



Wednesday 28 July 2021

## Returning to play in Victoria post lockdown

Dear League CEOs,

As we come out of another lockdown in Victoria, we are really pleased that community football for all age groups and Auskick will return across the state this weekend.

I want to thank leaders across community football for the work you've been doing to keep our game going through a very difficult, disrupted season.

AFL Victoria has been working closely with the Victorian Government to advocate for the game, and we appreciate that they acknowledged our submission on what is required for community football to return.

We understand that government protocols of only 'the minimum number of people required to participate and facilitate the activity', as well as not allowing spectators, presents challenges for many clubs. However, we are hopeful this will only be a short-term restriction and that the work we'll continue to do with the government this week will be well received, and crowds will be allowed at community football soon.

As was the case last time we came out of lockdown, I wanted to take the opportunity to address a few key items:

### Crowd management

- We urge everyone to support our clubs by adhering to the State Government directions. The Department of Health will be monitoring behaviour and it is vital we lead by example to ensure our exemption continues. It is also critical to our current submission around return to crowds in coming weeks, particularly with finals on the horizon for many leagues.
- We ask that leagues and clubs use their best endeavours to communicate to supporters and the community the restrictions that are in place. But we stress that volunteers are not expected to play the role of police or security guards. Many venues and grounds across the state operate as public space and therefore clubs should focus on doing their best to adhere to protocols in the immediate vicinity of the clubrooms.

### Club revenue

- Not only have we endured a pandemic-affected season here in Victoria, but our state has also endured storms, floods and other challenges which have undoubtedly impacted people and communities in different ways.
- We understand the strain this has had and will continue to place on some clubs with limited/no revenue coming in, while still incurring expenses. Please be reminded of some support mechanisms in place, including:
  - TAC Club Rewards Programs: \$1.3m of funding available. Each club can earn up to \$10,000 through this program in 2021 – [link here](#)
  - Various Vic Govt initiatives, including the Sporting Club Grants Program, with grants of up to \$2,000 available to assist clubs affected by the recent lockdown (Closing: 13/08/2021) - [link here](#)

- We recommend that clubs/leagues consider reducing salary caps (as per changes to regulations) or suspending player/coach payment while we cannot have crowds. This is entirely up to individual leagues and clubs to consider. We understand the differing positions of individual clubs, some of which are able to continue quite normally while others have been severely impacted by the recent lockdown.

I appreciate your willingness to ensure we get our game going again, even though the circumstances are not ideal. AFL Victoria will continue discussions with stakeholders around what can be done to support leagues and clubs as we return to playing in Victoria.

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss further.

Looking forward to having footy back this weekend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Scott', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

**Brad Scott**  
Head of AFL Victoria