COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE | JUNE 24, 2021

> ⚠ **Additional lockdown restrictions ease in Metropolitan Melbourne as of 11.59pm Thursday June 24.**

As of 11:59pm June 24, the following restrictions will apply to Regional Victoria:

- **Masks** must be worn indoors, unless at home or with a valid exemption. Masks must be carried at all times and worn outdoors if 1.5m social distancing cannot be maintained, unless there is a valid exemption.

- **Visitors to the home –** up to 15 adults (and their dependants) may visit per day.

- **Public outdoor gatherings –** limited to 50 people only.

- **Religious gatherings and ceremonies** are allowed with a density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm up to a maximum of **300 people** per venue. Check in upon entry using the Service Victoria app (QR code), even if your visit is less than 15 minutes.

- **Funerals –** (indoors or outdoors) maximum of 300 people plus those required to conduct the funeral , subject to density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm.

- **Weddings –** (indoors or outdoors) maximum of 300 guests subject to density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm. Dancefloors not permitted.

- **Schools –** All students return to face-to-face learning subject to 1 person per 4sqm except in areas used by students.

- **Adult education –** Study from home guidance removed. Face to face study, subject to 1 person per 4sqm except in areas used by students.

- **Childcare and Early Learning –** may remain open.

- **Restaurants/Cafes –** Open for seated service, with a maximum of 300 people. Venues smaller than 600sqm can operate with the lesser of density quotient or 1 person per 2sqm OR venue cap of 150 people provided they have a COVID Marshal at the entry doors. Venues can have 25 patrons before density quotients apply.

- **Beauty Services –** Open where face masks can be worn at all times.

- **Libraries and Toy Libraries –** Open with a maximum of 50 people.

- **Hospitals and Care Facility Visits –** 2 visitors at a time, up to 5 visitors per day (except end of life: 2 visitors at a time with no daily visitor limit). Visitors do not have to be from the same household and there is no time limit on visits.

- **Fixed seating entertainment –** INDOORS Open up to 75% of seated capacity up to 300 people per space. Group limit of 50 people. Density limit of 1 person per 4sqm applies. OUTDOORS Open up to 75% of seated capacity up to 1000 people. Density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm applies.

- **Non seated entertainment –** INDOORS Open to a maximum of 300 people per space with density limit of 1 person per 4sqm. OUTDOORS Density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm, up to 1000 people.

- **Shopping - The use of QR code check-in to be extended to all shops, including supermarkets.**

- **Travel to/from Metropolitan Melbourne** Travel is unrestricted within Victoria. Visitors to alpine regions are recommended to obtain a negative COVID test result within 72 hours of travel (children under 12 excluded).

- **Community Sport –** permitted for all ages (both training and competition)

- **Community Facilities –** Open with a density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres. Maximum venue capacity 300 people. Maximum size of any group 50 people. Venues smaller than 600sqm can operate with the lesser of density quotient or 1 person per 2sqm OR venue cap of 150 people provided they have a COVID Marshal at the entry doors.

- **Work –** The work from home requirement removed. Offices: Subject to density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm may have 75% capacity or up to 30 people if total workplace is 40 or less. Facemasks must be worn in all indoor settings.

Should you require any further detail, please see DHHS website: **DHHS website** or the **Coronavirus Victoria** website.

Should you have any further questions please email the **Crisis Management Team.**

Metropolitan Melbourne definition: See page 7 for a list of Local Government Areas which are defined as being within Metropolitan Melbourne.

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MULTI-LINGUAL RESOURCES

Where can I find the current government guidelines in other languages?

Victorian Multi-cultural Commission Coronavirus (COVID-19): In-language advice and information at **https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-language-advice-and-information.**

Ethnolink have information available in 51 languages at: **http://www.ethnolink.com.au/covid-%2019-coronavirus-translated-resources/**

The Department of Home Affairs has extensive multi-lingual resources available at: **https://Covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/**

The Victorian Multicultural Commission have release multi-lingual resources including:
- Audio messages: **https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai**
- Posters (JPG / PDF): **https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai**
- Social Media banners: **https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai**

GATHERINGS

What face-to-face gatherings are permitted at church?

Indoor and/or outdoor religious gatherings are allowed with COVIDSafe plans including cleaning and signage. Check in upon entry using the Service Victoria app (QR code), even for visits less than 15 minutes.

WORSHIP SERVICES
Religious gatherings and ceremonies are allowed with a density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm up to a maximum of 300 people per venue, plus a religious leader.

As of 24/06/2021

Do face masks have to be worn at all times during worship?

Yes. Masks are currently mandatory in all indoor settings, apart from at home, unless an individual has a valid reason for not wearing one. Ministers or other faith leaders may remove their masks whilst leading worship, as teaching/broadcasting/public speaking are valid exceptions.

Can we gather for morning tea afterwards?

As seated service is currently available in cafes etc for up to 300 people indoors, it is possible to gather for morning tea, providing:
- all attendees remain seated and socially distanced.
- the same density quotient and maximum numbers would apply as for the worship service.
- all food and drink would need to be served, rather than buffet style.

As of 17/06/2021

Can we sing?

Singing is permitted, but facemasks must be worn at all times.

As of 10/06/2021

WEDDINGS
Weddings may be held with a maximum of 300 subject to the density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm. Dancefloors not permitted.

As of 24/06/2021

FUNERALS
Funerals are allowed indoors or outdoors with up to 300 people subject to the density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm. This limit doesn't include babies under 12 months of age, or the people required to conduct the funeral. A funeral held at a private residence is limited to members of that household, intimate partner, 15 adults (and their dependants) and minimum number of people required to conduct the funeral.

As of 24/06/2021

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Is it permitted to provide transport ("give a lift") to people?

Where possible, treat passengers in your car who are not members of your household as if they were travelling in a taxi:

- Your passenger should sit in the back seat to maintain physical distancing
- Everyone in the car should wear a fitted face mask unless they have a lawful exemption
- Increase ventilation by opening windows wherever possible. Avoid having air-conditioning set to recirculate air.
- High touch surfaces in the vehicle should be cleaned and sanitised regularly (eg door handles, seat belts etc)

Physical distancing

The density quotient of 4 square metres per person must be maintained in all venues.

This requirement may mean that you cannot have the maximum number of attendees at a gathering. To calculate the maximum capacity of any building, measure the floorspace (length x width) in metres, then divide 4.

For example: if the inside of your church measures 10m x 6m = 60 square metres. You then divide this by 4. 60 ÷ 4 = 15 people is the maximum capacity.

Isn't the density quotient 2 square metres for venues using the government QR code?

No. Under current restrictions all venues must use the Services Vic app (see below) AND all venues must maintain density quotients of 1 person per 4 sqm.

As of 10/06/2021

Physical distancing signs

All church buildings must display signage showing the maximum number of people who can be accommodated in any space.

Once you have calculated the maximum numbers for each space, you may take advantage of the templates created to make your signage.

These are available at: **https://victas.uca.org. au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions/**

If you were previously using electronic record keeping and so basing your density quotient on 1 person per 2 sqm, you will need to recalculate your density quotient based on 1 person per 4 sqm, and display revised signs.

As of 10/06/2021

Attendance Record Keeping

All venues in Victoria must now record visitor information through the Services Victoria app (QR code). This includes churches, restaurants and even supermarkets and shops.

QR codes are unique for each venue, but will look something like this:

How do we get a QR code and how do they work?

1. Register for a FREE QR code service from the government at **https://www.coronavirus.vic. gov.au/register-to-use-vic-gov-qr-code-service**
2. Once you have your QR Code, you will need to display this prominently, eg at all entry doors. You will find a POSTER link in the email confirming your QR code registration. This unique poster is generated automatically with your QR code.
3. Everyone entering the building can then scan this QR Code using the camera on their smartphone or tablet device. This automatically opens the registration app, which knows that they are registering at your building.
4. They will then be asked to enter their name, phone number and residential postcode, and have the option of providing details of other individuals in their party.
5. A 'greeter' will be required on every door by which the public can enter. Their role is to ensure that everyone entering the building registers via the QR code. For attendees who do not have a smart phone or tablet device, the greeter will need to register them on the greeter's smartphone or tablet.

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The substantial benefit of the use of the Services Victoria app is to assist timely contact-tracing in the event of community transmission of Covid-19.

What if we have a substantial number of visitors who are unable to use the QR code system?
If absolutely necessary, names and contact phone numbers may be recorded manually at the time of entry, but must then be recorded into the Services Victoria app on behalf of those people. This should be done within 24 hours.

However, all venues are required to display the QR code and encourage all visitors to use this. The use of manual recording of visitors should not be seen as an option to replace the QR code self-checkin.

As of 10/06/2021

What face-to-face gatherings are permitted away from church?

Public outdoor gatherings – currently limited to 50 people only.

In-home gatherings – up to 15 adult visitors and their dependants can visit each day, separately or together.

As of 24/06/2021

CHURCH/COMMUNITY HALLS

Under what circumstances can Community/Church Halls be used?

Before using any church owned buildings, or allowing any other group to use church-owned buildings, please complete the Recovery Action Plan Checklist at: **https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/register-to-use-vic-gov-qr-code-service**

Community/Church Halls and similar buildings may be used subject to use the density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres and the use of electronic record keeping with the Services Victoria app (QR Code) up to a cap of 300 people.

All physical distancing, hygiene and QR code requirements must be met, with appropriate signage displayed.

WORSHIP SERVICES – Church or Community Halls can be used for Indoor religious gatherings with specific cleaning requirements and COVIDSafe plans, and subject to the same limits as outlined in Gatherings.

SUPPORT GROUPS – Essential support groups such as drug and alcohol support groups can continue to operate. No group limits apply. The facility must apply the density limit. The four square metre rule is the only limit on the number of people who can attend, but electronic record keeping is required.

Record keeping is not required in relation to essential support groups and health services if confidentiality is typically required. Support groups where confidentiality is not typically required should still collect records of those who attend.

Face masks must be worn and all attendees should keep 1.5 metres distance from other people (except with people from your own home).

BUSINESSES – If an organisation or individual rents space, the government guidelines for the conduct of that particular category of business would apply. These can be found at **https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19**

If in doubt, seek advice from your presbytery or contact **uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au**

RENTED & HIRED FACILITIES – Who is responsible for ensuring properties are COVID compliant?

- If you rent hire or licence out property to more than one organisation or group on a casual or non-exclusive basis (eg support groups, community groups, classes) using our standard Hire Agreement (Victoria) whether one-off or recurring, the Responsibility for maintaining all COVID-19 compliance, including cleaning to standard before and after every use, remains with the congregation as the responsible body. However, you may pass on the reasonable additional cost of cleaning or other necessary Covid-19 safety measures to the Hirer if you notify them in advance of the additional

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cost.

- If you rent out property to one organisation or group on an exclusive use basis (under a Lease or Licence), the responsibility for maintaining all COVID-19 compliance falls to the tenant.
- If in doubt, seek advice from your presbytery or contact **uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au**

As of 23/06/2021

COVID-SAFE PLANS

Do we need to complete a CovidSafe plan and/or UCA Covid Recovery Action Checklist?

If you have completed the **Covid Recovery Action Plan Checklist** and are keeping this up-to-date, this can be your Covid-Safe Plan.

What activities can/cannot be staged in/on our property?

During the current period of changes to Covid restrictions it is best to refer to either of the government websites (see p1) for current information. If in doubt, seek advice from your presbytery or **CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au**.

As of 10/06/2021

HOLY COMMUNION

What changes to worship services are permissable?

Assembly Standing Committee has approved temporary pastoral measure guidelines for congregations and faith communities to enable the celebration of Holy Communion as part of online worship. These guidelines have been extended to 30 November 2021 and can be found at: **https://www.assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/3163-temporary-arrangements-for-holycommunion**

For some thoughts on how to conduct Holy Communion in a COVID-safe manner read Rev Dr Sally Douglas' November 19 article at **https://victas.uca.org.au/how-can-we-keep-holy-communion-covid-19-safe/**

As of 26/11/2020

SAFE (DIGITAL) MINISTRY

What safety measures should be adopted for ministry within the digital space?

The Culture of Safety Unit has prepared some guidelines for leaders and communities, offering commentary and interpretation of how our existing Child Safety resources and policies, and the Uniting Church Code of Ethics, continue to shape our digital ministry practices. To view the guidelines visit: **https://victas.uca.org.au/safe-digital-ministry/**

As of 07/04/2020

MINISTERS IN HIGH RISK GROUPS

Ministry agents in high risk groups are encouraged to have clear contingency arrangements in place in case of potential situations where they may need to consider their involvement.

High risk groups include people who are:
- aged over 70,
- over 65 with chronic health conditions,
- immune-compromised, or
- Indigenous people over 50 with chronic health conditions

As of 10/12/2020

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Where can I access worship resources to help me keep connected?

Our worship resources page, which caters for all people across our Synod, is updated each week. Available at: **https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/**

As of 06/04/2020

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ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING LICENCES

What does it cost for a Zoom meeting licence?

If you plan on using Zoom frequently and/ or require full functionality, Synod Ministries and Operations along with other Synods have negotiated with Zoom to purchase a bulk deal. As such we are able to provide Zoom licences for a cost of just $7.93 per month. If your presbytery or congregation is interested, please contact: **Shweta.Paliwal@victas.uca.org.au**

You will need to provide: Number of licences required and the details of the contact person (including their email address)

As of 20/04/2020

OP SHOPS

How do we keep our Op Shop Covid-safe?

Op Shops run by Uniting VicTas must follow the current guidance issued by Uniting.

All UCA Op Shops should be regarded as any other Retail Store, all of which remain subject to restrictions:

- All staff and customers are must wear facemasks unless legally exempt.
- All retail stores must now use the Services Victoria app (QR code) to record all staff and customer details, even if in the shop for less than 15 minutes.
- UCA Op Shops, as church workplaces, are required to complete sections A and B of the Recovery Action Plan Checklist to ensure that they are Covid-complient and a copy sent to elnura.dulakovic@victas.uca.org.au
- Gloves should be worn when handling cash and any donated goods.
- Donated goods should be received contactless where possible. Donations should be stored in a location where workers won't have contact with them for a period of up to 72 hours. All items should be cleaned in line with COVID cleaning practices as soon as practical. Hands should be washed regularly whilst, and immediately after, handling any donated items. It is also recommended that WARNING signs should be displayed to ensure all staff and volunteers adhere to these precautions.
- In line with social distancing requirements, the number of persons in an Op Shop at any one time should be limited, using a rule of one person per 4sqm, including staff and volunteers, and people should remain a distance of 1.5m apart wherever possible. It may be helpful to mark this distance on the floor near service counters as a reminder to visitors.

VOLUNTEERS:

Even with a face mask, you should keep at least 1.5 metres between yourself and others at all times and practice good hygiene. If you are in a high-risk group, you can volunteer, however, consider minimising the number of different people you interact with. High-risk groups include people aged 70 years and over, people aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions, people with compromised immune systems and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50.

As of 10/06/2021

MARKETS

Can we hold garage sales and/or markets?

Markets may operate, within same guidelines as retail stores:

- The market operator is responsible for ensuring the four square metre rule is applied to indoor spaces.
- Customers should keep 1.5 metres in between them and other people who are not part of their household.
- Facemasks must be worn in indoor markets at all times.
- Use of the Services Victoria app (QR code) to record details of all visitors.
- We recommend that you have a process for orderly flow of people (eg everyone goes in one direction; entrance and exit points; and a total number limit) to ensure the social distancing requirements can still be safely met.

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METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE | JUNE 24, 2021

FIRST AID PRECAUTIONS

In the event of someone needing first aid treatment, are there any additional precautions required?

Anyone administering first aid should use general droplet and contact precautions, namely a face mask for the person they are treating which they should encourage the person to apply themselves, a face mask and gloves for the first aider, and goggles for the first aider (if available). In the event that a first aider has a reason to suspect a person is infected with COVID-19, they should try to limit their contact with that person as much as they can, meaning they should avoid physical contact (e.g. checking pulses and performing physical assessments) unless absolutely necessary, such as performing CPR or putting people in a recovery position if they are unconscious and/or struggling to breathe.

As of 11/06/2020

WELLBEING

During this time it is important that we all take care of ourselves and of each other. Sometimes we may need help to do this. Below are just some of the places you can turn to if you, or someone you know, may need some assistance coping with COVID restrictions:

Lifeline ph **13 11 14**

Beyond Blue ph **1300 22 4636**

Kids Helpline ph **1800 55 1800**

1800RESPECT ph **1800 737 732**
(Domestic & Sexual Violence)

SafeSteps ph **1800 015 188**
(support & planning to escape domestic violence)

LGBTQIA ph **1800 184 527**
(peer driven support)

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

Centrelink online financial resources for existing customers: **https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency**

Centrelink Crisis Payments ph 132 850

Uniting Vic Tas
https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/contact-us/

Metropolitan Melbourne includes the following Local Government Areas:

Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Melton, Monash, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse, Whittlesea, Wyndham (except Little River), Yarra, Yarra Ranges.

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