

Victorian Government response to the Review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders

The Victorian Government welcomes the Review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders in Victoria from the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee (PDAOC) and thanks members of the Committee for their work in producing the report.

The global pandemic was a one-in-one-hundred-year event across continents and countries. Governments around the world and interstate were tasked with managing a health response and communicating to the public in a dynamic environment, on an unprecedented scale. Victoria was no different.

The Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Order was retired in April 2022, and the pandemic declaration and any remaining pandemic orders were retired on 12 October 2022 and are no longer in effect. All Pandemic Orders, both current and replaced, are published on the Department of Health website along with supporting documentation

Many of the findings and recommendations from the review will be taken into account in future pandemic preparedness planning.

The Independent Pandemic Management and Accountability Committee (IPMAC) released a Review of COVID-19 Communications in September 2022 which outlines the ways in which the Victorian Government and the Department of Health used a broad range of communication and engagement activities, informed by consistent messaging that was tailored for different sectors and priority cohorts to ensure maximum reach. Information was distributed through government networks using existing channels such as the website and supplemented by a diversity of new mechanisms.

In addition, the independent review into the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (the Act), which is currently underway, will capture the PDAOC reviews as key resources in guiding and framing any recommendations regarding the Act.