

Media Release - 7 September 2020

**MORE THAN 75% OF COMMUNITY CLUBS WILL REMAIN CLOSED AS THEY CONSIDER
OUTDOOR DINING OPTIONS TOTALLY IMPRACTICAL UNWORKABLE.**

Victoria's "Roadmap to Reopening" demonstrates 'policy on the run', developed without consultation and fails more than three million Victorians who are members of community clubs, according to peak industry body Community Clubs Victoria (CCV).

Following a post-announcement survey of members (CCV) can reveal more than 75% of Victoria's not-for-profit community clubs will remain closed until at least November 23, given most cannot accommodate the outdoor dining provision proposed under the Roadmap's 'second step'.

CCV President Leon Wiegard said that clubs could easily meet COVIDSafe requirements, yet yesterday's announcements by the Premier and Chief Health Officer will prove fatal for many not-for-profit clubs that will not have the capacity to continue.

"Under COVID-19 restrictions many successful clubs have become financially marginal and some marginal clubs will be forced to close. The disregard shown by the Premier and Dr Sutton to the more than 3,000,000 club members and over 30,000 staff is unbelievable.

"Clubs have had plenty of time to think about how they can operate safely and are ready to enact these plans – it appears the government have not taken that into account.

"The structure and the sign-in protocols at clubs ensures they are in an ideal position to manage a COVIDSafe indoor, seated and distanced dining experience.

"The hospitality industry, including CCV, has been working for months with the government on a re-opening plan that was based on the successful NSW model. This has been totally ignored by the government and the industry was blindsided by yesterday's announcement.

"Unfortunately, Premier Andrews and Dr Sutton have also ignored the fact that clubs provide a vital hub for the community, particularly for the frail and aged. It is the decline in the well-being of our staff and our younger members that is emerging as a fresh concern. Our feedback points to a chronic physical and mental health breakdown in the Victorian community that begs the question are the lockdowns doing more damage than the virus?"

Mr Wiegard said he is calling on the Premier and Chief Health Officer to reconsider the measures in yesterday's announcement and allow community clubs to re-open in a COVIDSafe environment.

"Many clubs are located in regional areas or LGAs that have had zero cases for sustained periods. Why should they be limited in their operations while at the same time you can go to Dan Murphy's, the supermarket and work in a trade union organised building site but not be able to frequent your local community club? How can hairdressers be deemed safer than community clubs?"

"CCV clubs make an annual contribution to the Victoria community in excess of \$1 billion a year. An additional \$56 million a year is distributed in cash and in-kind donations to associated clubs, community groups and individuals. Clubs are not-for-profit operations and our purpose is to support the community and clubs and organisations that operate within it."