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4th wave lockdown will permanently lockdown many restaurants

As the 4th wave looms, with the added scare of a new Covid-19 variant, there is talk of further restrictions and lockdowns that would directly affect the sit-down restaurant industry during its busiest time when it needs to be fully operational to see it through the leaner months.

Scientists in South Africa have detected the Omicron variant, which has caused a surge in infection numbers - primarily in Gauteng province – and resulting in global travel bans on South Africa and surrounds.

The Restaurant Collective (TRC) spokesperson Grace Harding says: “Any form of lockdown will be like a death sentence; we have to continue to trade. We cannot handle any more disasters. The owners and crew of restaurants are on their last legs.”

TRC disagrees fundamentally with past restrictions placed on the industry. Big events are super spreaders and not sit-down restaurants where people are naturally well-spaced. Alcohol in these venues is also not a problem as it is generally consumed as an accompaniment to a meal. We are not the problem.

“We are covid fit. We have invested energy and resources in curbing the spread so that it has become a way of life for restaurant owners and their crew. Our venues follow all protocols. We need government to spend time identifying where the real problems are and providing usable data instead of applying a broad solution - work with us and collaborate around finding ways to save lives and livelihoods instead of punishing the entire school because of a few disruptive children.”

We urge Government to stop living from crisis to crisis and to focus on a co-ordinated drive to get the population vaccinated so we can continue with a functional economy where we are healthy and safe. As an alternative to restrictions, restaurants can require their customers to present a COVID-19 passport. Help us to help you.

The real problem is that there are insufficient people being vaccinated: “In other countries they are imposing lockdowns on those who are not vaccinated. There is so much ignorance around vaccinations. Government should invest in proper education and drive this via talk shows, radio interviews, community talks, etc. They were able to organise vaccine drives ahead of elections – this should have continued. They need to act to de-mystify the science and dispel myths.



TRC is working on this same challenge to educate and assist restaurant owners on vaccinating their staff to make restaurants as safe as possible and get feet back through their doors.

We invite all sit-down restaurants and taverns to register on therestaurantcollective.co.za to take a short course (10 minutes) on COVID protocols and how to explain to employees that vaccinations are safe, dispel myths and encourage vaccine awareness and uptake.

Once the owner or manager has completed the course he or she will receive a certificate from TRC endorsed by **Discovery Health and the Department of Health** to display in-store so customers can see restaurants are safe places where they can get back to living...and help bring the restaurant industry back to life. All of this is offered to restaurant and tavern owners at no cost.

TRC board member and National Liquor Traders convenor Lucky Ntimane adds: "We will continue to advocate for vaccination as well as push government on making alcohol restriction decisions based on science and not political considerations and to this end we will fight tooth and nail to keep our doors open and free of any unjust interference from government."

TRC is hopeful that travel bans will be lifted swiftly as scientists unpack the ramifications of the new variant.

NOTE: The sit-down restaurant industry of South Africa comprises more than 30,000 restaurants and over 35,000 taverns and employs more than 600 000 people – quality food establishments that form the heart of SA's tourism sector.

Restaurant owners can visit therestaurantcollective.co.za for a range of free resources and assistance.