

Transcript

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Compere: **KARL STEFANOVIC, ALLISON LANGDON, AND ALEX CULLEN** Summary ID: **X00082549168**

Item: **PRESS CONFERENCE WITH DANIEL ANDREWS, VICTORIAN PREMIER IN MELBOURNE.**

INTERVIEWEES: DANIEL ANDREWS, VICTORIAN PREMIER

Audience:	Male 16+	Female 16+	All people
	27000	34000	61000

DANIEL ANDREWS: Okay. So, first and foremost I'm joined by Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton, Police and Emergency Services Minister Lisa Neville to make some very important announcements following the meeting of the National Cabinet last night. As I think you know, because the Prime Minister has taken you through in broad detail, the National Cabinet took some unprecedented steps, huge steps yesterday to keep Victorians and indeed Australians safe. Never before have we seen a situation where venues, as such a large part of our economy, has essentially been shut down. This is appropriate. It's painful, but it is absolutely appropriate.

Now, I'll run through each of those settings, and of course we'll move to questions. But these bans, this shutdown includes pubs, clubs, nightclubs, Crown Casino, licensed venues in hotels and pubs beyond that, gyms, indoor sporting venues, places of worship, cinemas, entertainment venues, weddings and funerals. This list is comprehensive. This list basically

represents a very big step, a massive step that is essential to keep Victorians and Australians safe.

Now, these restrictions will come into force from midday today and will remain in force until midnight 13 April. They may well, I think it's fair to say, it is highly likely that they will be further extended beyond that. Now, this is step one. And it's called step one for a reason. There is almost certainly going to be a step two and maybe even beyond that. The most important thing coming out of last night's National Cabinet meeting? We needed to take a big step. And that's exactly what we have done.

Now, I'll go to schools and I'll make some general comments about the behaviour of Victorians and what we expect and what's at stake here. Schools, as you know, were due to break up. Holidays will begin- were scheduled to begin on Friday. There was at least one pupil free day in the week also. We have taken the decision, and the Chief Health Officer of Victoria is completely comfortable and supportive of this, to bring forward the school holidays and to spend these precious days without kids at school to plan for remote, flexible distance learning in the event that we need to move to that way of teaching and learning. These days will be very, very important, and the Deputy Premier and Education Minister James Merlino will have more to say at the appropriate time when it comes to the different steps that we're putting in place so that our kids can continue to be taught, to learn in the event that we have to go to that mode. The term 2 is scheduled to begin on 14 April. And people should

plan for term 2 to begin on 14 April unless I have advice, medical advice not to proceed with term 3 at school. I'm not making that announcement today, but term 2 begins on the 14th. But holidays begin from the end of the school day today.

Now, just before I go to some general comments about what each of us must do to save lives, I just want to make a couple of comments about the forthcoming school holidays. These are not ordinary school holidays. Every Australian has been advised not to undertake non-essential travel. And I'm advising every family that school holidays where kids might be going and staying at friends' places, kids might be outgoing to shopping malls and doing all the usual things - that is not appropriate. We can't write a rule for that. But it is not appropriate. That is the clear advice. It'll be a very different school holiday than usual. And it needs to be, because if we don't start taking these things seriously, then we will be talking about quite amazing tragedy.

Now, many Victorians are doing the right thing. They are keeping their distance. They are observing the rules that have been written. But there are many Victorians who are acting selfishly. They are not taking this seriously. They are doing the wrong thing. And if that continues, then people will die. It is easy to do the right thing for your family and for people that you have never met.

I just want to make this point. Whether you call it mateship, whether you call it being Australian, being Victorian, whether you call it decent behaviour, civic

duty, I don't care what you call it. Just do it. You need to keep your distance. You need to observe the rules. And that is not an option. That's why today I'm joined by the Chief Commissioner and I can also announce that Victoria Police have allocated five hundred police members to a special taskforce that is all about enforcing the coronavirus rules that have been put in place. In some respects, it is disappointing that it has come to this. But we've seen people on beaches in Sydney. We could just as easily have seen pictures of people in bars and cafés and restaurants and nightclubs here in Melbourne and right across Victoria. It's unacceptable. It will cost lives. It will cost lives. So, no matter what you call it, no matter what motivates you, do the right thing for everybody. That's what's at stake here. If we have a situation where this virus fundamentally gets away from us, we will have thousands of people who will only survive if they can breathe with the assistance of a machine. And we will not have enough machines, nurses and doctors to provide that care. I'm not sure whether I could make it any clearer than that. If you need further evidence, turn on your TV, have a look what's going on in Italy. Have a look what's going on in many other parts of the world.

Now, before I throw to Lisa to talk in more detail about Victoria Police enforcement of the rules that have been put in place, I do want to just highlight the fact that coronavirus.vic.gov.au will be- is exactly the place for anybody who's uncertain about whether their business needs to change, whether their business in fact can open. Go to that website. There will be- now and we'll

add to it over time, detailed information about how these rules work. We needed to take a very big step last night and the National Cabinet did just that. Is it the last step? Almost certainly not. There's another meeting on Tuesday night, there'll be meetings regularly throughout this crisis. I think it's almost certain that we will have more things to say. But at this stage, a massive step has been taken. This will hurt many people. I apologise for that. But this is the only way that we can keep people safe by flattening that curve, by suppressing the total number of people who finish up with coronavirus and ultimately reducing the number of people who will die. That's what's at stake. That's how important this is. And I ask every single Victorian to do the right thing.

Just finally, by way of example, you won't be able to go to the pub because the pub is shut. That doesn't mean you can have all your mates around to home and get on the beers. That's not appropriate. It's not essential. It's not needed and all it will do is spread the virus. Do you want another example? We had a case last week where a group of people, a dozen or so, went to a dinner party. As best we can tell, the dinner party started with one person who had the coronavirus. By the end of the dinner party, almost everybody at the dinner party had the coronavirus. This spreads rapidly. If people simply behave as normal, if they don't take this seriously, if they act selfishly, then people will die. I can't be any clearer than that. I also say many are doing the right thing and I'm very grateful to them for having the welfare of others, the welfare of all of us

front of mind. That's your civic duty. That's what's most important. And that's what must be done.

I'll ask Lisa now to speak about enforcement and then we're happy to take any questions you have. I also have a case update as well which I'll give to you now, if you like. At this stage, because we get some updated figures at about 9.30, but at this stage as of about 7.45 this morning, we have 59 additional confirmed cases. That's a total of 355. That number will probably grow in the next couple of hours as we tally up fully all the case- testing results from yesterday.

Lisa.

LISA NEVILLE:

Well, good morning everyone. So, about this time last week the Chief Commissioner and I spoke about the powers Victoria Police have got as a result of the directives issued by the Chief Health Officer. And we spoke about their ability to do both proactive and reactive spot checks on people who had returned from travel and also in terms of mass gatherings. Unfortunately, you know we had hoped that more people would comply than they have been. I know Victoria Police over the last few days have been doing spot checks; a lot of people are doing the right thing but some of those had not been doing the right thing. But also, over the weekend what we saw was quite a number of breaches in relation to the rules around indoor gatherings. What that has meant as a result of that, we're upping the ante in terms of Victoria Police engagement on this. This is such a significant issue in terms of people's lives, Victoria Police will have a

dedicated team of officers who will be tasked with doing those spot checks of travellers but also ensuring that people are following the rules in relation to non-essential gatherings. It is so critical and Victoria Police do not want to be out there having to knock on people's doors. Unfortunately, they have had to be and they will need to be over the coming weeks. Victoria Police members have a lot of other work to do so the more you comply the better the chance that they can get on with the other bit of work. But have- be in no doubt at all, police have the powers if they so believe to find you, arrest you, detain you. And they will use those powers where needed in the interests of community safety.

The other thing I'd just say is that last week we also saw escalations around behaviour at supermarkets and police again have had to intervene in a number of those. Again, you know, as the Prime Minister said please stop it. Stop this behaviour. There was enough food, there were enough beverages to go around in our community. We saw runs last night on some of our liquor stores, they are not closing. People go about proper shopping, planning ahead. You do not need to use that sort of behaviour and have police having to be called.

So, this is a new measure. It is upping the ante in terms of Victoria Police engagement on this issue. Because it is such a substantial issue and it is about saving lives. Police officers will be there for reassurance but they'll also be there to ensure people are abiding by the rules.

Now I might just ask Graham briefly to talk a little about - the Chief Commissioner - to talk a little bit about how that unit will work.

GRAHAM ASHTON:

Thanks Minister. As both the Premier and the Minister have outlined we've got police that will be dedicated to the task of enforcing these new arrangements. We're expecting to have delegations this morning from the Chief Health Officer which will give us appropriate powers in relation to doing this particular work.

For us we've already been seeing examples through the spot checking we've been doing where the community haven't been following the requirements regarding self-quarantining. We've had instances where in the spot checks people haven't been a home when they should have been at home and people that have [indistinct] said we're at home for some of the time, other times we're out shopping, we're out doing things. So clearly the message hasn't been getting through to the degree that we really need to see to make sure that we can deal with this health emergency in a proper way. Hence, we've had a need obviously through the good work of everyone involved in terms of making the right decision to keep people safe, to up the ante and have got some new measures. And we're in a position now to be able to do the enforcement for that. I should stress that it will be part of- as well as having dedicated officers of task it will be a part of our general patrol work to be making sure that people are complying with these arrangements as well. So in addition to sort of 500 there will be in fact many more.

When we look at all the patrol work that will be done including in their everyday work as well.

I should point out Victoria Police will still be doing their regular work, our day in day out work. Most of which, I should point out, is responding to family violence events. And in that regard with more people at home, more people self-isolating, it's a good reminder just to be looking out for each other, to be doing the right thing by each other. And when where we could potentially see increases in family violence we just want to make sure that people are respecting each other and doing the right thing to make sure that doesn't happen.

We want to make sure as well that people are thinking about the greater community good. So far we've seen very good community behaviour in relation to overall public order. People have been responding very well in that regard in terms of looking after each other. We want to make sure that that continues. We want to make sure that people are showing each other the right amount of respect, so that community can work through this and get through this unprecedented time as safely as we possibly can.

DANIEL ANDREWS:

I think before we go to questions can I just take this opportunity to - on behalf of all Victorians - to thank our emergency services who are doing a fantastic job. Teachers and staff, it's been a very stressful time for them I know. Can I thank the whole team across our health system and it's not just doctors and nurses, as important as they are in our health system, but it's

cooks and cleaners and orderlies and people at the front office, people in laboratories processing all of these tests. Everyone is working hard. The Government's got a plan but we need every Victorian to take this seriously. If Victorians don't, if some Victorians choose to continue to act in a selfish way then people will die. That is the fact of this. I can't be any clearer than that.

Simon.

QUESTION:

Premier, there was mass confusion last night among small businesses over whether they should close or not. Can a small business go to this website or contact the state government if they are confused?

DANIEL ANDREWS:

Of course, they can and there'll be details that will clarify the position for them. But if you're not a pub or a gym or a café or a restaurant, if you're not on the list that I've just taken you through, a list that I think is pretty clear now following last night's National Cabinet meeting, then you can remain open. At the same time though we are advising all of those businesses to- and their staff to practice that social distancing that just makes sense. And also to comply with other rules around outdoor events over 500, indoor events under 100, the four square metre rule. All of those rules as well as advice so common sense basically, common sense applies if your business is open. For instance, if you can work from home you should work from home. Non-essential travel, we're advising against that. In many respects if people can just think about their daily lives, what's essential, what isn't and then make good

judgements, good decisions. That will help stop the spread of this virus and indeed that will help people, all of us, to get through this crisis.

QUESTION: Do you think the next step would be closing down all non-food, retail, manufacturing [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS: Sure. Brendan, I understand completely that people would like all of those questions answered, I understand that. I don't think it's wise, back to Simon's earlier point, for us to speculate about what that next step might be. I'm just being really clear, as clear as I can be, as honest and frank as I can be, as I've been right throughout this. That we'd act on advice, that the advice will change, decisions would be made and we will continue to add to this framework. That's the nature of these things. It is fast moving and that's really challenging for people, all of us. The best thing to do though is to allow us to keep people updated and informed, that's why I'm standing here now. That's why I'll be before you many, many, many times before this is over. National cabinet meets again on Tuesday night and part of our agenda will be to discuss what if any next steps need to be taken. Once those decisions - if they're made - once they're made then we'll have more to say.

Everyone gets a go.

QUESTION: Given what you're doing with schools...

DANIEL ANDREWS: Yes.

QUESTION: ...what's the advice on childcare [indistinct] and TAFE?

DANIEL ANDREWS: Yeah. This is a very important point. Let me go through TAFE and universities. I'm very pleased to think that TAFE and universities- many courses are being moved to online. That's not possible of course with some TAFE courses but I'm very confident, all my advice is that universities and TAFE settings in the main are doing the right thing around distancing. And they certainly need to apply the rules around big outside gatherings and indeed how gatherings of less than 100 would apply. So the notion, 100 square metre room you can't have any more than 25 people there. All of those rules apply in my advice. And again that's why Victoria Police are going to be out there checking this to make sure that people are following the rules but my advice is that those rules are being followed. In terms of childcare, that is not on the list. Kinder is not on the list at this point. But as I said this is stage one, step one. There will be further announcements to make at some point and it's at time that I'll be able to confirm.

QUESTION: This announcement will leave a lot of people unemployed...

DANIEL ANDREWS: Yes.

QUESTION: ...what sort of supports are there to ensure that they can [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS: Well I should take the opportunity to thank the Prime Minister and Treasurer Josh Frydenberg on the

announcements they made yesterday. That is a very substantial package. More than \$60 billion on top of many other announcements that have been made. For our part, I just take you back to Saturday I know that seems a long time ago, a lot's happened since then. But there's about \$550 million worth of payroll tax refunds that will be in accounts starting, and we hope to get as much of a done as we can - there's 24,000 refunds - by the end of this week. Some of that may spill into the following week. There's about \$750 million worth of government invoices, so bills, money we owe often to small and medium sized businesses. We are going to get those bills paid within the five days so as fast as we possibly can. Between those two measures alone that's the best part of well over a billion dollars, not in the Government's bank account but in small and medium sized business bank accounts where it's needed.

Now, you'll also recall we announced the \$500 million fund to support those worst-affected businesses. Now, of course, with the list that I've just read out, with the decisions, painful, difficult but absolutely necessary, that National Cabinet made last night. Treasurer Tim Pallas and other ministers are meeting with those sectors today and we'll have more announcements to make about getting that money out into those businesses to support those workers and their families as quickly as possible. But some of the unemployment benefit changes, some of the safety net- social safety net changes, that the Federal Government announced yesterday, I think that's exactly what we need and to the extent that we can play a part in, if you like, our package tailoring to that, so properly aligning with that,

that's what we've done. That's why we waited to develop a unique package but a coordinated package, and I think what we announced fits well with what the Commonwealth Government announced yesterday.

Now, the Commonwealth Government's made it clear there may need to be further support and I'm certainly not ruling out further support as well. What I can say without any doubt is that I'll be making further announcements about more money, more resources for our health system. Last week, I announced more than \$500 million in additional support for our health services and the care that they offer, and I'm very confident that I'll be back here again talking about more resources in the health system very, very soon.

QUESTION:

Premier, yesterday, you put out a statement that said that you were moving towards a shutdown over 48 hours of all non-essential services. That's created a lot of confusion and panic. Everyone thought it'd be a full shutdown from today. Did you get what you wanted [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS:

What I wanted, Rich, was for us to take a big step, and that's exactly what we did. Will we have to take further steps? I think almost certainly we will. But it's not appropriate, I don't think, for any of us to necessarily foreshadow that to the point that you're making. We want to be-

QUESTION:

[Interrupts] yesterday [inaudible]... people thought [indistinct] work from home now [indistinct].

DANIEL ANDREWS: [Talks over] Well, people, if they can work from home, should be. That's the first point.

QUESTION: [Inaudible]...

DANIEL ANDREWS: No, hang on a minute.

QUESTION: [Talks over] [Indistinct] you talk about clear messaging. It's certainly something that wasn't [indistinct] stated by yourself and the Prime Minister.

DANIEL ANDREWS: Well, I don't necessarily accept that. But again, you're free to have a view but I'm not going to be a commentator on your commentary on me. What I'm going to say is that the National Cabinet met last night. We took a big step. A very, very big step. Not easy. That's what I wanted. That's what we got. And that's really important because I think what we did last night and what will come into effect at midday today will save lives. Just like if people follow the rules, if people make good decisions instead of selfish ones, instead of killing people, we will save lives. I can't be clearer. Whether you want to call it mateship or being a good Australian or complying with your civic duty, I don't care what you call it, just do it. Because if you don't, people will die. And you know who dies? The most vulnerable people in our Victorian community. That is not a tough choice to make. Do the right thing. Do the smart thing. Do the decent thing. Follow the advice and follow the rules. And what's more, if you don't, you've got every reason to believe that Victoria Police will catch you and you will be punished.

QUESTION: Just on the medical advice, is there any difference, further to Rich's point, between- is there any difference between Brett Sutton's advice at the moment and the federal advice? And is that what-

DANIEL ANDREWS: [Interrupts] In relation to what?

QUESTION: Well, particularly schools, I guess, which fronted your statement last time [indistinct].

DANIEL ANDREWS: [Talks over] Well, let me take you through schools. Let me take you through schools.

QUESTION: But is there any difference between the federal and the state [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS: Let me take you- there is a different position on Victorian schools and I'll take you through why. We are in a unique position. No other states start their school holidays this Friday. We do. After discussions with colleagues and discussions fully supported, decisions fully supported by the Chief Health Officer, we decided to bring the school holidays forward. Now, we'll again make the point. There was at least one pupil-free day this weekend, and some schools I think were planning on having as many as two pupil-free days this week. It just makes sense to take this time to do the work around flexible, remote distance learning, online learning and all that that entails, and that is a lot of work. I think we all appreciate that. That time will only be available to us now to get ahead of that issue, and

the Deputy Premier will make more announcements about it.

Ultimately, we're in a unique position because our school holidays start this Friday. Some states, their school holidays don't start until after Easter. So, I'm not surprised that our advice and the decision we've made is different because our circumstances are different. I might even say to you, Simon, if every school across Australia was due to go on their term one holidays this Friday, then perhaps other states would have made the same decision that I made. But that's not what's occurred because school holidays happen at different times. I'm very comfortable with the decision that I've made and I'm very comfortable with the fact that I follow advice. And I don't believe there are inconsistencies. I think everybody, whether it be the Chief Health Officer of Victoria or the Chief Medical Officer of Australia, are all working together to do what's needed to keep Victorians and Australians safe. Advice does change from time to time and I've said this- I don't know how many times I've said it. I'm going to have to keep saying it, and I'm happy to do it to keep reinforcing the point. The advice will change from time to time. The Government's response will need to change from time to time. That's the nature of these things. They move really fast and that's frustrating. That's challenging. But it's nowhere near as challenging as people doing the wrong thing and then we have 10,000 people who can only survive if they've got a machine to help them breathe and we don't have enough machines, nurses and doctors to get that job done.

QUESTION: Did the National Cabinet [indistinct] last night?

DANIEL ANDREWS: No, not at all.

QUESTION: There's different versions of events flying around.

DANIEL ANDREWS: Well, there'll always be different versions flying around. I can't really help that. I want to be really clear with you. The National Cabinet is a critically important part of the most effective response to this. That's why I'm in the room. That's why we're all there. This is how we will best protect the most vulnerable in our Victorian community and communities across our nation. It's going to meet many, many times, and there will be many announcements and circumstances will change, the responsible change. It needs to. This is not static. This is moving fast. And we need to have that sense of urgency and that's why I thought it was very, very important that we take a big step last night, and be in no doubt, that's exactly what we did.

Over to Rachel. Rachel.

QUESTION: Why did you talk about shutting down all non-essential services yesterday without defining what those are because undeniably that did cause a panic in the community?

DANIEL ANDREWS: Well, again, I just want to be really clear with you. What was important last night was that we took a big next step, and I really don't think any of us should state across or just sort of gloss over the fact that this is a

massive step. Ask publicans, ask restaurant owners, ask people who work in those businesses, people who own gyms, the list goes on and on, this is a massive step but it is one that we needed to take, not taken lightly. And by no means should any of us consider this to be anything other than a really big step. The fact that there might need to be other steps doesn't diminish how big a change this is. We have never done this before in any of our lifetimes, but it was appropriate and that's why we've done it.

QUESTION: [Inaudible question]

DANIEL ANDREWS: I'll come back to you, Simon. On borders, look-

QUESTION: [Inaudible]... in New South Wales, is there any consideration to closing that [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS: I'm not interested in closing our borders. I don't think that makes a lot of sense for us. And what other states do is a matter for them and I'll give you one example. Albury Wodonga Health is run by us. It is- the Albury Hospital is of course on the other side of the border. I think there are issues about what's practical and what isn't, and there'll be similar examples on other border towns, if you like, along the Murray. The most important thing here is that people heed the advice provided by the National Cabinet: non-essential travel should not happen. If everyone complies with that, then these issues of border movements- if social distancing is applied, if people use common sense, act in their interests and the interests of everybody else,

instead of acting in a selfish way, then I don't think we need to get to the point-

QUESTION: [Interrupts] [Indistinct] South Australia.

DANIEL ANDREWS: Yes.

QUESTION: So, people might [indistinct] over the border. What do we consider as essential and non-essential?

DANIEL ANDREWS: Well, that's ultimately- our border is not closed. So, that's essentially a matter for the South Australian Government and other governments who have made that choice. I think broadly they've got definitions of essential and non-essential. I'll leave it to them to explain that. Our border is not closed. If I got advice tomorrow to say that we should, well, then that'd be different. But I have no advice to close our borders and I think that it might well be a drain on precious resources because you can't just have a rule and then not actually enforce it. So what might be appropriate for other states, I'll leave it for them to explain that. But we think we've got our settings particularly around our borders right.

QUESTION: The number of people infected now is doubling every three days.

DANIEL ANDREWS: Yes.

QUESTION: Is that what's driving you now? What do we need to do?

DANIEL ANDREWS: Well, I'll leave it to Brett Sutton and others to talk to you in more detail about curve and what we'd like to see and perhaps the trajectory that we're currently experiencing. I think that Brett will be out later on today to do that. I'm not going to offer up medical opinion. But you're right though, James. We need to understand and appreciate that this is spreading and it's spreading faster than we would like. And therefore we have to take extreme measures. And I just- I don't think it's fair on anyone who works in a pub, or a café, or a restaurant to not accept that what we did last night is a massive shift. It is a big step. There may well be other steps. I just don't think it's fair on those workers and their families and those small business owners to not acknowledge that last night was a really big change. That's what I wanted. That's what we got. And there will be further announcements to make in due course.

QUESTION: [Indistinct]

DANIEL ANDREWS: Brendon and then Simon.

QUESTION: [Indistinct] up close with their clients like hairdressers, barbers, dentists, doctors, [Indistinct] with coronavirus. [Indistinct] thousands of people every day getting a haircut.

DANIEL ANDREWS: Whilst I've said, Brendan, that I don't want to foreshadow what the next steps might be. Those are the sorts of issues that I think that National Cabinet and our chief health and medical officers will be

working through. And they've got to make judgements about those things. I think that those sorts of questions will be questions that the National Cabinet will deal with. But again, I have been clear, I don't want to foreshadow and go through every single sector that might be impacted but the general principle that you're raising, I think is one that we will talk about in some detail.

Simon?

QUESTION:

Premier, have any Victorians died of coronavirus yet? You said in your statement that more Victorians would die. Just to clarify ...

DANIEL ANDREWS:

Well more than would otherwise be the case. It is simply not possible for us- for me to stand here today and say that no one will die of this. Tragically, sadly. But again being honest is really important. We are going to see deaths. We will see more deaths than would otherwise be the case if people are selfish, if people don't follow the rules. If you won't do it for yourself, do it for the people in our community who you may never have met but are our most vulnerable. Surely that's not too much to ask. Going over to a mate's place for a barbecue is not essential. It's not against the law, but it's not essential. If you can work from home, then you should. Again, that's not something that we're going to force you to do, but if you can, you should. We're all in this together and we all need to work for each other.

QUESTION: Do you have an update on the critical cases at all?

DANIEL ANDREWS: No, I've got no further information about that but I'm sure Brett could take you through that if there is an update.

QUESTION: [indistinct] patrolling beaches [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS: I think it's fair to say that police - both general duties police who are well briefed on these matters and the coronavirus enforcement task force - will be in many different places across the state. And if people are doing the wrong thing, then they will be dealt with. It shouldn't come to that, though. It shouldn't come to that. The Bondi scenes, and I'm not having a go at Sydney. As I said before, we could have had very similar pictures, the weather wasn't quite beach weather here, but you could have had pictures of nightclubs and bars and pubs where people were simply ignoring the advice and not taking this seriously. There's nothing more serious than people dying, and certainly those who are the most vulnerable. That should be the level that we operate on. That's not a matter of choice, that's just- they're just the facts. They're just the facts. And I don't care whether you call it being a good Australian, a good Victorian, whether you call it mateship, I don't care what you call it. Just do it for you and for the most vulnerable in our Victorian community

QUESTION:	Was your statement yesterday effectively [indistinct] dissatisfied with the speed and depth of the Federal response?
DANIEL ANDREWS:	No. Last night we took a very, very big step and one that I think is appropriate. But it will not be the last step. There will be further announcements at a time to be determined. The National Cabinet's meeting again on Tuesday night. I won't pre-empt the outcome of that meeting already, meeting of the National Cabinet, other than to say we have been prepared. As I said, I took you all to the Royal Melbourne Hospital, what is it, a couple of weeks ago now. And I said to you that they would not- we would be asking of Victorians things that we've never asked them before. We would be imposing on people's lives like we've never before. This is serious. This is absolutely serious and it needs to be taken seriously by every single Victorian. If it's not, then people will die. I can't be clearer than that.
QUESTION:	How many ICU beds ...
DANIEL ANDREWS:	How many ICU beds there are? We are currently in a process with the Commonwealth, the national- the Commonwealth Health Officer Brendan Murphy- Commonwealth Medical Officer, I should say, Brendan Murphy. There's a national audit going on of all of our critical care capacity. At the risk of- getting back into my Health Minister days, there are intensive care unit beds, there are high dependency beds, there are ventilators, there are [indistinct] machines, heart lung machines. There are many different ways in which we provide care for the critically ill and there's different

levels of care. We have ventilators on order. We are, I think, leading the nation in efforts to manufacture the ventilators that we will need and some of our best engineering minds, everything from digital printing experts to others who do advanced manufacturing have been working with the government intensively for the last couple of weeks. We'll have more to say about that soon. Ultimately, no matter how many intensive care beds we have, we will be overrun with patients who need a ventilator and critical care if people don't take this seriously. That's the key point. There will never be enough ICU beds or staff to run them if people don't start taking this seriously. For those who are, I thank you. I deeply and profoundly thank you. But for those who are acting selfishly, it's got to stop and it should.

QUESTION:

Can I ask one more on the schools? So at the moment, do we take it that [Indistinct] to bring the holidays forward and close the schools? In those circumstances, given we're going to have more cases [Indistinct] more pressure on our hospital system, how can you foresee a situation where the schools would reopen in those circumstances?

DANIEL ANDREWS:

Well I'll put it to you this way. I think the best way to understand the decision that's been made is that we have this unique opportunity unlike every other state because our holidays start on Friday, to spend those two or three days where they would have been students at school, instead spend that time doing the work to be ready for the potential of distance learning, learning from home. Now, I'm not necessarily saying

that in three weeks, or four weeks, or five weeks we'll have to move to that model. But if and when I get advice, we all want to be ready. I think parents are entitled to know that we're doing all the work we can to be ready for that eventuality. Hopefully that doesn't need to occur. But the last thing I want to do is when the Chief Health Officer- if the Chief Health Officer says to me we should shut the schools and every kid should learn from home, I don't want to have to say I'm terribly sorry, I can't follow your advice, because we didn't do the work. So that's what this week is about. And I just again make a point, there was at least one pupil free day, and some schools I think had advised that there might have been two. It's just common sense and all the good decisions when it comes to these things are guided by common sense. From governments, to emergency services, to health workers, all the way down to individuals. If you use your common sense- you might be young and healthy, maybe this won't be a serious issue for you. But it will be a serious issue one way or the other for someone you know and love, and for many vulnerable people that you have never met. Common sense says, and decency frankly, do the right thing.

QUESTION: [Inaudible question]

DANIEL ANDREWS: Again, back to the point I just made on Brendan. There will be other settings where proper consideration will need to be given. I don't want to flag and foreshadow. When we've got decisions, if they're made, if and when there's a stage 2 - that's far more likely than not - we'll have more to say about that. On construction sites,

there are things that can be done. I know that the Coordinator General Corey Hannah and others, whether it be level crossing removals or large hospital projects, school projects, they are looking very closely at things that can be done, not only to comply with the rules but some extra things. So this all gets back to first principles. Yes, there's rules, but there's also very simple things. Wash your hands. Cough etiquette. Keeping a distance from people. That's possible. It's not easy in some settings, but it's possible on a building site. It's possible in many different ways. And it has a profound impact on the spread of this virus and therefore the number of people who will die from it.

QUESTION:

Premier, on schools, [indistinct]... keep some open for say kids of health workers so there's somewhere for them to go [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS:

Yeah. Look, if we get to the point where- and again, I've been pretty clear that I think we will get to this point. I don't know when, when we get to a point where we perhaps have to move to that distance learning model, there will be some people who cannot be at home looking after their kids, because they've got patients to treat. They've got critical functions to perform. We'll put in place arrangements that would see more of those people doing the work we need them to do rather than less. That'll be for another time.

QUESTION:

Premier just part of that, [indistinct] school holidays, is there going to be special programs for kids with nurses, other health workers to go [indistinct]?

DANIEL ANDREWS:

Yeah, I'll have some more to say about that. What I'd say to you, though, and this is one of those things where you have to make a judgment. I think getting ready for the distance learning is really important. And again, I don't want to have to say to the Chief Health Officer at some point in the future, I'm terribly sorry, I can't follow your advice because we didn't do the work. That's a really an important point and that's what's guided me in this. But at the same time, if you had to have people away from hospital, better now than in the future when we have many thousands of people needing care. It's not a choice you'd like to make, but I just think the time and the consequences are worth it now. They will be much more challenging in weeks and months ahead. And if we can use that time, and James will speak to you in more detail about some of the stuff - 4G SIM cards and all sorts of things that we're doing - this is really valuable time, precious time in fact, for us to get ready. Now, that will be challenging. It won't be seamless, it can't be. But to do that work now is really, really important.

QUESTION:

[indistinct] breach in the quarantine and self-isolation?

DANIEL ANDREWS:

Not yet, but I - and I hope I can keep on saying that - not yet. And I hope I can continue to tell you that no one has been fined. But if you want to take the risk, if you want to- if you want to act in that irresponsible and selfish way, then there's 500 Victoria Police and many more out there doing general duties are going to be knocking on doors. And if you'll be doing the wrong thing, there's every chance you'll be caught. It shouldn't have to come to that. It should not have to

come to that. If you need a care package, we'll get one to you. If you need- and there's lots of different ways in which we'll support you to do the right thing. Please do the right thing. If you don't, there's every chance you'll get caught and the fines are significant. \$20,000. And we won't hesitate to levy them if people are doing the wrong thing.

QUESTION: Is it still okay for parents to leave their kids at home today? If they want to keep their kids home today ...

DANIEL ANDREWS: I've said consistently that the notion that we would divert critical resources at the moment to be running truancy cases against parents. No, we're not doing that. Today's fine for kids to be at school today. My kids are at school today. Chief Health Officer's kids are at school today. There'll be many kids at school today. But the school holidays begin when the bell goes at 3:30 today.

QUESTION: So the parents are fine, but if they ...

DANIEL ANDREWS: No. We're not going to be- again; we're not going to be wasting precious resources at going after parents for not sending their kids to school. I don't think that makes any sense. We're going to use this critical time, this precious time this week to be ready for distance learning in the event that we need to go to that.

If there's no other questions, thank you so much.

* * END * *

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