

COVID-19 special report

COVID-19 Special Report – Accord actions during the pandemic

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the global disruption and economic recession it has caused, has dominated our industry and Accord's activities during the first half of 2020.

Nimble, flexible industries and industry associations have so far fared better during these challenging times. And fortunately, because of the vital health protection role played by hygiene and personal care products, our industry faced a better mix of challenges and opportunities than some other industries responding to the pandemic.

The pandemic has sadly inflicted a huge toll in terms of loss of life, illness, social disruption, and economic downturn. In these difficult times, our industry is thankful that, via our hygiene products, we have been able to directly play our part and assist in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 infection.

Member services

During the pandemic, assisting our member companies has been our paramount task.

Communications have shifted to a crisis footing, with intensified and specifically targeted information to keep our member businesses fully informed of key developments.

Via our valued membership of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), members also receive the peak body's informative, business-oriented COVID-19 Updates.

Keeping our Members ahead of the pack

- ▶ Communication and information, via direct company engagement and specific Accord email alerts, as well as distribution of the ACCI COVID-19 Updates and other special bulletins, on:
 - critical pandemic trends,
 - key government decisions,
 - changing regulatory requirements,
 - business continuity issues,
 - HR and employment considerations,
 - COVID-safe workplace advice, and
 - economic stimulus programs
- ▶ Specific supply chain disruption information, advice, engagement and supplier connection
- ▶ New, dedicated web page on resources for COVID-19 information on www.accord.asn.au
- ▶ New "Member of Accord" logo, to help members promote their quality credentials
- ▶ Online training and information sessions via the new Accord Insight Hour

Advocacy and industry pandemic capability/response

Engaging with Australia's governments and other key stakeholders, including regulators, to enhance our industry's capabilities for responding to the pandemic has become a daily task for Accord.

In the earliest phase of the pandemic response, with massive disruptions to commerce and trade both locally and globally, addressing supply chain issues for essential products was a priority focus.

While our members were the primary target for this, to assist the government to boost available supplies of hand sanitisers, we also engaged cooperatively with new market entrants, such as distilleries, by publishing guidance on product safety and regulatory compliance rules they needed to be aware of.

As the pandemic progressed, and the full scale of the economic downturn became more apparent, activities shifted to broader problems related to impacted Accord businesses including regulatory compliance to further enhance industry's reputation.

Throughout the pandemic, Accord championed the quality, safety, and business credentials of our responsive and responsible membership across all sectors of hygiene, personal care and speciality products.

Ensuring ongoing supplies/access to essential products

- ▶ Proactively reaching out to Australia's governments, offering industry help where needed
- ▶ Writing to the National Cabinet to emphasise the essential, service nature of hygiene and personal care products and the factories/workplaces that make and supply them
- ▶ Engaging with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) on options to streamline rules for disinfectants and sanitisers to help increase supply
- ▶ Confirming suitable surrogates and testing regimes for the COVID-19 virus for hygiene products
- ▶ Facilitating supply chain analysis and solutions through a lead role in the multi-stakeholder Ministerial Hand Sanitiser Roundtable, other supply chain fora, and government bodies
- ▶ Establishing the COVID-19 Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitiser Connect matching program, to assist in meeting urgent product requests
- ▶ Compiling important member surveys (which were shared with government decision makers, as needed) on:
 - hand sanitisers,
 - cleaning & hygiene products,
 - business impacts
- ▶ Liaising with the Trade Minister's office and other key government departments on COVID tariff concession measures
- ▶ Campaigning for regulator fee increase relief for businesses, as a government COVID-19 economic response

Ensuring best possible advice to the public on effective and safe product use

- ▶ Promoting good hygiene product use through COVID-19 related revisions to our Hygiene for Health website
- ▶ Liaising with the federal government on improvements to their health and hygiene guidance
- ▶ Liaising with the federal Government on improvements to their COVID-19 safe workplace guidance

Sharing expertise to ensure ongoing product safety and quality in the market

- ▶ Monitoring relevant overseas developments to alert the TGA to a range of alternative regulatory/legislative options
- ▶ Developing hand sanitiser guidance material for new market entrants on safe production and transport
- ▶ Providing media statements and commentary, as strategically needed, on relevant COVID-19 industry matters, e.g. Sydney Morning Herald article on hand sanitiser supply issues
- ▶ Encouraging very visible and active compliance information dissemination and enforcement by a range of relevant regulators and national policy bodies including the TGA, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the National Transport Commission (NTC)

This COVID-19 Special Report covers the period from February 2020 – July 2020