

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Monday, 16 August 2021

EXTENDED MELBOURNE LOCKDOWN TO KEEP VICTORIANS SAFE

Due to the ongoing level of community transmission of coronavirus in Victoria, the current lockdown across Melbourne will be extended and a curfew will be put in place across metropolitan Melbourne.

After almost two weeks of restrictions in Victoria, it's clear the number of coronavirus cases out in the community is still too high, it's spreading too far and there are too many exposure sites cropping up every day.

The average exposure days, the number of days an infectious person is out in the community, was 0.61 and declining at this point of our previous outbreak. In the current outbreak the average exposure days is 1.8. To put that more simply: cases diagnosed yesterday were infectious in the community for a total of 15 days, compared to 0 for the same point during the last outbreak.

Most concerningly, there have been a number mystery cases discovered over the course of the last week which indicate the virus is moving around undetected in the community. Victoria's public health team believe additional measures are needed to limit movement across Melbourne to slow the spread of this highly infectious Delta variant and enable us to open up again as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, based on the current trajectory of the outbreak, we will not be in a position to lift restrictions on Thursday as planned. Victoria's Chief Health Officer has declared that from tonight the lockdown restrictions will be strengthened and extended in metropolitan Melbourne, until 11.59pm on Thursday, 2 September. This is an additional 14 days on the previous directions.

The strengthened settings will see a curfew imposed from 9pm to 5am every night. This will operate as it did last year, with very limited reasons to leave the home during this time. There will be increased police presence across metropolitan Melbourne to ensure public health measures are enforced.

While the restrictions commence from 11.59pm tonight, we are asking people to respect the curfew from 9pm.

Permits will be required to leave the house for authorised work, consistent with the arrangements that were in place last year. Additional restrictions will also apply to the construction industry, again operating as it did last year with staffing reductions in place except for critical infrastructure and emergency repairs.

At large scale construction sites, staffing must reduce to 25 per cent or five workers on site, whichever is higher.

Authorised workers will be required to carry permits when working, and when travelling for work, from 11:59pm on Tuesday August 17. The permits need to be certified by an employer. Permits will be available on the coronavirus website before these directions come into effect.

Permits will also need to be carried by higher education students who are on the Authorised Provider list.

Incidents which occurred in Melbourne over the weekend – people congregating together on pub crawls with no social distancing, different families meeting in parks together, large groups of people visiting other households – were unacceptable.

Under the strengthened restrictions designed to curb potential transmission events, playgrounds, basketball hoops, skate parks and outdoor exercise equipment will now be closed. People will not be able to remove their masks to drink alcoholic beverages in public.

For more information call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398 or visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au.

Exercise will be limited to just you and one other person, plus dependants if they can't be left at home. This is similar to the current rule, but with a slight change so that if you live in a larger household such as a share house, or with extended family, you can no longer exercise with all members of your household.

Otherwise, the restrictions will remain the same – there are still only five reasons to leave your home: shopping for the things you need – one person per household per day, care and caregiving, exercise, authorised work and study – and to get a vaccine.

Exercise and shopping are still limited to 5km from your home. If there's no shops in your 5km radius, you can travel to the ones closest to you. You are also able to travel more than 5km to get a vaccine if you need to. And more than ever, it's critical people do not have visitors to the home.

Increasing our vaccination coverage in Victoria also remains one of the most important things we can do given the current coronavirus outbreak and the potential for further interstate incursions this year.

We're making it even easier for Victorians to reach that goal of one million vaccine doses with more vaccination centres, more capacity and more appointments in the system.

All Victorians are encouraged where possible to book their vaccination appointment by visiting portal.cvms.vic.gov.au or by phoning the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

Visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccination-centres for more information on Victoria's vaccination centres, including locations and opening hours.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"These restrictions are hard work for every Victorian. Everyone wants this pandemic to be over, but the rules are in place for a reason – we know they work and if we follow them together, we'll be able to lift them sooner."

Quotes attributable Minister for Health Martin Foley

"We want Victoria back to COVIDSafe settings as soon as possible – and these additional measures will help get us there faster. Victorians can also help us achieve this by getting themselves vaccinated as soon as they're eligible."

Quotes attributable to Victoria's Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton

"At the moment we have a steady number of cases who are out in the community each day, and an increasing number of mystery cases, and we need to get ahead of that. These new measures will help us limit movement, so we can catch up and shut down this outbreak."