

Statement

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Acting Premier
Minister for Education
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STATEMENT FROM THE ACTING PREMIER

Make no mistake – our collective efforts over these past few weeks have changed the course of this outbreak. As individuals, as families and as a community, we have again done an incredible thing: protecting our state with grit, guts and determination.

Thanks doesn't seem enough, but I'll say it anyway. To every Victorian for following the rules, for doing the right thing, and for doing it with kindness and compassion – thank you.

For staying home and staying safe. For ordering in and taking out. For Zoom calls and virtual catchups. And for looking out for each other.

As much as we've achieved – this isn't over. And it's up to all of us to protect this precious thing we've worked so hard for.

That means staying COVIDSafe – most importantly, getting tested if you have any symptoms. It's singlehandedly the biggest contribution we can make, ensuring that if the virus is circulating – we catch it early. Whether you do it for your family, your mates or your state – if you're sick, get tested.

We've always said that when we could safely ease the rules, we would. And if we could make things even just a little easier, we wouldn't waste a minute.

It's why, on the advice of the Chief Health Officer, we can take some first safe steps. That means metropolitan Melbourne will move to almost the same settings currently in place across regional Victoria. And regional Victoria will move towards further easing.

From 11:59pm Thursday 10 June, the five reasons to leave home will no longer apply in metro Melbourne, and the existing 10-kilometre limit will be increased to 25 kilometres.

But wherever possible, we're asking people to stay local. That means the only reasons to go further than 25 km will be work, education, care and caregiving, and getting vaccinated. And travel into regional Victoria to visit family and friends or take a holiday still remains a no go – for now.

We're also still not in a position to be able to have visitors to our home, but outdoor gatherings will be increased to a maximum of ten people. And mask rules will be eased slightly – required inside, and outdoors when 1.5 metres isn't possible.

In good news for families, schools will be able to resume face-to-face learning for all students from Friday.

Cafes, restaurants and pubs will open – with strict safety measures like density limits, seated service and QR codes in place. Remaining retail will also open. Hairdressing, beauty and personal care can resume, but only for services where masks can be kept on.

Weddings will be limited to 10 people, and funerals no more than 50. Fifty will also be the limit on religious gatherings. Swimming pools, entertainment venues and community facilities will also open subject to density limits. And community sport can happen, but only for training.

When it comes to work, there'll no longer be a list – but if you can work from home, you should.

We also recognise that even with eased restrictions, some businesses still won't be able to open. It's why we'll extend our support for closed businesses with a further \$2000 top-up payment.

In regional Victoria, restrictions will also ease. Visitors to the home are allowed – limited to two people and their dependants – once per day. Public outdoor gatherings will be limited to 20 people.

There'll also be increases to the capacity limits at places like restaurants, entertainment venues, community facilities and religious gatherings. Indoor sport, including gyms, will also be able to reopen with careful limits on the number of people permitted at any point in time.

There'll be plenty more detail available online. But I want to assure people, subject to public health advice, we'll have more to say about what further stages of easing will look like next week. That includes the regional border coming down and Victorians being able to travel more freely around the state.

For Melbourne, we'll also look to further ease restrictions on venues and get community sport back to competition. We'll also look at what more can be done to ease restrictions for businesses, without risking the gains we have made. Further work will also be done on easing for regional Victoria.

As always, we'll make sure we keep people updated on how we're tracking, providing more detail – and more certainty – as soon as we can.

Today is a good day, there's no doubt about it. And we should absolutely be proud of what we've all achieved – but let me just say this:

It isn't over yet, and until we have widespread vaccination, this virus will still be with us.

We all know how fragile this thing is. We've seen how easily it can take hold. And if we allow complacency to creep back even a little, we could lose everything we've worked so hard to protect.

There's still work to do, there's still our state to keep safe. And we'll need every Victorian to help do just that.