

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Auditor-General's report to Parliament on COVID-19 Support Measures: Payroll Tax Waiver**

The Auditor-General, Mr Rod Whitehead has tabled his Report on COVID-19 payroll tax waivers in Parliament today.

The review assessed how well the State Revenue Office managed payroll tax waivers for businesses that operated in hospitality, tourism or seafood industries or paid up to \$5 million in wages each year. The review looked at whether there was an appropriate balance between managing risk and rolling out the support measure quickly to support businesses. It also examined whether applications were assessed in a timely manner and whether controls put in place to address key risks, such as fraud, were consistently applied.

A total of 525 waivers were approved across the two categories, with \$44.6 million revenue forgone for the 2019-20 Financial Year from those business that qualified for the waiver.

Mr Whitehead said, 'Our overall view is that, within the context of a support measure that was developed and implemented quickly, the application process was appropriately designed with risks identified and managed, applications consistently assessed and timely payments made.'

The State Revenue Office continued to check eligibility by reviewing past tax submissions. If the eligibility requirements were breached, the waiver was rescinded and the business was required to pay their payroll tax liability for the 2019-20 Financial Year. Those only happened in a very few cases and as at 31 January 2021, the waivers for only three businesses had been rescinded.

The Report states the administrative arrangements put in place for the COVID-19 payroll tax waivers facilitated the quick allocation of refunds to businesses in most instances. Correspondence regarding requests for additional information and application outcomes was clear and timely. For example, applicants whose applications were declined were informed, on average, within eight working days.

Mr Whitehead did not make any recommendations in respect to the implementation of the COVID-19 payroll tax waivers.

The complete Report can be downloaded from [www.audit.tas.gov.au](http://www.audit.tas.gov.au).

**ENDS**

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