

The true implications of the current crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are yet to be fully revealed.

It is clear, however, that hospitality businesses are set to experience severe, long-term economic implications. For many, if not most, these implications will be catastrophic leading to mass business closures, unemployment and an ensuing wave of family and social challenges.

At this time the most vulnerable in our community, those requiring emergency food provisions, remain our most vulnerable albeit they have become more vulnerable than ever before.

The Donkey Wheel and Give Where You Live proposal to redeploy the hospitality workforce to ensure the continuity of food relief is innovative, sensible and pragmatic. It will maintain a level of economic activity within the hospitality industry saving businesses and jobs. At the same time this proposal supports those most in need in communities across Australia as well as those whose circumstances will dramatically change for the worse.

The staff in this sector are skilled at preparing, cooking and delivering food. Without intervention, their skills will not be used, and they will experience a growing anxiety about accessing funds and/or food. Many of them will be forced on to Newstart, or other forms of assistance

Social isolation will become more prevalent, restaurants and cafés are already experiencing a significant reduction in business, to the point of either temporary or permanent closure. This is already happening across Victoria.

In times of crisis urgent, innovative action is required.

I fully endorse and support this proposal to maintain both the hospitality and emergency food sectors and urge state and federal governments to act to support this proposal immediately.

Yours,