



PRIME MINISTER

4 July 2020

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier of Victoria  
1 Treasury Place  
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Premier,

I write to thank you for the significant efforts underway to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria.

The Commonwealth Government's focus is to ensure that Victoria has the necessary additional support to assist in testing, tracing and isolating cases, as well as bolstering specialist public health leadership.

We have always said that Australia will likely experience periodic outbreaks as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

I note with concern that the Victorian COVID-19 case numbers have escalated to 108 cases today, as part of an increased trend of cases during the past week. This has necessitated a further two postcodes being listed as hotspots and new hard lockdowns of nine residential public housing buildings in North Melbourne.

I recognise the new measures and support the significant efforts underway. The Commonwealth stands ready to provide any support needed on top of the existing measures in place, including Australian Defence Force support to support planning and logistics, and Commonwealth staff to support clinical efforts, community engagement and contact tracing.

As we have seen with the previous outbreaks in North West Tasmania and Sydney, these types of outbreaks can quickly overwhelm local health systems. I reaffirm the offer of Commonwealth for on-the-ground support and help in co-ordinating support from other States while acknowledging Victoria's leadership.

s34(3)

States and Territories have also sent other expert resources, including specialist public health physicians, epidemiologists and contact tracers. I am aware that there are now six very experienced public health specialists from other states plus several strong epidemiologists on-the-ground and embedded in Victorian Department of Health and Human Services – who are available to support the efforts, including offering significant leadership. It is important that these resources are being used in a way which maximises the support to controlling the pandemic in the coming days and weeks.

Finally, I also note that the Commonwealth stands ready to support Victoria through the Australian Defence Force to assist with the lock down of affected suburbs and to assist to ensure persons from these areas do not travel outside these zones and to other states. It is concerning that there have been a number of cases where such travellers have been identified entering NSW in particular.

The Commonwealth has supported and will continue to support the difficult but necessary local decisions which the Victorian Government has taken and may need to take to contain the virus.

We appreciate that this a national challenge, not just a Victorian one and as a country we are here to provide support as required.

Yours sincerely

s22



SCOTT MORRISON



PRIME MINISTER

06 JUL 2020

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier of Victoria  
1 Treasury Place  
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Premier

Thank you for your letter dated 5 July 2020 about assistance responding to the COVID-19 situation occurring in Victoria.

I am pleased that the Commonwealth and Australian Defence Force (ADF) assistance provided to date has been of assistance to you.

I am advised that there are currently 199 ADF medical staff on the ground in Victoria assisting Victorian authorities with the COVID-19 situation. This is against the original request for 200 ADF medical staff. I am not aware of any other requests for medical personnel being submitted formally, but would be pleased to consider such a request.

In relation to your request for the provision of five additional ADF strategic planners/logisticians to be deployed to the State Control Centre, I am pleased to advise that we can meet that request as soon as the precise tasks are determined. I understand this will occur later today, at which point the ADF can select the personnel with the most appropriate skills and deploy them as soon as possible.

The ADF remains closely engaged with the Emergency Management Victoria and the State Control Centre and remain ready to respond to any additional requests as they manifest.

s47B(b)

s47B(b)



I was pleased to be able to action your request for the urgent cancellation of scheduled international passenger airlines services to Victoria for 14 days from 1 July 2020. The Commonwealth remains willing to extend this cancellation in the national interest. I would appreciate if your relevant Minister could closely liaise with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, the Hon Michael McCormack MP, on this matter to establish the arrangements and timing of any extension.

The Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC), chaired by the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, continues to meet daily and their main topic is the emerging situation in Melbourne. All members of the AHPPC continue to offer support and surge capacity to assist the Victorian Chief Health Officer.

I continue to value our close cooperation in the interests of all Australians as you manage the COVID-19 situation in Victoria.

I have copied this letter to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, and the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP.

Yours sincerely

s22



SCOTT MORRISON



PRIME MINISTER

11 July 2020

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier of Victoria  
1 Treasury Place  
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Premier

Further to our previous correspondence and discussions, I write about additional Australian Defence Force (ADF) assistance to support COVID-19 operations in Victoria.

I am advised that there are around 265 ADF personnel in Victoria, with around 200 medical specialists supporting COVID-19 clinical testing at 14 sites across Melbourne, around 30 supporting Victoria Police (VicPol) checkpoints and the remainder supporting planning and embedded within Victorian government departments. I further understand around 120 ADF personnel are being deployed over the weekend to support logistics and VicPol checkpoints.

The remainder of the ADF personnel you requested in your letter of 7 July 2020 remain available to be deployed in Victoria once Victorian officials have finalised their planning and preparation activities. Given the escalating COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria, I recommend that you again consider further ADF deployment to Melbourne over the coming days to assist in the enforcement of public health compliance.

It is critical to the containment of the virus that the now thousands of people in isolation and quarantine are carefully tracked by phone and personal visits to ensure compliance (and to ensure their welfare).

A model successfully used in previous deployments in other jurisdictions, involves an ADF member paired with a police officer in a team of two. This allows the legal enforcement powers to be exercised by state and territory police, supported by ADF members. It will allow a significant expansion of compliance and welfare activity.

The VicPol/ADF team model could also quickly be deployed to expand the ability to support containment rings around Metropolitan Melbourne/Hume Shire. An estimated 1,000 ADF could be progressively deployed in this way over the next week, with greater scope beyond.

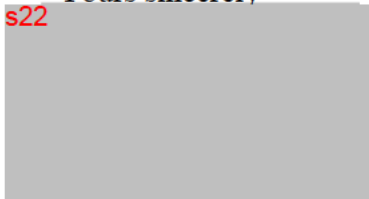
I am also mindful of the positive and reassuring impact that the presence of the ADF can have on communities in times of difficulties, as has already been demonstrated during the COVID-19 situation and during the Black Summer bushfires.

The ADF could also provide significant logistical advice on how this new deployment could be effectively used and assist more broadly in logistics. I am advised that initial contact tracing functions require special skills and ADF members would likely not be of value in this function without further training. But once this contact tracing has been done, the monitoring and compliance function could be passed over to the VicPol/ADF teams. I further note that other states and territories and the broader Commonwealth public service are available to support the immediate contact tracing response.

Thank you again for the work underway to respond to the outbreaks. The Commonwealth stands ready to support the Victorian efforts.

Yours sincerely

s22



SCOTT MORRISON