

Sunday, 22 November 2020

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

Three months ago, Victoria had 4293 active cases. Today we have one.

It's an incredible achievement. And the clearest evidence there is of our determination to not only get on top of this virus – but to squash it.

Back then, the goal – the *hope* – was something a little more 'normal' for Christmas.

Today, because of the efforts of every Victorian, that's exactly what we've been able to achieve.

For those keen to get on and plan how many seats there'll be around the table, I won't waste another second.

Today we can confirm you'll be able to host up to 30 people in your home for Christmas Day. Babies under 12 months won't count towards the cap.

This change will come into effect from 11.59pm, 13 December, just in time for catch-ups, and Christmas barbies – and for our Jewish communities, the closing days of Hanukkah.

We're also able to confirm some more immediate changes.

From 11:59pm tonight, the number of visitors to your home will increase from two to 15 per day.

That can be split across different times – ten for lunch, and five for dinner – as long as people are sticking to a total of 15.

Outdoor gatherings in a public place – the park, the beach – will increase to 50.

For those couples who've had to delay their special day, weddings will increase to 150 people. The same number will apply to funerals and religious ceremonies indoors.

There'll be changes for our hospitality sector too.

For smaller venues, the density limit will change to one person for every two square metres – up to 50 customers. QR code record keeping will be mandatory. For bigger venues, the density limit will stay the same, but the cap will increase to 150. Total venue capacity will also rise to 300.

Cinemas, galleries and museums will also be able to host up to 150 people indoors.

And in good news for community clubs, contact and non-contact sports can begin for adults as well as kids – 150 people indoors with a group size of up to 20 and 500 outdoors with groups of up to 50.

Organisers will also be able to apply to host a public event. Different requirements and rules will need to apply, depending on whether it's a school fete or a major sporting match.

We're also able to begin a phased approach for staff heading back to the office. From 30 November, up to 25 per cent of workers will be able to attend onsite.

I want to be clear though – unless you're one of those people nominated by your employer – you need to keep working from home.

We're also making some changes to the rules around masks.

In short, you'll still need to wear one when you're indoors and on public transport – and where you can't keep your distance.

But if you're outdoors and you can keep a safe distance, masks will no longer be mandatory.

For example, you'll still need to keep your mask on if you're at a busy outdoor market – or in line for a snag at your local Bunnings.

If you're headed for a quiet stroll around the neighbourhood, you won't need to wear a mask – but you will need to carry one, in case the situation changes.

I know for some people, they'll think this is too slow and still too restrictive.

But the point is, masks are a small sacrifice that help keep all of us safe.

And as we've been reminded so recently, all it takes is one case before you've got a much bigger outbreak.

We'll have more to say about what a "COVIDSafe Summer" will look like in the next few weeks – and in line with what our public health experts are telling us is safe.

For now, though, I want to thank Victorians.

Getting here was by no means guaranteed. But we did it. You did it.

It's been a long, hard winter.

Now, it's time to enjoy the sun.