



Alpine Resorts COVID Planning Update

10/6/2020

To Industry Members,

The following update is provided for all stakeholders in the Victorian Alpine Resorts to assist them in planning and preparing for the opening of lifting operations across the resorts from the 22nd of June.

The Industry associations including the ASAA, Chambers of Commerce, Ratepayer groups, SIA, Snow Australia and others have all been working hard with the ARMB's and various governments, at a federal, state and local level, in agreeing to the guidelines with which the resorts are able to operate in a COVID environment.

The industry is greatly appreciative of the support and engagement the State Government, DELWP, DHHS and DJPR have provided in working to a common goal of getting the resorts open and providing the much needed economic engine for our region during winter.

Given the 22nd June is fast approaching ARIAG wanted to provide an update, as best we can of the situation as it stands:

What information is currently available for Alpine Resort Businesses and Organisations?

On the 1st of June the State Government eased restrictions placed on the Tourism and Hospitality Industries as a result of responding to COVID.

In assisting with the reopening of these sectors the government produced the following guidelines:

Hospitality Guidelines:

<https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/hospitality-industry-guidelines-for-coronavirus-covid-19>

Tourism Guidelines:

<https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/tourism-industry-guidelines-for-coronavirus-covid-19>

These include both mandatory directions and guidance, of how businesses should re-open and then operate in the current COVID environment.

These guidelines apply to both Hospitality and Tourism businesses and associations operating in the Alpine Resorts. They provide a clear framework that businesses and associations will be expected to meet, and we recommend all businesses and associations familiarise themselves with them.

Restrictions to current Legislation:

In addition to the above the following amendments (**Restricted Activity Directions No.9**) apply to the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008**

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202005/Restricted-Activity%20Directions%20No%209%20-%20signed.pdf>

Is there any information available specifically for the Alpine Resorts?

Not as yet, but it is planned and should be published soon.

Following the Resorts engaging with DELWP on a number of issues, the State Government recognised that a clear set of **Alpine Resort Industry Guidelines for coronavirus (COVID-19)**, similar to the above industry guidelines, were needed to assist the Resorts in planning and preparing for the 2020 winter.

To ensure timely and efficient planning and management throughout the season, DELWP led the formation of a COVID Alpine Working Group which is made up of representatives of a number of government departments and agencies including DELWP, DJPR, DHHS, ARMB's, ARIAG, ASAA, Local councils and Emergency Services.

The first task was to assist government in the preparations of the Alpine Resort Guidelines, this work has been undertaken and is now being finalised and should be published very soon. While a date has not been set the working group is acutely aware these need to be published as a matter of urgency.

What areas will be covered in the guidelines?

Where guidelines or directions have already been published for specific industries i.e., Hospitality (Restaurants, cafes etc) the Alpine Resort Guidelines are not intending to replicate any of this work but will provide links to access the relevant information.

The following list is provided as an indication of the major operational areas that have been reviewed to consider whether any specific guidelines are required:

- Resort Transport
- Resort Capacity
- Lifting Operations
- Rental Operations
- Ski School Operations
- Shared Accommodation
- Snow Play Activities
- Staff Accommodation

The list doesn't cover all areas and is not intended to reflect what is in the guidelines only what has been considered.

What information is available regarding Staff Accommodation?

Staff accommodation guidelines are being finalised and will be published shortly.

As everyone in the industry is aware staff accommodation facilities are primarily governed by the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008** and particularly the prescribed accommodation provisions in the act, which determine bedroom density.

We encourage all businesses and associations that provide accommodation to once again familiarise themselves with the act and review the current rules against the **Density Quotient (1 person every 4 sqm)** currently being applied to all shared space.

This year, it is critical that staff accommodation is managed in accordance with all relevant guidance to ensure that the possibility of the spread of any infection is minimised.

What information is available for Club Lodges (shared Accommodation)?

The government and Industry have recognised that one of the areas of greatest concern is the operation of Club Lodges with shared facilities.

Some weeks ago, ARIAG formed its own working group to prepare supporting materials for all accommodation providers to assist them in preparing COVID Safe Plans for their facilities.

This work has now formed the basis of the Alpine Resort Guidelines identified above.

As these guidelines have not yet been published the following directions are in place and currently apply to Club Lodges.

These are taken directly from the **Tourism Industry Guidelines for coronavirus COVID-19** and reflect the amendments (Restricted Activity Directions No.9) that apply to the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008**

Section 3.1.1 Accommodation

From 11:59pm on 31 May, accommodation for tourism purposes (e.g. camping grounds, caravan parks, hotels, hostels or private holiday rentals) will be allowed to operate according to the following rules if:

- *there is no use of shared facilities (such as kitchens and bathrooms) – i.e. there are private facilities (e.g. self-contained cabins) or there are no facilities (e.g. back country camping)*
- *no more than 20 guests are permitted in the accommodation facility per group booking; and*
- *record-keeping and cleaning requirements are met.*

What do these rules mean?

Lodges are allowed to accept single group bookings of up to 20 people. These groups can occupy the lodge and use the shared facilities.

However, we have been provided further guidance, that only people living together normally i.e. families and flatmates should share a bedroom together.

Lodges are NOT allowed to operate with multiply groups or bookings sharing the facilities i.e. kitchens, bathrooms etc.

What is anticipated in the future?

In anticipation of the current (20 person) restrictions easing at some time in the future, which may be after the 22nd June, each Club Lodge should develop a COVID Safe Operating Plan which details how the lodge will operate and manage the implementation of COVID safe directions.

These plans will need to firstly consider the capacity of a Club Lodge.

- As a starting point, we suggest that Club Lodges may want to consider applying the **Density Quotient (1 person every 4 sqm)** to the various areas of a building, including bedrooms and shared living areas.
- A reasonable approach may look to limit capacity to the either of the bedrooms or the living spaces whichever is the lessor.
- Having established a reasonable basis for Club Lodge Capacity the plan should then consider how they will address the following:
 - Sleeping arrangements
 - Toilet and shower facilities
 - Kitchen and dining areas
 - Other communal areas
 - Guest change over procedures
 - Hygiene procedures and facilities
 - Catering facilities and mealtime processes
 - Control of entry and exit to the site
 - Education and training for staff (for COVID-19)
 - Laundry procedures
 - Drying room and equipment processes

Where can I go to get information to assist in preparing a plan?

The following links are provided to assist in preparation of plans for Club Lodges. These do not cover all the information available, but provide a good starting point.

Venue Setup - Taken from Tourism and Hospitality Industries where some elements apply to Club Lodges

<https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/reopening-of-tourism-businesses-faqs>

https://www.business.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1903602/Fact-Sheet-venue-set-up.pdf

Draft Risk Register

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/template-and-example-covid-19-risk-register>

Cleaning & Disinfecting

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/cleaning-and-disinfecting-reduce-covid-19-transmission-building-and-construction-sites>

COVID Training

<https://rtw.educationapps.vic.gov.au/>

Worksafe Australia

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/hospitality/about-covid-19?tab=tab-toc-employer>

In conclusion, with the season rapidly approaching we understand industry stakeholders are eagerly waiting for these guidelines to be published and we are working to achieve this as soon as possible.

The information government is providing to businesses and associations in supporting the re-opening of the economy is being constantly updated and improved. We encourage everyone not to wait until the guidelines are received, but to review their facilities based on the information provided in this update and more generally.

Considering we only got the green light for the season to commence just over two weeks ago, we have come a very long way in a short period of time, with a great deal of work from a lot of people.

To everyone involved thank you for all your efforts so far, and all the best for a safe and successful start to the season.

Nick Whitby
ARIAG Chairman