

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

Ms Lisa MacGregor

Organisation Name:Scarlett Mac Events

Your position or role: Director

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I am the director of Scarlett Mac Events, a boutique events agency in the Mornington Peninsula. Each year I produce or direct 4-5 decent size outdoor events/ festivals (ranging from 1000-7000 patrons). Our annual turnover sits at approx. 1M.

On the first lockdown I was running a festival site for 'Seven Sisters Festival' this was the last festival of 2020, it was held in March. For all of the remainder of 2020 there was absolutely no event or festival work as the industry was shut down overnight. With two young children and no work for the entire year (and nothing in the pipeline) things have been tight, this is manageable for a year, but is not sustainable. I have been lucky to have received job keeper but with the end to this scheme now I'm unsure how we will survive, short of me folding the company and looking for a new career.

In December, once the new events framework was released I applied to run a smaller version of our flagship event 'Peninsula VineHop Festival' after 7 weeks of hearing nothing regarding my submission I began to push eventually I had some feedback, but I had missed our deadline for marketing and tickets sales and had to reformat the event into a sit-down event. I decided to still run the event (Pop-up VineHop 13 March), and knew that with very little time to sell tickets I was unlike to make much profit and that there was also a huge risk I could loose up to 30K if there was a snap lockdown. In the end I have made a tiny profit of less than 10K but Its better than nothing. Ultimately though, had I had enough time to sell tickets and had the option to increase capacity I could have made enough to pay my wages for a few more months. This situation says enough about our industry, that we are so short of work that risking 30k to make 10K is risk worth taking, as things are so dire anyway why not take the risk!

There are some huge gaps in our industry right now, in my opinion here are the problems/issues that need a resolution ASAP

- The framework review time must be tightened, 4-6 weeks is what is detailed in the framework, for me this was not the case it was more like 7-8, but realistically 4-6 weeks is still too long! The quicker the timeline, the more time to sell tickets, the more money we can potentially make.
- For those of us who play in the large events space, having strict restrictions means that we can only do a tiny percentage of our normal work, which means our ability to make a profit is significantly diminished. VineHop is normally for 7000 patron, our mini version had the same number of staff for only 2000 patrons. The total cost to run the event was close to on par with the larger format event. When you do the maths it makes you wonder why we even bother trying to run anything at all. However the reason we do it is because we don't want our industry to die! We want to do something, as we already risk loosing everything.
- The government needs to offer a cancellation insurance program so that we don't wear the financial burden if we need to cancel due to a snap lockdown.
- Lastly, with no extra financial support most of us won't get through this year, I certainly will not. I don't want to train in a new industry, but I don't have much of a choice. The government can not have it both ways, either let us run like normal with out restrictions to our numbers/capacities/permits etc or help us financially to get through this year and let us go back to normal when its safe to do so.

I am only one small example of how Covid has effected my business, there are so many like me that have worked in the industry for 20+ years that are now looking/or have already moved out of the industry, not

because they want to but because they have to survive. The stats from the 'Save Vic Events' speak for themselves! I have always felt so proud to run evens in Victoria, but I feel sad knowing that our vibrant 'event state' will be no longer if we don't find a resolution immediately!

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:



Signature:

Lisa MacGregor