

**DAVID SHOEBRIDGE**  
Greens NSW MP

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The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP  
Minister for Health  
By email:

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Mr Shoebridge
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23 February 2021  
**URGENT**

Dear Minister,

**Re: Need to increase protest limits under COVID rules**

I write to request the urgent lifting of the current gathering limits that are imposed on protests and public demonstrations under the public health orders.

I request that you urgently lift the cap from 500 to the more reasonable 3,000. This would make the cap consistent with that which currently applies to community sport and with the limit in place late last year. Obviously COVID safety plans would continue to apply and spaces would need to be large enough to permit social distancing to occur.

As you can appreciate, the right to protest is a fundamental right in a democratic society and one that should only be constrained when it is critically necessary for serious public health threats. This circumstance does not currently apply in NSW. It is notable that while other restrictions have been eased this cap on protest has not.

On 6 February 25,295 people attended the Sydney Cricket Ground. No community spread has been linked to this large gathering.

On 26 January at least 6,000 people gathered to protest in the Domain. There was no community spread of COVID associated with this gathering. The greatest risk to the health of protesters is the risk posed by police seeking to enforce arbitrarily small crowd sizes. This could be substantially mitigated if the current arbitrary 500 cap is lifted.

**Action required:**

The urgent amendment of the Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 7) 2020 to increase the current protest limit to 3,000 and ongoing consideration of increases to this number as becomes appropriate.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on \_\_\_\_\_ or by return email to \_\_\_\_\_

Kind regards,

Greens MP David Shoebridge

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