

2 April 2020

Mr Neville Power
Chair
National COVID-19 Co-ordination Commission
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

By email: ncccenquiries@pmc.gov.au

Dear Mr Power,

Tax Profession an 'essential service'

The National Tax Liaison Group (**NTLG**) is the Australian Taxation Office's (**ATO**) longest standing consultative forum, focusing on strategic taxation matters of national interest. The primary objective of the NTLG is to provide a wide range of stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss the strategic direction of the tax system and to deliver opportunities for improvements to the administration of the tax system. The NTLG's membership is comprised of senior ATO and Treasury officers and representatives of the major tax, law, and accounting professional associations. Details of the activities of the NTLG, including its membership, can be found [here](#).

Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, Corporate Tax Association, CPA Australia, Institute of Public Accountants, Law Council of Australia and The Tax Institute (together **the Joint Bodies**) are the external members of the NTLG. We write to you as the peak professional accounting and tax practitioner bodies in Australia representing the tax profession at this critical time.

Australian governments are currently considering further strict 'lockdowns' of non-essential services.

Accountants, tax practitioners and professional advisers are critical to maintaining and supporting business and individuals (ie taxpayers) through the COVID-19 crisis. There are significant risks to the business operating environment, and the tax and superannuation systems, if they are unable to operate as usual, particularly as they are required to support taxpayers in understanding and accessing the benefits of the Stimulus packages announced by the various Australian governments.

These businesses are generally currently observing best work from home practices available to them and their people. However, a declaration of a 'lockdown' of non-essential services will result in these practices being unable to operate and support their clients at a critical time for the economy if they are not considered to be an 'essential service'.

The Joint Bodies respectfully request that accountants, tax practitioners and related professionals be determined to be an 'essential service' for the purposes of the COVID-19 measures. It should be publicly recognised that they be allowed to continue practicing and be exempt from limitations imposed under

COVID-19 restrictions and any stricter lockdown period so they can continue to support taxpayers during this critical time.

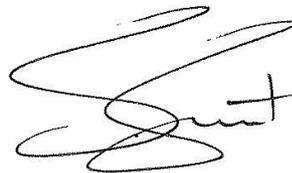
We look forward to your response.

If you would like to discuss any of the above, please contact Tax Counsel Stephanie Caredes on 02 8223 0059 in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,



Peter Godber
President
The Tax Institute



Simon Grant FCA Group Executive – Advocacy & Professional Standing
Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand



Michelle de Niese
Executive Director
Corporate Tax Association



Dr Gary Pflugrath
Executive General Manager, Policy & Advocacy
CPA Australia



Greg Rodgers
Chair – Business Law Section
Law Council of Australia



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CC:

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