

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 22 September 2021

LOCKDOWN IN CITY OF BALLARAT TO LIFT ON SCHEDULE

On the advice of the Chief Health Officer, the seven-day lockdown in the City of Ballarat will lift at 11:59pm tonight, 22 September, with public health officials increasingly confident that the spread of cases in the city is under control.

The Ballarat community's extraordinary efforts and sacrifice to date have helped slow the spread of COVID-19 locally, prevent a longer lockdown, and protect others in Ballarat and across western Victoria.

In the last week, around 10,000 tests have been processed from testing locations across Ballarat – which is almost one tenth of the city's population. 18 local cases have been identified, with no new cases today.

Despite the progress, given the fast-moving and unpredictable nature of the virus, locals are asked to stay on guard in case any new cases, concerns and chains of transmission are identified – including between now and when lockdown is scheduled to lift.

With these changes, Ballarat will move to the COVIDSafe settings it was under before the lockdown, with no reasons required to leave the home and no limit on travel throughout regional Victoria.

However, there are still important public health restrictions in place. Masks must still be worn indoors and out. No one can come to your home to visit. And getting tested and vaccinated is just as important as ever.

You can't travel to metropolitan Melbourne (or another regional Local Government Area currently in lockdown, such as Geelong or the Surf Coast) except for very limited reasons, including authorised work and permitted education, care and compassionate reasons, necessary goods and services and to visit your intimate partner.

Similarly, people from metropolitan Melbourne (or another area in lockdown) can't come to Ballarat for anything other than the permitted reasons – and businesses are required to check IDs for addresses.

You can see friends and family outdoors in a public place in a group of up to 10 people. Religious gatherings and ceremonies are allowed with no more than 20 people – just make sure you check in with the Service Victoria app.

The authorised worker list no longer applies for attending work in Ballarat – but if you can work or study from home, you should continue to do so. Offices can permit staff to attend on site for work, with capacity limits. Childcare and kinder are open, as is outdoor community sports for training. Gyms are open with strict limits.

More information about the COVIDSafe settings the City of Ballarat will move to at 11:59pm 22 September can be found here: www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-live-information-regional-victoria

The Chief Health Officer has also advised that at 11.59pm tonight, those areas of Point Lonsdale located within in the City of Greater Geelong will be able to follow the same rules that apply to the Borough of Queenscliffe.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Regional communities come together in a powerful way to deal with challenges like these. We saw it in Shepparton and Ballarat, and we'll see it in Geelong, Surf Coast and Mitchell Shire too."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"I thank everyone who came out and got tested and vaccinated – and if you still haven't got the jab, make an appointment today with a local GP or pharmacy, or at one of Victoria's vaccination centres."

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

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"I couldn't be prouder of Ballarat for stepping up when it counted. Every single person who followed the restrictions, got tested, and got vaccinated, has helped keep our community safe and prevented a longer lockdown."

Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle

"We've always said the moment it's safe to lift restrictions we will, and I want to thank Ballarat residents for their extraordinary efforts to slow the spread of this virus and protect the local community."