

23.03.20

Dear Staff,

Stand down from your employment

As you are aware, Australia is experiencing a public health crisis due to the Novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Because of the severe impact that COVID-19 is having, the Government has directed a lockdown of non-essential services from midday today, Monday 23rd March, until further notice.

As a result, to comply with this direction, Vanilla Lounge must go into lockdown and we will be temporarily standing you down from your employment without pay effective immediately. However, as you are aware, this is an issue that is continually developing so the stand down period will depend on further government directions. The restrictions in place may be relaxed or tightened at any time.

For the avoidance of doubt, your employment is not being terminated and the stand down is temporary in nature.

We are absolutely committed to doing whatever is necessary to keep us all safe and healthy during this time and continue to support our community both now and when this crisis passes.

Vanilla Lounge is permitted under section 524 *Fair Work Act 2009* (**Act**) to stand you down without pay. In particular, the Act enables Vanilla Lounge to stand you down during a period where you cannot be usefully employed because of a stoppage of work for any cause for which we cannot reasonably be held responsible.

We acknowledge the difficulties that may arise as a result of your stand down. To reduce any hardship that may occur during the stand down of your employment, we will:

- (a) permit you to undertake paid work with any person or entity other than Vanilla Lounge;
- (b) provide you with a financial hardship letter to present to creditors in which you have debts owing; and/or
- (c) provide you with any reasonable documentation required for the purpose of obtaining government benefits or the like

while the stand down of your employment remains in effect.

We would also like to bring to your attention the Working for Victoria Fund. Under the Working for Victoria Fund, displaced workers will be eligible to apply for different types of work. This presents opportunities for paid work and an opportunity to contribute to Victoria's ability to manage this event and support the community. You can register your interest at the following link: <https://www.vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria>

Furthermore, if you find yourself in mandatory self-isolation and don't have friends or family who can readily help you to get supplies, you can register your need for the emergency relief packages by calling Victoria's coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398 from today Monday 23rd March.

The Australian Government, Department of Social Services, is also offering a range of Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and support for individuals and families affected by Coronavirus through a range of measures. This link has all the relevant information: <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-support>

We greatly appreciate your support through this trying time and thank you for the contributions you have made to Vanilla Lounge. We look forward to resuming business operations in due course. You are all in our thoughts and please put your safety and the safety of your families first by practicing social distancing and taking all government directives seriously.

Yours faithfully,

Helen and Arthur Spanos

