

## **YMCA update for staff and volunteers - Friday 14 August**

**Speakers:** Carolyn Morris, Martina Smythe, Amanda Locke

### **Carolyn**

- Hi everybody thanks for joining me today. Today Martina and I will be providing updates covering staff wellbeing and a general business update that describes the impact of COVID on our business, and Amanda is here to help answer questions.
- Before we get started I'd like to acknowledge the tradition owners of the land on which we are meeting today in our respective locations, and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.
- I hope you have all been well, especially those of you who are in metro Melbourne under Stage 4 restrictions. I know it isn't easy.
- While we do still have a long way to go, and therefore must remain vigilant, it appears we are turning the corner and are beginning to see a reduction in the number of total active cases, albeit with some concerns for our regional cities.
- If you need to get tested for COVID-19, just yesterday the government announced an increase to the payment they will provide you while you are awaiting your test result. Previously it was \$300 and it is now \$450. This is to support you if you do not have sick leave.
- This is to ensure that if you have had a test and are awaiting your results, you must stay at home.
- Today we have a lot of information to get through, so I will begin with the organisational update.
- During the COVID-19 period, right from the beginning as you know, I have committed that no matter what happens we will keep enough cash to ensure we can pay you all your entitlements – this includes things like your regular pay, JobKeeper, Annual Leave and long service leave.
- Every day during COVID the Executive Leadership Team have ensured we have sufficient cash in the bank to pay all these entitlements owed to you.
- In addition, as new rules around wage payments and assistance have been legislated, we have worked around-the-clock to apply these - like JobKeeper 1.0 and now 2.0 and now 1.5. And you will hear more about 1.5 in the next webinar!
- Our Chief Financial Officer Peter Cargin has been on these webinars to explain our financial position in more detail and to show how extremely lucky

we are to live in a country where the federal government has supported us in areas of Childcare and JobKeeper. Without these we would not have survived.

- Unfortunately due to the Victorian lockdown 2.0 we are now once again in the situation where all our sites, except Children's Programs and interstate operations are shut and therefore where 80% of our revenue has ceased. This is – again - putting pressure on our cash reserves and sustainability.
- The government's decision to cease Childcare JobKeeper wage subsidies and free childcare has not helped. Although pleasingly, this has been replaced in Victoria with some transitional childcare subsidies. However it has to be acknowledged that these are much less than the subsidies we were receiving before.
- In addition, to qualify for these transitional payments we are required to commit to an employment guarantee.
- This means we will pay our permanent Childcare educators and workers their full contracted hours whether or not these hours are worked. This is obviously great news for our staff in Children's Programs.
- For the Y, we are still hopeful that the federal government's funding will assist us to at least cover the cost of paying these full contracted hours.
- The government have committed that they will pay us 80-85% of revenue however it appears that it will only be 70%.
- If it is only 70% this will put us under more financial strain. We are very concerned about this situation for our sustainability and so we will continue our advocacy work in this area.
- I do want to acknowledge that paying some staff full contracted hours may seem unfair as people are receiving different amounts. For example some are receiving full pay, some much more than they usually do with the current JobKeeper, some less and some are not receiving anything.
- The system the federal government has put in place for us during this time has been the Y's absolute lifesaver but it has had inequities and I just wanted to let you know I understand this but we have to live within the rules and we can't change them.
- I also know many companies have asked their staff while they are working their normal hours to take pay cuts. This has hit many households. At the Y we have not asked you to do this, but we have assessed that asking you to

take annual leave under the JobKeeper directions if you are stood down and not working currently is one thing that is fair to ask.

- And I have to say I am so grateful, most staff have willingly assisted us with this already and I want to thank you so much. For the few staff who are currently stood down on JobKeeper and have not yet booked their leave I wrote to you this week requesting you do so.
- I just want to make sure everyone is treated equitably in this regard. For us to survive we have needed everyone's help and I thank you.
- While I am talking about paying staff wages equitably, over the last three years we have conducted many reviews to ensure we pay you to the letter and to the spirit of the law. In the past if we have found we have made mistakes we have rectified these as quickly as possible.
- In addition, if the rules aren't clear, we typically take the position of giving staff more than is "technically" right. For instance just last month we provided recreation staff in Victoria with the 1.75% increase as at 1 July this year when technically this isn't applicable until 1 February next year.
- Similarly we recently made a commercial decision that will impact some South Australian Aquatic and Leisure Centre and Kingswim casual staff in relation to broken shift allowance.
- The Fitness Award that Kingswim and SAALC staff are paid under is silent as to whether the broken shift applies to casual staff but we have decided we will pay this and make back payments to those staff. We will be contacting staff affected and payment will be made in an upcoming payroll.

### **People Systems Integration (PSI) and paying our people**

- I have to thank you again. We have done a huge amount of work during Covid-19 with closing, opening and reclosing sites, creating COVID-safe practices JobKeeper 1.0 and now 2.0 and now 1.5 - just to name a few.
- You may be wondering what else we are doing. So I wanted to let you know we are very focused on two large projects - Virtual Y (which no doubt you are fully aware of from our webinars) and a project called People Systems Integration or PSI which was started last August. And I want to tell you more about the PSI project.
- In short, its aim is to clarify and simplify our end-to-end processes in relation to rostering, time and attendance, recognition of qualifications and staff payments. We want to make it easier to create accurate records. We want to ensure that the qualifications and pay are always right without the many manual steps that are currently making it very complicated and inadvertently open to errors.

- We are now in the second stage of the project and have already identified and implemented some improvements. For example, we have already implemented the Riteq phone app so you can remotely clock on and off Riteq.
- Correctly recording your time and attendance and qualifications is vital for us to pay you accurately. We will be working with your managers to provide all the additional training and support needed.
- Unfortunately we have seen that these processes are not being followed consistently across all areas - requiring even more manual workarounds.
- If and where the PSI project finds anomalies in payments to staff, we will rectify the situation as quickly as possible. This is in line with our values and our commitment to staff.
- For example, we are currently reviewing whether we have accurately captured all of the qualifications in the system for Children's Program staff. We are in the process of working with staff to update records to ensure they are correct. If this results in identifying instances where staff were not paid the correct rate, we will rectify and reinstate their pay as we have in the past.
- The Y is a complex business, there is no escaping that, but we are keen to work with you all to improve our systems and processes to make life easier, improve accuracy and reduce complexity for everyone. Until those improvements are implemented, we all need to follow our current processes and we will be providing you with training and support to ensure that you understand what to do.
- As I said earlier, the PSI project is in its early stages and I will continue to provide updates as the project progresses.
- I'll now handover to Martina.

#### **Martina**

- Hi everybody. I'm sure many of you have heard of our Employee Assistance Program - or EAP - provided through Lifeworks that is available to all staff and volunteers and their immediate family.
- I know I often talk about EAP, but I wanted to go into some more detail today to share some of the features that you may not be aware that the service provides.
- Our EAP does offer traditional counselling if you need help personally or professionally, but it also offers financial counselling and support in navigating financial hardship.

- Given the economic impacts of COVID-19 on Australians, in particular Victorians, you might be experiencing financial hardship and looking for support in how you can get through this challenging period.
- Our Employee Assistance Program may be able to help you so I encourage you to get in touch. You can reach out to them over the phone, via text or online chat, and have a confidential discussion with a financial professional.
- The financial counselling services provided will take you through your options like calling up your banking or utilities provider to discuss different billing arrangements due to financial hardship, they can provide advice and tips on budgeting and minimising your spending during periods of lower income, and much more.
- They will be aware of the various options banks and utilities have to assist their customers. Perhaps an example you haven't thought of is car leasing or car loan repayments. There are many options to assist you in this area but sometimes it is difficult to access them. This is how the EAP may be able to help you.
- So I really encourage you to give them a call or message if you think this could be beneficial for you. It may just provide you with peace of mind to know that you have options if lockdown continues. They are not financial advisors, but they are qualified to provide general financial counselling for your situation at no cost to you.
- It's completely anonymous, so please remember to reach out to the Employee Assistance Program (Lifeworks) on 1300 361 008 to get support as you need it.
- There have been many updates for the Children's Programs sector as it has been a very confusing couple of weeks with multiple government announcements that we've had to interpret. Amanda and the team have done a great job. I would encourage Children's Programs staff to look at the recording from the Tuesday night's webinar if you haven't already, you should have received this via email.
- I'll now handover to Carolyn.

## Carolyn

- Before we move into Q+A, I am very pleased to let you know that Casey Stadium was recently awarded the Community Facility of the Year Award by Parks & Leisure Australia. Casey Stadium was, I'm told, once an old tyre factory and now, as a result of a two stage, multi-million dollar development, is a very impressive stadium. The stadium is home to, amongst other clubs, Casey Gymnastics, one of the largest gymnastics clubs in Australia. Congratulations to the whole Casey team for this award, what a fantastic win for the Y.

- I'm also happy today to provide an update on our new Virtual Camping experiences on Virtual Y.
- This week, we've launched the Outdoors and the Environment section, and over the coming weeks, Virtual Camping will continue to grow, with more content being added regularly. It also includes dedicated resources to help teachers facilitate camping inspired classes while remote learning is in place.
- From 'How to pack for an outdoor adventure', to virtual wildlife encounters and map drawing lesson, our virtual camping content allows children to continue learning and growing while they are stuck at home.
- So please either encourage your schools to use these materials or you can use them yourself if you are home schooling or just interested in taxidermy – or one of the other many interesting topics you will find.
- Now let's move into Q+A.

#### **Q+A**

- If you have any further questions or suggestions regarding the PSI project, we will establish a webpage like we did with COVID to provide further information. The link for this webpage will be sent out to you in the coming weeks.
- Finally, I'd like to remind you that you have until Monday to enter the Rebuild competition to win some of their handmade woodwork. Prizes include wooden desks and chopping boards. I will provide the link to enter in my follow up email.
- Thank you all for tuning in today and thank you to Amanda and Martina for joining me.
- See you all next week. Stay safe.