

COVID-19: A Business Guide to Who's Who in Government Response

30th March 2020

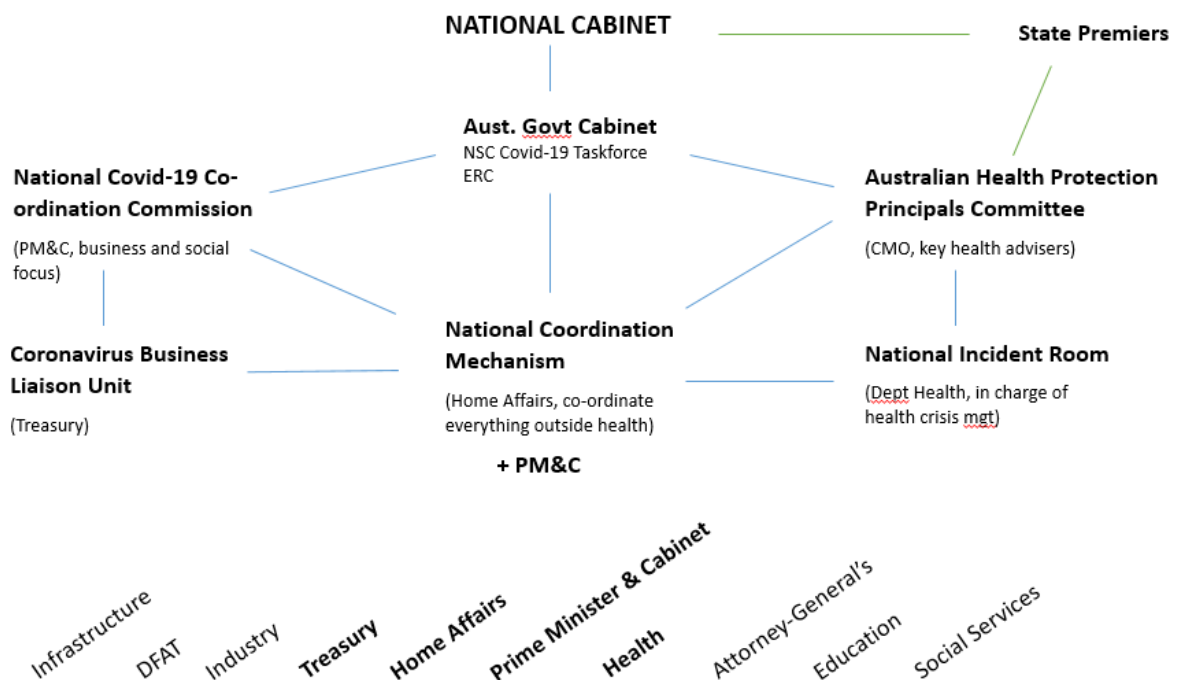
The Australian Government's response to Covid-19 involves a combination of new entities and old entities to act as decision makers, policy formulators, policy deliverers, co-ordinators and support entities.

The key entity is the National Cabinet, comprised of the Prime Minister and all the Premiers and Chief Ministers. In the Australian Government, the two key Cabinet sub-Committees are the **National Security Committee Covid-19 Task Force**, and the **Expenditure Review Committee**.

Government Departments and Agencies are playing critical roles, and many have established internal Task Forces and Units dedicated to the Covid-19 issue.

This Brief describes the key entities involved, particularly as they relate to business.

Power Schematic – How the new entities fit in (over-simplified), noting that Government Departments continue to play critical roles in policymaking, co-ordination and execution.





KEY ENTITIES

National Cabinet

Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Premier of NSW Gladys Berejiklian, Premier of Victoria Dan Andrews, Premier of Queensland Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier of Western Australia Mark McGowan, Premier of South Australia Steven Marshall, Premier of Tasmania Peter Gutwein, Chief Minister of the ACT Andrew Barr, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Michael Gunner.

Summary: The National Cabinet is the pre-eminent decision making body in Australia regarding the Covid-19 crisis. Decisions are not binding on jurisdictions, but the aim is, where possible, consensus on key matters.

Cabinet Sub-Committees

The Cabinet (23 Ministers) is the main decision-making entity in the Australian Government, but there are two main Cabinet Sub-Committees dealing with Covid-19 – the National Security Committee Covid-19 Task Force, and the Expenditure Review Committee.

Australian Health Protection Principals Committee (AHPPC)

Department: Health

Run by: Chief Medical Officer Brendan Murphy (Chair), and all State and Territory Chief Health Officers (Contacts for the Chief Health Officers can be found here on each relevant [state and territory's websites](#)).

Summary: This is the key advisory committee for health emergencies (such as Covid-19).

Website: <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>

Contact: (02) 6289 1555

National Incident Room

Department: Health

Run by: Celia Street



Summary: This is the key co-ordinating mechanism in the Department of Health during medical emergencies (as it is for this one). Around 150 people staffing it, including epidemiologists, doctors, pathologists, crisis managers, Home Affairs officials and border health and biosecurity agency officials. It also runs communications, public information and public awareness. Running 24/7.

Webpage: https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-strateg-bio-factsht_inc_room.htm

Contact: (02) 6289 1555

National Covid-19 Co-ordination Commission

Department: Prime Minister & Cabinet

Run by: Chair Neville Power, Deputy Chair David Thodey, Greg Combet, Jane Halton, Paul Little, Catherine Tanner, Phil Gaetjens, Mike Pezzullo

Summary: Newly established (25 March) to co-ordinate advice to the Government on mitigating the economic and social effects of Covid-19. The National Coordination Mechanism (based in the Department of Home Affairs), which coordinates the cross jurisdictional response to non-health aspects of the pandemic, will report to the Commission, as will the Coronavirus Business Liaison Unit (based in the Treasury Department).

Website: So far, only the Department's website <https://www.pmc.gov.au>

Contact: 02 6271 5111

National Coordination Mechanism

Department: Home Affairs

Run by: DHA Deputy Secretary Paul Grigson

Summary: The NCM is a key body which co-ordinates the whole of government responses to issues outside the direct health management of COVID-19.

Website: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/emergency-management/about-emergency-management/national-coordination-mechanism>

Contact: (02) 6264 1111



Coronavirus Business Liaison Unit

Department: Treasury

Run by: Gordon de Brouwer

Summary: The Coronavirus Business Liaison Unit is the go-to unit for businesses with enquiries relating to Treasury matters - tax, financial services, corporate governance. They have been working closely with industry groups/peak bodies, and urge businesses to also work through those bodies.

Website: <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/business-and-industry/coronavirus-business-liaison-unit>

Contact: coronavirusbusinessliaison@treasury.gov.au; 02 6263 2300

Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources - Covid-19 Task Forces

Summary: DISER is responsible for a range of key industry issues relating to Covid-19, and has established Task Forces on key industry issues relating to the virus.

Key personnel: Former Secretary of the Department of Health Glenys Beauchamp has been given a wide brief covering industry-health issues.

Energy Security Task Force - Lila Oldmeadow

(DISER has established a dedicated webpage for Covid-19/energy matters

<https://www.energy.gov.au/energy-sector-response-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-australian-businesses>)

Industry Intelligence Task Force - Dr Chris Locke

Personal Protective Equipment Task Force:

- Testing kits - Sam Chard
- PPE Supplies - Sam Reinhardt
- Medical Supplies - Narelle Luchetti
- Ventilators - Duncan McIntyre

Website: <https://www.industry.gov.au>

Contact: 02 6213 6000



business.gov.au

Department: Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

Summary: DISER runs the business.gov.au website, which is the whole-of-government website for the Australian business community. They have set up a Covid-19 specific webpage and hotline for information, services and support.

Website: <https://business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business>

Contact: 13 28 46

Department of Social Services

Summary: The DSS has a webpage dedicated to information regarding social security matters relating to Covid-19.

Website: <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-support>

Contact: 1300 653 227

National Disability Insurance Scheme - <https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus>

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission -

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-information>

Services Australia

Department: Social Services

Summary: Services Australia delivers the government's social and health related services through its Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support programmes. It has a dedicated webpage for Covid-19 related matters for business.

Webpage: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/business/subjects/coronavirus-information-businesses>

Contact: (02) 6155 7788

Department of Education, Skills and Employment



Summary: Has a dedicated web-page with information for education providers and employers.

Website: <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19>

Contact: 1300 566 046

Fair Work Ombudsman

Department: Attorney-General's

Run by: Sandra Parker, FWO

Summary: The role of the FWO is to promote harmonious workplace relations and ensure compliance with Australian workplace laws. The FWO has information for Covid-19 for employers and employees interested in industrial relations issues.

Website: <https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au>

Contact: 13 13 94

Safe Work Australia

Department: Attorney-General's

Run by: Michelle Baxter, CEO

Summary: Safe Work Australia leads policy development regarding work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements across Australia. It has established a dedicated webpage to Covid-19 related matters.

Website: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-employers>

Contact: (02) 6240 0303

Aged Care

Department: Health

Summary: The Department of Health runs Aged Care policy and has a dedicated website for aged care providers and consumers regarding Covid-19. Covid-19 related matters are also being dealt with by the National Incident Room and AHPPC.

Website: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-aged-care-sector>



Contact: (02) 6289 1555

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Summary: DFAT plays a key role in all foreign interface issues regarding Covid-19, including consular issues, travel advice, trade issues, and tourism.

Website: <https://www.dfat.gov.au>

Contact: 02 6261 1111

Tourism Australia

Department: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Summary: The Australian Government has a dedicated \$1 billion fund to support sectors, regions and communities disproportionately affected by the economic impacts of the coronavirus. DFAT is the lead agency managing the fund. Tourism Australia has a webpage dedicated to the Covid-19 response relating to tourism.

Webpage: <https://www.tourism.australia.com/en/events-and-tools/industry-resources/resources-for-industry/coronavirus-information-and-resources-for-industry.html>

Contact: (02) 9360 1111

Austrade

Summary: Austrade has set up a web page with updates for exporting businesses.

Website: <https://www.austrade.gov.au/news/news/novel-coronavirus>

Contact: +61 (2) 9392 2000

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

Department: Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

Run by: Kate Carnell, ASBFEO

Summary: ASBFEO aims to help small business through advocacy and assistance. It has established a dedicated website aimed at helping small business with Covid-19 related issues.

Website: <https://www.asbfeo.gov.au/my-business-health/home>



Contact: 1300 650 460

ATO One-Stop Shop for Covid-19

Summary: A one-stop shop for information about tax and superannuation changes.

Website: ato.gov.au/coronavirus

Infoline: 1800 806 218

ACCC

Run by: Rod Sims (Chair)

Summary: The ACCC has established a special unit to deal with Covid-19 issues.

Website: <https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights-guarantees/covid-19-coronavirus-information-for-consumers>

Contact: Infocentre 1300 302 502

International Freight Assistance Mechanism

Department: Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Run by: Michael Byrne (International Freight Coordinator General)

Summary: Established to assist Australia's agriculture and seafood export sectors with current air freight constraints to critical markets.

Website: <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/international-freight-assistance-mechanism>

Contact: Air Freight Support (02) 6272 2444

Online [contact form](#)

NOTES:

- If you are unsure of the relevant area of Government for your interests, please contact us.
- This is a living document on our website, so please inform us if you'd like to add relevant information.



Further information – Barton Deakin Briefs on COVID-19

[Federal Economic Stimulus Package](#)

[Second Federal Economic Stimulus Package](#)

[NSW Government Stimulus Package](#)

[NSW Stage Two Stimulus](#)

[NSW COVID-19 Further Emergency Measures](#)

[NSW Pandemic Planning](#)

[SA COVID-19 Stimulus Package](#) and [Further Stimulus Measures](#)

For further information, contact [David Alexander](#) on +61 457 400 524 or [Georga Nonnenmacher](#) on +61 457 662 422.