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19 March 2020

To: Australian Biathlon membership

Dear Members,

2020 has already been a difficult year for all Australia, firstly with the bushfires, and now with the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic. It is currently unclear what will be the final cost in lives and financial suffering.

The ABA was unable to do planned maintenance and track upgrades over the Christmas-New year period, as Mt Hotham was evacuated. Northern Italy, the centre of our Overseas Program, is now in lockdown.

The absolute priority of the ABA is to do its utmost to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our members, and minimise risk to the broader community. We have been receiving regular advice and updates from our Medical Director, Dr Jane Fitzpatrick, together with the Federal and State Governments, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Australian Olympic Committee and the International Biathlon Union.

We all love the sport of Biathlon, and are desperate to provide opportunities to our athletes to train and race, and further develop our range, but this is of secondary concern to the health and welfare of all Australians.

There is an absolute requirement for social distancing, and we must do our utmost to limit the spread of disease, whilst ensuring that we protect our athletes, family and members, particularly those elderly or with co-morbidities/medical conditions.

Our current medical advice is:

"To cancel all events until at least May 2020 with information to members that it is possible, even likely, that many Winter events will be impacted".

The ABA Board has decided to follow this advice and all ABA events, including school visits, training sessions and working bees, are all suspended until at least May 2020. Our athletes are encouraged to maintain their fitness and personal training programs as much as is possible.

The ABA will endeavour to run races this winter if this can be done safely and in accordance with medical advice. Control measures for coronavirus (COVID-19) are changing almost on a daily basis, and it is impossible to know now, where we will be in a few months. Events may have to be deferred or cancelled depending on medical advice at the time. Above all the safety and wellbeing of our members is paramount.

I hope that you and your families stay healthy, fit and disease free. The ABA will keep you informed of further developments. Please check the website regularly.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Flanagan', is placed above the typed name of the signatory.

Dr Grant Flanagan
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President
Australian Biathlon Association

The National Federation for Biathlon in Australia

Affiliated with the International Biathlon Union and the Australian Olympic Committee

Major Supporters: State Government of Victoria | International Biathlon Union | Australian Olympic Committee | Mount Hotham