

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Water



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DEPLOYING PSOS TO WHERE VICTORIANS NEED THEM

The Victorian Government is increasing the range of ‘designated places’ where Protective Services Officers (PSOs) can exercise their powers so PSOs can be redeployed from the public transport network and into communities, boosting police resources in the fight to slow the spread of coronavirus.

From Thursday, Operation Shielding will see police send 200 PSOs every day to major activity centres in the Melbourne CBD, as well as commercial hubs and suburban areas across greater Melbourne and the regions, including Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo.

PSOs will work in teams with police officers to patrol these areas and provide a highly visible policing presence and public safety role, reassuring workers and members of the community shopping for supplies or travelling to health appointments, and deterring crime.

PSOs will continue to work at 83 train stations and will maintain a mobile presence across the transport network, but these are commonsense changes as fewer people use public transport because of coronavirus restrictions.

The reforms also provide the Chief Commissioner of Police with more flexibility to ensure PSOs are deployed to where they are needed most.

It comes as Victoria Police has undertaken 983 spot checks in the past 24 hours at homes, businesses and non-essential services across the state, and issued 108 fines as part of Operation Sentinel.

A 500-strong police taskforce has been established to ensure Victorians are following the strict physical distancing measures and Chief Health Officer directions to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Police are conducting checks at businesses, homes, community locations and non-essential services across the state to ensure directions are being followed.

They will continue to take action to stop people who choose to ignore these rules and put the health and safety of Victorians at risk.

Anyone who breaches these directions faces on-the-spot fines of \$1,652 for individuals and \$9,913 for businesses.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

“This is a commonsense change to boost frontline policing so that Victorians can continue to feel safe if they’re leaving their home for food and supplies, medical care, exercise, or work or education.”

“Just like our healthcare workers and so many others in the community, our police and PSOs are on the frontline of Victoria’s response to coronavirus and this will provide them with the additional support they need.”

“We sincerely hope that Victoria Police do not have to issue any more fines because people are doing the right thing. But for those that don’t, they will be dealt with.”

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