



# DOWNNS INDUSTRY SCHOOLS CO-OP (DISCO)

"Partnering Schools, Linking with Business, Supporting Youth"

Suite 3, Level 1 453 Ruthven Street PO Box 1353 Toowoomba QLD 4350

Phone: 07 4638 3088 Fax: 07 4638 7602

E-mail: [info@disco.org.au](mailto:info@disco.org.au)

**DISCO**

[www.disco.org.au](http://www.disco.org.au)

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## OPEN LETTER to the DISCO FAMILY

Dear DISCO Client, Parent, Stakeholder or Friend,

We understand that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is on your minds as it permeates the news and daily conversations in an ongoing way at the moment.

The safety and wellbeing of our entire DISCO community continues to be our first priority in the wake of the ever-evolving situation around this virus.

We are monitoring the spread of the virus, particularly in Queensland, and are aware that the situation is changing rapidly.

Because of this, DISCO in partnership with its Board and Senior Management team has established very specific internal processes led by an approved Risk Management Plan to monitor the situation, make informed decisions, and develop contingency plans to address a host of potential scenarios and impacts across our South West Queensland offices.

For our Risk Management Plan to work we need your help. DISCO's ability to minimise the impact on our organisation relies on staff, clients and stakeholders being aware of their own health at all times as well as the health of others.

We need everyone to remember that if they feel unwell, they must remain at home and seek advice from their Doctor. Please DO NOT attend DISCO sites as anyone who visits a DISCO office who is unwell will be asked to leave. This is a duty of care we must observe to minimise the potential transmission of the virus and ensure the safety of clients, staff and visitors at our sites.

**Please see below a summary of the impact on each of our programs as this information may be useful to you or someone you know.**

### **Going forward – *Get Set for Work Program***

Modelled on Singapore's approach, the official advice is that **DISCO sites will remain open** unless there is a directive by Queensland Health or the Australian Government or there is a confirmed positive Covid-19 case in a DISCO office.

Unless circumstances change, our *Get Set for Work* programs for Semester 1 will **end on Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of March for all young people**. Our intention at this stage is that all clients will **return on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> of April**. All DISCO staff will use the final week of March to prepare for the possibility of alternative learning delivery to see if there may be ways we can continue to support students should it be necessary to ask them to remain away for an extended period. It is hoped that this long break will allow the worst of the pandemic to pass and that we can return to the normal operation of the project on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April.

### **Going forward – *Youth Employment Support Program (YES) & Transition to Work (TtW) Service***

Both our TtW service and YES program require young people and our staff to work closely together and we are very keen for these programs to continue their normal operation.

Each afternoon our staff will phone clients who have appointments the following day. They are required to ask them a series of questions to ensure the individual is well enough to attend an appointment. If they are, the meeting will continue as planned, if they are unwell or possibly in self-isolation, the appointment will happen over the phone.

By adopting this strategy, we are continuing to offer support to our clients but are also taking steps to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus further which must be the goal of all of us.

### **What to do if a DISCO Office is closed?**

In the event of a closure of a DISCO site, all clients (and where necessary parents and guardians), will be contacted and advised of the situation.

Please note that this may be done under a directive from the Queensland Health or DISCO may take this action as a result of being concerned that an individual MAY have needed to go into isolation or has possibly been infected.

DISCO will follow the advice and directions of Queensland Health on the management of any cases of the coronavirus. Should Queensland Health direct the organisation to close an office, or the organisation entirely, DISCO will communicate via its **RESPONSIBLE PERSON who is Ms Kymberley Baills**. Ms Baills has authorisation to speak (or prepare communication in writing) on behalf of the organisations Senior Management team and Board. Please record her name as any communication or directions from her will be valid and accurate. Her mobile number for any URGENT enquiries is 0428 013775. If the enquiry is only of a general nature, please contact the staff at the relevant office.

### **Site cleanliness**

We are disinfecting all surfaces as part of the daily clean at all offices (including all doors and handles). Our goal is to ensure that our sites are sanitised to the best of our ability each day to ensure our office environments are as safe as possible.

### **Work and travel**

Easter is a popular time of year to travel for many DISCO clients and their families. Because of this the risk that families may come into contact with members of the public or other family members who may have contracted Covid-19. Please be aware that if this does occur to carefully monitor your families general health in case there may be the possibility of the virus being transmitted. If you are in doubt, please remember to seek medical advice and do not return to DISCO unless you are in good health.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has upgraded its **travel warnings** - please refer to this advice and reconsider any non-essential travel. Visit the Smart Traveller website for updates.

Please notify the Manager at your DISCO office of any travel that you plan to undertake (domestic or international) if you are likely to then visit a DISCO office after travelling.

### **Taking precautions**

The health and wellbeing of our clients, staff and stakeholders is of utmost priority to us.

- Please ensure you take preventative measures and seek immediate medical attention should you present with symptoms;
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet;
- Implement **social distancing** (1.5 metres distance from other individuals) and do not shake hands;
- Limit non-essential business travel;
- Limit large meetings and reconsider attendance at events;
- Practice other good health habits - get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food and remember
- Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Contact your Doctor the moment you feel in any way overwhelmed, uncertain or out of control

Thank you to all of the members of the DISCO team who have come together to help make these changes actionable so that clients, staff and our stakeholders and partners can continue to engage in learning and support for work.

We are keenly focussed on ensuring the safety and professionalism of all of our team members and the continued smooth delivery of services at all DISCO sites.

We will continue to update everyone as new information becomes available and local decisions are made.

Yours sincerely,  
**Mike Paton CEO**