

# Victoria, Australia Fitness centre restrictions not based in reality – VIC Active

*VIC Active has slammed the State Government's refusal to review its stance on fitness club restrictions*

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, September 29, 2020 / EINPresswire.com/ -- [VIC Active](#), a peak body representing more than 100 Victorian [club owners](#), 4000 staff and 300,000 members, met with State Government representatives last week, in conjunction with [Fitness Australia](#), to present its case for a safe reopening plan.



Gyms Are Safe

But the Government's announcement yesterday included no change to restrictions on fitness clubs, which at this point are not likely to reopen until late November, under the "Last Step" of the Government road map.

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The Government cannot keep ignoring this," Mr Schleiger said."

*Tim Schleiger*

health of Victorians.

"Fitness clubs are not high risk - there is now clear and irrefutable evidence of that from all over the world, but the Government is ignoring facts and keeping clubs closed on a guess," Mr Schleiger said.

"Data collected by Fitness Australia shows that from 7.31 million check-ins across 546 clubs in the first eight weeks after they reopened in NSW there were zero cases of reported community transmission.

"In the United States, from 49.4 million club visits, across 2877 locations in August, the infection

occurrence rate was 0.002%. ZERO transmission occurred from any reported cases.

"Similarly in the UK, the infection rate is 0.34 cases per 100,000 visits, from 22 million visits in the two months following reopening, according to ukactive, with zero community transmission recorded.

"Unlike many other industries, fitness clubs know exactly who is using the facilities, at what time and for how long. We have an almost unrivalled capacity for contact tracing – should it even be required.

"Fitness clubs were already highly controlled clean environments, regulated with gold standard hygiene processes – these are significantly enhanced by COVID-safe plans."

Dr Rachael Jefferson-Buchanan, specialist in human movement at Charles Sturt University, has warned that ongoing closures would have a series of knock-on ramifications.

"Improved physical and mental health status leads to more physical activity, which in turn has a positive association with better mental health and physical health. People with high exercise levels also display fewer health problems when they encounter stress," Dr Jefferson Buchanan said.

"Premier Andrews must provide an evidence base for this gym closure decision, or the mid and long-term adverse health effects for the Victorian population will be felt. Gyms need to be reclassified as an essential service during this pandemic.  
team@vicactive.org

# THERE IS A MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CRISIS IN VICTORIA.

**FACT.**

Mental Health Crisis

## TIME TO OPEN FITNESS FACILITIES!

Premier, PLEASE work with the fitness industry to get fitness facilities open **COVID safe** as a priority.

## SIGN THE PETITION

VIC Active will speak up on behalf of the Victorian Fitness Community.

Petition

“Long-term consequences of a lack of fitness activities in gyms will likely affect the population’s future motivation to exercise and re-join gyms when they eventually open. This will have an adverse effect on the population’s health, as well as the fitness industry more generally.

Dr Jefferson-Buchanan pointed to a 2018 study that investigated the relationship between resistance exercise training and mental health outcomes. It concluded that weight training was associated with a significant reduction in depressive symptoms regardless of the participants’ age, sex, health status, or the program/session duration, intensity, or frequency.

“There is a clear statistical connection between professional exercise environments and physical health and wellbeing. The Government cannot keep ignoring this,” Mr Schleiger said.

“We know that healthy people can withstand the virus. But by enforcing ongoing lockdowns, the Government is increasing the danger of the virus.

“The best way to get Victorians back on track is to re-open fitness facilities with COVID-safe plans; the 40,000 fitness and wellbeing professionals across the state are ready, willing and able to get the community on the road to recovery.

“Fitness centres are integral to maintaining physical and mental wellbeing and so it’s now critical that people can be allowed to access them in a responsible and COVID-safe way.

“Gyms were already highly regulated, clean and sanitary environments prior to the pandemic. All VIC Active members have COVID-Safe plans in place which increase the level of safety. The suggestion that fitness centres are high risk is simply wrong.”

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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