

1 Background

- 1.1 The restrictions and recommendations being put in place by the different levels of government are changing rapidly in an effort to mitigate the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The operation of Paddle Clubs has further been impacted by recent government rulings.
- 1.2 Our priority remains the health of our paddling community and minimising the risk to members of contracting COVID-19. We also seek to ensure that the practices of Paddle Australia (PA), our affiliated organisations, including our State Paddle Associations (SPAs) and Paddle Clubs, do nothing to increase the likelihood of the spread of COVID-19 amongst the broader Australian community and those more vulnerable people in particular.
- 1.3 Paddle Australia and the State Paddle Associations (SPAs) are working with the relevant authorities to confirm exactly what access members have to their Paddle Club facilities and under what circumstances.
- 1.4 PA has been liaising with the Sport Australia (SA), the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) and Paralympics Australia as well as other National Sports Organisations (NSOs) to ensure a coordinated approach to the current risks.

2 Advice from Paddle Australia

- 2.1 As it is confirmed that the Olympics and Paralympics have been postponed until 2021 and the SIS/SAS and our National Centres of Excellence are shut down, let's start with a very important message from some of our extraordinary athletes.

<https://youtu.be/iXtYNFNj7-Y>
- 2.2 The information and advice in this update are addition to and in some areas alters the information and advice provided in our update of 19th March. PA again stresses the general advice that decisions need to be made by each Paddler and Paddle Club taking into account the different and unique circumstances in which they operate.
- 2.3 The guidance below is provided based on the best information available as at 27th March 2020. Further updates will be provided as new advice on the control of the spread of COVID-19 becomes available. Paddlers and Paddle Clubs are advised to refer to advice on the dedicated pages on the [PA Website](#) and the regular updates on that page in particular.
- 2.4 Paddlers and Paddle Clubs should always act in accordance with the general advice available from the Department of Health and any Federal, State or Local Government recommendations or requirements that are applicable. Links can be found on the [COVID-19 page on PA Website](#).
- 2.5 This guidance is provided for the general paddling community. Additional and more tailored guidance will be provided to those training regularly in state and national teams and squads.

- 2.6 Exercise and participation in paddling is an important part of maintaining physical and mental health. PA and our SPAs seek to ensure that the very real benefits of paddling can continue to be enjoyed. This is going to be increasingly difficult as further restrictions are placed on the movement and meeting of people. That said, PA and our SPAs completely understand and support the need for these restrictions.

3 General Paddling Activity

- 3.1 In our last update we noted that: *the activity of paddling outdoors generally meets the requirements of 'social distancing', with paddlers normally more than the required 1.5 metres apart [now 2 metres], even during competition. 'Social distancing' should be a consideration when afloat and when launching and coming off the water, particularly when paddling for recreation.* This is still the case, except with the closing of Clubs and other restrictions, competitions should obviously no longer be staged.
- 3.2 Australians are generally being encouraged to continue exercising but the message and some of the restrictions vary. If you are considering getting out on the water, we recommend that you check the current restrictions and any advice from your state or territory and/or local government. The links to each of the relevant state pages are provided below. Please also follow any specific advice from your State Paddle Association (SPA).
- 3.3 If paddling is your chosen form of exercise and state and/or local government restrictions and related advice from your SPA does not recommend against going paddling, you should note the following:
- 3.3.1 Exercise common sense. As well ensuring you remain healthy, you have an obligation to do nothing to increase the likelihood of the spread of COVID-19 amongst the broader Australian community.
- 3.3.2 You, and anyone that you are paddling with, should carry with you all the required [safety equipment](#). You should always wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) or lifejacket whilst afloat.
- 3.3.3 The services that you might normally rely on in an emergency may not be available to you. Follow the [Paddle Smart guidelines](#). Take particular care, including letting someone know where you are going and when you will be back.
- 3.3.4 Paddle within your abilities. Preferably paddle on sheltered waters where you can self-rescue in case of an emergency. Unless you are an experienced and competent paddler, do not paddle on the ocean.
- 3.3.5 Try to avoid paddling alone. Paddle with no more than one other person known to you, or with members of your household. Ensure you always comply with current social distancing and health and hygiene guidelines when both ashore and afloat and when travelling to and from the venue. These are widely available and outlined in [PA Update 2](#).
- 3.3.6 Our insurance brokers have confirmed that if you are a member of PA, our personal accident and liability cover remains in place. This may change if further restrictions are introduced.

We again note that the requirements are changing quickly. Please check the [PA website](#) where we will continue to update information as it becomes available.

4 Advice to Paddle Clubs

- 4.1 Restrictions have been introduced by the Federal Government limiting use of sporting venues. If your Club has a physical clubhouse or similar, then that area should be closed with immediate effect if not already closed. Similarly, if your Club has a gym, that too should now be closed. Your Club should not be staging any organised events or activities.
- 4.2 The restrictions on access to boatshed and storage areas is less clear and varies on a state and territory basis. Clubs should check the current restrictions that your state or territory government has in place. Please consult with your SPA if in doubt. Clubs are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with their local situation through the links below:

State/Territory Governments

[New South Wales](#)
[Queensland](#)
[South Australia](#)
[Tasmania](#)
[Victoria](#)
[Western Australia](#)
[Australian Capital Territory](#)
[Northern Territory](#)

State Paddle Associations

[Paddle NSW](#)
[Paddle QLD](#)
[Paddle SA](#)
[Paddle TAS](#)
[Paddle VIC](#)
[Paddle WA](#)

- 4.3 If you are unsure based on the information available, PA recommends no access should be permitted to your Club premises, including boatshed and storage areas, under any circumstances.
- 4.4 It is very likely that further restrictions will be imposed. If you determine areas of your Club are still accessible, this may change in the future. The general advice has been that restrictions, once in place, could extend for six months.
- 4.5 If you decide that members can currently access Club storage facilities and wish to continue to use their boat(s) and equipment stored on Club premises, we recommend that members be made aware of the risk of closure and that they consider collecting their boats and equipment and storing them elsewhere, ideally at home. In making this recommendation we advise:
- 4.5.1 Access to storage areas, especially indoor storage areas, is organised in such a way that the requirements around 'social distancing' and hygiene are adhered to. We do note that most storage areas are cramped. Clubs may consider placing a limit on the number of people at one time that can access storage facilities and controlling access if necessary.
- 4.5.2 All the steps outlined in [Update 2](#) from Paddle Australia should be adhered to, especially those relating to health and hygiene.

5 Cancellation of PA 2020 Paddle Australia Canoe Marathon Championships

- 5.1 The PA Canoe Marathon Technical Committee has decided after extensive conversations to **cancel** the 2020 Paddle Australia Canoe Marathon Championships. Further to this decision, it has been decided that Paddle Australia will now not support a team to the 2020 ICF Canoe Marathon World Championships, currently scheduled to be held in August in Norway. These decisions were not taken lightly but were considered to be in the best interest of the health and safety of canoe marathon athletes.
- 5.2 Paddle Victoria is in the process of refunding all entry fees for the 2020 Paddle Australia Canoe Marathon Championships. The refunds will be processed via PayPal. Paddle Victoria will work to process all refunds as soon as possible but we ask for your patience during this time. If you have any concerns about your refund, please feel free to contact Sandra from Paddle Victoria (accounts@paddlevic.org.au).

6 SIS/SAS and National Centres of Excellence

- 6.1 Following the measures from the Australian Government that have been put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19, coupled with the news that the Olympic and Paralympic Games have been postponed, the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), along with all State Institutes and Academies (SIS/SAS), have closed all training facilities across the country including gymnasiums, recovery centres, boatsheds and other related venues.
- 6.2 Coaches within SIS/SAS and national canoe/kayak sprint and slalom programs have already, or by the end of this week will have, ceased all structured coaching sessions on the water. Based on the Government restrictions, the PA National Centres of Excellence at Penrith (Slalom) and Pizzey Park (Sprint) are now closed.
- 6.3 Our high-performance staff and athletes understand the impact COVID-19 is having on the global community and respect the need to limit the risk of spreading of the virus. Shutting down operations in shared training facilities and group training sessions is an appropriate response in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

7 Contacting Paddle Australia and our State Paddle Associations

- 7.1 The PA Sydney office is closed with the administrative team working remotely. The office phone system will automatically redirect your calls. However, with phone and internet services frequently being saturated as the result of extra traffic, you may find your call is either not answered or will not connect. Please be patient in these circumstances and try again later if you need to talk with one of our team.
- 7.2 During this period, it might be more convenient for you to contact our primary services via email. For all Membership Services use: membership@paddle.org.au and for Helpdesk/System enquiries use: helpdesk@paddle.org.au and for all other and general enquiries use: info@paddle.org.au. All these emails are monitored, and we will get back to you as promptly as we can.
- 7.3 All SPAs can be contacted via email and plan to remain available to provide support throughout this emergency. Again, if in doubt about any local restrictions or guidelines, please consult your SPA.

8 General

- 8.1 Whilst access to the facilities is restricted, your Club is much more than a venue. There are still opportunities for your Club to make a positive contribution to your community. Many people will be feeling scared and isolated right now. We are in this situation together and it has been heartening to see Clubs engaging with members in a variety of ways, from newsletters, to social media and online competitions. Make sure that you share your ideas.
- 8.2 If you need clarification on any of the advice above, please let us know via email at info@paddle.org.au. Whilst social media is helpful in getting information out there, we can't monitor all posts. We will provide more information as and when we can. Again, please check regularly for updates on the [COVID-19 page on PA Website](#).
- 8.3 As we said in our last update, things are changing very quickly. A reminder to be supportive and check up on your fellow paddlers.
- 8.4 Enjoy your paddling, keep healthy and stay safe.

Phil Jones
CEO
Paddle Australia

27th March 2020