

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Sunday, 9 January 2022

## NEW PANDEMIC DECLARATION TO SUPPORT OMICRON RESPONSE

As part of Victoria's continued response to the global coronavirus pandemic, Premier Daniel Andrews has extended the pandemic declaration to apply to the state of Victoria from 11.59pm Wednesday 12 January for three months.

The declaration was made under section 165AE of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* after consultation with and consideration of advice from the Minister for Health and Acting Chief Health Officer.

In making the declaration the Premier was satisfied on reasonable grounds there was a serious risk to public health throughout Victoria due to the coronavirus disease, including the rapid spread of the Omicron variant leading to significant case numbers not previously experienced in Victoria. This risk requires continued public health and other protective measures.

In particular, the Acting Chief Health Officer noted Omicron had become the dominant strain, estimated to account for more than 75 per cent of newly diagnosed cases.

While 93 per cent of Victorians over 12 years have received two vaccine doses against coronavirus, there is currently a low proportion of Victorians who have received a third dose. Restoring protection through third dose vaccinations is a high public health priority.

The Acting Chief Health Officer also noted the continuing rise in hospital and intensive care unit admissions, with no indication that Victoria has reached its peak, as well as the potential significant negative impact on essential services and supply chains.

After the initial pandemic declaration, which lasted four weeks, subsequent extensions can last for up to three months.

A pandemic declaration gives the Minister for Health the authority to make pandemic orders he considers reasonably necessary to protect public health after considering the Chief Health Officer's advice and other relevant factors, including social and economic factors.

The extended declaration also mandates the formation of the Independent Pandemic Management Advisory Committee of experts and community representatives to advise on pandemic response and management.

The Statement of Reasons, and the advice of the Acting CHO and the Minister for Health will be tabled in Parliament.

### Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*"The Omicron variant means there are significant challenges ahead of us. The third dose vaccine rollout, and our children five to 11 year-old vaccination blitz will give us the strongest chance of meeting this challenge."*

*"Extending the pandemic declaration ensures we are able to put the measures in place to slow the rate of transmission and protect the community's health and our health system."*