

## An Open Letter to the Office of the Mayor of Auckland

Dear Mayor Goff

I'm contacting you because my wife and I are Auckland restauranteurs, passionate about our businesses, our staff, our customers and our city. We're hurting. We don't want a handout, but we do need help to get through the chaos that Covid has brought in its wake.

You don't normally hear from us. We go about our work hosting, feeding and connecting with fellow Aucklanders, visitors from other parts of New Zealand and travellers from around the world.

Our livelihood, along with that of over 100 staff, depends on Auckland being an open and vibrant city.

The Auckland lockdown is creating great expense and incredible uncertainty. We fear that this may continue for months to come and into 2022.

We're not arguing against a lockdown. We're not saying we must open up and learn to live with Covid. We're saying that more needs to be done to mitigate its impact on good businesses and the people they employ.

That takes courage and leadership and, fairly or unfairly, we feel that the Office of the Mayor has not shown the leadership the city needs. Certainly not since we entered the current level 4 lockdown. We have seen little evidence of strong advocacy on behalf of the city or plans to relieve the impact of the response to Covid-19 on Auckland businesses.

We need you to fight for us. The following urgent issues require action:

1. Central Government to confirm Auckland businesses can access wage subsidies at Alert Level 2 now and in 2022

Our region is shouldering a disproportionate burden for keeping New Zealand safe. Continuing the Wage Subsidy is not only fair but is economically necessary. It ensures staff will continue to be employed and are paid what is required for them to survive.

2022 may see Auckland go to Alert Level 2 again and perhaps multiple times. We, our staff, and our bank require assurance that the wage subsidy will be available when this occurs.

2. Quarantine facilities are out of Auckland CBD by 2022

Whatever logic there was for MIQ facilities to be placed in New Zealand's most populated, connected and economically important place no longer stacks up with the reality of the Delta variant. \$1B a week of economic damage due to lockdowns is proof of this.

Auckland CBD cannot be the major quarantine facility for the country as we move ahead. Once home quarantine is allowed demand for MIQs will reduce, and this must stop MIQs from being in the riskiest part of the country.

3. Mass vaccination facility located in Auckland CBD

Can this please be organised immediately and to be available through the rest of this year.

4. Invest in activity to help the CBD rebound

There is no shortage of ideas from businesses: plenty have been put forward and discussed including offering two hours free downtown parking and facilitating street/outside dining.

January and February 2022 will be difficult trading without overseas tourists. Perhaps a 'Summer in the City' weekend break campaign including hotels, airlines, hospitality etc may encourage domestic travellers to choose AKL over a weekend somewhere else.

Promotional activities will have only limited impact but will help so long as the other actions have been addressed.

Auckland is blessed with outstanding restaurants, something of which the city is rightly proud. At the moment the industry is struggling, and we require your urgent assistance.

Regards,

Tony McGeorge

Owner / Operator

Café Hanoi, Saan, Ghost Street, Xuxu