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**VICTORIAN RESTRICTIONS WILL BENEFIT NATION**

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said the declaration of a State of Disaster and additional COVID-19 restrictions across Victoria will help that State and the Nation ultimately recover from the pandemic sooner.

In response to confirmation of 671 new COVID-19 positive patients in Victoria today, Dr Khorshid said it was now or never for Victoria to adopt additional restrictions, including on workplaces, which have been a common source of virus spread.

“Every Australian wants to see Victoria succeed in halting the spread of COVID-19. Stopping the virus needs both tougher restrictions and better compliance by citizens,” Dr Khorshid.

“The expert medical advice of the AMA for some weeks has been that getting on top of COVID-19 in Victoria requires level four style restrictions.

“These new restrictions will mean hardship and inconvenience for many Victorians and another interruption for the economy. We should not underestimate the significance of today’s decision but more needs to be done to stop the spread of virus in workplaces.

“The alternative, though, is continued spread of the virus through the Victorian community, more illness and death and increasing pressure on a strained health system.

“Level four restrictions will support health care workers. There is enormous pressure on front line doctors, nurses, aged care workers and contact tracers and ongoing spread of the virus through the community even at current rates is unsustainable.

“Successful implementation of level four restrictions will help save Victorian lives, and help the Nation emerge from the pandemic sooner.”

Dr Khorshid’s comments follow his election yesterday as Federal AMA President. He has committed the AMA during his Presidency to helping Australia emerge from COVID-19.

“Nobody wants to impose additional burdens on the Victorian community. Increasing restrictions will be tough. We must consider the psychological needs of those in lockdown, and make sure Victorians can still access medical care through their GP, using telehealth wherever possible” Dr Khorshid said.

“The risk is not just for Victoria. Community transmission in that State could still spread to any other State and Territory. Clamping down on community transmission helps all in the long run.

“It is time for everyone in the community to do the right thing. These restrictions are critically important and I encourage all Victorians to comply with them.

“The thoughts of all Australians will be with our Victorian friends as they face this difficult time. We have been playing catch up for too long and it is time to get ahead of the virus spread. Inconvenience and interruption now will aid a smoother and faster long-term recovery.”

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