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Coronavirus (COVID-19) daily update

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This Chief Health Officer update is intended to provide clinicians and the Victorian public with information about the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria as well as relevant public health response activities in Victoria. Chief Health Officer Alerts will continue to be issued when there are changes to the public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

18/1/2021

What's new?

- Victoria has recorded four new cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) since yesterday, all of which are related to the Australian Open tennis tournament. This is the twelfth consecutive day where Victoria has recorded no new locally acquired cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- The total number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases reported in Victoria is now 20,428 including those in hotel quarantine.
- There were no new deaths and the state's death toll stands at 820.
- There are 33 active cases in Victoria this includes four local cases and 29 in hotel quarantine, 19,573 people have recovered.
- A total of 4,266,111 test results have been received. This is an increase of 13,973 since yesterday.
- You can find further details in today's [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) media release](#).
- The DHHS website has full details in the [interactive daily report](#).

New South Wales

- As of 6:00pm (Victorian AEDT) Monday 18 January 2021, the Blue Mountains, Wollongong and all Greater Sydney Local Government Areas (with the exception of Blacktown City, Burwood, Canada Bay City, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield City, Inner West, Liverpool

City, Parramatta City and Strathfield Municipality) will be declared an orange zone due to improved epidemiological conditions.

- People in these ten Local Government Areas (LGAs) who have already applied for an exemption to travel to Victoria will not need to reapply for a Victorian Travel Permit.
- Travellers must also confirm they have not been in any of the remaining ten red zone LGAs in Greater Sydney within the past 14 days (other than for transit), have not been in close contact with someone confirmed to have coronavirus (COVID-19) and do not have any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.
- In addition, New South Wales towns on the Victorian border will move to a green zone from 6:00pm Monday 18 January, ensuring easier movement for residence on either side of the border. This includes Albury City, Balranald Shire, Bega Valley Shire, Berrigan Shire, City of Broken Hill, Edward River Council, Federation Council, Greater Hume Shire, Hay Shire, Lockhart Shire, Murray River Council, Murrumbidgee Council, Snowy Monaro Regional Council, Snowy Valleys Council, City of Wagga Wagga and Wentworth Shire.
- Anyone living in a cross-border community who has been in an orange zone in the last 14 days (other than for transit) – such as the Greater Sydney area – must apply for an orange zone permit and agree to the conditions, including the requirement to get tested within 72 hours of arrival and remain in self-quarantine until a negative test result is received.
- Anyone living in a cross-border community who has been in one of the ten LGAs currently in the red zone in the last 14 days cannot travel to Victoria without an exemption, exception or essential worker permit.
- Exemption applications will no longer be required for those LGAs being downgraded to an orange zone – unless people have also been in a red zone in the last 14 days – and will not be considered.

Queensland zone changes

- Due to the reduced exposure risk and low community transmission, the Local Government Areas of Greater Brisbane - Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Redland, Logan, and Ipswich - have now been declared orange zones by Victoria's Chief Health Officer.
- The updated orange zone listing overrides the previous classification as a red zone and applies to the last 14 days. This means anyone who has been or is currently in Greater Brisbane wanting to travel to Victoria is able to apply for a permit.
- This change is expected to remove approximately 5,000 exemption requests from the current system and allows those who applied for exemptions to be eligible for a standard orange zone permit.
- Anyone applying for an Orange Zone Permit will need to agree to the conditions including the requirement to self-quarantine, get tested within 72 hours of arrival and remain in self-quarantine until they receive a negative result.
- They must also attest that they are not a diagnosed person or a close contact of another diagnosed person, are not experiencing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and confirm that they have not been in a currently listed red zone in the past 14 days.
- Exemption applications will no longer be required if a person has been in Greater Brisbane in the last 14 days. If eligible, the person can apply for an Orange Zone Permit on the [Victorian Travel permit System](#) page.

- Anyone currently in Victoria who has completed 14 days of mandatory hotel quarantine in Brisbane at the Grand Chancellor hotel on or after 30 December is asked to isolate and contact the coronavirus hotline immediately.
- Anyone who has arrived into Victoria from 30 December must get tested and quarantine at home until they receive a negative result. They should call the coronavirus hotline on [1800675398](tel:1800675398) immediately.
- Previously we had asked travellers to test if they had been in these QLD areas on or after 2 January 2021, however this public health advice has changed based on new information from QLD Health authorities regarding the B.1.1.7 lineage cluster in their hotel quarantine program.

Victoria's Permit System

- Victoria's new 'traffic light' permit system has come into effect, for all domestic travel into Victoria.
- All residents and travellers wishing to enter Victoria must now apply for a permit and the 'traffic light' permit system applies to travellers from anywhere across Australia.
- Applications can be made through the [Service Victoria portal](#).
- Areas across Australia are to be designated as green, orange or red, according to their risk, and will be updated based on the latest health advice. To help stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), all residents and travellers wishing to enter Victoria must now.

Public transport Myki registration

- Public transport users are encouraged to register their Myki cards to support contact tracing efforts and provide another avenue to contact people. Myki cards can be registered on the [Public Transport Victoria website](#).

NSW Border

- Regional NSW is now classified orange. For travellers who arrived from regional NSW and are currently in hotel quarantine, they will be permitted to leave quarantine if they have tested negative.
- Entry from any red zone is currently restricted.
- For Victorians living along the Murray River, the existing ' [border bubble](#)' arrangement allowing residents to travel across the border, between permitted Local Government Areas will continue.
- There is an exemption process in place for those in NSW who have special needs to come back into Victoria.
- All exemptions are reviewed by the Chief Health Officer, or their delegate, and take up to 48 hours to process.
- You can apply for an exemption by calling the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 or via the [online form](#).
- Victorians are strongly advised not to travel to NSW.

Testing sites

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing remains one of the best ways we can keep people safe and stay open, so we're asking anyone with symptoms to come and get tested - regardless of the time of year.
- Testing sites are also be operating in the popular summer destinations at Torquay, Lorne, and the Mornington Peninsula.
- Testing site details, including new and pop-up testing site and opening hours, are available at [Where to get tested page](#)

Face masks

- Face masks are now mandatory in all indoor settings, including workplaces. There are exceptions, including when you are eating and drinking or if you have a health condition.
- Under [COVIDSafe Summer restrictions](#), there is a requirement to carry a mask at all times.
- Fitted face masks are now mandatory when in airport terminals and it is strongly recommended to wear a mask on your flight.
- From 11:59pm 17 January, rules about mandatory mask wearing will change. Masks will 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 will continue to be recommended to wear a mask in other situations if physical distancing is not possible.

Wastewater monitoring continues in more than 60 locations

- Victoria has joined other Australian states and territories and New Zealand in collaborative research that will help us detect coronavirus (COVID-19) viral fragments in wastewater systems and use testing results with other health data as part of our response.
- As always, it remains vitally important that any Victorians with any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, no matter how mild, stay home and get tested.

Current advice to clinicians

- Clinicians should be asking patients if they are from or if they have been in New South Wales or Queensland and if so, to check the areas of risk defined by the NSW and QLD governments and recommended actions.
- [Statement on Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) diagnosis in symptomatic persons.](#)
- Notifications to the department of a confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus (COVID-19) can be done online. You can submit an [online form](#) to our public health team, rather than calling us, saving you time and resolving your case load more efficiently.
- The department continues to ask commercial passenger vehicle drivers and food delivery drivers to get tested for coronavirus (COVID-19). If commercial passenger vehicle drivers and food delivery drivers do not have any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they will not have to stay home to wait for their test results. Commercial passenger vehicle drivers and food delivery drivers will need to tell staff at the testing centre/site that they work in the industry.

COVID-19 testing criteria

- Practitioners should test any patients who meet the clinical criteria below:
 - Fever OR chills in the absence of an alternative diagnosis that explains the clinical presentation* OR
 - Acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, or loss or changes in sense of smell or taste)
 - Note: testing is also recommended for people with new onset of other clinical symptoms consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19)** AND who are from the following cohorts: close contacts of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19); those who have returned from overseas in the past 14 days; or those who are healthcare or aged care workers. Testing is recommended for those cohorts with onset of other clinical symptoms**. Asymptomatic testing is not recommended at this stage except for targeted programs
 - *Clinical discretion applies including consideration of the potential for co-infection (e.g. concurrent infection with SARS-CoV-2 and influenza)
 - **headache, myalgia, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea.
- If referring your patients for coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, a list of testing locations can be found on the [getting tested for coronavirus page](#).
- If a symptomatic patient that presents for testing, confirms exposure to a known coronavirus (COVID-19) case within the past 14 days, and the outbreak definition is met, the test sample is to be treated as an 'outbreak sample'.

Victoria's restriction levels

- The State of Emergency has been extended until 29 January 2021 to allow the Chief Health Officer's directions to remain in force.
- From 5:00pm on Thursday 31 December 2020, the limit of people gathering in private homes was reduced from 30 to 15.

Key messages for the community

- Testing is a critical help to keep numbers down so it's extremely important that if people have [symptoms](#), however mild, they get tested. Go home straight after your test and isolate while you wait for the results. Go to the [testing map](#) for locations.
- [Public exposure sites are listed on the DHHS website](#). If you have visited any of the locations listed during the dates indicated, you should watch for coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. If symptoms occur immediately get tested and stay at home while you wait for results.
- COVIDSafe principles apply across Victoria:
 - You must carry a face mask with you when you leave home. You must wear your face mask on public transport, while in taxis or ride share vehicles, or when going to large retail venues, including shopping centres, supermarkets and department stores.
 - Wearing a face mask is strongly recommended in all other situations when you can't

keep 1.5 metres distance from other people. Don't go to work if you feel unwell.

- Maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres.
 - Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow.
 - Wash hands with soap or use hand sanitiser regularly.
- The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Home Safety Plan \(PDF\) is available](#) for download which tells you what you need to know to help you, your family and friends stay safe and well.
 - Many Victorians are feeling fatigued, isolated or lonely. If you are in need of support for your mental health there are [mental health resources](#) you can access on our website.
 - If Victorians are not safe at home, they can seek help and support at an [Orange Door](#) or other family violence support service. If you or someone you know is at risk or experiencing family violence, call 000 in an emergency or safe steps 24/7 crisis service on 1800 015 188.
 - The [Partners in Wellbeing](#) hotline (1300 375 330) is available for referrals from people who identify as LGBTIQ, multicultural, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, veterans and people experiencing homelessness.

Clinical information

- [Latest coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for Victorian health services and general practice](#)
- [Latest information about providing immunisation services during Coronavirus Pandemic](#) (Word)

Online resources

- Locations of respiratory assessment clinics and testing sites are available [online and through an interactive map](#).
- Find out the latest information about visiting [care facilities](#) and [hospitals](#) on our website.
- [Protecting our healthcare workers \(PDF\)](#) sets out the very latest in our understanding of coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it can spread within healthcare settings – both hospitals and aged-care facilities. More information can be [found online](#).
- A new [Infection Prevention and Control](#) resource hub is now online, and includes a new factsheet on protective eyewear and the [Guide to the conventional use of PPE \(Word\)](#). Updated information for health care workers is available online on the [PPE coronavirus page](#).

Consumer information

- [Financial and other support for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Translated resources in over 50 languages](#)
- [Victoria's current restrictions](#)
- [Latest coronavirus information from the World Health Organization](#)
- [Latest travel advice from Smartraveller](#)

Contacts

Medical practitioners needing clinical information or to notify confirmed cases can contact the Department of Health and Human Services Communicable Diseases Section on 1300 651 160 (24 hours).

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Contact

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The department acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

The department is committed to safe and inclusive work places, policies and services for people of LGBTIQ communities and their families.



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