

Statement

The Hon Dan Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 25 October 2020

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

I know plenty of people were looking forward to some good news today. And soon, very soon, we'll have some.

But for now, we need to do again what we've done throughout this pandemic: follow the advice of our public health experts. That means there can be no changes to restrictions in Melbourne today.

As we know, today 6 new cases have been identified in our northern suburbs, meaning there have so far been 39 cases spread across 11 households. Concerningly, while these cases have locations in common it is not yet clear how they link together. It means we may still have transmission happening where we can't see it.

The local community, working alongside our public health team, are doing everything they can to stop this spread.

In the last 24 hours, over 3,000 Victorians from our northern suburbs did a profoundly powerful thing and got tested. With thousands of tests comes thousands of results.

We have around 1,000 swabs currently being processed – and we're expecting even more today.

We'll use the next couple of days to review those results and understand exactly how this virus is travelling.

Put simply: this is a couple of extra days that might put us weeks ahead of this virus. To not only get on top of this outbreak – but to stamp it out.

I know everyone will be disappointed we're not making that move today. I get that. I am too.

But I want to reassure you, this is not us taking a step back. This is us making sure we can take a step forward – and stay there.

We can't let everything Victorians have sacrificed, everything we've given up, simply slip away.

Until then, we'll continue to keep a careful eye on the numbers – and the all-important stories that sit behind them.

To anyone who might be considering it. Who's got a scratchy throat, or a runny nose. Who's connected to one of those school communities. Please, please get tested.

The more tests, the more data. The more data, the more certainty.

And with more certainty, we can make more decisions about Melbourne's transition to the Third Step.

While we can't deliver that good news for Melbourne today, due to the continued low number of regional cases, we're able to announce some additional changes for regional Victoria.

As part of the Third Step and from 11:59pm on Tuesday 27 October, indoor gyms and fitness spaces will be able to open for up to 20 people, with a maximum of ten per space and a density of one person per 8 square metres.

Indoor pools will open to 20. Indoor sport will begin for those 18 and under.

Food courts can open. Live music can resume as part of outdoor hospitality.

School graduations can be held within school communities.

And for religious celebrations, 20 people can gather together indoors with their faith leader – or 50 outdoors.

Thanks to the efforts of the local community, from 11:59pm tonight, Greater Shepparton will also come into alignment with the rest of regional Victoria and then progress under these changes.

Regional Victorians should be proud of this success. Everyone should be proud of this success. Because soon, it will belong to our whole state.

From hundreds of cases to single digits, we have driven this virus down.

And we are so close – *so close* – to beating this thing.

I'm asking each of you: keep going.

Dig deep. Stay strong.

Let's win this fight, and let's win it for good.