

18 October 2020

Some good news for Victorian businesses but more to do to fast track COVID-normal

Thousands of Victoria's struggling businesses have received some good news from the Andrews Government, with the Premier today permitting some businesses to reopen and the potential for more as infection rates remain low.

While the news has been positive for some, there are many businesses that have been overlooked and must wait longer. The certainty for business is good, but as every day goes by that they are closed, more business owners will not recover and that means both more debt and more jobs will be lost.

From 11.59pm tonight in metropolitan Melbourne, hairdressers can get back to work, outdoor real estate auctions will be able to take place with up to 10 people, plus the required staff, and thousands of tradies will return to work, among other changes.

The Premier stated that more time is needed to reach the Third Step of the metropolitan roadmap, with Victoria's hard-hit retail, hospitality and personal care services still not permitted to open their doors until 11.59pm on 1 November.

Regional Victoria's hard work and sacrifice was recognised with almost non-existent case numbers enabling hospitality businesses to host up to 40 customers indoors and up to 70 outdoors, from 11.59pm tonight. Other changes include outdoor religious gatherings increasing to 20 people, and two people and dependants will now be able to visit as many other households a day, provided they remain within those numbers per visit.

The Premier stated the possibility of easing restrictions earlier if the state continues to track well on the most important indicators: infection rate averages, mystery cases, test numbers and the number of days people wait before they get tested. We urge every Victorian to do their bit, so the Premier can provide the announcement we all need next Sunday.

The Chamber is proud to see its advocacy and feedback reflected in today's announcements – and will continue working to get all members and industries back to work.

To be attributed to Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief Executive Paul Guerra:

"Today's announcement, reflecting our intensive engagement with government, provides some good news for people and businesses, with more certainty on how restrictions will be eased across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

"We have already heard from our hospitality and retail operators, and they are desperate to get back to work. That must happen over the next 10 days, and hospitality limits must be increased to 20 people per space indoors as part of a viable reopening. We need to ensure they can maximise every weekend from now, and enjoy a strong Christmas.

“Now, with the Premier signalling the potential to open even earlier, the Victorian Chamber asks every Victorian to do the right thing so the Premier can announce full re-opening of business next Sunday.

“We cannot keep the state locked up. The contact tracing system is in place, businesses have COVIDSafe plans, and if every Victorian commits to doing the right thing with masks, social distancing and testing, we can again enjoy a sense of COVID normality, like we have seen in other states.

“Not only should Victorian businesses open up, but the border restrictions from SA and NSW can now be dropped. To rebuild the nation’s economy, we must see freedoms for everyone to travel to and from Victoria without the need for quarantine.”

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