

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 17 February 2022

DENSITY LIMIT, DANCEFLOOR & QR CODE RESTRICTIONS TO EASE

With hospitalisation numbers and community transmission decreasing and more than half of Victorians aged over 16 now vaccinated with three doses, a number of common-sense restrictions and recommendations in place during the state's Omicron surge can be safely eased.

From 6pm Friday, 18 February as part of new pandemic orders to be signed by the Minister for Health, density quotients of one person per two square meters in place at hospitality and entertainment venues will be removed. Indoor dancefloors at these venues can also re-open.

Under the orders, QR code check-in requirements will no longer be in place at retail venues, schools (including childcare and early childhood) and for employees at many workplaces. QR code check-in and vaccination check requirements will remain in all 'vaccinated economy' settings such as hospitality and entertainment venues.

Currently, key industries including meat processing observe mandatory surveillance testing requirements. These mandates will become recommended-only, reflecting declining community transmission. Requirements for hospital worker 'bubbles' will also be removed, but health services may still implement them at their discretion.

Small and proportionate adjustments will also occur to border settings for international arrivals, who will no longer be required to obtain an international arrivals permit through Service Victoria. The 14-day hotel quarantine period for international visitors and aircrew who aren't fully vaccinated or medically exempt will reduce to 7 days.

When Victoria's density quotient restrictions were first announced on 6 January, the third dose vaccination rate for Victorians aged 16 and over was only 12.7 per cent, compared to 52.2 per cent today. When the dancefloor closure was announced on 10 January, 818 Victorians were in hospital with COVID-19, compared to 401 today.

As community transmission of COVID-19 continues to reduce throughout Victoria and vaccination coverage increases, the Minister will consider changes to office-based settings from next week.

With the pressure on the health system easing and third dose vaccination coverage climbing, the Minister will consider if it is appropriate to remove the recommendation that Victorians work from home.

The Minister will also consider easing existing mitigation strategies in office-based settings such as face mask requirements, with consideration to those who have received a third dose of the vaccine and the added protection that it provides.

Further details on the new restrictions coming into place this week will be published online at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au from 6pm on 18 February.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We always said these measures wouldn't be in place for a minute longer than they are needed, and with hospitalisation numbers decreasing and less pressure on our health system, now is a sensible time to make changes."

"We're grateful to everyone who has been doing the right thing, helping to reduce the impact of this virus on the community, our healthcare system and our economy."

For information about coronavirus visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or call 1800 675 398.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

“These are safe and sensible measures which balance the need to support our health system with the benefits of easing restrictions across a range of settings.”

“Changes to QR code requirements will still support our focus on the highest-risk settings most likely to generate super-spreader events – and we will keep reviewing the system over time in line with the epidemiological situation.”