



An Open Letter to the Victorian Government

29 September 2020

The Swimming Pool & Spa Association of Victoria (SPASAVIC) together with Landscaping Victoria Master Landscapers (LVML) are immensely disappointed that our pleas for logical and sensible easing of restrictions for our sectors have not been heard.

As both industries have strongly advocated over the past two months, the construction of small-scale projects - where small teams operate in a completely Covid-Safe environment with no contact with the community - must be permitted to resume on-site activities.

Be assured though, there is nothing small about our combined industries who contribute 2 billion dollars to the Victorian economy. The lack of consultation with each industry body to understand how we work and to work together to kick start the economy is nothing other than breathtakingly short-sighted.

AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, SPASAVIC and LVML urge the Victorian Government to review the easing of restrictions to allow outdoor work, with zero contact under COVID-Safe protocols for:

- **Pool Service Technicians** who must be allowed on an occupied property to maintain the health and safety of pool water. Under the guidelines given to sole traders for garden maintenance, it is absurd to assert that pool service technicians cannot operate under these same guidelines.
 - It must be noted that the chemical balancing of water in residential and commercial pools is essential to keep pathogens and cryptosporidium out of pool and spa water and stop un-treated bodies of water from causing a health risk to the community. Research undertaken by a vast amount of academics has concluded that water borne pathogens are real and are a continuous health risk to the community ¹
- **Pool Builders** who form a sub-sector of the Construction industry, to carry out their duties in a completely contact-free manner and must be allowed to re-start incomplete projects. Victorian families continue to live with construction sites where 80% of the yard is unavailable, the back door barricaded to prevent access, and kids and pets unable to access any space to play during lockdown
- **Landscape Builders** who under the technical wording of the latest announcement can work on their own, however two people are required on site to comply with OH&S regulations, effectively negating this

The rulings are totally inconsistent and unfair on everyone working in the pool and landscaping industry who take their COVID-Safe work environment seriously.

CEO of SPASAVIC, Chris Samartzis says, "We implore the Victorian Government to consider the COVID-Safe work environment that our entire industry has adopted during this pandemic and allow residential pool and spa construction and maintenance activities to re-commence. The guidelines around sole traders are totally inconsistent and they discriminate one industry from another."

Megan Flower, Executive Officer of Landscaping Victoria Master Landscaping adds, "Sole traders performing outside landscaping and gardening returning to work is NOT a win and does not address landscape construction as a legitimate profession in the construction industry. This decision for 'one worker' defies all logic and common sense, is not practical and frankly beggars belief. Yet because of it the Government have not added Landscape Construction (ANZSIC code 3291) to the list of eligible business to receive Third Round Business Support because they have 'eased restrictions'."

Our many hundreds of members who collectively own and manage their businesses cannot wait until the 19th of October for a resolution. We implore Government to hear our combined plea and allow the thousands of workers that comprise the bulk of both our industries, to resume trade.

Mental and financial health are paramount concerns for both our organisations.

Yours Sincerely



Chris Samartzis – CEO
SPASA Victoria

Yours Sincerely



Megan Flower - EO

Landscaping Victoria Master Landscapers

¹ Peer reviewed research:

- The Good The bad and the Volatile: Can we have pools and healthy people – Judy S. Lakind, Susan D Richardson and Benjamin C Blount Environmental Science and Tech 2010
- Viral pathogens in water – Kristen E Gibson University of Arkansas, Dep of Food Science 14th Jan 2014
- Exposure Assessments for Swimmers in bathing waters and swimming pools – Francika M Schets, Jack F Schijven, Ana Mariade and Roda Husman – National Inst. Of Public Health and Environment – 2011
- Relationships between Microbial Indicators and Pathogens in Recreational Water Settings – Korajkic A, McMInn B.R., Harwood V.J. – 2018

For consultation, please contact:

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