



Covering protests in Victoria

Tip sheet for journalists

June 2021

The following information has been prepared with the assistance of the Victoria Police Media & Corporate Communications Department.

Current protest environment in Victoria:

- Over the past few years, Victoria Police has seen an increase in hostile and at times violent protests throughout the state.
- With the current pandemic, it has also been an ever-changing environment which has meant police and the community have to quickly adapt to the Chief Health Officer directions in place at any time.
- Victoria Police have also seen an increased number of protesters claim to be media in order to avoid police enforcement of the health directions.

Role of police at protests:

- The role of police at protests is to maintain the peace and keep the community safe.
- There are a number of priorities police have at protests, including balancing individual rights, enforcing health directions that may be in place as well as media reporting on these issues, but above all, the number one priority is the safety of everyone in the area.
- Victoria Police recommend reading the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's explainer about protests during the current pandemic: [Explainer: Protests during COVID-19 | Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#) (
- Victoria Police do understand the important role media play in covering these protests and are always willing to assist with requests, but media is still required to follow police directions at all times.
 - This includes a direction to move away from a certain area and not obstructing protesters from leaving an area by stopping them when police have directed them to move.

Media identification:

- Police officers performing duties at protests or major events in Melbourne are generally sourced from a range of different areas right across the state. This means they may not be as familiar with all of the metropolitan based media outlets or publishing company names listed on your usual ID card.
- Having appropriate identification will allow police to assist in quickly identifying journalists, photographers and camera operators who are working at protests.

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- Police are now briefed on MEAA media identification cards before every protest and it will make things easier for everyone involved by allowing police to more readily identify those working in the media.

Victoria Police contacts:

The Victoria Police Media Unit is available 24/7 if you have any queries or concerns, and can be reached on 8336 6200 or via policemedi@police.vic.gov.au

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