

Tuesday 7 July 2020

COVID-19: AN URGENT STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

2020 has not been the year any of us wanted.

Cancelled events. Plans put on pause. Uncertainty about what the future holds. And I guess that's why so many people want to pretend this is over. That they can go back to how things once were.

Others don't have that luxury. In the last 36 hours we lost two more Victorian lives to this deadly virus. We don't yet know their names, their stories or the circumstances in which they died. All we do know is that – except for the company and compassion of the medical staff who cared for them – they would have died alone. No family. No friends. No holding hands. No goodbyes. Denied the last quiet moments that we all hope for.

That's how dangerous and infectious this disease is.

Thankfully, it's a fate that most Victorian families have not been asked to endure. And I think, for some, that's led to a creeping complacency. But although today it's someone else – tomorrow it could be you, or me.

I know a lot of people aren't scared because this feels like something happening to other people in other parts of the world. But you should be scared of this. I'm scared of this. We all should be.

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Yesterday, we reached a grim new milestone, the most cases in a single day. Today, we surpassed it. It's clear we are on the cusp of our second wave – and we cannot let this virus cut through our communities.

It's why, based on the advice of the Chief Health Officer and across metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, Stage 3 "Stay at Home" restrictions will be reinstated from 11:59pm on Wednesday 8 July.

For six weeks, and if you live in these areas, there'll be only four reasons to leave your home:

Shopping for food and essential items.

Care and caregiving.

Exercise.

Work and study – if you can't do it from home.

Otherwise: Stay home. Stay home. Stay home.

In case it needs repeating, stay home. We are fighting a global and deadly pandemic.

This Stay Home direction will apply to your principal place of residence – that means no escaping to holiday homes.

And because we need to limit the spread of the virus across our state, there will only be three reasons to cross the border of these metropolitan areas:

Shopping for food and essential items.

Care and caregiving.

Work and study – if you can't do it from home.

Unless you're a local, that means no fishing trips at Lakes Entrance. No four-hour hikes in the Grampians.

Businesses in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will also return to Stage 3 restrictions.

Restaurants and cafes will return to takeaway and delivery services only.

Beauty and personal services will need to close.

Kinship Care in the time of Coronavirus

Entertainment and cultural venues will need to close.

Community sport will need to stop.

I know just how tough this will be for these businesses and for their workers. I promise, we'll have more to say shortly about support to help get you through.

I also understand six weeks might feel like an eternity. But it's the time our health experts tell us they need to really get on top of this thing.

Many parents, teachers and students will be worried about what happens with the school year. I can confirm that:

- all Year 11 and Year 12 students in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will go back to school for Term 3 as planned, along with our special schools.
- students Prep to Year 10, will have to extended the school holidays by one week, so we can get more advice from our health experts.

- a return to remote learning for these kids is a possibility, if that's what is safest.

For people who live in regional Victoria, where case numbers remain low, current restrictions will remain the same for now.

We've talked about this virus being like a public health bushfire. By putting a ring around metropolitan Melbourne, we're essentially putting in place a perimeter to protect regional Victorians.

This is not where any of us wanted to be, but we have to face the reality of our situation. To do anything else would have deadly consequences. I don't take this step lightly. And I know just how deeply frustrating this is for everyone. But I'm asking you, please talk to your families. Talk to your friends. Talk to your neighbours. Talk to your communities. Don't do it for me. Do it for them. Do it for every Victorian family.

For information about coronavirus, please visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au or phone **1800 675 398**.

List of restricted LGAs

Banyule	Hume	Moreland
Bayside	Kingston	Mornington Peninsula
Boroondara	Knox	Nillumbik
Brimbank	Manningham	Port Phillip
Cardinia	Maribyrnong	Stonnington
Casey	Maroondah	Whitehorse
Darebin	Melbourne	Whittlesea
Frankston	Melton	Wyndham
Glen Eira	Monash	Yarra
Greater Dandenong	Moonee Valley	Yarra Ranges
Hobsons Bay	Mitchell Shire	