



The Hon. Cameron Dick MP  
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Our Ref: 04178-2021  
Your Ref: A756102

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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 2 September 2021 about e-Petition 3577-21 COVID-19 Business Support Package.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Queensland Government has acted decisively to protect the health of Queenslanders, including at various times through lockdowns, border closures, social distancing and mandatory mask directives. These measures have been necessary to contain the spread of the virus to minimise health risks for individuals and the community, protect our most vulnerable, and prevent significant strain on the public health system.

Due to the extended lockdowns in New South Wales and Victoria, interstate tourism has been significantly impacted, particularly in regions such as the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Cairns and the Whitsundays.

To minimise these impacts, on 13 August 2021, the Queensland Government announced a \$600 million package of COVID-19 Business Support grants, jointly funded by the Australian Government.

The package includes support for non-employing sole traders and expands on support for eligible small and medium businesses, and large tourism and hospitality businesses. Successful applicants will receive the total value of the boosted grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$30,000 depending on whether they are a business or not-for-profit organisation.

The grants are available state-wide to all eligible businesses impacted by the lockdowns in South East Queensland, and Cairns and Yarrabah local government areas during August. The program opened on 16 August 2021 and will close on 16 November 2021. All eligible businesses that apply for a grant during the three-month application period will receive funding. Details on the program and the eligibility criteria are available on the Business Queensland website: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/advice-support/grants/covid19-support-grants>.

In addition, the Queensland Government recently announced a \$47.75 million Tourism and Hospitality Sector Support Package. This package includes:

- a refund or waiver of liquor licence fees for the 2021-22 licence period;
- a deferral of land rent for eligible tourism operators for 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022;
- a deferral of payroll tax liabilities due to be paid during August 2021 for a period of six months to eligible impacted businesses;
- a waiver or refund of fees for commercial activity agreements and permit fees for tourism businesses conducting business in a national park, conservation park, recreation area or state forest, including whale watching operations, for 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022;
- a rebate to offset berthing fee costs at privately owned/operated marinas for businesses in eligible local government areas between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022; and
- a waiver or refund of inbound tour operator fees for 12 months, when renewals are due between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022.

The \$20 million COVID-19 Cleaning Rebate Scheme has also been announced to help cover the cost of professional cleaning for businesses with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case. The Scheme offers a cleaning rebate of up to 80 per cent of professional cleaning costs, capped at \$10,000 (excl. GST) per incident, to support small, medium and not-for-profit businesses declared as a COVID-19 exposure site by Queensland Health.

On 14 September 2021, a jointly funded emergency support package was announced to help businesses suffering due to the border restrictions with New South Wales and to provide targeted support to tourism and hospitality businesses facing significant hardship. The package includes:

- \$40 million for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Program to deliver one off grants of \$15,000, \$25,000 and \$50,000 for small, medium and large employing businesses across the state that have experienced a reduction in turnover of at least 70 per cent for at least seven consecutive days between 1 July and 30 September;
- \$6.3 million to extend the existing COVID-19 Business Support Grants program to support businesses impacted by the closure of the Queensland-New South Wales border in recognition of the close connection between border communities; and
- \$6.5 million to provide one-off Hardship Scheme grants of \$5,000 for employing businesses and \$1,000 for non-employing sole traders to recipients of the COVID-19 Business Support Grants in the border zone in the event of an extended border closure.

The Queensland Government is also providing additional support through the following initiatives:

- up to \$1 million to match City of Gold Coast Council and Destination Gold Coast's 'Play Money' campaign, encouraging Gold Coasters to patronise border businesses;
- \$700,000 for additional mental health support for business owners and their families in the border zone; and
- \$50,000 support for marketing campaigns in Coolangatta.

On 25 September 2021 the Queensland Government announced further assistance to support Queensland's tourism and hospitality businesses who continue to face significant hardship.

This included an enhanced \$110 million Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Program, which will provide grants to both eligible tourism and hospitality businesses, and major tourism attractions and experiences through two grants: the \$80 million Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Grant, and the \$30 million Major Tourism Experiences Hardship Grant.



The \$80 million Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Grant provides up to two payments of \$15,000, \$25,000 or \$50,000 (i.e total grants of up to \$30,000, \$50,000 and \$100,000) to eligible tourism and hospitality operators that have experienced a reduction in turnover of at least 70 per cent for at least seven consecutive days between 1 July and 30 September 2021.

The \$30 million Major Tourism Experiences Hardship Grant supports Queensland's eligible major tourism attractions and experiences that are key drivers of significant interstate and/or international tourism, as well as being major employers of Queenslanders. Grants of up to \$4 million are available to ensure eligible major tourism businesses, which are critical to support Queensland's economic recovery remain in business, retain staff and critical skills and can scale up when visitation returns.

I recognise the challenges being faced by event organisers experiencing cancellations as a result of the necessary public health restrictions to keep Queenslanders safe. Communicable disease exclusions have been applied broadly in the commercial insurance market and event businesses have been unable to get event cancellation insurance cover for COVID-19 public health restrictions.

Given the event industry's ongoing exposure to public health restrictions across various jurisdictions, there is a strong case for government support at a national level. I am raising these issues with the Australian Government through appropriate intergovernmental forums as a matter for urgent consideration.

I thank the petitioners for raising this matter with me and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cameron Dick', followed by a horizontal line.

**CAMERON DICK MP**  
**Treasurer**  
**Minister for Investment**