



An Open Letter to the Victorian Government

10th September 2020

The Swimming Pool & Spa Association of Victoria (SPASAVIC) together with Landscaping Victoria Master Landscapers (LVML) is immensely disappointed with the current roadmap announced by the Victorian State Government on Sunday the 6th of September.

As details of the Government's Roadmap to Recovery are being finalised, we write to you today as two peak industry bodies with one combined message – Landscapers, Horticulturists & Garden Maintenance professionals, Pool & Spa Builders and Pool technicians need to be allowed to continue delivering essential well-being and sanitary benefits to the community whilst maintaining employment for thousands of Victorians from September 14th 2020.

By way of introduction, Landscaping Victoria Master Landscapers (LVML) is a progressive Association of committed landscaping professionals working in a six billion-dollar industry.

Representing the industry since 1966, our 620 members represent commercial and residential landscape contractors, landscape designers, landscape service and product suppliers as well as the education (TAFE) sector. Our industry consists of some 4,500+ businesses, sustaining tens of thousands of direct and complimentary jobs.

The Swimming Pool and Spa Association of Victoria (SPASAVIC) founded in 1961, has been advocating on behalf of its constituents for many decades. The industry contributes over \$500 million dollars to the Victorian economy and employs over 10,000 people. It also owns and operates the Summer and Winter Pool and Spa shows at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre along with the Backyard and Garden Show.

SPASAVIC represents 95% of pool and spa builders, pool technicians, pool shop retailers, suppliers / manufacturers and associated professionals such as building inspectors.

Both organisations represent thousands of Victorian workers and we are deeply concerned with the lack of empathy shown towards both industries where work has ground to a halt. Our industries are at the forefront of Covid Safe strategies and employment procedures ensuring the complete safety of Victorians where our members work.

To not be able to enter a backyard under the current restrictions due to health and safety is a completely false assertion when in almost all scenarios our members work in isolated environments well away from the residential home and certainly keeping contact with the community to zero under current guidelines.

Under current restrictions released by the Victorian Government, which although incredibly ambiguous and unclear, seem to indicate that our industry members cannot attend worksites until the 26th of October which leaves us all in an untenable situation. Not only are small business owners critically affected, but thousands of employees will also feel the wrath of these draconian restrictions.

To assert that they cannot work in a Covid Safe environment is a false premise which we strongly challenge. If this was the case, then no supermarket would be open.

We request that our members and the wider allied businesses supporting them be permitted to resume work from the 14th of September. Government must provide consistency and certainty to the community of Victoria, small business and those who currently have not been able to go back to work.

The ramifications for many businesses and employees if they are forced to wait until October 26th will have a disastrous outcome for thousands of Victorians and the community at large if the well-being benefits we can deliver are halted.

Critically, it needs to be understood that Landscapers, Pool & Spa Builders along with Pool technicians:

- Work outdoors, separated from client/families who may be self-isolating and can arrange separate sanitation facilities
- Are well used to risk assessment, OH&S audits and use and application of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) during their normal working practice and follow a Covid Safe Plan
- Socially distance at all times whilst onsite
- Travel to site in their own vehicles and where staff have previously shared vehicles, businesses are now paying additional fuel costs for staff to take separate vehicles
- Have their own tools, or where required can allocate one person per task eliminating the need to share tools

We come together as two key industry bodies to implore the relevant Ministers and Premier Daniel Andrews to give due consideration to our industries and the COVID Safe environment they operate within. We are seeking an urgent review of the ambiguous restrictions to provide clarity to help the thousands of employees and small business owners who can no longer support these extreme measures to get back to work.

To be ignored in such a way flies in the face of industry consultation and the slogans of “we are all in this together”. We acknowledge the hard work of the relevant departments to manage the process, but there also must be common sense applied to work environments.

SPASAVIC and LVML strongly support Covid Safe plans and procedures and we know that our members can effectively work in a manner which supports a Covid Safe environment.

Yours Sincerely



Chris Samartzis – CEO
SPASA Victoria

Yours Sincerely



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