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VICTORIA LOCKDOWN SPREADS ECONOMIC PAIN TO NSW

The nation's peak Tourism Accommodation body said Victoria's snap lockdown is having a damaging ripple effect on NSW accommodation hotels already struggling to overcome staff shortages and prolonged trade restrictions.

TAA CEO Michael Johnson said NSW hotels have had a flood of cancellations since the Victorian lockdown began on Thursday, 27 May.

"There has been a surge in cancellations across the Sydney and greater Sydney regions, where hotels have been struggling to survive for more than 15 months now," said Mr Johnson.

"Some major CBD hotels have fallen back below 20 per cent occupancy, near the lowest occupancy rates since the pandemic began early last year."

Mr Johnson said regional NSW hotels had also received many cancellations from local and interstate tourists and conference delegates from Victoria.

"More than 100 conference delegates cancelled in the Hunter region alone - one hotel lost bookings for 60 rooms for three nights," said Mr Johnson.

"We understand public safety is always the priority, but these lockdowns have a huge flow-on impact in terms of revenue and confidence to the travelling public and could not come at a worse time for accommodation hotels."

Mr Johnson said the industry is struggling to recover from its worst year in living memory and is facing a skills crisis shortage.

"This was a problem before COVID and it is even worse now due to the lack of international students, working holiday makers and temporary visa holders," he said.

"Hotels, particularly, are crying out for skilled staff like chefs, cooks and front-line staff and apprentices. Many can't open rooms because they don't have the staff to service them."

Recently, TAA called on National Cabinet to agree on co-ordinated targeted, temporary assistance for workers and businesses forced to close by snap lockdowns.

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