

COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs

REGIONAL VICTORIA (EXCLUDING BALLARAT) SEPTEMBER 16, 2021



As of 11:59pm Wednesday Sept 16, lockdown restrictions only apply to Ballarat and Metro Melbourne.

The following COVID-safe restrictions apply in Regional Victoria (except Ballarat).

- **Stay at Home** requirements have been lifted, and the 5km travel limit has been lifted.
- **Masks** must be carried at all times and must be worn at all times indoors and outdoors by Victorians aged 12 years or over unless at home, or when visiting an intimate partner's place of residence, or if an exemption applies. Face masks are recommended for primary school aged children indoors or outdoors unless at home or if an exemption applies. Face masks may only be removed to eat and to drink non-alcoholic beverages.
- **Visitors to the home** are not permitted. Intimate partner visits or single person bubble permitted.
- **Public outdoor gatherings** are limited to 10 people only.
- **Religious gatherings and ceremonies** are permitted with up to 20 persons per venue, plus those workers necessary to conduct the ceremony. COVID Check-in marshals must ensure all attendees check-in.
- **Funerals** – (indoors or outdoors) maximum of 20 people plus those required to conduct the funeral. Children under 12 months are not counted in the cap. COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure all attendees check-in
- **Weddings** – (indoors or outdoors) maximum of 10 people and those workers necessary to conduct the wedding. Children under 12 months are not counted in the cap. COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure all attendees check-in. Dancefloors not permitted.
- **Work:** if you can work from home you should work from home. Offices may return with 25% or up to 10 people if the total workplace is 40 persons or less. Density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm applies. Permitted worker permits are now only required for people who live and/or work in Metropolitan Melbourne or Ballarat.
- **Schools**
 - Open for Prep to Grade 2, and for Year 12 only. Remote learning for all other levels.
 - Open to children of metropolitan Melbourne authorised workers and vulnerable children
 - Twice-weekly PCR testing for teachers moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.
 - Density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies in non-student areas.
 - Face Mask requirements apply to everyone 12 years and over.
- **Adult/Higher Education:** Closed. Remote learning only unless permitted study.
- **Childcare and Early Learning:** Open for regional Victorian children; open for children of metropolitan Melbourne authorised workers, single parents and for vulnerable children. Twice-weekly PCR testing for teachers moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.
- **Restaurants/Cafes:** Open for seated service only with maximum of 20 outdoors and 10 indoors subject to density limits.
- **Hairdressing & Beauty Services** – Open with a cap of 10 people. Masks must remain on during the service.
- **Community Facilities** – Open with a maximum of 20 people per facility.
- **Hospital Visitors:** Unless end-of-life, 2 people per day may visit but only for the following reasons:
 - As a parent, guardian or carer of a child who is a patient in hospital
 - To provide support that is necessary for the patient's emotional or physical wellbeing.
 - As a nominated person under the Mental Health Act
 - To provide interpreter or informal language support
 - For leaning to support the resident's care upon discharge
 - As a carer of a patient with a disability
 - Accompanying someone to the emergency department or outpatient clinic
 - As a partner of a pregnant woman or patient in a maternity ward

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- **Care Facility Visits:** Unless end-of-life, 2 people per day may visit but only for the following reasons:
 - To provide care and support for the resident's physical and emotional wellbeing
 - To support residents under 18 years of age
 - As a nominated person under the Mental Health Act
 - To provide interpreter or informal language support
 - For learning to support the resident's care upon discharge
- **Entertainment Venues:** (INDOORS) Open with a maximum of 20 people per space. (OUTDOORS) Open with up to 25% capacity or a maximum of 300 people, whichever is lesser.
- **Business and Function Facilities:** Open with a maximum of 20 people per space.
- **Shopping –** Open with a density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm. Check-in required. Masks mandatory at all times and cannot be removed for eating/drinking.
- **Travel to/from Metropolitan Melbourne -** restricted to the following specific purposes:
 - Necessary goods and services (from the nearest facility)
 - Care or compassionate reasons (including intimate partner/single person bubble)
 - Authorised work or education
 - Other specified reasons (eg moving home)
- **Community Sport –** All indoor sports facilities to remain closed. Outdoor playgrounds, skate parks and communal gym equipment may open. Community recreation facilities – outdoor only with up to 20 people per facility. Community sport is permitted for outdoor training only with the minimum number required to train. No spectators, except one parent permitted to supervise children.

The guidance in this document is not relevant in the Ballarat region. Anyone who lives and/or works within the Ballarat LGA should refer to the Metro Melbourne FAQs for COVID-safe guidance whilst lockdown restrictions continue to apply.

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, subject to maximum attendance caps and density limits, with COVIDSafe plans including cleaning and signage. Covid Check-in Marshals must be used to ensure 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 permitted with up to 20 persons per venue, plus those workers necessary to conduct the ceremony. COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure all attendees check-in using the Services Victoria app (see p4).

As of 10/09/2021

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

Yes. Masks are currently mandatory in all 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 10 people indoors and public gatherings outdoors of 10 people are also permitted, it is possible to gather for morning tea, providing there is a maximum of 10 people inside and 10 people outside with all attendees seated and socially distanced, and with all food and drink served, rather than available buffet style.

As of 10/09/2021

Can we sing?

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

As of 09/08/2021

WEDDINGS

Weddings (indoors or outdoors) may be held with a maximum of 10 people, including the two persons being married and two witnesses. The celebrant and photographer are not included in the cap, nor are children under 12 months. COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure all attendees checkin. Dancefloors are not permitted.

As of 10/09/2021

FUNERALS

Funerals (indoors or outdoors) may be held with a maximum of 20 people plus those required to conduct the funeral. Children under 12 months are not counted in the cap. COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure all attendees check-in. Funerals at private residences are not permitted. Any additional requirements if any attendees are from Metro Melbourne are yet to be announced.

As of 10/09/2021

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 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/>

As of 09/08/2021





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. There is a \$1,652 on-the-spot fine for non-compliance.

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?

"Kiosk check-in" can be set up on any device (ie Computer, smart-phone, tablet) which will allow a designated person to enter the names and contact phone numbers on behalf of all visitors. For further details or to download check-in kiosk: www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checking-qr-codes

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 10 people only.

In-home gatherings – Are not permitted – only intimate partner or single-person bubbles..

As of 09/08/2021

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>

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

As of 09/08/2021





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. The facility must apply the density limit and overall attendance cap relevant to the venue.

As of 09/08/2021

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 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 24/06/2021

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 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: George.Delice@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 08/07/2020

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 customers and all staff 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
- 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.

As of 28/07/2021



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REGIONAL VICTORIA (EXCLUDING BALLARAT) SEPTEMBER 16, 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 08/07/2021

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 density quotient 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 24/06/2021

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:

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

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/>

