



Night Time
Industries
Association

Saturday 21 March

For Immediate Release

Campaign launched to save thousands of jobs in Australian venues

- Campaign calls for Federal help to stop venues going bankrupt across the country
- Over 900,000 workers could be affected and much loved pubs, clubs, restaurants, cafes and bars face closure
- Decision to ban gatherings over 100 people could decimate venues across the country
- Financial help and tax breaks urgently needed to prevent mass layoffs, as is happening in other countries

Many of Australia's high street venues could face closure and thousands of jobs lost unless the Federal Government takes action now.

A national campaign – Keep Our Venues Alive - has been launched by industry organisations including the Night Time Industry Association with wider industry support expected to follow. The campaign has also established a website keepourvenuesalive.com to track the impact of the crisis on venues.

According to ABS figures, more than 900,000 in Australia work in the hospitality and accommodation sector, with many more reliant on supply business from venues. The decision on Tuesday by the Federal Government to restrict gatherings of over 100 people could lead to mass closures of venues, many of which will not re-open without financial support.

Further restrictions on distancing in venues is expected to be announced by the Federal Government today.

The campaign calls on the Federal Government to:

- Work with local councils to suspend Business Rates on venues for at least 3 months
- Make financial provision for all venue staff including casual staff, and self-employed people who cannot work (for at least 3 months)
- Extend Tax Relief to the hospitality, culture and recreational sector for at least the next 3 months
- Support Landlords to allow them to give rent holidays to businesses for at least 3 months
- Create a fund to facilitate financial support for businesses if forced to close / or ensure government forces insurances to cover closures with an additional clause for all businesses including events and festivals

Many other countries affected by COVID-19 have introduced emergency financial relief for that is specific to venues.

- The UK government is covering 80% of wages for staff working in venues
- France has committed €300 billion to stop businesses failing;
- Spain is covering the cost of 70% of employee wages during the crisis;
- Denmark is funding 75% of employment costs

However, so far no government funding has been committed to specifically supporting venues or their staff.

Chair of the Night Time Industries Association Michael Rodrigues said:

“Venues across Australia find themselves in a critical situation with rapidly falling numbers and restrictions on gathering over 100 people. The hundreds of thousands of people who work in venues across the country need urgent government support and need it now”.

“Inaction will result in some of our best loved pubs, restaurants, cafes, theatres and music venues closing down. The impact on the Australian economy and our local communities will be disastrous”

“The Federal Government is taking action to save other industries – as it should – but the local Aussie pub, music hall, small bars and restaurants and the 900,000 people they employ all face ruin unless financial help arrives immediately”.

“Other governments in Europe and Scandinavia are taking decisive action to save hospitality businesses. These businesses are directly affected by the social distancing policy and need to be recognised as a special class”.

A link to the petition can be found at <https://www.change.org/KeepOurVenuesAlive>

The petition reads:

- **Reason:** The Federal Government has banned all gatherings over 100 people and is likely to restrict this number further. This has already led to major cancellations of events and bookings at venues across the country and puts tens of thousands of Australian jobs at risk. It threatens to bankrupt huge numbers of restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs, theatres, music venues and clubs across our communities. The Federal Government must step in to provide financial support for venues. Inaction will see hundreds of venues close on our local high streets and in our communities. Canberra has already provided financial assistance for other industries and must act to protect venues from collapse.
- **Request:** We therefore ask the House to: - Work with local councils to suspend Business Rates on venues for at least 3 months - Make a financial provision for all staff including casual staff, and self-employed people who cannot work (for at least 3 months) - Extend Tax Relief to the hospitality, culture and recreational sector for at least the next 3 months - Support Landlords to allow them to give rent holidays to businesses for at least 3 months - Create a fund to facilitate financial support for businesses if forced to close / or ensure government forces insurances to cover closures with an additional clause for all businesses including events and festivals

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