

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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VICTORIA'S ROADMAP: DELIVERING THE NATIONAL PLAN

These past 20 months have been incredibly hard on all Victorians. We have missed our loved ones and doing the things we love, all the while buying time for people to get vaccinated.

Opening up too soon – before people had the chance to get the jab – would mean our hospital system simply could not cope and catastrophic numbers of Victorians would become seriously unwell.

However, as more and more Victorians get that protection, we move to the next phase of the pandemic and we have the opportunity to open up. The path to being open again will be difficult – but essential to moving forward as a state.

Victoria's new Roadmap to Deliver the National Plan released today sets us on a hopeful path to opening while also preserving our health system and ensuring Victorians can still get the healthcare they need, when they need it most.

The Roadmap has been developed based on expert modelling from the Burnet Institute and is set against COVID-19 thresholds including hospitalisation rates, and the vaccination targets already set out in the *National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response*.

The modelling has helped our public health teams get a picture of what our hospitalisation rates could look like while cases are still rising and develop trigger points to indicate if the system is becoming overstretched – allowing time to implement further health measures and protect it from becoming overwhelmed.

While we're no longer aiming for COVID zero, it's imperative we don't jeopardise our health system as we open up – too many Victorians rely on it every day.

The COVID-19 thresholds detailed in the Roadmap will be important measures to maintain as we move through the different stages in order to safeguard the health system. There will be a "guard rail" system in place, which will allow our public health team to adjust restrictions if hospital admissions become too high.

The Burnet modelling also shows that the key to opening up and reducing risk in Victoria will be making sure workers across the state are vaccinated.

To help ensure this, Victoria's Chief Health Officer will assess vaccination requirements for all authorised workers in Victoria. These requirements and potential deadlines will be assessed progressively as the Chief Health Officer considers each sector. There are already vaccine requirements for aged care, construction, and freight workforces.

Following the recommendation from AHPPC to National Cabinet, we can confirm that healthcare workers will be the next workforce to have vaccination become a requirement to work. Healthcare workers will need to have received at least their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 15 October or provide evidence that they have an appointment to be vaccinated before 1 November to continue working.

The next workforce group prioritised for assessment will be school staff and childcare staff. We will also have more to say soon about Victoria Police and disability worker vaccinations requirements.

As we reach 70 per cent and 80 per cent double dose vaccination targets, the Roadmap lists certain venues for opening – but only on the condition that all eligible attendees to the venue are vaccinated.

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

While we remain constrained by Pfizer vaccine supply from the Commonwealth, the Moderna vaccine will start being delivered through pharmacies this week, more GPs will have access to Pfizer and we'll continue to do everything we can to prioritise vaccination those who need it – and make access to vaccinations as easy as possible for all Victorians.

As we've flagged before, there will come a time when Victorians who choose not to get vaccinated will be left behind – that time has now been firmly set in the Roadmap.

When Victoria reaches 70 per cent double dose vaccination, changes will include an increase in numbers for public gatherings outdoors, funerals, weddings and religious gatherings – with larger caps for people who are fully vaccinated.

Creative studios, amusement parks, entertainment venues and hospitality will also reopen with patron cap and density limits but only to people who are fully vaccinated.

There is very little precedence in Australia for fully vaccinated events, which is why the Government will conduct trials to support businesses as much as possible in the lead up to transitioning to a 'vaccinated economy' in this state, and ensure we have the right systems in place.

Both one-off events and specific venues will be considered – with businesses permitted to operate with higher patron caps if all staff and patrons provide evidence of full vaccination. Areas in regional Victoria with highest vaccination rates and no COVID-19 cases will be the first to be considered for these trials.

Proof of vaccination options will also be part of the trials. The Service Victoria app will be integrated with a Medicare Certificate that shows proof of vaccination and other proof of vaccination options may also be trialled to determine what works best for both businesses and patrons.

Another key part of the Roadmap when we hit 70 per cent double dose vaccination, getting more activities outside is a key part of keeping us safe and slowing case numbers. We want to see retail shopping in laneways and fitness classes in our parks.

Based on the overwhelming success of last Summer's Outdoor Dining program, we will be looking to provide additional funding to councils and businesses to get even more activities outside and more details will be released about this soon.

For the final phase of the Roadmap, we will wait for more details to be developed as part of the National Plan as we move beyond 80 per cent double dose vaccination rates and we will update Victorians on that final phase in coming weeks.

We know how important getting to the end of the year and being able to celebrate Christmas will be for so many. That's why we are working towards having 30 visitors to the home by late December – and with travel across both interstate and international borders open again, many families will be able to reunite.

So, if you are yet to book your vaccination, now is the time.

In our state clinics there are 4,796 AstraZeneca appointments and 9,076 Pfizer appointments available over the next week. Victorians can also book through their trusted GP or local pharmacist. More than ever, the best vaccine is the vaccine that's available today.

For more information on Victoria's Roadmap to Deliver the National Plan visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au.

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