

MEDIA RELEASE

16 August 2021

Master Builders Victoria expresses extreme disappointment at tougher restrictions for building and construction industry in metropolitan Melbourne

Master Builders Victoria (MBV) has expressed extreme disappointment at the increased restrictions imposed on the State's building and construction industry for the next two weeks, despite the sector recording just six positive COVID-19 cases this year.

In response to the current trajectory of COVID-19 positive numbers and unlinked cases of community transmission, the Victorian Government has extended the current lockdown restrictions for a further two weeks to midnight 2 September 2021.

MBV CEO Rebecca Casson said tougher restrictions for the building and construction industry in metropolitan Melbourne would have a devastating impact on a sector already reeling from repeated snap lockdowns this year.

One member has already calculated that these latest restrictions would cost them around \$2.4m in repeated fixed costs, Ms Casson said, forcing them to make labour stand downs.

Ms Casson said that, in a bitterly disheartening move, it appeared that the Victorian building and construction industry was being unfairly punished following some disappointing public behaviour at the weekend, including a pub crawl at Richmond and an engagement party in Caulfield North attended by 69 people.

She said it was important to note that since the start of the pandemic, the sector had continued to follow the bespoke COVID-19 Guidelines for the Building and Construction Industry Victoria – which is now up to revision 13 - and implemented many measures ahead of other sectors.

“Whilst we understand this decision from a health perspective, our sector has a strong proven track record of keeping worksites safe,” Ms Casson said.

“This can be demonstrated by cases of COVID-19 on worksites being very small in comparison to overall cases in the Victorian community.

“Even at the height of the pandemic in 2020, the ratio of building and construction cases compared to the wider community was 1:7.5.

“We've had six positive cases in 2021, and only 148 cases in total since the pandemic began in March 2020.

“It’s therefore hugely disappointing that our industry is now paying the price for some regrettable and highly publicised flouting of restrictions at the weekend.”

Ms Casson said building and construction was critical to the state’s economy, being the largest full-time employer in Victoria and supporting more than 300,000 jobs.

The industry also accounts for over 46 per cent of the state’s tax revenue.

“Every day that our industry is locked down, that’s \$455 million in lost revenue plus \$63 million in lost wages,” Ms Casson said.

“We know that the recent circuit-breaker lockdowns have been especially challenging for many of our smaller members not permitted to work - that’s why we have been fighting so hard on their behalf.

“Although it is pleasing to see that MBV’s voice was listened to in relation to increasing the amount of COVID Hardship funding support from \$8,000 to \$10,000, we will continue to advocate to both State and Commonwealth governments for further financial support for all our members impacted by these most recent lockdown restrictions.”

BACKGROUND

It’s important to note that the building and construction industry in regional Victoria is not impacted by these latest changes.

However, any metropolitan Melbourne workers visiting or moving between sites in regional Victoria must adhere to metropolitan Melbourne rules.

ENDS

IS YOUR BUILDER A MASTER BUILDER?



MASTER BUILDERS VICTORIA

www.mbav.com.au

Since 1875, Master Builders Victoria has grown to be Victoria's leading building and construction industry voice. A broad-based organisation, we service the needs of the entire industry, from residential to commercial and engineering businesses, principal contractors to subcontractors, manufacturers and suppliers.

We continually assist in developing the skills of our members by providing access to a wide range of services and proactive representation to government and industry. Master Builders Victoria also serves the community by fostering best practice work standards and acting as an independent advisory service for our industry.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Andrew Jefferson, Media and Communications Manager, ajefferson@mbav.com.au, 0400 694 593

IS YOUR BUILDER A MASTER BUILDER?

