

Sport and Recreation Industry Plan for a Pandemic

Q: A pandemic won't affect our industry will it? Which areas of operation could be impacted upon if there were a Pandemic declared in Australia:

A:

- Staff absenteeism due to illness;
- People welfare (vaccinations etc);
- Impact on fixtures (travel restrictions, social isolation);
- Financial impact of no gate takings, cost escalation associated with alternatives and player maintenance; and
- Impact on contractual arrangements with media, stadia etc.

Q: At what point can travel restrictions be placed on interstate travel?

A:

- Such restrictions will severely curtail any national league activity and national championships.
- If the pandemic alert reaches Phase 3 - the 'Contain' phase where there is a small number of cases recorded in Australia - travel restrictions may begin to be enforced on internal travel within Australia.
- If the pandemic alert reaches Phase 4 – the 'Sustain' phase where the pandemic virus is established in Australia and spreading in the community – travel restrictions are highly likely.

Q: At what point can social isolations restrictions be placed on the community?

A:

- Such restrictions can severely curtail any public gathering, including sporting fixtures.
- If the pandemic alert reaches Phase 3 - the 'Contain' phase where there is a small number of cases recorded in Australia – social isolation restrictions such as the closure of schools may begin to be enforced in small clusters.
- If the pandemic alert reaches Phase 4 – the 'Sustain' phase where the pandemic virus is established in Australia and spreading in the community – more widespread social isolation restrictions are likely.

Q: Will social isolation restrictions really affect our sport?

A:

- The health department has the right to cancel all public gatherings when a pandemic virus hits Australia. In the main this involves school closures but in more severe cases will be further wide spread.
- This could apply to major fixtures/gatherings and also apply to all community sporting fixtures.

Q: What would our responsibility be if community fixtures were cancelled?

A:

- As the state sporting association your main responsibility will be one of communicating to all your clubs that fixtures have been cancelled.
- You will also need to plan for if and how these fixtures will be made up post the restrictions.

Q: What could be the effect if major fixtures were cancelled?

A:

- If your organisation collects income from major fixtures then this income may be lost.
- If you have contracts with stadia, caterers etc then these may not be able to be cancelled and you will still have expenses to meet.
- Sponsors may question their continued association.

Q: Have you considered the application of a risk management process to minimize the affect of a pandemic?

A: A risk management process may include:

- Prioritise your sports critical functions;
- Insurance to protect the financial viability of sport;
- Identify functions that could be suspended;
- Plan for alternative work schedules for employees;
- Explore telecommuting capabilities of staff;
- Identify staff needs – training, information, support etc. to effectively deal with the issues arising from a pandemic;
- Develop a succession plan for key management personnel in case some are lost to the pandemic;
- Provide specific education to staff and families regarding the issue; and
- Consider the supply of gloves, masks, antiseptic wipes for employees.