

Discover the best way to support staff during COVID-19



At the end of March, **MetLife's COVID-19 Insights research** was conducted to understand how employees perceived the support they had received so far from their employer during the COVID-19 crisis. It revealed that Australian based employers have been quick to respond according to employees, however some are lagging behind, with work from home and regular/transparent communications being key differentiators.

- 3/4 of employees rated the employer's response as either 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' – praising employers for proactively taking steps to look after the health and safety of their staff.¹
- 1/4 of employees have been unhappy with employer's response - feeling business priorities were put ahead of the health and safety of staff and customers.¹

The following tips have been developed directly from the research and may be useful as a checklist.

Show leadership

- Ensure **strong leadership presence**, with timely, proactive, decisive and concise decision making processes and plans. Key priority needs to be that of the health and safety of staff and customers alike.
- Enact **BCP**.
- Ensure pre-COVID-19 **reward and recognition programs remain in place**, as particularly important employees feel appreciated and recognised.
- Ensure employees **continue to be offered relevant training/courses** (e.g. technology, soft skills, leadership programs, mentoring etc.).
- Provide all employees **exposure to senior leadership**.
- Continue to **support employee-led identity or affinity groups**.
- Solicit **continuous employee feedback**, and ensure voiced/acted on in a timely manner.



Support all working arrangements

- Provide **option for employees to work from home**, including are they are set up correctly from a technology and equipment workstation perspective (or at least an allowance to do so) e.g. computers, monitors, phones, chairs etc.
- Allow employees to have **flexibility in their role**, so as to support their out of work lives too e.g. parents looking after children (when not in school), caring for someone at risk, timeout to focus on one's health and wellbeing.
- Ensure employees are **equipped with essential cleaning and sanitisation products**.
- Provide employees with **personal protective equipment** e.g. face masks and gloves, or the option to supply themselves and wear.
- Ensure appropriate **health and safety measures** put in place for staff in the workplace at home.
- Allow employees **time to adjust** to working from home arrangement if something new.
- Provide frontline staff with **alternative accommodation near work facilities** so as to not put family/friends at risk at home.



Communicate

- Provide **regular and transparent communications** to staff e.g. daily emails.
- Provide employees with updates specifically with regards to the **financial health/performance of the company and their job security** (where possible).
- Provide content and resources specifically aimed at **maintaining/improving an employee's health and wellbeing** (e.g. resilience, nutrition, sleep, exercise etc.).
- Provide **ongoing information and education** specifically relating to COVID-19.
- Encourage teams to **regularly check-in with each other**, including not just immediate teams too. Video conferencing should feature as part of this.



Provide support

- Provide **additional leave entitlement** to employees outside of the standard annual leave, sick leave and carers leave, and help support them during this time.
- Provide **assistance to those employees being stood down/unemployed**, including referral services/ support packs, and specific information with regards to return to work.
- Outline various **benefits and tools** that may be available to employees and their families and ensure they understand how what's offered meets their needs e.g. EAP's, flu shots etc.
- Provide employees with options with regards to **maintaining/improving an employee's financial wellness**.



To find out more about the research or the support material available through MetLife's 360Health program, please contact your Relationship Manager.

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Our 152-year history and global presence gives us the scale and experience to be a valued and trusted partner in business. We protect customers in more than 40 countries and lead the market in corporate insurance solutions in the US, Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East.

MetLife is the third largest group insurer in Australia, protecting more than 2.6 million people. We support our claimants to get back on their feet financially, having paid out over \$504 million in claims in 2019. We provide an exceptional claim experience with access to ancillary support services to promote holistic health and wellbeing.

MetLife Australia is the winner of ANZIIF Australian Insurance Industry Awards 2019 - Life Insurance Company of the Year.

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Methodology

- Online survey conducted 27 - 31 March 2020
- Sample size of **500 Australians aged 18-65 years**. Sample nationally represented across age, gender, geography, employment status and marital status
- Given current conditions, allowed for more unemployed in sample (including those who have recently been impacted by COVID-19)
- Monitored sample size with regards to those in retail/hospitality, those working from home, those with children at home (due to enforced shutdown), the number of people in their household (including those who may be at higher risk of COVID-19 infection), and those with a financial adviser
- Research conducted in collaboration with independent research partners, Little Triggers

1. MetLife's COVID-19 Insights research, April 2020

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