

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 8 November 2020

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

Nothing about this year has been easy.

But the hardest thing of all has been missing the people we love most.

Collectively, we've missed the big moments and the small.

Birthdays and barbecues. Special dinners and cups of tea.

Those things we didn't even know we'd miss – until we realised just how precious they really were.

But we did it. Because staying apart meant keeping each other safe.

Today, because of that sacrifice, our state can be whole again. Families will be whole again too.

From 11:59pm tonight, the boundary between Melbourne and regional Victoria will come down.

The 25-kilometre limit will no longer be in place.

And Victorians will be able to make up for lost time with loved ones.

There're some other changes too.

The rules that currently apply to regional Victoria will apply to the whole state – wherever you live.

For Melbourne, that means visits to the home will be relaxed – a little.

You can still only have a maximum of two people to visit per day. Going forward though, those two people don't need to be from the same household, and they'll be able to come at different times.

It's really important that people stick within these rules. The data is very clear on this: so many of our recent outbreaks were connected to home visits.

Home is where we relax, where we feel comfortable – which is precisely why it's so dangerous.

There'll be other changes for Melbourne too. Restaurants, pubs and cafes will be able to host up to 40 customers indoors and 70 outdoors.

Gyms and indoor sporting facilities can open with up to 20 – subject to strict density limits. Indoor sport for those 18 and under can recommence.

Indoor religious ceremonies will be increased to 20, with 50 allowed outside. The same numbers will apply to funerals, but there's no change to weddings – for now.

Community spaces like libraries or RSLs and neighbourhood houses can have up to 20 indoors, with groups of up to ten.

And accommodation will be able to open – because frankly, Victorians have earned a break.

There are some other changes that we've been able to bring forward.

From tonight, and across the state, indoor entertainment venues will be able to open with 20 people per space.

That means movie theatres, galleries, museums and music halls will now be able to open.

Something that I know will mean a whole lot to a whole lot of families, the rules around visiting aged care and hospitals will also be relaxed.

Instead of a specific number of visitors – a household will be able to visit together. Once per day and limited to two hours.

Those under 16 will also be able to visit hospitals. And the time limit for partners visiting maternity wards will no longer exist.

Individual hospitals and facilities though may continue to have their own policies – reflecting the needs of their patients and whatever the virus might be doing in our community.

Reflecting the progress we've made – the State of Disaster will not be renewed. But because the virus is still very much with us, the State of Emergency will be extended until 6 December to allow the Chief Health Officer's directions to remain in force.

From 22 November – and in line with the public health advice – Victoria is on track to reach the Last Step in our roadmap towards reopening.

Private gatherings will be able to increase to 10 people.

Gatherings for religious services, weddings and funerals will also increase too.

Our hospitality venues will be able to have up to 100 indoors, 200 outside.

There'll also be increases for other indoor venues like cinemas and gym and galleries.

More detail about other changes will be made available online.

Of course, in getting there – we'll continue to rely on the advice of our public health experts.

And we'll continue to rely on the efforts of every Victorian.

By now everyone knows the drill when it comes to keeping safe – so I won't waste words. But I will say this:

We have worked so hard. We have given up so much. And together, we've come so far.

We've got to protect it.

So, let's stay safe, stay open – and keep going.