

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 20 December 2020

FURTHER MEASURES TO PROTECT VICTORIA

The Victorian Government will today enact new measures to protect our state from the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Based on the most up-to-date information available, the current outbreak in New South Wales is linked to a returned traveler in that state's Hotel Quarantine program. However, concerningly, there remain missing links in the chains of transmission and case numbers and exposure sites continue to grow.

Without mandatory mask rules and stay at home orders across Sydney, our Government and state's health authorities do not have confidence that the situation remains safe.

It's why from 11:59pm tonight, the Greater Sydney area and the Central Coast will be designated as a 'red zone'. That means people who live in these communities, or have visited these communities since 11 December 2020, cannot enter Victoria. Anyone from this zone found trying to enter Victoria in breach of this order will be subject to 14-day mandatory hotel quarantine.

Victorians who have recently visited or are currently in Greater Sydney and the Central Coast, other than those in the Northern Beaches area, will be given until 11:59 Monday 21 December to return home.

Those returning must register for an exemption on the Service Victoria website and then get tested within 24 hours of returning to our state. They must then self-quarantine for 14 days at home. Follow up checks will be undertaken.

The Northern Beaches area will also be elevated to a 'hot zone'. Victorians in the Northern Beaches area remain subject to the NSW's Chief Health Officer's stay at home orders and will not be permitted to enter Victoria.

The rest of regional New South Wales remains a green zone, but residents in these areas will still need to apply for and receive a valid permit to enter Victoria.

Those living in local government areas along the border will not need a permit but will instead be able to use their driver's license as a passport to travel between Victoria and New South Wales.

Victoria Police will deploy up to 700 members to establish additional checkpoints along the Victorian and New South Wales border to ensure only people with permits, residents in border communities or those with eligible exemptions are able to cross into our state. They will be supported by the SES and other emergency services personnel and Victoria has requested logistical support from the Australian Defence Force to support the establishment and management of the check points.

The local government areas in the border zone on the Victorian side are: Alpine, Benalla, Bendigo, Buloke, Campaspe, East Gippsland, Gannawarra, Indigo, Loddon, Mildura, Moira, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga and Yarriambiack.

The NSW LGAs are: Albury City, Balranald, Bega Valley, Berrigan, Broken Hill, Edward River, Federation, Greater Hume, Hay, Lockhart, Murray River, Murrumbidgee, Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys, Wagga Wagga, and Wentworth.

Discussions are underway the ACT Government and these will inform how residents from Canberra and the ACT are treated whilst also ensuring we stop travellers from Greater Sydney, Northern Beaches and the Central Coast entering Victoria by taking flights from Canberra Airport.

Anyone found to have entered Victoria without a valid permit or exemption, may be subject to penalties in excess of \$1,652 and if you intentionally provide false information on your permit application, you may be issued a fine of \$1,652 or face a penalty of up to \$9,913.

We know these safeguards will have a big impact on many families ahead of Christmas and the New Year, but we believe these measures are integral to keeping our state safe.

We will continue to assess the situation as it evolves. More information about the permit system will be made available on the Service Victoria website.

Quotes attributable to the Premier Daniel Andrews

“Just as when other states closed their borders to us, these decisions are not easy, but they are necessary.”

“We know keeping families apart is an especially hard ask this close to Christmas. But Victorians have given up too much for us not to take this seriously.”

“Without significant additional action to slow the spread of the virus in New South Wales, we believe these measures are necessary to keeping Victoria safe.”