IMPORTANT INFORMATON ABOUT WEARING FACE COVERINGS!

As the Premier announced on Sunday, people living in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire will now be required to wear a face covering when leaving home for one of the four reasons, following a concerning increase in coronavirus cases in recent days.

This new direction will be enforced from 11.59pm Wednesday 22 July.

There will be some reasons not to wear a face covering. For example, those who have a medical reason, children under 12 years of age, or those who have a professional reason. However, you will still be expected to carry your face covering at all times to wear when you can.
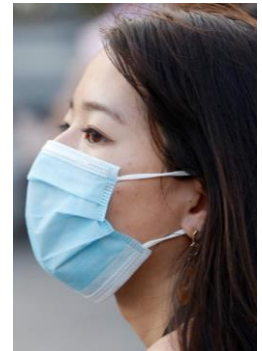
Please refer to the updated restrictions on the Department of Health and Human Services' website for more detail.

For those undertaking vital work in our community services sector, please remain vigilant and continue to implement the Guidance for coronavirus (COVID-19) planning in the community services sector (Word), to protect the health and safety of staff, clients and the broader community. This guidance will soon be updated to reflect the latest announcement re mandatory face coverings.

How do I wear a mask correctly? (surgical mask - single use)

- Before putting on the mask, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or use a hand sanitiser that is made up of over 60% alcohol.
- Check for defects in the mask, such as tears or broken loops.
- Position the coloured side of the mask outward.
- If present, make sure the metallic strip is at the top of the mask and positioned against the bridge of your nose.
- If the mask has:
    o Ear loops: Hold the mask by both ear loops and place one loop over each ear.
    o Ties: Hold the mask by the upper strings. Tie the upper strings in a secure bow near the crown of your head. Tie the bottom strings securely in a bow near the nape of your neck.
    o Dual elastic bands: Pull the bottom band over your head and position it against the nape of your neck. Pull the top band over your head and position it against the crown of your head
- Mould the bendable metallic upper strip to the shape of your nose by pinching and pressing down on it with your fingers.
- Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.
- Be sure the mask fits snugly.
- Don't touch the mask once in position.
- If the mask gets soiled or damp, replace it with a new one.

What's the best way to take off a face mask?

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Don't touch the front of the mask or your face.
- Carefully remove your mask by grasping the ear loops or untying the ties. For masks with a pair of ties, unfasten the bottom one first, then the top one.
- If your mask has filters, remove them and throw them away. Fold the mask and put it directly into the laundry or into a disposable or washable bag for laundering. Single use surgical masks should be disposed of responsibly.
- Clean your hands again.

The most up to date information, including FAQs about face coverings, is available on the Victorian coronavirus website

Stay safe!