

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 6 December 2020

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

2020 has seen us embrace a new vocabulary.

We've become experts on "Reff rates" and "roadmaps" – on following the rules and sticking to restrictions.

Week after week, change and change – we adapted, and readapted. But we did it, because it meant keeping our state safe.

Until we have a vaccine – and even then, until we have a widely distributed vaccine – some aspects of these rules and restrictions must continue to be part of our reality.

At the same time, and because of the efforts of every Victorian, we're able to end this year with far fewer limits on what we can and can't do.

Our new "COVIDSafe Summer" will be in place until at least the end of January, giving Victorians a bit more certainty about what the next couple of months will look like.

These are the restrictions that will see us through the summer months – and living as normally as we can until we get a greater sense of what the rest of 2021 will look like.

Under the changes, and from tonight at 11:59pm, masks will only be required in a limited number of places: on public transport, in rideshare vehicles and taxis, in some retail settings including indoor shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores and indoor markets.

While masks are no longer mandated in most circumstances, the evidence is clear wearing a face covering makes a real difference in slowing the spread of the virus – so masks continue to be recommended indoors or outdoors when distancing can't be maintained.

As has been previously announced, Victorians will be able to host up to 30 people in their home. Outdoor gatherings in public places – the beach, the park – can increase to 100.

Density limits in our pubs, restaurants and cafes will shift to 1 person per 2sq metres for both indoors and outdoors with no other cap. The use of electronic record keeping – a QR code – will be mandatory.

And for small operations, there'll be no density limits if the patron number is under 25.

For retail and beauty services, businesses will be able to move to 1 person per 2sq metres – if they also introduce electronic record keeping. For businesses where that's just not possible, the existing density limits will continue to apply.

The cap for funerals and weddings will also be removed, subject to a new density limit of 1 person per 2sq metres. For those who want to dance on their special day – or maybe even the Nutbush – dancefloors will be able to host up to 50 people, with a density of 1 person per 4sqm.

The same rules will apply to nightclubs. But remember, the health advice still stands: no hugs, no handshakes and if you're feeling sick, you need to get tested and stay home.

The same new density limits will apply for community facilities, like our libraries, RSLs, and community halls.

In gyms, the density limit will move to 1 per 4sq metres – with exercise classes limited to 50 indoors and 100 outdoors.

And more relaxed restrictions for our entertainment venues will see more Victorians enjoying everything that makes us the cultural capital of Australia.

For those sick of only seeing their colleagues in a square on the screen, we'll be able to move to a 50 per cent return for office workers by 11 January, after considering the public health advice at the time. For the Victorian public service, up to 25 per cent will be able to return to the office from 11 January, moving up to 50 per cent on 8 February.

Details of further changes will be made available online.

As always, this won't be everything for everyone. But these are the careful steps we can take as we continue to protect our state and everything we're built.

Victoria, enjoy your summer.

You've earned it.