



Inquiry calls for urgent action to support Victoria’s tourism and events sectors

An inquiry into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism and events sectors in Victoria has called for governments to provide more certainty on the triggers for lockdowns and border closures.

The Legislative Council’s Economy and Infrastructure Committee heard from more than 50 witnesses from Victoria’s tourism and events sectors during the four-month inquiry.

“All of us have been affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic and its unprecedented challenges. Unfortunately, Victoria’s tourism and events sectors are among the industries most affected by this virus,” said Committee Chair Enver Erdogan.

“Tourism relies on people being able to move about freely and events cannot happen without people being able to come together safely. Both of these have been difficult and, at times, impossible during the pandemic,” he said.

The Committee was encouraged to learn that Victoria’s tourism industry is showing signs of recovery. However, growth is not uniform across the state with Melbourne, in particular, continuing to suffer from low visitor numbers.

To redress this the Committee has recommended that Visit Victoria develop individual support packages, including funding and future marketing campaigns, specific to the strengths and needs of each tourism region in Victoria, including Melbourne.

“We also know that Victoria is the events capital of Australia. And this is not just the major sporting and cultural events that Victoria is famous for globally, but also boutique world-leading business events, among others. We are determined to keep Victoria number one,” Mr Erdogan said.

The Victorian Government has provided a number of support packages over the past 18 months which have assisted the tourism and events sectors, including the large Business Support Fund. The Committee heard that more can be done, though, and has made 22 recommendations covering a wide range of issues critical to the recovery of both the tourism and events sectors.

One of the most important issues the Committee addressed was confidence, for both business owners and the public. To improve confidence, the Committee has recommended the Victorian Government work with National Cabinet to include the dates and vaccination rates that will trigger changes to Australia’s national COVID-19 response. This will provide more certainty, helping the tourism and events sectors plan for the future.

The Committee has also recommended the Victorian Government, as a matter of urgency, consider the issue of the events sector’s inability to insure against the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Committee believes that the recommendations in this report will give the tourism and events sectors and the wider public the confidence they need to recover strongly from the COVID-19 global pandemic,” Mr Erdogan said.

Other key recommendations include:

- That the Victorian Government advocate to the Commonwealth Government for the resumption of the JobKeeper Payment, or a similar form of wage subsidy, for industries that continue to face significant COVID-19 restrictions, such as the tourism and events sectors
- That the Victorian Government establish an events industry taskforce to review and revise its consultation processes with the events sector, in order to: identify departmental structural changes to facilitate ongoing consultation and inform the long-term recovery of the sector; and recognise its value independently of tourism and other sectors
- That the Victorian Government consider options to support businesses who have been ineligible for the Business Support Fund, including sole traders
- That the Victorian Government advocate for the Commonwealth Government to implement a second Tourism Aviation Network Support Program that includes Melbourne and regional Victorian airports
- That the Victorian Government publish clear guidance on the types of triggers for the imposition or lifting of density quotients and venue capacity restrictions.

The report tabled in Parliament today is available on the Committee's [website](#).

Issued: 3 August 2021