



Compliance Essentials e-bulletin February 2011

As the year gets under way we take a look at the areas of potential impact on organisations of some of the recent and imminent legislative changes affecting business operations.

Already here.....Paid Parental Leave

The Paid Parental Leave scheme came into effect on 1 January 2011. The period January to June is a transition period to phase in the scheme; employers can provide Paid Parental Leave during this time to eligible employees providing that both the employer and employee are in agreement. From 1 July 2011 an employer must provide Paid Parental Leave to an eligible employee in respect of either the birth and adoption of a child; the employee must have been employed for twelve months or more prior to the expected date of birth or adoption. The scheme does not change the entitlement of a new parent to the minimum period of twelve months unpaid leave or to any other leave entitlements agreed between the employer and employee.

For further information visit www.familyassist.gov.au.

Already here.....Australian Consumer Law

Updating the *Trade Practices Act*, Australian Consumer Law was effective nationally from 1 January 2011, applicable to all businesses. The main changes encompass

- National unfair contract terms covering standard form contracts
- Changes to legislation relating to consumer rights replacing previous laws on conditions and warranties
- Product safety
- Unsolicited consumer agreements
- National rules for lay-by agreements

Coming soon.....National Names Register

April 2011 will see the commencement of the new National Names Register, administered by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). This will create a National Register of business names and it will no longer be necessary for a business to register a name at State level. Existing business names will be automatically transferred to the National Register regardless of whether or not the name holds an ABN, but new applications will not be finalised without an issued ABN.

Coming soon.....Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

The aim of this legislation is prevent discrimination in the workplace. Effective from April 2011, employers still have time to review workplace activities and strive for a discrimination free working environment. It should be noted that as of July 2012 the provisions of the legislation will also apply to unpaid and volunteer workers.

The contents of this document are for information purposes only. It is not intended to be advice and you should not act specifically on the basis of this information alone. If expert assistance is required, professional advice should be obtained.

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