

# COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE | JUNE 17, 2021



## Further “Circuit-breaker lockdown” restrictions ease in Metropolitan Melbourne as of 11.59pm Thursday June 17.

### As of 11:59pm June 17, the following restrictions will apply to Metropolitan Melbourne:

- **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 two adults (and their dependants) may visit per day.
- **Public outdoor gatherings** – limited to 20 people only.
- **Religious gatherings and ceremonies** are allowed with a density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm up to a maximum of **75 people indoors** per venue, plus a religious leader, with the option of a further 75 people outside. Check in upon entry using the Service Victoria app (QR code), even if your visit is less than 15 minutes.
- **Funerals** – maximum of 75 people plus those required to conduct the funeral.
- **Weddings** – maximum of 20 guests including the couple and two witnesses. Celebrant and one photographer are not included in the cap.
- **Schools** – All students return to face-to-face learning.
- **Adult education** – If you can study from home, you should continue to study from home.
- **Childcare and Early Learning** – may remain open.
- **Restaurants/Cafes** – Open for seated service, with a maximum of 150 people, with 75 of those inside.
- **Beauty Services** – Open where face masks can be worn at all times.
- **Libraries and Toy Libraries** – Open with a maximum of 50 people.
- **Residential Aged Care** – No visitors, with very limited exceptions.
- **Hospitals** – Visitors only for end-of-life, or one support person for childbirth.
- **Seated and Non-seated entertainment – open with max of 50 people OR 50% capacity (whichever is fewer)**
- **Shopping - The use of QR code check-in to be extended to all shops, including supermarkets.**
- **Travel to/from Metropolitan Melbourne** – The 25km travel distance has been removed, as have restrictions on travel between Metro Melbourne and Regional Victoria. However, anyone planning on visiting Alpine regions must have a negative covid test result within 72 hours before travel.
- **Community Sport** – permitted for all ages (both training and competition)
- **Work** – Offices open with up to 50% of capacity. Facemasks must be worn in all indoor settings. Use of the Services Victoria (QR Code) app will soon become compulsory for staff check-in at all workplaces.

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](#).





## 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 75 people per venue indoors, plus a religious leader. A further 75 people may attend outside with the service livestreamed.**

### How do we limit attendance to just 75 members?

In 2020, some larger congregations instigated a booking system. This ensured that maximum capacity limits were not exceeded and avoided having to turn members away.

### 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.

### If more than 75 people arrive can the extra overflow go into another separate area which has live-streaming available?

Yes, providing that area is outdoors. The current restriction states: Religious gatherings and ceremonies are allowed with a density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm up to a maximum of 75 people **per venue indoors**, plus a religious leader. As PER VENUE and INDOORS have been specifically stated, having more than 75 people split into separate indoor areas does not seem to be an option currently.

### Can we gather for morning tea afterwards?

Synod's Crisis Management team is not currently encouraging this, as the removal of masks for eating and drinking increases the possibility of COVID transmission.

However, as seated service is currently available in cafes etc for up to 75 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.

*Continued P3*





## 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 20 people including the couple and two witnesses. The celebrant and one photographer are not included in this limit.

*As of 10/06/2021*

## FUNERALS

Funerals are allowed with up to 75 people. 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, two adults (and their dependants) and minimum number of people required to conduct the funeral.

*As of 10/06/2021*

## 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.  $60 \div 4 = 15$  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*

*Continued P4*





## 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.

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 20 people only.

**In-home gatherings** – only two adult visitors and their dependants can visit each day other than intimate partners. Anyone who lives alone may create a "bubble" with one other person.

Church Councils and congregation committee meetings should be held via teleconference and/or video conference.

*As of 10/06/2021*

## 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).

*Continued P5*







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](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 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 10/06/2021*

## 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](mailto:CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au)

*As of 10/06/2021*

## 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 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*

## 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](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*

## 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-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.

*Continued P7*





- 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.

*As of 10/06/2021*

#### **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:

<b>Lifeline</b>	ph <b>13 11 14</b>
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	ph <b>1300 22 4636</b>
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	ph <b>1800 55 1800</b>
<b>1800RESPECT</b> (Domestic & Sexual Violence)	ph <b>1800 737 732</b>
<b>SafeSteps</b> (support & planning to escape domestic violence)	ph <b>1800 015 188</b>
<b>LGBTQIA</b> (peer driven support)	ph <b>1800 184 527</b>

#### **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/>

