



To the Hon. Daniel Andrews, Premier of Victoria
The Hon. Martin Pakula MP, Minister for Sport
The Hon. Ros Spence MP, Minister for Community Sport
The Hon. Martin Foley MP, Minister for Health
The Hon. James Merlino MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Mental Health

20 October 2020

Masters Swimming Australia Inc. (MSA) is the peak body for adult swimmers aged 18 and above. It is a non-government, not for profit organisation, constituted in 1975. We have over 5500 financial members, 200 clubs and approx. 300 coaches across the country.

Masters Swimming Victoria (MSV) a member Branch of MSA, has over 1000 members, 34 clubs and 35 coaches across Metro and Regional Victoria. The Masters' programs and services available at club level vary from club to club, but generally include a safe, managed environment to encourage fitness, friendship and fun, coaching by qualified MSA coaches, social events, interclub swim meets, time-trials and endurance swims.

More recently, MSA and MSV have been providing members with information, resources, and advice to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in line with official Government resources and Swimming Australia National guidelines. Our Victorian masters swimming clubs are well prepared in practising social distancing and providing members a safe and COVID-19 approach back to swimming with the implementation of the 'Return to Play' plans. Our organisation and members can operate with a low ratio of swimmers to coaches as desired; however, it is vital that we re-establish adult squad swimming as soon as possible in this environment.

Adult swimming is strongly connected to the community, club-based training, and camaraderie within the membership. The current restrictions in most of Victoria do not allow for adult swimmers to swim in a group or squad-based training which is the core of our community. We are writing to you on behalf of our organisation, members, coaches, technical officials, and volunteers, to share information about how the continual restrictions of adult group based squad training due to COVID-19 is affecting our adult swimming community across Victoria.

Swimming is a community sport which should be re-established as soon as possible which will be in line with government announcements regarding the importance of physical and mental health. Members rely on our organisation for regular training and stroke correction, survival skills as well as the camaraderie which comes with belonging to a community club.

The ongoing closure of indoor pools in Victoria and the inability for swimmers to train together is affecting the mental and physical health of our adult swimming community. We request that the State Government consider the current restrictions placed on us and act and allow adult swimming training to resume under the 'Return to Play' guidelines approved by Sport and Recreation Victoria. The benefit of swimming and connecting with the community after such a period of isolation is vital to the mental and physical health of adult swimmers.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the mental and physical health of our adult swimming community and we look forward to providing any additional information or meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss our requests in more detail.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Cairns (MSV President)
Jane Noake (MSA Acting President)
Sarah Pisterman (MSA General Manager)