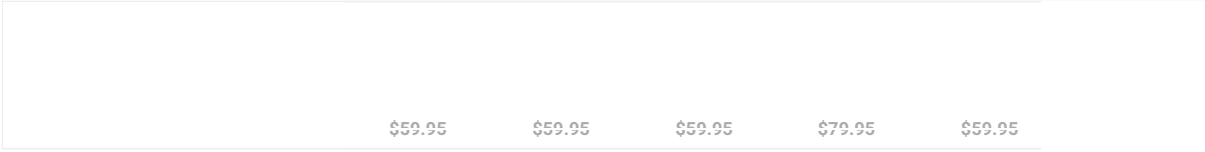


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Trapped traders demand more support after being crushed by multiple lockdowns

Traders are begging for a lifeline after again being left in lockdown as restrictions are eased in regional Victoria.

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Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews says the state has recorded 11 new cases of COVID-19 and flagged an end to lockdown in the regions. Mr Andrews said of the 11 new cases all but one was in the community while in the infectious period. Mr Andrews said after four days of lockdown and no cases of community transmission,...

Mornington Peninsula businesses are calling for help as they are once again left on the wrong side of the border between regional Victoria and Greater Melbourne.

The Committee for Mornington Peninsula (CfMP) questioned the logic of continuing to include the region in blanket restrictions covering Melbourne when it had been 14 days since a local exposure site was recorded.

Executive officer Briony Hutton Hutton said existing support for peninsula business was “not adequate”.

“At a time when many local businesses are still recovering from the economic effects of the Circuit Breaker Lockdown in June and Lockdown 5 in July, the announcement of Lockdown 6 came as a devastating blow to many,” Ms Hutton said.

She said previous lifelines offered by the federal and state governments, including Job Keeper and the Boosting Cashflow Payments program, were no longer available.

Many businesses were also not eligible for the support that was available during previous lockdowns including the Business Costs Assistance Program (BCAP) and Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund (LHVF) payments.

Ms Hutton said the Victorian Government was also yet to announce an opening date for the Small Business Covid Hardship Fund which allowed businesses to apply for an \$8000 payment.

The CfMP surveyed 36 businesses after the end of the July lockdown and found most had been forced to stand down up to five staff members and half had lost \$40,000 in revenue as a result of recent forced closures.

The survey also revealed that most businesses did not think they or their employees

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would be eligible to receive the Commonwealth’s COVID-19 Disaster Payment.

Half the respondents did not think they would qualify for any Circuit Breaker Business Support Package payments from the Victorian Government.

Ms Hutton said businesses wanted wage subsidies, a cash flow boost and broadened eligibility criteria for government grants.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council also voted on July 27 to write to Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg requesting the urgent reinstatement of JobKeeper and Jobseeker.

“I have spent the last week and a half hearing from and reading about the anguish of business owners and community members and their very real struggle with Lockdown 5,” Deputy mayor Sarah Race said.

Current pandemic support for eligible businesses

\$750 COVID-19 Disaster Payment for workers losing more than 20 hours due to lockdown

\$450 COVID-19 Disaster Payment of \$450 for workers losing 8 – 20 hours

\$1500 Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment for each 14-day period a person must self-isolate, quarantine or care for a person who has Covid

Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme

\$5000, \$10,000 or \$20,000, for licensed venues depending on capacity limits

\$2,800 BCAP payment for small to medium businesses

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