



**mitchell & co**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

## **Mitchell & Co Autumn Newsletter**

### **Mitco COVID-19 Management Plan – Open for Business**

The world has changed for sure since our last newsletter.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced COVID-19 as a pandemic, just 2 weeks ago.

It seems every day we are bombarded with updates from government, suppliers, customers and the like to advise us of their respective business practices to manage the crisis.

This newsletter is another one of those, sorry to say.

Our approach is **very much business as usual with some common-sense restrictions** as advised by WHO and our government(s). One thing we are doing against the norm is to ban the term “social distancing” – simply hate it.

We will of course reduce our client visits and now conduct most of business via email/Skype and the like.

We have adopted safe working conditions (signs in the office bathroom – how to wash your hands as a start), our systems are already cloud based so working from home if required will be seamless in terms of client interaction.

Wayne in our office has had his holidays in New Zealand cut- short and will fly back a week earlier than planned. He will of course self-isolate for 2 weeks as required before he returns to the office.

### **Exporter Impact**

You are in a tougher position than we are.

Many of our client base has lost their overseas markets overnight with many orders cancelled and it seems overseas marketing plans are now put on hold for 6 months or so. Bit hard to travel overseas when the planes are grounded, trade shows cancelled and no one wants to meet with you face to face anymore.

Many of you are also facing domestic challenges as well, with restrictions on your

activities as a result of the government virus containment and travel restrictions. The government announced a range of programs to help the economy and those who have been “dis-proportionally effected” by the economic impact of the virus. That’s you!

It states that for the \$1 billion Economic Assistance package (under the control of Trade Minister Simon Birmingham) that,

*“Where possible, we are using existing delivery mechanisms to ensure speed and efficiency, without the need to create new programs.”*

A fully funded EMDG scheme is the best means to give immediate help you all, for this year and beyond.

How can we help you? We think there are three things we can do.

- **Lobby** the Minister on your behalf for EMDG to be fully funded.
- Help you get your outstanding 2018/2019 applications **paid as soon as possible.**
- Help you get started on your 2019/2020 applications **now.**

### **Lobbying Efforts**

We are onto it already – [click here to see our initial submission of last week.](#)

We have asked Minister Birmingham to fully fund EMDG for the 2018/2019 grant year and make some simple “tweaks” to the program to help you deal with your trading conditions in 2020/2021 and beyond.

The funds are there and no logical reason exists for the EMDG program not to be used as a delivery mechanism to give exporters immediate help.

For example the second tranche payment due to exporters for their grant entitlement above \$40,000 normally paid in June can be brought forward to today with the stroke of the Ministers pen!

We continue to lobby for you and do so, day in day out – being a serial EMDG pest comes to mind.

### **2018/2019 Applications Not Yet Paid**

Applications are generally processed in the order of receipt.

The processing time is dependent solely on Austrade and the allocated staff member.

Austrade has been focused on applications lodged in November.

Audit activity has been slow to say the least.

We have been informed that if your application has been accepted for a site audit visit,

such visits have been put on hold for 4 weeks as a safety measure to Austrade staff. We have sought confirmation of Austrade's approach going forward. We are yet to get a response.

We have also contacted the Minister's office to encourage them to equip Austrade with more resources and other incentives to get the remaining grant payments out the door as soon as possible.

Please contact us directly and we do our best to push things along as best we can.

As soon as we hear from Austrade in relation to your application we will be in touch.

### **2020 Applications**

We are already preparing grant applications for 2020.

Given the current status, as mentioned above, you need to consider looking at your export marketing expenditure already acquitted in FY 19/20 and export earnings received.

Applications can be lodged from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and you should start thinking about providing information to us as soon as practicably possible.

### **Contact us now.**

We will provide answers to if a 2020 application should be lodged or not.

Please don't hesitate to call or email us - no visits of course in the short term!

All the Best,

***Stuart & Team***