

# Victorian COVID Crisis Has Catastrophic Affect To Gym Industry In Australia

*New Entity Created to Advocate for the Re-Opening of Fitness Centres in Victoria*

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, September 8, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fitness Centres are COVID-19 Safe and must re-open if [Victoria](#) is to avoid a physical and [mental health](#) catastrophe, according to [VIC Active](#), a newly formed advocacy body for the Victorian fitness industry.

On behalf of independent fitness centre owners Victoria-wide VIC Active will lobby the Andrews Government to allow their facilities to re-open before the mooted "Third Step" late October deadline (as unveiled by the Government on September 6).

So far, more than 100 owners, comprising 400 sites and representing over 4,000 staff and 300,000 members have joined VIC Active, with all operators, suppliers and industry groups urged to join. High profile members include the Victorian operators of major fitness networks including F45 and Body Fit Training.



"Our members are also small businesses and sole traders adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions – they and their employees are feeling devastated and many are facing collapse" This is not a game."

*Tim Schleiger*

VIC Active spokesperson Tim Schleiger said that fitness centres were proven to be some of the safest public environments and that the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of Victorians revolved around access to professional fitness services.

"The mental health of Victorians has taken a massive hit – the freedom to exercise in a supervised environment with



THERE IS A MENTAL AND  
PHYSICAL HEALTH CRISIS  
IN VICTORIA.

**FACT.**

Mental Health Crisis

professional management is VITAL," Mr Schleiger said.

"The Premier tells us he is listening to industry concerns but he is taking advice from his health officials and not properly consulting the health and fitness industry. Victoria has endured the longest and toughest COVID-19 lockdowns in the world and the mental and physical toll is at crisis levels.



Gyms Are Safe

"Another seven weeks is simply too long to wait and the risk to overall wellbeing and both physical and mental health is severe. There needs to be a balance and VIC Active will detail to the Government how we can manage health and safety requirements with the urgent need to re-open fitness centres.

"All our members have worked hard to prepare COVID-safe operating plans, including appropriate infection control and social distancing measures, to allow us to re-open and help their members regain balance in their lives.

"In New South Wales there have been over 7.3 million check-ins at gyms over 8 weeks after lockdowns lifted on June 14. We understand case numbers have risen to five, but people were not infected in the fitness centres.

"The concept that we are a risk because of the supposed indoor transfer of airborne COVID droplets is simply not accurate.

"If the bottle shops and supermarkets can be safe – fitness centres are even safer. Fitness centres were already tightly regulated by strict sanitary and hygiene protocols before the pandemic – those measures have been strengthened as part of clear and concise COVID-19 safe plans.

"Most of Victoria is COVID-19 clear – particularly in rural and regional centres. Fitness centre lockdowns in those locations simply don't make sense.

"Our members are also small businesses and sole traders adversely impacted by lockdown restrictions – they and their employees are feeling devastated and many are facing collapse. This is not a game of dare!"

Mr Schleiger said VIC Active took notice of the August 31, 2020 letter sent to Premier Andrews by more than 500 eminent Victorian health professionals that stated:

We, the undersigned, are senior medical practitioners of various specialities who practice in

Victoria and are deeply concerned with the Victorian government's management of the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid19) viral pandemic as a public health issue.

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware that not all medical practitioners are in agreement with the Chief Medical Officer and the Victorian government regarding the most effective way to control this disease. We believe that an alternative medical response is required that reflects what we know about the spread of the virus, those who have died from it, and the impact that the stage 3- 4 lockdown restrictions are having on the physical and mental health of the general population. For the sake of people in Victoria with other medical illnesses, it is vital that Stage 4 restrictions be lifted on schedule in mid-September.

VIC Active will release a range of communications assets to members which can, in turn, be shared with their networks via social media.

"Surely it's time to open fitness centres at the earliest opportunity if we are to avoid fitness and mental health catastrophe!

"That time is NOW!"

The broader industry in Victoria comprises more than 45,000 staff. While one in six Victorians regularly attend a fitness centre.

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