

14 September 2020

CLUBS IN REGIONAL VICTORIA SHOULD OPEN NOW!

COVID-19 INFECTION RATES WELL BELOW SAFE THRESHOLD

Due to the success of COVID-19 suppression measures community clubs in regional Victoria should open as a matter of urgency according to the State's peak industry body, Community Clubs Victoria (CCV).

As of today, the average infection case load is 4.1 in regional Victoria – well below the Premier's safe threshold. CCV contends no argument can be mounted on public health or safety grounds not to re-open clubs in regional Victoria now.

CCV President Leon Wiegard said most regional Local Government Areas have had zero or negligible case numbers for several weeks.

"Clubs in regional Victoria serve as a vital hub for the communities they serve. More than that they have more than 1,000,000 members and employ more than 10,000 staff. It's surely time to reward regional communities for their adherence to the suppression measures that have ensured regional Victoria is virtually COVID-19 free.

"The structure and the sign-in protocols at clubs ensure they are in an ideal position to manage a COVID-19 safe full-service offering to patrons.

"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.

"We are aware that many of our members and our staff are doing it incredibly tough. Why should regional communities suffer further physical and mental anguish when there are no medical or enforcement grounds to do so.

"And don't forget the local business and sporting and community clubs that our members support. This is magnified many times over in regional and country town.

"Unfortunately, the Business Support and Adaption Package as announced yesterday and this morning's outdoor dining package will do little to help clubs that have been financially decimated during these lockdowns. The only way for the Government to breath life back into regional communities is to open these clubs now," Mr Wiegard said.

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.