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EXCLUSIVE MATT JOHNSTON ANDREW KOUBARIDIS

VICTORIA is on the brink of a massive COVID-19 lockdown in a desperate bid to break the back of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Andrews government cabinet was on Saturday night fine tuning extreme measures that will bring large parts of the state to a halt.

Today or tomorrow Premier

Today or tomorrow Premier Daniel Andrews is set to pull the trigger on new limits for shopping, workplaces, schools and travel.

The hard lockdown will last for weeks and is set to see more businesses close their doors, residents forced to stay in their suburbs and all students sent back to home schooling.

The details were being thrashed out by the Crisis Council of Cabinet on a video hook up across the state.

The lockdown is set to see only essential shopping allowed, with just supermarkets, chemists and service stations permitted to trade in Melbourne and key regional areas.

Consideration is also being given to some access to hardware stores for tradies only.

Police checks will step up, including the use of licence plate recognition, to clamp down on nonessential travel with a massive increase in patrols to stop breaches and maintain law and order.

The lockdown follows several days of warnings by Premier Andrews that new restrictions were on the agenda.

One senior source said the premier had indicated it was time for tougher action: "You have got to get the setting right but it can't just be a small change."

FULL REPORT, PAGES 4-5

ON THE AGENDA

- Only essential shops allowed to stay open
- Residents to stay in their suburbs
- Home schooling for all students
- Supermarkets, chemists and servos to stay open
- Increased police patrols





