

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Tuesday, 9 August 2022

## FREE MASKS TO KEEP VICTORIANS SAFE THIS WINTER

The Andrews Labor Government will provide free N95 and KN95 masks to protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community and help reduce transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced that more than three million masks will be handed out to the community through our state-run testing sites, community health services across Victoria and across the public transport network.

Over the next four to six weeks every person that presents for either a free rapid antigen or PCR test will receive one box of 10 N95 masks, along with instructions on how best to wear them to reduce transmission.

Masks will also be distributed through some of Victoria's community organisations including at multicultural, multi-faith events and Aboriginal gatherings as well as through a number of disability service providers.

In addition, more masks will be available from PTV hubs and staffed train stations while authorised officers and some V/Line conductors will carry masks with them to hand out as needed.

Wearing a face mask can help protect you, those around you – and importantly, Victoria's hardworking healthcare workers. Face masks can stop viruses spreading in the air when people talk, cough, sneeze and laugh, which lowers the chance of spreading or catching COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

Wearing a mask is strongly recommended if you are in an indoor setting, can't physically distance, have any COVID-19 symptoms, or are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19. Masks are still mandatory in high-risk settings including hospitals, aged care and on public transport.

This announcement is in addition to the ongoing support our Local Public Health Units continue to provide residential aged care facilities during emergency outbreak responses including free rapid antigen tests, personal protective equipment and air purifiers.

During July alone more than 1,350 air purifiers, 1,100 boxes of masks, 140 boxes of gloves, 75 units of gowns, 40 cartons of hand sanitiser, 60 boxes of face shields and 4,000 rapid antigen tests were distributed to residential aged care facilities across the state.

The Government is investing billions to support the health system during this difficult time, but it's more important than ever that Victorians take steps to protect themselves, their loved ones and the health system.

All Victorians are encouraged to make sure they are up to date with vaccinations, stay home if feeling unwell, wear a face mask, physically distance and try to maintain good ventilation.

### Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*"Providing masks free of charge to those who need them most will help them protect themselves, their loved ones, and Victoria's hardworking healthcare workers."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

*"Wearing a mask, staying up to date with your vaccinations and ensuring indoor areas are well ventilated are all steps Victorians and businesses can take to manage their own COVID-19 risk this winter and into the future."*

**Media contact:** Jamila Fontana 0409 741 279 | [jamila.fontana@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:jamila.fontana@minstaff.vic.gov.au)