BNZ and local gyms through to international brands like TikTok, Microsoft and Monster Energy and have helped hundreds of businesses go online. These sessions are backed and supported by Microsoft, Facebook, Xero, Google, Amazon, MYOB and other tech companies from all around the world.

About Digital Boost:

It's free, self-paced learning, run by experts, for Kiwis and delivered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment in conjunction with The Mind Lab, K&J Growth and Indigo. This online platform is accessible to small business owners across New Zealand.

If you have any concerns, or are not getting the support you need, from the resources, please contact anyone below.

Destination Queenstown – Ann Lockhart – CEO – annl@queenstownNZ.nz

Queenstown Chamber – Ruth Stokes – CEO – ceo@queenstownchamber.org.nz

Lake Wanaka Tourism – Tim Barke - GM – gm@wanaka.co.nz

Ignite Wanaka Chamber – Naomi Lindsay – Executive Officer – naomi@ignitewanaka.co.nz

QLDC Economic Development – Peter Harris – Economic Development Manager
peter.harris@qldc.govt.nz

Regional Business Partners – Tara Druce – Business Advisor – tara@otagorbp.co.nz