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4 September 2020

The Hon. Martin Pakula MLA,
Minister for the Coordination of Jobs, Precincts and Regions: COVID-19,
Minister for Industry Support and Recovery,
Level 36, 121 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne, VIC 3000.

ASSISTING VICTORIA'S ECONOMIC AND JOBS RECOVERY.

Dear Minister,

Our two organisations represent those consultants in the construction industry who have only intermittent presence on construction sites. However, when our members are required to be present, it is to acquit their responsibilities for critical matters affecting construction quality and public safety of the end-users, such as services and equipment integration, structure and fire safety and disability access.

Minister we are fully supportive of Covid-safe work plans. However, Victoria's current High-Risk Covid-Safe Plans for the Construction Industry include Architects and Engineers in the count of workers for the Daily Worker Limit. The impact at present is that our members can only visit sites when trades workers and/or supervisors have finished their work for the day.

We request that Architects and Engineers are placed in the same 'exception' category with other workers named in the High-risk Covid-Safe Plans template published by DHHS and not included in the Daily Worker count. We suggest that the exception is also clarified in the next release of the Workplace (Additional Industry Obligations Directions) when the current Directions (No. 4) cease on September 13th.

Most importantly, construction works will be required for buildings to re-open safely – such as modifications of existing buildings to increase ventilation and provide a COVID-19 safe environment. Therefore, a more flexible approach will help to accelerate Victoria's economic and jobs recovery.

We thank-you for considering this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us for any assistance we can offer, either via Caitlin Sinclair, Victorian Chapter AIA on via caitlin.sinclair@architecture.com.au or Alesha Printz, General Manager, Engineers Australia – Victoria via APrintz@engineersaustralia.org.au or 0439722420

Yours sincerely,

Robert Stent, LFRAIA.
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