

## **SAMA's Position on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic – updated 17/3/2020**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus. Symptoms range from a mild cough to pneumonia. Some people recover easily, others may get very sick very quickly. There is evidence that it spreads from person to person. Good hygiene can prevent infection. The incidence of serious infection is greater than for the common cold or flu.

COVID-19 is increasingly having an impact on the global community and is a rapidly evolving issue. In Australia the risk of becoming unwell with COVID-19 without a history of travel to countries listed by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) in the last 14 days is very low, although there are now documented cases of community transmission of COVID-19.

From previous experience with other coronaviruses, those at most risk of serious infection include:

- people with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer)
- elderly people
- people with diagnosed chronic medical conditions

Recent developments in Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in many sporting events being cancelled, including many athletics championships across the country.

Athletics Australia has decided to cancel/postpone their national T&F championships in Sydney, on the basis that it as an organisation that draws athletes, coaches, families and spectators from every Australian state, and they are complying with public health policy to slow the spread of COVID 19 for the benefit of the greater community. This decision is also in line with the government's recommendation that non-essential gatherings of more than 500 people should not proceed.

Australian Masters Athletics and the Brisbane LOC have announced that the National Championships to be held in Brisbane in 2020 will be cancelled and not rescheduled this year.

The Victorian Masters Track and Field Championships due to take place in Bendigo, and the ACT Masters State Athletics Championships 2020 have both been cancelled.

Athletics SA (ASA) and a number of athletics organisations in South Australia have cancelled their events in upcoming weeks.

Following a strong recommendation from ASA, as a member club, SAMA has decided to curtail its own competitions for the next few weeks, in the interests of the health and safety of our athletes, officials, volunteers and their families. As a Masters club our demographic includes a large proportion of people above 60 years of age, and this decision is consistent with the government policy on social distancing as one means of minimising infection of the Coronavirus.

**SA Masters Athletics has decided that no further SAMA competitions will be run at SA Athletics Stadium this summer and that the summer State Age Group Championship events will not be held as scheduled.**

Also the summer presentations night and associated competition will not be held on 1 April.

### Information about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The virus is most likely spread through:

- close contact with an infectious person
- contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- touching objects or surfaces that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face

Good hygiene practices like washing your hands regularly and covering your coughs and sneezes is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 and other colds and flu.

Good hygiene includes:

- washing your hands often with soap and water
- using a tissue and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
- avoiding close contact with others, such as touching

We also recommend that you should not shake hands with other people and that everyone should keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres from one another at all times.

Further information on COVID-19 in relation to sporting activity has been provided by the Australian Institute of Sport on their website at <https://ais.gov.au/health-wellbeing/covid-19#covid-19-and-sport-faq>

The Australian Government Department of Health has produced a Fact Sheet on COVID-19, which is available to download at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>