



CLEANING  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
FRAMEWORK

# Guidance for procurers: protecting cleaners' rights during COVID-19

Current as of 7 May 2020

## **Large businesses have a key role to play in limiting the economic and human rights effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

As procurers of cleaning services, either as tenants or landlords of buildings, large businesses hold considerable power to minimise the negative impact of this public health crisis for some of the most vulnerable workers in Australia.

Large companies have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to corporate social responsibility during this pandemic by ensuring that cleaners, some of the most vulnerable workers in their operations and supply chains, are treated with respect for the crucial work they do to provide safe and hygienic environments and their frontline role in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

This info sheet outlines best practice approaches to respecting cleaners' rights in your supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## *Why does this matter?*

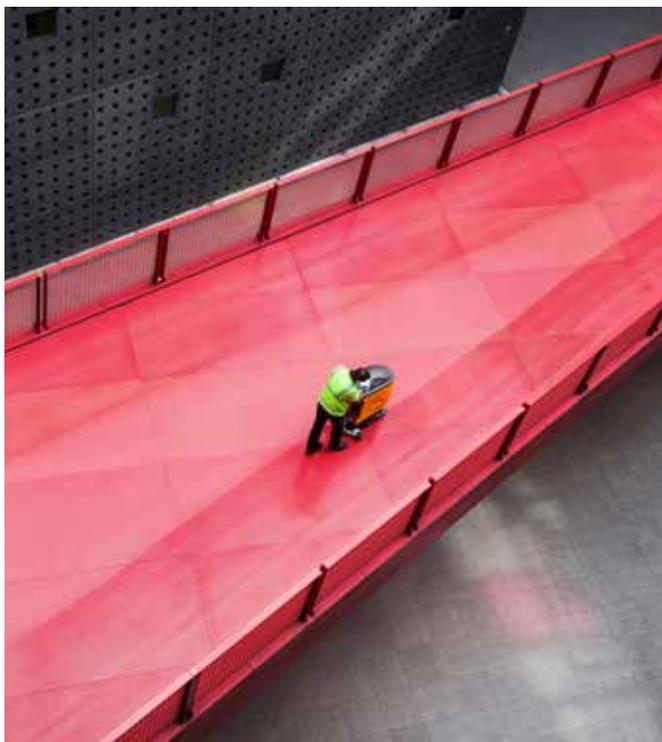
Cleaners are frontline workers in the pandemic and the nexus between quality cleaning and decent work has never been stronger. Providing fair working conditions for cleaners is critical to ensuring a COVID-19 safe Australia.

Most cleaners are low-paid workers on temporary work visas living pay cheque to pay cheque. If their capacity to work is affected by the pandemic, they



will be in an extremely precarious financial position, unable to access income support and with poor access to healthcare if they need it.

Quality cleaning can only be delivered by a cleaning workforce that is treated with respect. In practice, this means compliance with minimum legal standards around wages and entitlements, high workplace health and safety standards, and an environment in which cleaners are empowered to speak up when they experience dangerous or substandard conditions in their workplace.



## *In practice, what can procurers of cleaning services do to protect cleaners in their supply chains?*

### **Where cleaning scopes are increased:**

- Work with your cleaning contractor to ensure adequate hours and resources are allocated to meet your cleaning needs – this may require a variation to the current cleaning contract.
- Work with your cleaning contractor to provide your cleaners with access to 14 days' special paid sick leave if they are affected by COVID19 – this should be extended to casual workers as well.

### **Where cleaning needs are reduced due to social distancing requirements:**

- Best-practice: Do not cut hours from cleaning contracts – maintaining service provision will ensure that cleaners, most of whom are ineligible for JobKeeper and JobSeeker due to their visa status, will be able to keep their job and livelihood. Responsible owners and tenants are taking advantage of low occupancy to task their cleaners with detail cleaning, and placing a focus on high touchpoint cleaning to ensure that workplaces remain as safe and hygienic as possible.

- Best practice: Continue to pay for the wages of cleaners who are ineligible for JobKeeper due to their visa status during the period of reduced cleaning scope.
- At a minimum, set the expectation with your cleaning service provider that cleaners who are ineligible for JobKeeper or JobSeeker due to their visa status be retained to work on site, while those cleaners who are eligible for the wage subsidy or income support be stood down. This will ensure that all the cleaners will be able to survive this difficult period with some income.
- Detailed guidance on how to ensure ethical business conduct in relation to service reductions is available to CAF members at stakeholders at CAF-certified buildings, contact [info@cleaningaccountability.org.au](mailto:info@cleaningaccountability.org.au) to receive the latest version.

In any situation, make sure that:

- Cleaners are fully informed of what is happening at their workplace;
- Cleaners have high workplace health and safety standards;
- Cleaners are able to take paid sick leave when they need to; and
- Cleaners are able to speak up if they experience dangerous or substandard working conditions.

If you are a member of CAF, and/or if you are a stakeholder at a CAF certified building, we are here to assist you with any further guidance. Please contact the relevant certification adviser or email us at [info@cleaningaccountability.org.au](mailto:info@cleaningaccountability.org.au)

In addition, CAF has guidance for cleaning contractors and cleaners that we encourage you to share with your service providers:

- [Info for cleaning contractors](#)
- [Info for cleaners](#)
- [Resources for migrant workers](#)

Our COVID-19 resource section on our website will be updated regularly, so keep checking in for up to date information.