

25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Minister Mthethwa

**REQUEST FOR CLARITY THAT GOLF COURSE AND BOWLING GREEN MAINTENANCE ARE OPERATIONS THAT REQUIRE CONTINUOUS PROCESSES THAT MUST CONTINUE DURING THE NATION-WIDE LOCKDOWN.**

GolfRSA, the Professional Golfers Association of South Africa and the Club Managers Association of South Africa are the three bodies responsible for the sport within the golf facility environment.

**GolfRSA, the Professional Golfers Association of South Africa and the Club Managers Association of South Africa acknowledge and support the National Coronavirus Command Council's decision to enforce a nation-wide lockdown for 21 days with effect from midnight on Thursday 26 March. Golf clubs will be closed country-wide and no golf will be played in accordance with the requirements of the lockdown.**

The address by the President on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 referenced the following:

**"Companies whose operations require continuous process such as furnaces, underground mine operations will be required to make arrangements for care and maintenance to their continuous operations"**. We would appreciate it if clarity could be given to golf courses, golf facilities and bowling clubs as we believe that they fall within this category.

Golf properties and bowling greens require continuous daily maintenance to remain viable for future use. The potential damage to the facility that could be incurred through zero maintenance over this period will in turn require longer rehabilitation periods and costs that may further burden the already financially strained golf facility. This in turn would lead to job losses across all departments such as course, caddies, waiters, catering and management staff.

"IMF Sport Marketing Surveys SA", indicates that golf without the multiplier effect generated a total direct impact of R29,2 billion in 2008, creating in excess of 50 000 jobs. The current contribution to the economy by existing golf facilities only, is estimated at R13,5 billion and this excludes the hosting of golf days by NGOs, charities and schools to raise funds that create economic relief for Government. The average number of permanent employees at a Golf Club varies between 40 and 100 with the larger Clubs in south Africa employing more than 200 permanent employees. Forty percent of revenue earned by golf clubs are paid as salaries.

These properties have essential maintenance needs that must continue for the preservation of the property's agronomic health. These functions include irrigation, pest control, application of growth retardants and continuous mowing of grass surfaces such as greens, tees and fairways. These are living ecosystems that must be maintained to a very high degree to ensure the facility can be used for the purpose of the sport after the shut-down period.

On average, a golf course encompasses 40 to 80 hectares of property, most of which is a living ecosystem and approximately 50% of that property require specific daily care and maintenance. Turfgrass cannot be neglected for extended periods of time.

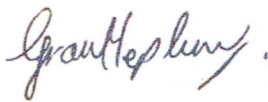
Environmental health of the property can however be achieved with appropriate changes to maintenance functions that limit the number of personnel who may access the property and with a greater emphasis on the recommended health hygiene practices and strict social distancing.

We therefore propose:

- That Golf courses and bowling greens retain a "skeleton staff compliment" of a bare minimum, and not greater than 15% of their normal course/green maintenance compliment, to ensure essential maintenance is done on the golf course or bowling green.
- That Golf RSA, in cooperation with CMASA and the PGA of SA, as the representative bodies of all Golf properties and Golf and Recreational Clubs in South Africa, be authorised to issue to each Club a letter of authority that will allow specific employees the right to access the facility for essential care and maintenance purposes.
- Said letter of authority referred to above will contain the name and ID numbers of the individuals who may access the lock down properties.

Should we be unable to do basic care and maintenance then the golf club industry will suffer irreparable harm.

Signed jointly on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020 by:



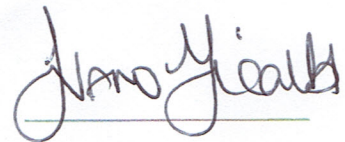
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Grant Hepburn  
Chief Executive Officer  
Golf RSA



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Chris van der  
Merwe  
Chairperson  
CMASA



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Ivano Ficalbi  
Chief Executive  
PGA of South Africa

