


# COVID-19 VICTORIA

# FAQS

Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT MARCH 26, 2021.



## On March 23, Acting Premier James Merlino announced further easing of Victoria's COVID restrictions, effective as of 6pm Friday March 26.

Restrictions included in that announcement are shown with 

- **Leaving home:** No restriction on reasons to leave home but stay safe.
- ⚠️ **Public gatherings:** Up to 200 people can gather outdoors from any number of households (infants under 12 months not counted in the cap)
- ⚠️ **Visitors to the home:** Up to 100 visitors per day (infants under 12 months not counted in the cap). Visitors may be from any number of households, together or separately. Front and back yards are considered part of the home.
- ⚠️ **Face Masks:** Must be carried at all times and must be worn at all times where social distancing cannot be maintained. Masks are no longer required to be worn in retail settings, but remain mandatory when travelling on public transport or when travelling in a commercial passenger vehicle or tour vehicle, when visiting a hospital, when visiting or working in a care facility (unless a lawful exemption applies). A person who is awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test or experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 must wear a face covering. Any person diagnosed or suspected of having COVID-19, or who is a close contact of someone diagnosed with COVID-19, must wear a face covering if leaving home/accommodation for a permitted reason, such as medical care
- ⚠️ **Weddings and Funerals:** No maximum attendee caps indoors or outdoors, but:
  - No maximum attendee caps indoors or outdoors
  - Record keeping requirements as per where the wedding or funeral is held (*see Religious Gatherings and Ceremonies below*).
  - A cap of 100 people applies if the wedding or funeral is being held at a private residence.
- ⚠️ **Religious gatherings and ceremonies:** Density quotient of 1 per 2sqm applies. Venues must now use electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app

(see p5) or a government API-linked digital system. Venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty. Indoor and outdoor ceremonies can occur at the same time.

- **Food or Drink at gatherings:** No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment is permitted to be **shared** by participants. Food or drink can be **served** as part of a religious gathering or after a religious gathering. It is recommended that single use items are used to serve food or drink. It is recommended that one person serves or distributes food or drinks. For example, one person uses the urn for hot water for tea
- **Singing:** Singing or chanting can occur as part of a religious ceremony, wedding or funeral. (See p4 for guidance)
- ⚠️ **Care facilities and hospital visitors:** **No restrictions on purpose, number or time of visits. Face masks required to be worn at all times.** Symptomatic (e.g. sore throat) individuals (except those symptomatic due to underlying or chronic conditions), close contacts and returned international travellers excluded from visiting
- ⚠️ **Work:** Workers may attend onsite as required. On-site office work is no longer capped (both public and private sectors). All workplaces with onsite workers require a COVIDSafe Plan.
- ⚠️ **Community venues:** No patron caps with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. **Must use electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty)**
- **Creative arts facilities:** No patron caps with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm, subject to use of electronic record keeping (see p5).
- ⚠️ **Seated entertainment venues (indoors and outdoors):** Open, with the total facility patron cap is 75 per cent of seated capacity for a maximum of 1000 per space and all activities are ticketed. Density quotient of 1 per 2sqm in foyers, bars, bathrooms etc. All venues must use electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty). Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online. For outdoor spaces the patron cap is 75 per cent of seated capacity.



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Arrangements for capacity over 1000 patrons per space are determined on an individual basis under the Public Events Framework.

- ⚠ **Indoor non-seated venues (such as galleries):** Open, up to 75 per cent total capacity with maximum patron cap of 1000 people. Density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. All venues must use electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty). Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online. Arrangements for large events determined on an individual basis under the Public Events Framework.
- ⚠ **Accommodation:** Bookings restricted to the private gathering limit. The person or household booking the accommodation can have up to 100 visitors.
- **Interstate travel:** Continued international border controls. State border controls activated in case of outbreaks.
- ⚠ **Tourism spaces and groups:** No patron cap on tour groups. Masks must be worn on tour transport. **Venues must use the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system for record keeping (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty)**
- ⚠ **Indoor physical recreation and community sport:** A density quotient of 1 per 2sqm applies to each space. No caps on gym and exercise classes (other than limits imposed by dentistry quotients) COVID Marshals required when gyms are staffed. At times when gyms are unstaffed, a density quotient of 1 per 4sqm applies. Signage must state the number of people permitted inside, disinfectant and other cleaning products must be supplied for use by patrons. Electronic record keeping through the Services Vic application or a government API-linked digital system is required (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty). Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online.
- ⚠ **Outdoor physical recreation and community sport:** No cap on outdoor fitness classes other than density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. Electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system is required (venues will have a

28-day compliance amnesty). Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online..

- **Retail:** (e.g. supermarkets, other retail) Density quotient of 1 per 2sqm, with record keeping where practicable.

⚠ **Current requirements state: Religious gatherings can be held indoors or outdoors. There are no group limits. Venues must apply the two square metre rule to ensure people have enough room to maintain 1.5 metres distance between them. The two square metre rule can be used only if electronic record keeping is used, otherwise, the four square metre rule applies. The square metre rule doesn't include babies under 12 months of age.**

**However, by late April, all venues must keep records electronically through the Services Vic app (QR code). There is a 28 day compliance amnesty from 6pm Friday March 26, 2021**

For a full list of COVID-Safe Summer requirements, visit <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covidsafe-summer>.

As of 04/03/2021

## What has NOT changed in Victoria?

- Physical distancing (1.5m) and maximum occupancy quotients must still be observed
- Good hand hygiene must continue to be followed
- Do not go to work if you are unwell
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow.
- COVID safety plans are required for all workplaces (including churches, halls etc) including:
  - Attendance Contact Lists (which must be kept for 28 days or maintained electronically (see p5)
  - Cleaning protocols
  - Physical distancing, maximum occupancy and all other COVID signage
- Sharing of food and drink: No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment may be shared

As of 04/03/2021





Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT MARCH 26, 2021.

To help identify items which are new, or have been updated since the last FAQ, simply look for:



This week's updates:

- **GATHERINGS** P3
- **CHURCH/COMMUNITY HALLS** P6
- **OP SHOPS** P9

### How will we know about further updates?

Regularly check the latest government advice available at: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/> and at: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/>

The Synod Crisis Management Team monitors changes on a regular basis. These FAQs will no longer be updated weekly and now only be updated as required.

It is recommended that you occasionally check the Synod website <https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions/> for updated FAQs, by checking the "Date Modified" column.

Should there be any major changes to COVID restrictions, these will be advised via separate email to all Church councils.

If you have any queries, these may still be sent to [CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au).  
*As of 10/12/2020*

### 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: [www.ethnolink.com.au/covid-19-coronavirus-translated-resources/](http://www.ethnolink.com.au/covid-19-coronavirus-translated-resources/)

The Department of Home Affairs has extensive multi-lingual resources available at: <https://covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

The Victorian Multicultural Commission has release multi-lingual resources including:

Audio messages

- <https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai>

Posters (JPG and PDF)

- <https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai>

Social Media banners

- <https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai>

*As of 13/08/2020*



*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

### 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.

*As of 04/03/2021*

There are no limits on numbers who may attend, however density limits do apply to ensure people are able to maintain a distance of at least 1.5m. A density quotient of 1 person per 2 sqm applies if using electronic record keeping of attendees (see p5). If not using electronic record keeping a density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies.

*Continued P4*





**Electronic record keeping through the Services Vic application (QR code- see p5) or a government API-linked digital system will soon be required. Venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty.**

*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

**Indoor and outdoor ceremonies** can now occur at the same time. No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment is permitted to be **shared** by participants. Food or drink can be **served** as part of a religious gathering or after a religious gathering. It is recommended that single use items are used to serve food or drink. It is recommended that one person serves or distributes food or drinks. For example, one person uses the urn for hot water for tea

*As of 10/12/2020*

**Weddings and Funerals:** There is no maximum attendee caps indoors or outdoors, but:

- A density quotient of 1 person per 2 sqm applies when using electronic record keeping of attendees (see p5).
- Electronic record keeping through the Services Vic application (QR code- see p5) or a government API-linked digital system required. Venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty.
- A density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies until electronic record keeping is not used.
- A cap of 100 people applies if the wedding or funeral is being held at a private residence.

*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

**Singing or chanting can occur as part of a religious ceremony, wedding or funeral.**

Singing is allowed, but it is best for singing and chanting to occur in well ventilated places or outside where the risk is lower.

Singing and chanting in religious settings has been shown to spread the virus. It is best if face masks are worn by congregants when singing occurs.

**Group singing is safest when the following measures are applied:**

- singing outside or in a well-ventilated room (with windows open)
- physical distancing of at least 2 metres between each person while singing
- short performances (of less than an hour)
- singing softly.
- wearing a face mask while singing

Singing inside in a poorly ventilated area with singers not physically distanced has been associated with the spread of COVID-19. Humming and singing softly is of lower risk. A study has shown that normal singing produces more aerosol particles than normal talking, and loud singing generates more particles than normal singing. Wearing a face mask reduces the level of aerosol particles produced to about that of normal talking.

Outdoor lessons, class or practice is permitted with the number of singers based on current restrictions. Singing lessons need to ensure enough space to allow for physical distancing.

It is important that anyone attending group singing does not have any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) to ensure the safety of others. People at high-risk of severe illness should not participate in group singing while there is active community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

*As at 11/03/2021*

**Singing rehearsals are permitted.**

If the rehearsal is held indoors, the indoor venue should be well ventilated. This can be achieved by making sure that windows are opened. If you are participating in a music or singing rehearsal it is recommended:

- That you keep at least two metres from other people in the rehearsal.
- No group size limits apply if the facility can apply the two square metre rule if using electronic record keeping. This means the limit on the number of people who can attend is determined by the size of the venue. The two square metre rule is the only limit on the number of people who can attend.

*Continued P5*





- Activities can be held indoors or outdoors. The facility must apply the two square metre rule to ensure people have enough room to maintain 1.5 metres distance between them.
- Please also see above guidance on singing or chanting for further information.

*As of 04/03/2021*

## Physical distancing

PHYSICAL DISTANCING requirements may mean that you cannot have the maximum number of attendees at a gathering.

The rule of 4 square metres per person must be maintained if attendance records are not being collected and maintained electronically. If attendance details are being collected and maintained electronically, then the rule is 2 square meters per person.

To calculate the maximum capacity of any building, measure the floorspace (length x width) in metres, then divide by either 2 (electronic record keeping) or 4 (non-electronic record keeping).

For example: if the inside of your church measures 10m x 6m = 60 square metres. If you are **not** keeping attendance records electronically, divide this by 4:  $60 \div 4 = 15$  people is it's the maximum capacity.

If you are keeping attendance records electronically, Divide the area by 2:  $60 \div 2 = 30$  people is the maximum capacity.

*As of 10/12/2020*

## What is meant by electronic record keeping or “Services Vic App”?

The Victorian Government has introduced a QR (Quick Response) Code service to allow for contact tracing information to be gathered by venues electronically. This allows for easy self-registration by guests directly into a contact tracing app.

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



## How do QR codes 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. If you intend to keep records electronically, 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.

## What is the advantage of using the QR code system?

Only venues which are using the above electronic method of gathering and keeping records with a Victorian Government supplied QR code can use the 2sqm per person density quotient. It also removes the need for maintaining hard-copy attendance registrations for 28 days.

**Electronic record keeping through the Services Vic application (QR code- see p5) or a government API-linked digital system will soon be required. Venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty from March 26, 2021.**

*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*





## Physical distancing signs

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

Firstly, you will need to determine if you are going to maintain attendance records electronically or not, as this will determine the maximum occupancy quotient (2 sqm per person if electronic, or 4 sqm per person otherwise). 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 do intend to maintain attendance records electronically, you will need to recalculate maximum occupancy per space and replace any existing occupancy signage.

*As of 10/12/2020*

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

Up to 100 people can visit a household per day (infants under 12 months not counted in the cap). Visitors may be from any number of households, together or separately. Front and back yards are considered part of the home.

Whilst this provides additional opportunities for pastoral care visits, these should be prearranged to ensure that those being visited remain within the current daily limit on visitors.

Church Councils and congregation committees should discuss which meetings are appropriate to be held via teleconference and/or video conference and which meetings are more appropriate if held face-to-face.

*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

## Transporting People. 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)

*As of 10/12/2020*

## 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: [www.victas.uca.org.au/safe-digital-ministry](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/safe-digital-ministry)

*As of 07/04/2020*



*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

## 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://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/8852/recovery-action-plan-checklist>

*Continued P7*



# COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs

Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT MARCH 26, 2021.

No patron caps with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. **Must use electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty).** All physical distancing and hygiene requirements must be met.

*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

**WORSHIP SERVICES** – Church or Community Halls can be used for Indoor religious gatherings with specific cleaning requirements and COVIDSafe plans. No attendance caps but with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. **Must use electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty)**

*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment is permitted to be **shared** by participants. Food or drink can be **served** as part of a religious gathering or after a religious gathering. It is recommended that single use items are used to serve food or drink. It is recommended that one person serves or distributes food or drinks. For example, one person uses the urn for hot water for tea

*As of 10/12/2020*

**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. This means the limit on the number of people who can attend the facility is determined by the size of the venue. The two square metre rule is the only limit on the number of people who can attend, and only applies if electronic record keeping is used. Otherwise the four square metre rule applies if manual record keeping is used.

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 for more than 15 minutes.

Activities can be held indoors or outdoors. Face masks are strongly recommended when you can't keep 1.5 metres distance from other people (except with people from your own home).

*As of 04/03/2020*

## EXERCISE GROUPS –

■ **Indoors:** A density quotient of 1 per 2sqm applies to each space. No caps on gym and exercise classes (other than limits imposed by density quotients) COVID Marshals required when gyms are staffed. At times when gyms are unstaffed, a density quotient of 1 per 4sqm applies. **Electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system is required (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty).**

■ **Outdoors:** No cap on outdoor fitness classes other than density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. **Electronic record keeping through the Services Vic app or a government API-linked digital system is required (venues will have a 28-day compliance amnesty).**

Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online.

*As of 6pm 26/03/2021*

**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-restrictionlevels-covid-19](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restrictionlevels-covid-19). If in doubt, seek advice from your presbytery or contact [uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au](mailto: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

*Continued P8*





Covid-19 safety measures to the Hirer if you notify them in advance of the additional 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](mailto:uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au)

*As of 17/09/2020*

### **COVID-SAFE PLANS – Required for some gatherings Do we need to complete a Covid-Safe plan as well as the UCA's Covid Recovery Action Checklist?**

If you have completed the [Covid Recovery Action Checklist](#) and are keeping this up-to-date, this can be your Covid-Safe Plan. There is no need to complete a separate plan. *As of 12/11/2020*

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

As more activities become permitted during the easing of Covid restrictions, Synod's Crisis Management Team have prepared a quick reference guide document for many of the non-worship uses of church property.

<https://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/9475/congregations-groups-permitted-activity-guide>

*As of 12/11/2020*

### **RENT RELIEF REQUESTS**

#### **What do we do if we are approached by tenants for Covid-19 rent relief?**

Rent relief is not automatic. Our Property Services and Legal departments have compiled guidelines for handling rent relief requests, both commercial and residential. If you wish to support a rent relief application, there is a form which needs to be completed before any rent relief can be offered. Details available on the first info sheet at:

[www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/property/forms-and-resources/](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/property/forms-and-resources/)

*As of 16/04/2020*

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

#### **What changes to worship services are permissible?**

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 June 2021 and can be found at: <https://www.assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/3163-temporary-arrangements-for-holy-communion>

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*

### **CORONAVIRUS FUNERALS**

#### **Are there any special requirements for holding the funeral of someone who has died of Coronavirus?**

The Victorian and Tasmanian governments each have guidelines for cases of suspected or confirmed COVID-19. These mean that some cultural and ministry funeral practices need to change, especially how families interact with the body of a person who has (or may have) died with COVID-19. Ministers need to consider how their ministry practice may need to alter and should discuss with Church Councils ahead of time how families can be supported in this situation.

*As of 17/04/2020*

### **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*







As of 6pm 26/03/2021

## 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 volunteers are encouraged to wear facemasks unless legally exempt, especially if they fall into any of the high-risk groups (see p8).
- 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-compliant and a copy sent to [elnura.dulakovic@victas.uca.org.au](mailto: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 2sqm, 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.
- Where practical a record of customers should be kept, in addition to records of all staff and volunteers who are on the premises. The simplest way to do this is with a Government QR Code (see p5).

As of 6pm 26/03/2021

**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 10/12/2020

## KINDERGARTEN

### We have a kindergarten operating from a church-owned building. Do we need to close it?

All Kindergartens and early Childhood Learning Centres may open. All appropriate risk mitigation measures should continue to be observed.

As of 17/09/2020

## 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

## 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.

Continued P10



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



If your presbytery or congregation is interested, please contact:

[Shweta.Paliwal@victas.uca.org.au](mailto: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*

## SYNOD STAFF

### What if we need to contact someone from Synod Ministries and Operations?

Most Synod staff have returned to the Synod offices, which are now located at Wesley Place. Please note that whilst email addresses and mobile phone numbers remain unchanged, office telephone numbers have now changed and the old 9251 telephone numbers are no longer valid. Wesley Place UCA Reception: **(03) 9116 1400**

*As of 03/04/2020*

## 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 two 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.**
- maintain a contact tracing register (ie name and contact number) for anyone attending the Garage Sale or market if possible and
- we recommend that you have a process for orderly flow of people (eg everyone goes in 1 direction, entrance and exit points and a total number limit) to ensure the social distancing requirements can still be safely met.

*As of 10/12/2020*

## CONGREGATION WEBSITE TRAINING

### Will training sessions for new congregation websites still go ahead?

It is currently anticipated that Training Sessions will resume in early 2021, following the Synod meeting. Further advice will be made available through Synod eNews Update in the new year.

*As of 26/11/2020*

## COVID SAFE APP

### Should we encourage downloading the Federal Government's Covid-Safe tracing app?

Synod Ministries and Operations would strongly recommend that all people in ministry download the Covid-Safe tracing app and also encourage all Uniting Church members to do so. As worship services recommence, this is a simple measure to help maintain the safety of our members as they start to gather again.

*As of 14/05/2020*

## 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*

*Continued P11*





## **JOBKEEPER PAYMENTS**

### **What is happening with the Jobkeeper payments?**

Last July, the Government announced an extension of the JobKeeper Payment until 28 March 2021. The Synod was required to re-assess eligibility for the JobKeeper extension using actual turnover in the September quarter 2020 to demonstrate that it met the relevant decline in turnover test to be eligible for JobKeeper for the period 28 September 2020 to 3 January 2021 and again for the period of 4 January to 28 March based on the December quarter.

**We have again met the eligibility test based on the December 2020 quarter, therefore Jobkeeper payments will continue until 28 March 2021.**

The JobKeeper Payment rate has been reduced and paid at two rates:

- From 28 September 2020 to 3 January 2021, the payment rate was reduced to \$1,200 per fortnight for all eligible people who were working for 20 hours or more a week on average, and \$750 per fortnight for people who were working for less than 20 hours a week on average in the reference periods.
- From 4 January 2021 to 28 March 2021, the payment rate has been further reduced to \$1,000 per fortnight for all eligible people who were working for 20 hours or more a week on average, and \$650 per fortnight for people who were working for less than 20 hours a week on average in the reference periods.

Our people are not required to resubmit a new nomination declaration and Congregations do not need to provide financial information to support the turnover tests. Eligible people will be notified of their payment tier by a message on their pay slip.

Further information is available in the JobKeeper Payment extension fact sheet. <https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/Fact-sheet-JobKeeper-Payment-extension-1.pdf>

Specific payroll queries can be directed to:

[Payroll-UCA@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:Payroll-UCA@victas.uca.org.au)

Congregations should record the JobKeeper payments in their accounts as a receipt – “Grants received Government”. **The amount should not be paid to ministers/staff as they have already been paid through the normal payroll processes.**

The Synod will manage all reporting to the ATO, including monthly declarations of revenue. This is based on the Synod operations and not on individual congregation results. There is no need to submit monthly revenue results.

Unfortunately efforts to qualify for the Cash Boost Payment have been unsuccessful at this stage.

Congregations are reminded that the JobKeeper Payment has been implemented by the Government to help employers keep staff and restart when the crisis is over.

### **Some questions:**

#### **Do casuals need to submit timesheets?**

Where a casual is normally paid by submitting timesheets, these need to continue to be submitted, even if it's for a small shift.

#### **Do staff need to continue to work?**

Yes. The JobKeeper payment processes allow an employer to reasonably alter an employee's duties, location and days of work. We would advise congregations to find all staff (including casuals) some work tasks to do even if it's from home. You might need to be creative and/or ask the staff what they may be able to contribute. Some ideas shared in the zoom meeting – for Playgroup workers contacting parents, providing activity packs, zoom catch up with children, sing alongs etc. Admin staff may also be used to keep in contact with members, email/deliver newsletters, filing etc. The work may not be what they normally do.

*Continued P12*





**For Part-time/Casuals who receive a top up payment do LSL levies (portable LSL) apply?**

Portable LSL Authority - levy for "Community Service Workers": For those employees who are receiving a top-up payment, the top-up portion is not included in the calculation of the LSL levy.

The situation is the same as what has been calculated in the past (the actual total hours worked and the totals ordinary pay received by the worker, not including the JobKeeper top-up payment).

*As of 18/02/2020*

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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:

**WELLBEING**

- 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)
- Alcohol or Drug related issues** ph 1800 888 236

A great workbook to help build resilience during isolation: <https://thewellnesssociety.org/free-coronavirus-anxiety-workbook/>

YMCA – Virtual Y – online platform with loads of fitness, nutrition, wellbeing, family and youth content. <https://virtualy.ymca.org.au>

Vic Govt Food and personal care packages for people in mandatory self-isolation, delivered to your door.

ph 1800 675 398

**FINANCIAL**

**Centrelink**

Online financial resources for existing customers: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency)

**Centrelink Crisis Payments** ph 132 850

**Uniting Vic Tas**

<https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/contact-us/>

**Aust Govt** (early release of Superannuation):

[www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au)

