

# Statement

The Hon Dan Andrews MP  
Premier



Monday, 3 August 2020

## STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

Yesterday, we asked Victorians to make some big sacrifices. Big, real and meaningful sacrifices. Today, sadly, we need to ask the same of Victorian businesses and Victorian workers.

As Premier, I've spent every day fighting for workers and fighting for jobs.

I understand deeply: a job means financial security – but it also means stability, purpose and the foundation to build your future.

Truthfully, I never thought I'd find myself in a position where I'd have to ask people not to go to work.

But if we're serious about driving this thing down – and we absolutely must be – we need to take unprecedented steps in limiting the movement of people, and therefore limiting the movement of this virus.

Today I can announce three lists that will apply during Stage 4 restrictions.

These changes, in addition to the previous restrictions including working from home requirements, will mean around 1 million Victorians are no longer moving around the state for work.

First: supermarkets, grocery stores, bottle shops, pharmacies, petrol stations, banks, newsagencies, post offices – plus everyone involved in our frontline response – will continue to operate.

Second: Industries where onsite operations will have to cease for the next six weeks including retail, some manufacturing and administration. These businesses will all need to close by 11:59pm Wednesday 5 August, unless they have specific circumstances that mean they need longer to shutdown safely.

Retail stores will be permitted to operate contactless 'click and collect' and delivery services with strict safety protocols in place, and hardware stores can remain open onsite, but for tradespeople only.

The third and final list is made up of industries that are permitted to operate – but under significantly different conditions.

Whether it's our food production, waste collection or supply chain logistics we need some things to continue – but they've got to do so safely.

All open businesses and services will have until 11:59pm Friday 7 August to enact a COVIDSafe plan focused on safety, prevention and response in the event that coronavirus is linked to the workplace – because beating this virus requires a rapid response wherever it rears its head.

In industries that can't close, but where we've seen a number of cases or emerging new risks, we'll be making some big changes to make these workplaces safer – for workers and for their families.

That includes mandated reductions to the number of workers onsite. In the meat industry – and based on the minimum required to operate safely onsite – the workforce will be scaled back to two-thirds. Unlike other changes, and recognising the risk these sites have posed here and around the world, this will apply to abattoirs in Melbourne and across the state.

Warehousing and distribution centres in Melbourne will be limited to no more than two-thirds the normal workforce allowed onsite at any one time.

Our construction sector, the lifeblood of our economy, will also move to pilot light levels. This will allow the industry to keep ticking – while also making sure we limit the number of people onsite.

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

For major construction sites, that means the absolute minimum required for safety – but no more than 25 per cent of the normal workforce onsite. Small-scale construction will be limited to a maximum of five people onsite.

To date, we've almost halved the number of people onsite on some of our biggest Government projects. Now we're going to go through project by project, line by line to make sure they are reduced to the practical minimum number of workers.

These workplaces that are continuing to operate will also have additional requirements including extra PPE, staggering shifts, staggering breaks, health declarations and more support for sick workers to ensure they stay home.

To give one example, workers in abattoirs will be kitted out in full PPE – gowns, masks and shields – more akin to what a nurse would wear. They'll also be subject to routine testing.

These changes will be enforceable. And the onus will be on employers to make sure they're doing the right thing by their workers, including ensuring those with symptoms – and potentially the virus – do not come to work.

As always, this work will be done in consultation with industry and with unions.

And for those businesses and industries that fall into grey areas when it comes to their operation, the dedicated Industry Coordination Centre within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions will consider their case.

I understand this will have real and heavy consequences for a number of businesses, workers and their families. We'll do everything we can to lighten that load.

For those businesses that suffer significant losses or need to close as a result of the current restrictions, we will provide support through our expanded Business Support Fund.

Businesses in regional Victoria can apply for a \$5,000 grant while those in Melbourne and Mitchell Shire can apply for up to \$10,000 in recognition of spending longer under restrictions.

Honestly, this will be an imperfect process.

The decision of which column to put millions of Victorian jobs – millions of Victorian workers – could never be clear cut.

And, as much as we'd like one, there is no playbook when it comes to a pandemic.

But what is clear is that if we don't do this now, if this doesn't work, then we'll need a much longer list of complete shutdowns.

It's hard to imagine what a Stage 5 might look like. But it would radically change the way people live. Not just rules on when and where you can go shopping – but restrictions on going shopping at all.

This will be hard. It'll be frustrating. It'll be confusing. For a lot of workers and their families, it'll be heartbreaking.

But the only way to get people back to work and businesses back open is by making these tough decisions – and by Victorians abiding by them.

We have to make this work.

Lives and livelihoods are counting on it.