

**Media Release | INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE****Sunday 07 June 2020****Attention Toowoomba Media****LICENSED CLUBS EXPERT SAYS CLUBS IN TOOWOOMBA WILL NEED GROUND ZERO HELP TO SURVIVE COVID19****CLUBS MUST DRAMATICALLY CHANGE THEIR WAYS TO SURVIVE**

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A leading Queensland expert in the licensed community clubs sector says licensed clubs in Toowoomba must review every area of their operation and almost start from scratch to survive the economic, social, and financial fallout from COVID19.

The long time CEO of Clubs Queensland, Doug Flockhart, says licensed clubs in Toowoomba are at "Ground Zero" and will have to rebuild the way they operate from the ground up.

He estimates that somewhere between 20% to 40% of Queensland's licensed Clubs may not survive the next 12 months and that the percentage will be even higher for unlicensed community clubs.

Mr. Flockhart retired from his position as CEO of Clubs Queensland – the peak body for licensed Clubs in Queensland – earlier this year and has three decades of experience in the hospitality, hotel, and licensed clubs' sector.

"This is going to be a battle and Clubs in Toowoomba just like everywhere else in Queensland, need to rally the troops and fight their way through.

"It is not going to be easy and Clubs need to understand that they have to look at every avenue of revenue, expenditure and marketing to come through the next 12 months.

"Every aspect of their operation must be put on the table and assessed."

Mr. Flockhart hopes the Federal Government will give serious consideration to scrapping the Fringe Benefits Tax for business meetings at licensed Clubs, either in whole or in part.

He also supported a rescue package that Clubs Queensland has submitted to the State Government.

"The Clubs themselves can't do this alone.

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"The lack of international and interstate tourism will also make it extremely hard for many Clubs to survive without Government help.

"If a club fails it is unlikely to ever reopen, and that would be devastating for the community they support.

"Governments can help via providing financial assistance but also via reducing many of the taxes that apply to the Clubs sector."

Mr. Flockhart said the immediate priority for Clubs in Toowoomba was to put a program in place to retain current members.

"Clubs need to give priority to reaching out to their current members and understanding their needs in the post COVID age.

"Hold on to your current members first before you try and increase membership."

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