Monday 3rd August 2020

The Honourable Daniel Andrews, Premier of VictoriaOffice of the Premier
1 Treasury Place
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia, 3002

By email

Cc'd:
>Hon. Tim Pallas, Minister for the Coordination of Treasury and Finance – COVID-19
>Hon. Jenny Mikakos, Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19
>Hon. Jill Hennessy, Attorney General and Minister for Workplace Health and Safety
>Hon. Jaala Pulford, Minister for Small Business
>Hon. Martin Foley, Minister for Creative Industries
>Hon. Martin Pakula, Minister for the Coordination of Jobs, Precincts and Regions – COVID 19 and Minister for Industry Support and Recovery
>Hon. Gayle Tierney, Minister for Training and Skills
>Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Women
>Covid-19Team – Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

RE: COVID-19 – Essential Service and Essential Service Supply Chain Provider – Print, Publishing, Mail and Distribution – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dear Premier,

I write again from The Real Media Collective (TRMC) and appreciate your team's responses to our previous communications. As an industry association you are aware we represent $15.88BN of the $18.9BN industry and write to you in follow up to our former communication dated Friday 17th July 2020.

Given the recent events in Victoria, and the pending further restrictions, we write to provide further insight to government the print, mail and communications industry being an essential service provider, the current impact to industry on the effects of COVID-19 and the collective steps undertaken by our industry to ensure ongoing operations safely for employees and the community.

Workplace distancing – one of the highest in the State
Our sqm per person ratio when operating with zero public access, zero cross-over shift change and workplace protocols must be considered as the lowest risk manufacturer operating across the country, let alone Victoria.

An overnight survey of our members shows the lowest sqm per person is 55sqm, the average being 280sqm per person across our industry's manufacturing sites, well below the recommended 4sqm by WorkSafe.

The Victorian industry – an essential service provider
Our Victorian members provide print and distribution for **essential services across all of Australia and not limited to Victorian only**. Shutting down our member's manufacturing, warehousing and distribution facilities will have significant state and national impact.

1. **Mental Health Information** – printers, mail-houses and distributors service charities nationally, including but not limited to – Beyond Blue, Vision Australia, Salvation Army and more. From online ordering across Australia mental health materials are printed, picked and packed and distributed from a Victorian warehouse.

2. **Public Health Notices and Signage** – printers, mail-houses and distributors service health associations, government health departments, pharmacies and other national and community health sectors. Including, but not limited to, the Australian Medical Aossciation, Australian Dental Association, Local GP and Hospital services. These services include Public Health Notices, COVID-19 on-site protocols, signage and labelling, direct mail notices outlining prescription health information and more.

3. **Aged Care and Patient Health Records** – printers, mail-houses and distributors produce and ship health records specific to the aged care, intensive care and hospital public health sectors. Patient record sheets and form-work across Victoria and broader Australia are crticial to the operations of the health system. With multiple stakeholders maintaining patient records and meeting legislative compliance requires extensive form-work throughout the full term of a patient's care. The printing of these materials is produced by our Victorian membership.

4. **Energy and Utility notices – printers, mail-houses and distributors** produce via 'on-request online portals' and 'data management and mail processing' energy and utility notices for Victorians regarding essential utility services across residential and commercial needs.

5. **Financial and Superannuation** – printers, mail-houses and distributors provide banking and financial institutional information that assists Victorians and all Australians prepare and manage their finances during a difficult period.

With the significant digital divide across Victoria, relying on digital communications only when Victorians are in lockdown for these essential materials is an error that alienates the most vulnerable citizens.

> Over 2.5M Australians do not have internet connectivity in their homes (ABS, 2018) and more than four million Australians access the internet solely through a mobile connection. In 2019, mobile-only users have an Australian Digital Index Inclusion (ADII) score of 43.7, **some 18.2 points lower than the national average** (61.9) (ADII, 2019).

> People aged 65+ are Australia's least digitally included age group. The ADII score for this age is **19.5 points lower** than the most digitally included age group (people aged 25-34 years) (ADII, 2019).

> Those on a disability pension and living with a disability are **9.9 points lower** than the national average (ADII, 2019).
> Australians with low levels of income, education, and employment are significantly less digitally included. Australians in Q5 low-income households have a **30.5 points lower** score than those in Q1 high-income households (ADII, 2019).

Furthermore the alarming rise of digital scamming and fraud impacting the most vulnerable citizens must not be ignored by government.

> ACCC Scamwatch January 2020 figures report Mail/Letterbox fraud costing Australians $108,683 compared to a staggering $4,284,669 across Digital channels – in a period of fear and misleading messages being communicated to Australians the Letterbox is a channel of strength and trust (ACCC, 2020).

We make ourselves available for any further discussions and/or additional information requests.

Yours sincerely,

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The Real Media Collective

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