

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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LOCAL RESPONSE UNITS AND BOOSTED REPORTING FOR SAFE NEXT STEPS

New Suburban Response Units will be set up to give rapid local insights and leverage community connections to help keep localised outbreaks contained, as Victoria takes the first steps to COVID Normal.

The Government will establish new COVID Suburban Response Units across metropolitan Melbourne to ensure tailored and localised responses can be quickly established for future outbreaks.

The new suburban public health teams will mirror the successful program already established in Victoria's regional centres and will provide a tailored local response to everything from contact tracing, to outbreak management.

Consultation is set to begin with health services and local government to determine the best location to set up a unit in each area, and to develop a model that suits the needs of each of these communities.

This program will mean new cases are responded to with speed and agility, informed by the local knowledge of how and where the virus is likely to spread in local communities, which will be reported back centrally.

In addition to this, the Victorian Government will begin publishing weekly contact tracing performance metrics online and keep Victorians up to date on 14 day rolling case averages, as we continue to expand the Department of Health and Human Services data website.

The Government is also working with Salesforce to deliver a new case and contact management system. It will cover the whole program of contact tracing – from positive result coming in, the interviews, follow-up phone calls and coordination of Operation Vestige to the clearance of cases and contacts to be managed all within the one system.

The system is being set up in parallel to the current process, to ensure there is no dip in performance as we make improvements.

Healthcare worker infection data will also be reported weekly as part of a major body of work that is underway to protect our doctors, nurses and other health workers from coronavirus.

The *Protecting Our Healthcare Workers* plan was launched on 25 August and is guided by the expert Healthcare Worker Infection Prevention and Wellbeing Taskforce, which has been established to gather and review data on healthcare worker infections and advise on best practice infection control practices within health settings.

Since the plan's launch a number of other actions have already commenced including audits of the implementation of COVIDSafe plans within health services, assessments of staff amenities to ensure they comply with physical distancing requirements, a fit testing trial of PPE and asymptomatic testing of healthcare workers in COVID wards.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"As we take careful steps towards a COVID Normal, we will be further adding to our contact tracing team to keep Victorians safe."

"That's why we're establishing public health teams operating in the suburbs – acting quickly to put a ring around any outbreak with local knowledge, keeping the community updated as they work to save lives."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"On top of our Regional Response Units, these new Suburban Response Units will mean all communities – no matter how large or small – are able to keep their families, friends and all Victorians safe."

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

“We’re boosting public reporting with our expanded Department of Health and Human Services online dashboard to ensure the community can easily access regular contact tracing and health care worker infection data.”