



28 May 2021

Prime Minister Hon Scott Morrison MP and First Ministers of Australia
National Cabinet
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2603

Dear Prime Minister and First Ministers,

National Cabinet re: lockdown support

Further to my letter of 31 March, the AHA again requests the Commonwealth and States/Territories agree on coordinated targeted, temporary assistance schemes for businesses and workers that are forced to close or restrict trading by public health order to keep Australians safe.

As you are aware, due to another outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a lockdown by public health order of Victoria for at least seven days. Unfortunately, this latest lockdown highlights again that between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories there is no coordinated scheme in place to look after the welfare of businesses and workers financially impacted by restrictions imposed by public health orders. The effect of this latest lockdown has been exacerbated by the conclusion of JobKeeper.

Unfortunately, post-JobKeeper, this lack of coordination and funding has a human consequence. In the Victorian Accommodation and Food Sector 26,193 businesses employ 229,729 workers. These workers and businesses are faced today with zero or decreased income or revenue.

Those businesses and workers have had their livelihoods locked down to help keep their fellow Australians safe. Yet, they appear caught in a stand-off between the Federal Government and the State/Territory Governments.

- On the one hand, we have State/Territory Governments implementing lockdowns and trading restrictions based on differing risk analysis and with varying degrees of financial assistance to affected workers and businesses
- On the other hand, we have the Commonwealth inferring states are either at fault or are acting rashly and that if the Commonwealth provides financial assistance, that will only further encourage rash behaviour
- Stuck in the middle of this stand-off are the workers and businesses whose livelihoods are directly impacted and who are carrying the greatest financial burden and stress

The AHA asks again that National Cabinet reach consensus on how to provide coordinated, targeted, temporary assistance to those workers and businesses forced to give up or restrict their livelihoods to keep all Australians safe.

STEPHEN FERGUSON
NATIONAL CEO