

Inquiry into the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Tourism and Events Sectors

Mr Peter Worth

Organisation Name: Audio Visual Dynamics

Your position or role: Managing Director

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

Audio Visual Dynamics (AVD) established in 1992, is a market leader in the Audio Visual production & services for conference and events in the venue market. We are contracted to many hotel and conference centres such as Pullman Albert Park, Pullman On the Park, Melbourne Town Hall, Sofitel Melbourne, Intercontinental, Langham, Novotel Melbourne, Zinc at Federation Square and Marvel Stadium to name a few as their In-House AV provider.

In March 2020 we had employed around 140 Full and casual staff making AVD one of the largest employers in the sector.

After a very difficult 2020 where our revenue collapsed by over 95% from 2019, we were hoping for a recovery of some sort when conferences and events would again be staged in Melbourne. Unfortunately, that hasn't occurred in 2021 in great part due to government mandated restrictions but also due to a lack of business confidence for meetings following the various state lock downs. In addition we have several of our contracted clients closed as they are dedicated traveller repatriation hotels and or they are forced by the lack of business to stay closed until the business returns. These venue closures represent approximately 35% of our 2019 turnover. The remaining venue clients are running at an average of 35% of 2019 turnover.

Our hotel clients are stating their conference clients will not return in any volume until September at the earliest, meaning they will have no great short term need for our AV support. Most larger meetings and events take several months to plan and execute. With the various state lock downs including Victoria's recent "Circuit Breaker" closure, we have seen clients confidence to confirm major conferences that have long lead times, evaporate.

Audio Visual Dynamics is just sitting dead in the water waiting for our clients to start up again and no matter what marketing, networking or strategising we try, that situation will not change until all venues reopen to the public and conferences and events start to be held again.

I am most concerned that as a supplier to an industry we will be forgotten.

Right throughout 2020 we were accruing holiday and long service leave entitlements with little income leaving us with large staffing leave liabilities.

We have a loyal and long-standing workforce who deserve more than we can currently offer. They are all very supportive of the company and have accepted greatly reduced wages for the remainder of 2021 to ensure we can hold on to all members of the team. With an uncertain future, I worry about their immediate welfare.

If Victoria wants to be known as the "Events Capital of Australia" it will need suppliers like AV companies. If you let the industry suppliers wither and die, so will Victoria's ability to deliver a product that people will want to attend. Business Events is a huge contributor to the State & Federal economies and in Victoria, it now stands on the precipice of extinction.

An industry-based program with stronger definitions on what constitutes a reduction in business, must be created to see people through a downturn that wasn't of the businesses poor management or their control.

Actions taken by the State Government has and continues to have major impact on the events industry. A solid plan that gives certainty to event organisers and businesses must be delivered showing a road map for short-, medium- and long-term government regulations and support if the industry is to have a future.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:



Signature:

peter worth