

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 14 January 2021

MORE VICTORIANS RETURNING TO A COVIDSAFE WORK PLACE

Victoria's staged return to office work will resume next week as more restrictions are eased and Victorians continue to enjoy a COVIDSafe Summer.

Premier Daniel Andrews announced today that with no current evidence of community transmission in Victoria, and our new permit system providing confidence that any interstate outbreaks can be appropriately managed, the Chief Health Officer has recommended that it is safe for Victorians to continue heading back to on-site office work.

From Monday, 18 January, the Victorian Public Service will be able to return to on-site work at 25 per cent capacity at each site and all other office workplaces will be able to increase to 50 per cent capacity.

Record keeping requirements for workplaces will remain unchanged, which means that an employer must keep a record of all workers and all visitors who attend the premises for longer than 15 minutes.

In addition to this, from 11:59pm on Sunday, 17 January, rules around mandatory mask wearing will be able to return to the settings that were in place at Christmas time.

This means that masks will now only be mandatory on all domestic flights, at airports, in hospitals, on public transport, in commercial passenger vehicles, at supermarkets and other large indoor retail locations, including shopping centres.

It's also recommended that Victorians wear a mask in other situations if physical distancing is not possible.

While many Victorians will be happy to see this easing of restrictions it's vital that workplaces maintain and enforce their COVIDSafe plans to protect staff and the broader community.

We know this will be disappointing for many but the current health advice has also meant Brisbane City and surrounding LGAs, and Greater Sydney, Wollongong and the Blue Mountains will remain red zones until further notice – we simply cannot take the risk in lifting the classification at this point, particularly with the transmission of the UK strain in Queensland's hotel quarantine system.

Victorians have made an incredible effort in getting tested and we continue to urge everyone – if you have any symptoms at all, please get tested and then stay home until you get your result.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"This will be a massive boost not only for the office workplaces in the heart of Melbourne, but the cafes, restaurants, bars and shops that rely on their business – it will be fantastic to see the city coming alive again."

"We know there are many Victorians currently north of the border who want to come home and the public health team will continue to assess the situations in New South Wales and Queensland on a daily basis. As soon as it is safe to downgrade the risk in any of the current red zones, we will."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"With the hottest part of summer approaching, I'm sure Victorians will be relieved to ease up on the mask wearing in some settings but please – always carry one with you, to keep yourself and your community safe."

For more information call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398 or visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au.