



# STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria  
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

## MEDIA RELEASE



### **'Green-light' places without cases, Acting Premier**

18 June 2021

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party parliamentarians Tania Maxwell and Stuart Grimley have pressed Acting Premier James Merlino to keep places without COVID cases out of future lockdowns.

The pair wrote to Mr Merlino on June 16 to put the case again for rolling out in Victoria the COVID-risk management 'traffic light system' the government established early this year to limit travel from high-risk locations in NSW.

"I've also circulated the proposal to mayors across Northern Victoria and I'm encouraged by the upshot," Ms Maxwell said.

"Here's a workable solution that we first put to the government in August and reiterated publicly in parliament in September, last year.

"The government, in response to the Sydney COVID outbreak in January, subsequently set up the Victorian Travel Permit System that used public health advice to define levels of COVID risk in NSW local government areas.

"High-risk zones were designated red, at-risk zones orange, and low or no-risk zones green.

"People from red and orange zones wanting to enter Victoria were subject to travel, activity and stay-at-home restrictions and testing requirements, while people from green zones could carry on with their daily lives and come here simply by completing a declaration permit.

"It's a system the government continues to use for all travellers from interstate.

"This week Stuart and I have again asked the government to adapt this system for use throughout Victoria in conjunction with robust trace management and testing.

"This would deliver for our communities an 'an easy-to-understand traffic light system', as Premier Dan Andrews described it in a media statement on January 11 during the Sydney outbreak.

"It would also enable the 'places-without-cases' communities that we represent to get on with recovery and rebuilding after our fourth statewide lockdown."

Ms Maxwell and Mr Grimley acknowledged in the letter the government's earlier adoption of other COVID management changes the pair had put forward, including specific exemptions from lockdown for border residents and differing restrictions between regional and metropolitan communities.

"But we've told Mr Merlino the government cannot continue to rely on hard lockdowns and sweeping restrictions to limit outbreaks of COVID-positive cases in Victoria," Ms Maxwell said.



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“If there’s either no risk or a very low risk of COVID spread in so many of our communities then these shouldn’t be locked down.”

Mr Grimley said using the traffic light system was “a no brainer”.

“Regional communities should not be lumped in with Melbourne COVID outbreaks,” the Member for Western Victoria said.

“Both Tania and I hear from regional businesses and organisations located more than 400 kilometres from Melbourne pleading to stay open. A traffic-light system will benefit our regional towns.

“I’m sure businesses would be more than happy to continue to check IDs to make sure their customers aren’t from ‘red zones’, especially if that means they can stay open during a Melbourne COVID outbreak.

“It’s hard to think that people in towns such as Nhill, Portland or Edenhope have to wear a facemask because a small group of people in Melbourne have contracted COVID-19. The traffic-light system could stop this from happening.”

Ms Maxwell said the Justice Party wanted the proposal considered as a key part of a detailed, long-term plan for COVID management in Victoria.

“Since September we’ve openly said the government must also consult widely so Victorians can deal responsibly with COVID,” she said.

“Stuart and I hear from our communities every day about the devastating financial, psychological and social impacts of impromptu lockdowns, particularly in places where there’s no, or low, transmission risk.

“All parliamentarians should be actively encouraged to contribute to this plan for public recovery – one that at its heart is directed at restoring Victorians’ livelihoods, certainty and confidence.

“We look forward to the Acting Premier’s positive response.”

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