

Inquiry into the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Tourism and Events Sectors

Mrs Krystal Ciaglia

Organisation Name: KC Bookkeeping

Your position or role: Owner

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I am a Certified Bookkeeper in Bairnsdale, and currently service 25 businesses in the East Gippsland area, and I have been working in my chosen profession for 10 years.

Many local businesses have been adversely affected by not only Covid, but the lack of timely support to adapt and survive through covid.

I have been working in tandem with Business Victoria on the resolution of many grant applications that were denied unfairly, due to no fault of the business owner, or grants that in the most case took months upon months to actually be paid to eligible applicants. There has also been a lack of support from the government in terms of assistance and clarification to certain rules and laws made during the various lockdowns. This has caused much confusion for business owners who have had to wing it, or make their own interpretations on the sometimes completely contradicting information given by the DHHS and Covid Hotline.

Particularly now affecting rural businesses is the recent changes to the 2 and 4 square meter rule and the enforcement of the use of QR codes. In rural East Gippsland where many accommodation providers operate in blackspots it is simply not feasible nor possible to have a QR code system in place, so they are being unfairly restricted due to a lack of access to decent signal. There needs to be exceptions granted in these cases, so businesses can continue to operate at a viable capacity, particularly in a regional area where we certainly have the space to do so, and not have the fear of breaking the law to remain in business.

Another increasingly worrying trend I am seeing is businesses unable to secure staff. Particularly in the Hospitality and Tourism industry which is primarily casual employment this is of great concern. Many were caught in the Jobkeeper trap when casual employees realised they did not actually have to attend shifts to continue being paid the jobkeeper payment, and that their employer had no power in the situation. The employer was then forced to hire additional workers if possible to cover the work that could have been done by the employee on Jobkeeper if they had have attended work.

Now I am seeing applications for job vacancies submitted where it states in the cover letter that the only reason for application is to fullfill the Jobseeker requirements for payment. Or employers are contacting applicants to arrange interviews and being told no I only applied because I had to.

Many local cafes, pubs and restaurants have had to close for days at a time over at least the last 2 months because they simply have not had the staff to open.

This is putting even more pressure on already financially stressed businesses and causing many to collapse. I have seen a drastic reduction in business opening hours in the food and beverage industry, and alot of business closures. More and more business owners are suffering under the overwhelming stress, anxiety, pressure and depression that Covid has wrought.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:





Signature:
Krystal Ciaglia