

Media Release

The Hon Danny Pearson MP

Assistant Treasurer

Minister for Regulatory Reform

Minister for Government Services

Minister for Creative Industries

Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services



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NEW FINE FOR BUSINESSES FLOUTING QR CODE REQUIREMENTS

Victorian businesses found intentionally flouting the Chief Health Officer's rules – such as the requirement to use QR Code systems – will be slapped with a new \$1,652 on-the-spot fine.

Venues and facilities are required to maintain an electronic record-keeping system for all visitors – which is critical for ensuring quick contact tracing in the event of a new coronavirus case, as we have seen this week.

During the Government's three-week COVIDSafe Blitz in April, more than 4,000 hospitality and retail businesses were checked for compliance across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

More than 165 enforcement notices were issued throughout the operation and a further 300 verbal warnings – with common issues including failure to use QR codes, no COVIDSafe Plan and no density quotient signage.

Enforcement checks over the past week alone continue to show a worrying trend of complacency, with 37 per cent of businesses visited flagged as non-compliant with QR Code check-in rules.

The new on-the-spot fine allows Authorised Officers to issue an immediate penalty which will deter businesses from intentionally ignoring Chief Health Officer rules and putting Victoria's hard-won gains at risk.

Authorised officers will be out and about throughout May and June, targeting compliance with record-keeping and QR code requirements. Businesses not doing the right thing will be issued with the \$1,652 fine, along with an Improvement Notice which triggers a follow up visit.

Where there are repeated breaches, a further \$9,913 fine can be issued and businesses may be prosecuted in court for continued, blatant or wilful non-compliance with the rules.

This approach will ensure the focus continues to be on helping businesses to follow the rules, while still enforcing fines on blatant breaches. The new fine bolsters the mandatory switch to the free Victorian Government QR Code Service through the Service Victoria app from 28 May 2021.

More than 91,000 Victorian organisations have signed up for the free Victorian Government QR Code Service across 125,000 different locations – with more than 21.5 million check-ins – an average of 280,000 a day.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services Danny Pearson

"As we've seen this week, it's essential every Victorian checks in when visiting a business, to help contact tracers quickly find those who could be at risk of coronavirus exposure."

"While most businesses are doing the right thing, those who aren't are letting down every Victorian who has sacrificed to get us where we are today."

"This new on-the-spot \$1652 fine sends a clear message that we will not tolerate any business ignoring its responsibility to help Victoria stay safe and stay open."