

# Statement

The Hon Dan Andrews MP  
Premier



Thursday, 25 June 2020

## STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

I know many Victorians are feeling anxious and unsure.

After all, so many of us have given up so much in order to keep our state safe.

And yet – disappointingly, devastatingly – we again find ourselves on a knife’s edge. What we do now will determine what comes next.

We don’t want to have to move to local lockdowns. We know the impact that would have on businesses and on families. But we do need to get a comprehensive sense of how this virus might be spreading – and we need Victorians’ help to get us there.

Today we begin our Suburban Testing Blitz, our plan to ensure we have all the information and insights we need. This targeted blitz across ten priority suburbs represents one of the biggest testing efforts ever.

On the advice of the Chief Health Officer, priority suburbs include Keilor Downs, Broadmeadows, Maidstone, Albanvale, Sunshine West, Hallam, Brunswick West, Fawkner, Reservoir and Pakenham.

Over the next 10 days, residents of these suburbs will receive free testing – with or without symptoms. Our aim is to do 10,000 tests a day across these areas and in the top two priority suburbs – Keilor Downs and Broadmeadows – we want to reach half the population in the next three days.

A team made up of 800 testers will zero-in on community transmission with a fleet of mobile testing vans – allowing people to not only get tested in their own community, but in their own street.

And, in an Australian first and thanks to the efforts of the Doherty Institute, from next week we will be doing additional testing from the collection of saliva samples – providing a faster, easier and more comfortable test.

We’re asking locals in these areas – particularly if you have symptoms – please come forward and get tested. See it as your civic duty. See it as your contribution to keeping your local area and our whole community safe.

Our squad of more than 1 000 doorknockers will also continue their outreach, going door to door to ensure locals have the latest health advice.

To make sure we can process these test results in time, we’ll also be undertaking a massive expansion of our lab processed capacity.

Right now, pathologists in Victoria can process up to 18,000 tests a day. With the help of labs in New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and private providers that number will grow to at least 25,000 tests every single day.

These efforts will be supported by Australian Defence Force personnel who’ll provide planning and logistics support – including the transportation of pathology samples interstate if required.

For information about coronavirus, please visit [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) or phone 1800 675 398

Through fire and flood – and even just this summer – we have always been proud to send our people to support other states in their time of need. We are grateful now to receive that same support from around the country as we continue to confront coronavirus together.

Our state-wide testing efforts will also continue, with more than 130 testing locations across Victoria – and more sites coming soon.

Again, we still need Victorians to play their part. Staying safe in the community – and staying safe inside your home.

If you're sick, get tested and stay home. If someone in your household is sick, make sure they get tested and stay home.

If you've been tested, stay home while you wait for your result.

Keep your distance. Keep washing your hands. Keep listening to the advice. And as you do, remember:

You're doing this for your family – and for every Victorian family.

I want to be upfront, in the coming weeks, and in line with our expanded testing program, we'll likely see our daily cases increase.

Some may see this as a mark of failure. Instead, if those cases can be traced back to other known positives, it'll be a mark of our success. Every Victorian who gets tested – every case that is identified – brings us one step closer to containing and slowing the spread of this virus.

This isn't easy.

But it's up to all of us to make this work.