



Cricket Australia Chief Medical Officer

Advice re: Community Cricket Competitions

16 March 2020

Cricket Australia has an important role to play in combatting the spread of COVID-19 (also known as Coronavirus). To ensure that we continue to lead and serve our communities, our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. John Orchard has recommended that all community cricket competitions and events be suspended immediately. This decision follows ongoing consultation with the Australian Government and the endorsement of each State and Territory Cricket Association and Cricket Australia.

As a non-contact sport, cricket is at a relatively low-risk of transmitting COVID-19 when compared with other sports where there is more contact. However, to effectively reduce the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted between individuals a number of measures must be in place:

- Regularly cleaned and sanitised changerooms
- Individually packaged food and drinks
- Zero physical contact between players
- Spectators and other attendees to maintain a 1.5m distance between themselves and others
- Access to changerooms restricted to players only
- Screening of players for medical illness during matches, and excluded if they are presenting symptoms in common with those for COVID-19

For these measures to successfully be in place requires both education and resources. It is unlikely in the current environment that community cricket clubs and associations will be in a position to implement effectively and keep their participants and communities free from risk.

Community cricket volunteers such as umpires, managers and other team officials vary in age, with many being part of older age groups that can be more severely impacted by COVID-19. It is recommended that these older individuals should be undertaking social isolation and not be attending public gatherings such as cricket matches.

With the availability of testing for COVID-19 currently restricted to those returning from overseas travel and those who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, it is reasonable to assume that if matches were to proceed that players and officials could unknowingly be in contact with someone who has the COVID-19 infection and risk spreading the virus throughout the club and their local community.

There is also the very real possibility that members of teams scheduled to be participating in matches over coming weeks may themselves be undertaking social isolation. To potentially disadvantage those teams when their members are doing what they can to protect the community from this global pandemic would be grossly unfair.

It should be remembered that we all love the game of cricket and we have explored all options in front of us to continue playing. However, this is a situation we have not faced for generations and we must all act in the global interest to ensure that we combat the spread of COVID-19 in whatever way we can.