

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Monday, 24 August 2020

## KEEPING THE TOOLS WE NEED TO CONTINUE CORONAVIRUS FIGHT

Legislation changes will be introduced into the Victorian Parliament to ensure the public health directions protecting Victorians from coronavirus can continue to be enforced.

Some of the key public health protections required to manage this pandemic are only available when a State of Emergency has been declared under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* – such as mandatory face coverings, requiring workplaces to have a COVIDSafe Plan and the current and past restrictions that have helped slow the spread of the virus.

It also ensures public health risk powers can be exercised – for example, requiring positive cases to isolate.

Since first being introduced in March 2020, the State of Emergency has been extended six times, but under current legislation it can only remain in place for a total of six months.

Until we have a vaccine, we need to continue in our fight against coronavirus. That means, regardless of when restrictions may ease, some of the current protections under the State of Emergency – including mandatory face coverings and requiring workplaces to have a COVIDSafe Plan – will remain necessary. By extending the maximum length of the State of Emergency, the Victorian Government can continue its efforts to keep all Victorians safe.

Amendments to the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* will be introduced on 1 September, which will allow the State of Emergency to be in place for a total of up to 18 months – encompassing the six months these arrangements have already been in place, with an extra 12 months to help ensure we see out the other side of this pandemic.

To ensure Victorians have the latest information in our coronavirus fight, the Government has also released a new dashboard to provide local communities with more data than ever before.

Data related to active case numbers, deaths, outbreaks, cases in aged care settings and hospitalisations will be made publicly available online on a daily basis. The site will also list 'high risk locations' identified by the public health team – places where there has been a known exposure period, and encourage Victorians who may have been there at the relevant time to be on the watch for symptoms.

The Government has partnered with local councils, health providers and community organisations throughout Victoria to collate this data and ensure local communities have access to the most up to date information. More data will be added to the site as it becomes available.

To find out more information about coronavirus in your local community call 1800 675 398 or visit [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus).

### Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*"Without a vaccine, this pandemic is far from over. These legislative changes will mean we continue to have the right protections in place until it is."*

*"From face coverings to density limits – these measures are fundamentally about keeping every single Victorian safe."*

## **Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos**

*“We’ve heard loud and clear that Victorians want to know more about coronavirus in their community – as part of their efforts to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.”*

*“As we all continue to follow the rules, our team will continue to work around the clock to ensure local communities have the latest information and understanding.”*