



21th of July 2021

Gladys Berejiklian
52 Martin Place
Sydney, NSW
Australia, 2000

Dear Premier,

I am writing to seek your urgent review of NSW lockdown restrictions to allow solo business operators that do not come into direct contact with other people to continue working.

These business operators include among others:

- Mowing contractors
- Pool cleaners
- Exterior painters
- Gardeners

Over the past year I have watched with some approval your handling of the COVID-19 epidemic. This is of interest to me because, while I live in Victoria, more than a thousand of my Franchisees live in your state. On the whole, your government has led an effective response, balancing defence against infection with a concern for the livelihood and mental health of people. Your public health system has worked well and is a credit to all involved.

This is why I am so disappointed with your latest restrictions. Like most Australians, I fully support sensible measures such as wearing masks, getting vaccinated and keeping people out of close contact with others. But outside tasks such as mowing lawns, working alone on a property and having no contact with clients, presents NO danger to the public.

My Franchisees, like most in the industry, are fully capable of taking payment remotely. They actually present less danger of infection than if going out to exercise, buying petrol, getting McDonalds or visiting a bottle shop.

I challenge you to present one case where a sole operator has passed on or received infection while gardening, washing a car, grooming a dog or building a fence.

Throwing tens of thousands of people out of work without cause has terrible effects on health and wellbeing. This is not just financial, even if partially compensated at taxpayer expense. The lockdowns in Victoria financially and emotionally devastated many people and ruined livelihoods and families. I personally know two men who lost their marriages and homes from the Victorian lockdown last year, and two others who had suicide attempts within their families. We take pride in the work we do and the help we give to millions of our fellow Australians.

I urge you to reconsider the restrictions to allow solo business operators and mum and dad businesses that do not come into contact with other people to get back to work.

Restrictions should be based on the best possible health advice. Last year, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services specifically exempted sole outside workers from any restrictions.

Though unfortunately not followed in practice at the time, sole operators such as mowing contractors and dog groomers are now permitted to work in Victoria. Daniel Andrews' government has since adopted a sensible and balanced approach to this issue and I fully support him.

Premier, I urge you to follow the Victorian Government's current approach to sole operators. Don't throw thousands of hardworking decent people out of work for no valid reason as they pose no risk to public safety.

To date you have led an effective and competent government and won the admiration of many, in your state and elsewhere. I implore you not to let the people of NSW down. You can also set an example for other states such as South Australia that are following similar unwise policies.

I say this on behalf of my Franchisees and the entire industry: let my people work!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Penman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "P".

Jim Penman
CEO and Founder of Jim's Group
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