



MEDIA RELEASE

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HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES CALL FOR END TO LOCKDOWN SUPPORT STAND OFF

The nation's peak hospitality body has called on National Cabinet to agree on coordinated targeted, temporary assistance for workers and businesses forced to close by snap lockdowns.

AHA National CEO Stephen Ferguson has written to the Prime Minister and State Premiers on behalf of the businesses and workers whose livelihoods are directly impacted by the latest lockdown in Victoria and who are carrying the greatest financial burden.

"We understand the public health orders are put in place to make Australians safe," said Mr Ferguson.

"But the latest seven-day lockdown in Victoria highlights again that workers and businesses are stuck with no coordinated scheme in place to look after the welfare of businesses and workers financially impacted by the restrictions imposed on them.

"The effect of this latest lockdown has been exacerbated by the end of JobKeeper."

Mr Ferguson said the lack of coordination and funding has a very human consequence.

"In the Victorian Accommodation and Food Sector 26,193 businesses employ 229,729 workers," he said.

"These workers wake up today with zero income and nowhere to turn to for help."

Mr Ferguson said hospitality businesses are caught in a stand-off between the Federal Government and 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.

"And on the other hand, we have the Commonwealth inferring states are either at fault or are acting rashly and if the Commonwealth provides financial assistance, that will only further encourage rash behaviour. "

The letter asks National Cabinet to 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.

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