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DOMESTIC ANIMALS FORGOTTEN ONCE AGAIN IN DRAWING VICTORIA'S COVID ROADMAP

The Victorian Government must not ignore the welfare of our domestic animals when considering what businesses are essential during a state of emergency, says industry peak body, the Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA).

‘We have seen the regulations concerning essential services like grooming and dog walking change twice in the last 24-hours. This has resulted in confusion and distress for pet parents. The public look to us for a welfare solution, one we cannot provide as these essential businesses have been forced to close.’ said PIAA President Barry Codling.

‘But in a crisis like this pandemic, these services are too easily under-valued when governments make decisions about what businesses can remain fully or partly open, and which cannot,’ Mr Codling said.

Just like their owners, pets need to be properly fed, exercised, and cared for. This isn't just about veterinary and feed services, but access to other services that ensure domestic animals can live happily and healthily, even under the midst of this pandemic and the associated constant lockdowns.

‘It is vitally important to treat domestic and companion animal health and welfare services as essential and not discretionary’ said Mr Codling.

‘We call on the Premier, The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP and the Minister for Jobs, The Hon. Martin Pakula MP to re-open pet services businesses as a matter of urgency and ensure the health and welfare needs of domestic animals, as well as livestock, are fully respected now and in all future decisions about extending Victoria's State of Emergency and State of Disaster’ Mr Codling said.

PIAA is once again calling for Victoria's essential and emergency services legislation to be amended, to ensure that animal welfare is specifically defined as an essential service in any future state of emergency.

‘It's vitally important, in times of grave emergency, that meeting the basic health and welfare needs of Victoria's domestic and companion animals does not depend on the discretion of ministers and officials but is unambiguously legislated as a category of essential service.’ Mr Codling said.

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