

1 Thank you

- 1.1 Paddle Australia and our six State Paddle Associations (SPAs) have been delighted that, despite the limitations of physical distancing and having to 'stay local', so many people have been able to get out on the water to enjoy the very real physical and mental benefits that paddling brings.
- 1.2 During this difficult time, we have continued to advocate on behalf of paddlers everywhere, members and non-members alike, to ensure paddling is recognised as a form of exercise and is therefore allowed to continue. Most recently, Paddle Victoria was able to work with their State Government to get paddlers back afloat in the face of a broader ban on recreational boating.
- 1.3 This change ensured that paddlers all around Australia could all get afloat, all complying with a similar set of restrictions. We know that some normal activities have been curtailed, but given the almost total shutdown of community sport, this seems a small price to pay.
- 1.4 Our job has been made easier by the way our community has acted so responsibly when going out for a paddle. We have had no reports of the rules being broken, which could easily have resulted in further restrictions. So, a big thank you to everyone for your care and diligence in ensuring we can keep doing what we enjoy so much.
- 1.5 As we see signs of some restrictions being relaxed little, we encourage you to get out for a paddle for exercise, always following our previous advice (see section 3 of [update 3](#)). Remember though, this is not over. There are many examples of flare ups occurring and the virus can spread very quickly. Take care.
- 1.6 We do ask that you to keep across the changes and continue to check and comply with any federal, state or local restrictions. Again, we include some useful links in this update.

2 Rebooting Sport

- 2.1 We are not going to defeat COVID-19 in the short term. Accordingly, we will have to learn to live with it. Against this background, plans are now being drawn up to 'reboot' sport. This will need to be done cautiously so as not to endanger public health. We are expecting an announcement as soon as this Friday.
- 2.2 The initial emphasis will be on high-performance sport, with athletes returning to training under strict guidelines. Generally, the high-performance environment can be more strictly controlled, hygiene protocols are more easily adhered to and the relatively small numbers of people involved make regular screening and testing practical.
- 2.3 The opening up of community sport, and especially of our clubs is going to take a little longer. When we do return, we will be required to put some special measures in place that are likely to be with us for a while. Paddle Australia and our SPAs are working on general guidelines for when these are required.

- 2.4 The Australian Government's COVIDSafe app is a major initiative being deployed to help protect the health of the community by quickly alerting people who may be at risk of having contact with coronavirus.
- 2.5 Consistent with our ongoing commitment to support the health and welfare of the paddling community, Paddle Australia and our State Paddle Associations call on our paddling community to download the app to play an important role in curbing the spread of the virus and to help Australians get back to work, sport and play while minimising risk to public health.

3 Paddle Support Package

- 3.1 It has been particularly heartening over the last two months to hear the stories of those that have been rediscovering their love of paddling. Equally we know that some paddlers and clubs are finding things tough.
- 3.2 To help to address this, and as mentioned in the last update, Paddle Australia and our State Paddle Associations have been working closely to develop a Paddle Support Package (PSP). Our aim is to preserve the infrastructure of paddling, retain and support our member associations, paddle clubs and individual members during the COVID-19 emergency and to ensure that we are all well positioned to emerge strongly as restrictions are lifted.
- 3.3 The different elements of the PSP aim to address the issues raised in our recent questionnaire to clubs. We will be communicating the details of the PSP this Friday, initially to clubs and will have a question and answer session next week to clarify any points. Our plan is then to promote the PSP to members and more widely during the week commencing 11th May. Watch this space for more details.

4 Advice to Paddle Clubs

- 4.1 Clubs are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with their local situations 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](#)

- 4.2 If you are unsure based on the information available, PA continues to recommend that no access should be permitted to your Club premises, including boatshed and storage areas, under any circumstances.

5 Contacting Paddle Australia and our State Paddle Associations

- 5.1 The PA Sydney office remains closed with the administrative team working from home. The office phone system will automatically redirect your calls. Please be patient in these circumstances and try again later if you need to talk with one of our team.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

6 Background

6.1 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.

6.2 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](#).

6.3 PA continues to liaise with 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.

6.4 The information and advice in this update is current as at 29th April and is in addition to the information and advice provided in our previous updates. PA again stresses this is general advice and that decisions need to be made by each Paddler and Paddle Club considering the different and unique circumstances in which they operate.

7 General

7.1 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 cannot 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](#).

7.2 This is a challenging time for everyone. A reminder to be supportive and check up on your fellow paddlers.

7.3 Enjoy your paddling, keep healthy and stay safe.

Phil Jones
CEO
Paddle Australia

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