

## ***Latest Legal Update: Latest industry-specific authorisations granted by ACCC in response to COVID-19***

Source: [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au)

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### **Abstract:**

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has provided interim authorisation to the following industries as a result of COVID-19:

- 1. Private and public hospitals to cooperate in Northern Territory and South Australia:** Following similar authorisations granted to Victoria and Queensland (referenced [here](#)), the separate authorisations allow private hospitals to cooperate with their state health agencies, public hospital and each other, as they respond to the pandemic. It is expected the authorisations will help boost capacity by integrating the operations of public and private hospitals by sharing and jointly procuring equipment, medicines and other resources, allocating patients between hospitals and sharing staff. The ACCC media release can be found [here](#).
- 2. Life insurers to co-operate on life insurance for frontline workers:** The interim authorisation, granted to the Financial Services Council (FSC) and its members, means that exposure to COVID-19 cannot be used as a reason to decline life insurance coverage to frontline healthcare workers, or to charge higher premiums or apply risk exclusions to any new policy. The commitment applies to a broad range of workers including doctors, nurses and all hospital workers; ambulance workers and paramedics; people working in GP surgeries or clinics; people working on COVID-19 vaccines; pharmacists; police; aged care workers; and volunteers supporting people with COVID-19. The ACCC media release can be found [here](#).
- 3. Expanded co-operation for energy sector:** The interim authorisation follows an initial authorisation granted earlier this month to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), allowing energy market participants to co-operate on certain measures intended to maintain secure and reliable energy supplies whilst the pandemic continues (referenced [here](#)). The ACCC has now authorised an expanded set of measures, including allowing market participants to share information about the operation of critical facilities and any risks to their continued operation. Conduct relating to gas availability is expressly excluded and the ACCC has maintained the same conditions as the initial authorisation, in terms of reporting requirements, etc. The ACCC media release can be found [here](#).

The ACCC may grant authorisation if it is satisfied that the public benefit from the proposed conduct outweighs any likely public detriment. Further information can be found in the Exemptions sub-topic on [Authorisation](#).

For more information on authorisations that have already been granted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, see Latest Legal Updates: [Co-ordination between competitors and COVID-19](#), [Airline coordination and COVID-19](#); [ACCC authorises further industry cooperation](#); and [ACCC issues new industry-specific authorisations during COVID-19](#).