

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Thursday, 19 November 2020

## TEMPORARY BORDER CONTROLS WITH SOUTH AUSTRALIA

In response to the coronavirus outbreak in South Australia, the Victorian Government is taking decisive action to protect the incredible achievement of Victorians in delivering zero cases for 20 days and will implement temporary border controls from tonight.

Fragments of the virus that causes coronavirus were detected in untreated wastewater taken from Portland and Benalla wastewater treatment plants on Tuesday 17 November. The preliminary positive test results received yesterday are unexpected and concerning given there are no residents of either area known to have had a recent coronavirus illness or diagnosis.

Residents of Portland and Benalla and anyone who has visited between 15 and 17 November with any symptoms at all are urged to get tested, and to isolate until they get their result. Hours will be extended at local testing sites for the coming days, with additional testing capacity to be made available. Further wastewater samples are being taken from those two towns – and this detection has no impact on local water supplies.

With community transmission clearly happening in South Australia and in light of the wastewater test results along freight routes in Victoria, the Government is following public health advice and has made the difficult decision to introduce temporary border controls with South Australia.

From 11:59pm Thursday 19 November, a 'hard border' will be in place for 48 hours before a permit system comes into effect from 11:59pm Saturday 21 November.

Under the hard border, only freight drivers and those with medical or emergency reasons, urgent animal welfare or as authorised by law will be able to pass through the border.

The final details of the permit scheme will be provided as soon as possible but the reasons to enter Victoria from South Australia from Saturday night will include:

- if you are an emergency services worker or a worker providing essential services
- for agricultural work
- to receive medical care (including seeking coronavirus testing), obtain medical supplies or compassionate reasons
- to shop to obtain essential supplies

Victoria Police will establish check points on roads between South Australia and Victoria – a similar approach to what we saw around the perimeter of metropolitan Melbourne while travel restrictions were in place.

Regional Development Victoria will meet with local councils today to determine any resourcing needs for border communities in Victoria while the border controls are in place. The Government will work with councils on what measures are necessary to ensure their communities continue to have access to food, fuel, pharmaceuticals and medical services.

From today, interstate truck drivers travelling through Victoria from South Australia will be offered extra testing at a site at Nhill on the Western Highway. Other testing sites are being activated at other major freight routes. Drivers can also be tested at more than 193 other sites across Victoria.

We're working with major freight companies, independent operators and industry peak bodies to provide advice about the need for testing and all tested will have their samples fast-tracked for analysis.

The Victorian Government will continue to monitor the SA outbreak and take whatever action is necessary to keep Victorians safe. Our Victorian Public Health team is also supporting SA contact tracers as they continue to track and trace the spread of the virus.

For more information about Victoria's response or where to get tested visit [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus) or by calling 1800 675 398.

**Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews**

*"Victorians have worked too hard and given too much to allow anything to put at risk our goal of reaching COVID Normal by Christmas. We'll do whatever it takes to keep Victorians safe."*

*"We know border communities have had an incredibly difficult year – and we don't take these decisions lightly. Our public health team will work closely with South Australia to monitor the outbreak and get the border back open as soon as it's safe to do so."*

**Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley**

*"We're asking all locals and visitors in Portland and Benalla with any symptoms at all to please come forward and get tested today."*

*"We'll work with these communities to ensure they have access to the things they need, as we provide further details on border crossings in the coming days."*

**Quote attributable to Deputy Chief Health Officer Allen Cheng**

*"We're working closely with our public health counterparts in South Australia and other states to monitor the outbreak. We thank those living in border communities for working with us as we work to protect our consecutive zero days."*