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**Subject:** FW: COVID Hardship Grant

**From:** Karen Fry <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, 24 August 2020 8:27 AM  
**To:** Ivan Dean <[ivan.dean@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:ivan.dean@parliament.tas.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Natasha Exel <[natasha.exel@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:natasha.exel@parliament.tas.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** COVID Hardship Grant

Dear Ivan,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the Governments economic expenditure response to the current COVID pandemic.

I would like you to know my personal story regarding my application for the \$15,000 Hardship Grant.

While we are incredibly grateful for any support at all I feel the process was very unfair & we continue to suffer extreme distress - both personal & financial.

We have a B&B in Geeveston & when the grants were first opened I submitted our application on the 9th of April & were number 376 which indicates our application was one of the first. We had been directed by the Government to close our doors to all guests on March 25th. I felt we had a very good case for the grant as we had no option but to cease business completely until directed otherwise.

We were not in any position to change the way we operate. We could not offer "takeaway" options and it's not a product that can be posted & of course we have always sold our product online.

It wasn't for some weeks after our application was submitted that we learned the rules were subsequently changed & there was a possibility we could be granted the lesser amount of \$4,000. But still, we heard nothing, despite my inquiries to State Growth about how our application was progressing. Meantime I was hearing of businesses who had already received the full amount of \$15,000. It wasn't until the very last day of notifications, May 28th that we were advised that we were to only get the lesser amount of \$4,000. We had waited seven weeks to learn this.

I felt our case was particularly strong as our business is in Geeveston & we had just gone through more than 12 months of being severely affected by the loss of the Tahune Airwalk from the previous years bushfire. The Airwalk is our main tourism drawcard & in fact, the Airwalk had only been open for 3 weeks when the COVID crisis hit & was closed again. ( It is still only open 2 days a week ). Despite Govt. assurances that the proposed Dark Lab/Mona project that was to be "somewhere in the south" & was going to revitalise our area, nothing had been announced. ( As it happens it was announced this week but not expected to be complete for at least another 16 months ). So we have had a prolonged downturn with no end in sight at this point, but were not considered eligible for the \$15,000 grant.

I can't help but wonder about other businesses that have received the full amount, then have closed their doors. We can't & won't close our doors. Our business is in part of our home & we have been operating

successfully for 14 years & have an exemplary record with TripAdvisor to prove this. Nor can we sell what we offer in any other way. With the consistent uncertainty of border reopenings, forward bookings are virtually non-existent. I would gladly show you our booking system to uphold this.

I feel that the entire process was unfair & unbalanced & that once again small business, in fact very small, locally, family-owned businesses have been disadvantaged. This has been & continues to be an extremely stressful time. We weathered more than 12 months of bushfire aftermath only to be devastated again by the pandemic & when the government offers help, to only withdraw the bulk of it & change the rules, it's very disheartening & soul-destroying.

Yours sincerely,  
Karen Fry,  
Cambridge House B&B,  
Geeveston.