

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 1 September 2021

SLOWING THE SPREAD AND KEEPING OUR STATE SAFE

Over the past 72 hours, the advice from our public health team has been that we still had a promising chance to bring this under control and to bring cases down. We were charting our way out of this outbreak with easing at thresholds of lower cases.

Last night, with cases already in triple figures, too many mystery cases and too many people infectious out in the community, that advice changed.

With the number of positive cases this high, the speed at which this Delta variant is spreading and so many Victorians still to be vaccinated, our Chief Health Officer advises it is unlikely we will be able to bring our case numbers down.

Throughout this pandemic we've always followed the health advice. Today is no different.

Due to the ongoing level of community transmission and the continued number of unlinked cases popping up across the state, Victoria's lockdown will be extended.

Victorians cannot afford to open up and let this virus run free – our hospital system would be overrun, our frontline staff would be placed under too much pressure and quite simply, people would die. We need to continue to slow the spread of the virus until more of us are vaccinated.

This is why Victoria's Chief Health Officer has declared that almost all of the current lockdown restrictions will remain in place until 70 per cent of Victorians have had at least one dose of vaccine. This is estimated to be around 23 September.

Until then there will still be only five reasons to leave home: shopping for food and supplies, authorised work and study, care and caregiving, exercise, and getting vaccinated. Other restrictions – including mask wearing – will stay the same.

However, from 11.59pm on Thursday 2 September, playgrounds will re-open – with strict rules to keep everyone safe. Playgrounds will be for children under 12 with only one parent or carer, and adults should not remove their masks to eat or drink. Playgrounds will also have QR codes for checking in.

In-home care – like babysitters – will also be expanded to school aged children but only if both parents are authorised workers.

When 70 per cent of Victorians have had at least one vaccine dose we will look to ease restrictions a little further.

At that point, the 5km radius will expand to 10km – so exercise and shopping can take place up to 10km from your home. If there's no shops in your 10km radius, you'll be able to travel to the ones closest to you.

Victorians will be able to exercise for an extra hour, for up to three hours per day. Outdoor personal training will be allowed with up to two people plus the trainer. Outdoor communal gym equipment and skateparks will reopen.

Private inspections of unoccupied premises for a new purchase or end of lease will be permitted but only one household may attend at a time, with the agent staying outdoors during the inspection.

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

Victoria's construction workforce will also be able to increase to 50 per cent when 90 per cent of their workers have received at least one vaccine dose, subject to epidemiology at the time. Up to five staff will be able to work onsite at entertainment venues to broadcast performances.

While these restrictions are implemented state-wide for now, we will review the epidemiological conditions and subject to public health advice, we will consider easing parts of regional Victoria next week.

To ensure our senior students sitting year 12 exams have certainty and are ready for exams, from Tuesday 7 September until Friday 17 September we will put in place a priority vaccination program.

As part of this program, year 12 students will be given priority booking access at our state-run clinics, as will their teachers and examiners. Students and teachers will need to book an appointment, as walk ups are not available as part of this blitz.

Students and teachers will be able to book one of these priority appointments from Monday 6th September. The Department of Health and the Department of Education will work directly with schools, and students and parents will receive the advice on how to arrange a booking through their schools.

As we reach the national cabinet threshold of 70 per cent and 80 per cent of people double dose vaccinated in Victoria, we will ease more restrictions at set intervals, as part of the National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response.

Getting vaccinated has never been more important – it is well and truly our way out of this pandemic. Nearly three weeks ago we announced a goal to administer 1 million doses in five weeks, and so far, we've delivered just under 500,000 doses.

If you're yet to be vaccinated, please book your appointment today – either in the state system, or in your general practice or local pharmacy. If have any questions or concerns you can talk to a GP, pharmacist or to a senior and experienced immuniser at our state-run sites.

The best vaccine is the vaccine you can get today – while we're limited on Pfizer appointments because of supply, there are 72,745 Astra Zeneca appointments available across Victoria over the next three weeks.

Astra Zeneca is a safe and effective vaccine – and if that's what's available, then that's what you should get.

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.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"This is not where we wanted to be as a community, but we need to keep cases low so we can get more people vaccinated."

"So my message is: if you are over 18 and you want to keep you and your family safe, don't wait. AstraZenca is available now. Make a booking to get vaccinated."

Quote attributable Minister for Health Martin Foley

"There's a million things that we miss about life before the pandemic and a million things we're looking forward to doing again once we're through this outbreak – each of those is a reason to get vaccinated."