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IT'S TIME TO REOPEN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR SAFELY

Former AFL player, and proprietor of Lamaro's Hotel in South Melbourne, Paul Dimattina is the face of an advertising campaign launched today which calls for the safe re-opening of the Victorian hospitality sector.

The campaign by issues advocacy group Change Victoria includes a petition to Parliament which calls on the Victorian Government to allow restaurants, bars, and cafes to reopen safely in line with the restrictions which were imposed in Stage 2.

"The hospitality industry has been disproportionately impacted by the lockdown and restrictions being imposed in Melbourne and regional Victoria as a response to COVID-19," said Change Victoria Chief Executive, Stuart Eaton.

"68,000 jobs have been lost since March this year and we believe it is time to allow the industry to get back to work and allow them to re-employ the many staff who have lost their jobs and income.

"Under Stage 2 the Victorian hospitality sector operated safely complying with social distancing restrictions, patron limits and making sure venues kept contact information from its customers.

"Data shows that restaurants and cafes have not been a significant source of coronavirus transmission and, as has been the case in NSW, steps can be taken to clean venues and contact staff and patrons for testing should a break out take place," said Mr Eaton.

Change Victoria is a non-profit incorporated membership association which believes in more jobs, greater prosperity, smaller government, less regulation, and support for the important role of the private business sector in our state and the need for this part of our community to be represented in public debate.

Change Victoria is not connected with any political party.

Change Victoria advocates for policies and reforms that our members believe are necessary to improve the climate for investment, business operations and employment growth in Victoria.

"Our members have asked us to run this campaign, because what is happening in the hospitality sector is mirrored across their businesses, and impacts us all," said Mr Eaton

"As a proprietor and industry advocate Paul Dimattina was the perfect choice to front our TV and radio campaign.

"We understand why we had to lockdown but enough is enough and the hospitality sector needs to get back to work safely before the damage is irreparable."

Change Victoria's petition and new advertising campaign can be viewed at www.changevictoria.com.au