FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BUSINESS CRUCIAL TO A SAFE RETURN TO NORMAL

20 April 2020

The Business Council is today releasing a paper that outlines how business will play a crucial part in a risk management approach to returning greater freedoms to Australians, including normal day-to-day business and personal activities.

Business is playing a leading role in managing a careful and gradual easing of restrictions without compromising safety as part of our commitment to drive Australia's social and economic recovery, Business Council chief executive Jennifer Westacott said.

"We all recognise that in the long run there can be no trade-off between health, social and economic recovery: our strategy must deliver on all fronts, or it will fail.

"The business community stands side by side with state and federal governments to safely re-open our nation by providing safe workplaces for employees, customers, and suppliers.

"It is vital that together we rebuild a sense of confidence in the community that it will be safe to go back to work, go to the shops, and go about our daily lives so we can start moving forward.

"We welcome the National Cabinet's decision to begin mapping out the road ahead, and we believe the critical elements of safely easing back on restrictions include:

- keeping employees, customers, and suppliers safe through enhanced workplace safety standards

- rebuilding confidence by continuing partnerships between governments, unions and industry, and

- transitioning economic assistance from 'life-support' to 'acceleration'.

"The community must have confidence in how restrictions are safely eased otherwise the social and economic benefits will not be realised.

"Industry and business will continue to develop and adopt best practice safety standards, with many already enforcing social distancing rules, enhanced hygiene practices, and staggered and rotating return of workers.

"We also believe that confidence in a safe re-opening of the economy will be further boosted by mass testing and the adoption of opt-in technology such as mobile apps to assist with contact tracing to minimise further outbreaks of the virus. Business stands ready to be part of those solutions," Business council president Tim Reed said.

"Using a 'traffic light' style approach that registers red, amber or green, apps could easily detect a person's infection risk and would be a powerful way to help employers keep employees, customers and suppliers safe as well as reassure the community about the safety of work and public places.

"Any technology would need to be community driven, have strict independent governance, privacy safeguards and an expiry date," he said.

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The decisions by Australian governments, businesses and individuals to embrace social distancing measures has been highly effective in combating the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jennifer Westacott said.

"This means we now have an opportunity to determine how to best manage the virus and its impacts on our society and economy as we move forward. The costs of failing to properly manage the way out of the pandemic would be enormous and generations would pay the price.

"We must not waste a second of our new level of co-operation between business, governments, unions and the broader community to work towards recovery.''

Read *Working together in the national interest – COVID-19 next steps* here.

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