

Statement

The Hon Dan Andrews MP
Premier



Saturday, 20 June 2020

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

From the outset, we have always listened to our medical experts. And they're telling us we've come to a critical crossroads.

Today, our case numbers have hit the highest they've been in more than two months. I know that's not what people want to hear – but sadly, that is our reality.

The experts tell us that, largely, the numbers are being driven by families – families having big get-togethers and not following the advice around distancing and hygiene. In fact, around half of our cases since the end of April have come from transmission inside someone's home.

You can see how this could happen. People feeling relaxed at home. Letting their guard down. Letting old habits creep back. But we are still in a pandemic – and people's lives are still at risk.

It's why today, we're announcing a number of changes.

From 11:59pm on Sunday, the number of visitors you can have at your home will reduce to five. Outside the home, families and friends can meet in groups up to ten. As we've seen across the world, this virus has the ability to turn a few cases into hundreds in a matter of days.

That's why we also need to delay an increase to gathering limits in businesses and community facilities.

That means restaurants, pubs, auction halls, community halls, libraries, museums and places of worship – will all stay at a maximum of 20 people in any one space until 12 July. Businesses that were set to open on Monday like gyms, cinemas, theatres and TABs can do so – but again, only with a maximum of 20.

Community sport for kids and non-contact competition for adults can proceed as planned. Ski season and accommodation facilities with communal spaces will also open, but with increased screening and safeguards in place.

I know this is not where we wanted to be. And that Victorians will feel disappointed and frustrated. I'm frustrated too. But we have to channel that frustration into action.

We can't let this thing get away from us. We must act – while we can.

That means staying safe while out in the community – but just as importantly, staying safe at home. And that means only seeing those you need to – if you need to. Not your third cousin. Not your third best friend from primary school.

Each of us need to be aware that the more people you see and the more often you see them – the more danger you are putting people in. There are other things we need to do.

If you do have to see people, keep your distance. No handshakes and no hugs. Maintain good hygiene. Don't share food or drinks. And if you're feeling unwell – stay at home.

Don't visit friends and family. Don't go on holiday. Don't go to work. Stay home.

We want to make this as easy as possible.

Which is why we're also announcing a new \$1500 payment for those who have a confirmed case or are a close contact and who can't rely on sick leave. This is about making sure there's no financial reason for these people not to isolate and to go to work instead.

I know businesses are keen to open further – which is why we've all got to play our part.

That means ensuring those who can work from home continue to do so at least until 31 July. And if you do have people on the job – having a zero-tolerance approach to sickness. Having symptoms must mean you go home, and you get tested.

We'll also look at ways we might begin to contain hotspots – if we keep seeing high case numbers each day, we will have to consider putting whole suburbs back into lockdown.

The vast majority of Victorians have been doing the right thing.

But this is a wake-up call. We cannot be complacent.

And the only thing between us and a second wave is what we do next.