



AS IT IS

Melbourne Ends 111-days of Virus Restrictions

October 28, 2020

Small business owner Darren Silverman pulled his car off the road. Then he cried. The radio had just announced that Melbourne's COVID-19 **lockdown** would be largely lifted after 111 days.

“The difficulty...when you've put 30 years of your life into something that's suddenly taken away with the **prospect** of not returning through no fault of your own — I felt like...having a bit of a **sob** to myself,” he said.

The Victoria state government announced the lockdown changes that will permit 6,200 stores, 5,800 restaurants, 800 **bars** and a few other businesses to reopen. The move affects 180,000 jobs.

Mask wearing is required in Melbourne and there are few people on the street. Citizens of the city are still required to stay within 25 kilometers of their homes. Offices are closed as work-from-home orders continue.

At the Bourke Street shopping area near the center of the city, there are many empty stores. Reports suggest that many stores and eateries did not survive the lockdown. It was the city's second lockdown since the **pandemic** began.

Now, people are ready to celebrate. Restaurants are reporting they are already full for the next month.

“People are **anxious** to get out, to be able to sit outside at a table and have a cup of a coffee or something to eat,” café owner Maria Iatrou said.

It has been difficult for people living in Melbourne, the largest city in Victoria state. The rest of Australia was able to contain, what some call, the second wave of infections without a return to restrictions.

Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews faced great pressure from businesses and the federal government to reopen to help the economy.

Andrews refused until this week, when he announced the lifting of restrictions after the state recorded no new infections for 24 hours. It was the first time Melbourne had gone a day without a new infection since June 9.

Andrews thanked stores, eateries and hotels for working with his government.

“They know and understand deep down that we’ve all got to be COVID-safe...to protect this **fragile** thing that we’ve built,” Andrews said, meaning the containment of the virus.

Iatrou said the lockdown was difficult both professionally and personally. Her café struggled, but survived selling takeout and delivery. She lost two relatives to COVID-19 and could not attend their funerals because of the restrictions.

They were in care homes for older people, where most of Victoria’s 819 coronavirus deaths have been recorded. Only 88 people have died of COVID-19 in other places in Australia.

Mary Poulakis said she is happy to have reopened the small clothing store she’s owned for 35 years in nearby Coburg. She also said she would not obey a third lockdown.

“I’m staying open. I cannot close my doors again,” she said.

I’m Susan Shand.

The Associated Press reported this story. Susan Shand adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words In This Story

lockdown – *n.* the confinement people to their homes or of prisoners to their cells for a temporary period as a security measure

prospect – *n.* the possibility that a specific thing will happen in the future

bar – *n.* a business that sells alcoholic drinks and sometimes food

sob – *v.* to cry

mask – *n.* a covering for part or all of the face to protect against infection or to hide the face

pandemic – *n.* an occurrence in which a disease spreads very quickly and affects a large number of people over a wide area or throughout the world

anxious – *adj.* fearful or nervous, especially about what might happen

fragile – *adj.* not strong; easily broken
