

October 26, 2020

Open letter to State and Federal Labor Members of Parliament

RE: A plea for Help!

It is a statement of fact that Community Clubs Victoria has always valued the support and recognition of the Australian Labor Party as we serve the Victorian community through the provision of first-rate venues and services around the state.

Our members eagerly await the Premier's announcement that metropolitan clubs can finally open, albeit with restricted dining facilities. However, through recent member surveys we know that:

- More than 75% of community clubs cannot offer outdoor dining as envisaged under the Government's initial Roadmap to Recovery
- The average costs incurred by clubs during lockdown is \$59,800 per month. CCV has over 1,000 members. That represents a loss to the Victorian economy and club communities of millions of dollars (m\$60) each month.
- We estimate around 200 community clubs around Victorian are now on the brink of failure. A recent audit of clubs shows the financial viability of community clubs is dire, however a safe but prompt re-opening would enable these venues to gain momentum in the lead up to the peak Christmas-New Year period.

CCV has been an active and vocal member of the Government's industry consultation groups and has appreciated the support of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Melissa Horne, as we advocate for a safe and steady re-opening of venues around Victoria. **Unfortunately, the framework presented for re-opening is not sustainable and economically ruins clubs that are at the 'end of the marathon' and have no legs left!**

You may be aware that we represent over 1,000 community clubs across Victoria of which approximately 200 operate Electronic Gaming Machines. We employ over 30,000 people and celebrate the fact that our clubs now have over 3,000,000 members.

Each club is a not-for-profit entity where distributions are made to the local community, including sporting and social clubs that service the community every day. We support people who need to be supported – and provide our members with great facilities, a welcoming community and first-rate food and beverage options.

This letter has been sent to you at a time of unprecedented challenge to the clubs' movement as we battle our way out of COVID-19 lockdowns. To say we are teetering on the edge of a cliff is no exaggeration. Community clubs have been smashed by COVID-19 and the resulting lockdowns.

I can confirm that our re-opening plan is based on the same successful model developed by Clubs NSW and Clubs Queensland, which has guided the safe and steady re-opening of venues in those states. Those States have understood that venues with indoor facilities can operate safely so long as they mandate sound infection control measures.

Our offering is underpinned by the fact that every person who enters a venue – be they a staff member, supplier, member or casual patron – must sign in on entry (a longstanding club industry rule). We know who they are, where they live, and when and how long they were in the venue. We can then cross-reference that data with all necessary agencies and stakeholders.

This is complemented by accepted infection control measures, including appropriate social distancing, hand sanitising, patron to room limits and mask wearing as appropriate. We have introduced COVID Marshalls to all venues. We are confident that our inherent contact tracing measures are first rate.

Anecdotally, I can also confirm that the general state of mental health among our members and staff is at an unprecedented low. This is causing us great concern.

CCV's case is simple: community clubs are safe and have the most effective contact tracing systems already in place. We stand ready to re-open to serve our members and the communities in which we operate.

My request to you, in the spirit of mutual support, is to ask you to plead our case to the Premier of Victoria and the Chief Health Officer. Community clubs are COVID-19 safe and should be allowed to re-open NOW in a safe and sustainable way, so we can continue to serve our communities for generations to come.

If I can provide you with any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on (03) 8851 4900 or andrew@ccv.net.au

I look forward to your support.

Yours sincerely,



ANDREW LLOYD
Chief Executive