

COVID-19

VICTORIA FAQs

Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT NOVEMBER 26, 2020



As of 11:59pm Sunday November 22, the State of Victoria, including metropolitan Melbourne, has entered the “Last Step” prior to “Covid Normal” under the government’s Roadmap to Recovery.

What HAS changed?

■ Religious gatherings and ceremonies:

- Indoor: Cap of up to **150** providing a **density quotient of 1 per 4sqm can be met. No group limit.**
- Outdoor (proximate to a place of worship): Cap of **300** with a density quotient of 1 per 4sqm. No group limit.
- Either indoor or outdoor ceremony, not both at the same time.
- No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment may be shared by participants

■ Weddings, including receptions:

- Cap of **up to 150** people with density quotient of **1 per 4sqm** indoors or outdoors. **No group limit.**
- Weddings at private residences: private gathering limit (15 people) applies.
- Persons necessary to conduct the wedding (such as celebrant or wait staff) excluded from this limit.

■ Funerals, including wakes:

- Cap of **up to 150** mourners with density quotient of **1 per 4sqm** indoors or outdoors. **No group limit.**
- Funerals at private residences: private gathering limit (15 people) applies.
- Persons necessary to conduct the funeral (such as a faith leader) excluded from this limit.

■ Face Masks: mandatory indoors, unless an exemption applies or at home. Include settings such as public transport, including when waiting at stations, ride shares, hospitals, care facilities and shopping.

- **Face masks not required outdoors** except where physical distance (1.5 metres) from non-household members cannot be maintained, such as farmers’ markets and other outdoor retail.

- Requirement to **carry masks at all times.**
- Some industries are required to wear face coverings as part of their COVIDSafe Plan.

■ Private gatherings: up to 15 visitors, including dependants, per day can visit a household, together or separately.

- infants under 12 months are excluded from the visitor caps.
- **face masks recommended** when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- **keeping a record of visitors** is advised

■ Visiting hospital and care facilities:

No restrictions on purpose, number of visitors or length of time for visits

■ Work: Workplaces currently working from home (such as offices in the CBD) to return for **up to 25 percent** of their workforce per site **from 30 November 2020**

- Standard workplace requirements including density limits & Covid-safe plans continue to apply
- Businesses with fewer than 40 staff can have 10 staff on-site subject to density quotients.

■ Higher education and training: Return to campus for students and staff for summer programs.

■ Community facilities, including libraries and toy libraries:

- **Indoor:** Cap of **150** patrons with density quotient. **Group limit of 20 patrons.**
- **Outdoor:** Cap of **300** patrons with density quotient. **Group limit of 50 patrons.**

■ Community venues: Cap of **150** patrons with density quotient. **Group limit of 20 patrons**

- Recommendation that **no more than 5 people per space singing** or using wind instruments for amateur groups.
- Persons necessary to conduct activities (such as the person running a class) excluded from this limit.

■ Creative Studios

- **Indoor:** If venue less than 80sqm, maximum of **20 people**, subject to a density quotient of **1 per 2sqm**
- If venue 80sqm or larger, maximum of **150** people indoors subject to density quotient of **1 per 4sqm**
- Group/class limit of **20 patrons.**
- Recommendation that no more than **5 people singing** or using wind instruments for amateur groups.

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Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs

Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT NOVEMBER 26, 2020

- **Outdoors:** Venue cap of **150 people**, with a group limit of 50 people, density quotient of **1 per 4sqm**
- Persons necessary to conduct activities (such as the person running a class) excluded from this limit.
- **Hospitality (seated service only) Indoors:**
 - Venues less than 200sqm of floorspace subject to density quotient of **1 per 2sqm** up to a total of **50 patrons**.
QR codes must be used for venues using the small indoor venue density quotient.
No group limit.
 - Venues 200sqm of floorspace or larger subject to density quotient of **1 per 4sqm** up to **150 patrons**. **No group limit.**

What has NOT changed?

- **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)
 - Cleaning protocols
 - Physical distancing, maximum occupancy and all other COVID signage
- **Singing:** it is still recommended this be limited to a maximum of 5 singers or wind or brass instrument players. Performers must be 2 meters apart and 5 meters from the audience. Well ventilated areas only though singing outdoors is strongly recommended (*see p4*)
- **Sharing of food and drink:** No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment may be shared
- **Public gatherings:** Up to 50 people can gather outdoors from any number of households, excludes infants under 12 months.

Until (and including) November 29, the current advice is to continue to work from home if you can.

An announcement on the move to “COVID NORMAL” is currently anticipated to be made on December 6, but remains subject to Covid case numbers.

As of 26/11/2020

Send any questions to:
CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au
 or contact your Presbytery.

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



This week's updates:

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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/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions-roadmaps>

The Synod Crisis Management Team monitors changes on a daily basis. Compliance and Pastoral advice will continue to be issued via emailed letters from the General Secretary and/or Moderator. All other relevant advice will continue to be sent via the special Coronavirus editions of Synod eNews, which will appear in your inbox from “Communications”. eNews and emailed

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letters are sent to all Presbyteries, all ministers, all church councils. These FAQs are updated weekly, available every Thursday.

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/

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 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 26/11/2020

LIVE-STREAMING WORSHIP

How many people can be involved in live-streaming worship services?

Recording and live-streaming of worship services is permitted providing all of the following guidelines are met.

The streaming of worship services is permitted only where the following social distancing requirements can be met and the total number

of people at the premises is limited to 150 (which includes those participating in the ceremony and those providing technical support). **Total attendance numbers remain subject to density quotient of 4m²per person.**

No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment may be shared by participants.

- Every person must wear a fitted facemask
- At least 4sqm of floor area per person is required in the place where the ceremony/performance takes place. This means the immediate area/room around the participants where the ceremony is performed.

In addition, you must take measures to mitigate any risk of disease transmission by ensuring the following measures are in place:

- Exclude persons who are unwell from participating in the production of the live streaming
- People in any of the identified vulnerable groups should carefully consider their need to participate in live streaming. This includes:
 - Those who are immuno-compromised, etc.
 - over 70
 - over 65 with significant medical conditions
 - Aboriginal people over 50 with significant medical conditions
- Ensure all people present practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and provide appropriate hand washing facilities and hand sanitisers
- If live streaming worship from a church or church building,
 - a COVID Recovery Action Plan Checklist (Sections A, B & C) must be completed and maintained **and a copy sent to:** elnura.dulakovic@victas.uca.org.au
 - If live streaming worship from a private residence, with only the residents present, a COVID Recovery Action Plan Checklist and Permitted Worker Permit are not required.

As of 26/11/2020





PRE-RECORDING WORSHIP

Are there any differences in the requirements for pre-recording worship vs live-streaming?

As the basic process is the same for both, the same practices should be applied.

As of 06/04/2020

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

As of 07/04/2020



As of 26/11/2020

GATHERINGS

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

Indoor religious gatherings are allowed with a maximum of 150 people plus a faith leader attending with specific cleaning requirements and COVIDSafe plans. **Total attendance numbers remain subject to density quotient of 4m² per person.**

No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment may be shared by participants.

As of 26/11/2020

- **Outdoor religious gatherings** for up to 300 people plus a faith leader proximate to the church are allowed, using appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices
- It is not permitted to conduct both indoor and outdoor gatherings at the same time.

Weddings may be held with the maximum number of 150 people present, using appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices. The people necessary to conduct the wedding are not included in this limit.

Funerals may be held in places of worship, with the maximum number of 150 people present (not including people required to conduct the funeral eg the faith leader), using appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices.

Note: Religious gatherings (including worship, weddings and funerals) may not be held indoors and outdoors (proximate to the place of worship) at the same time.

As of 26/11/2020

Is singing permitted at gatherings?

Singing within a non-professional, rehearsal or class environment is permitted but with restrictions.

Note: face covering are required for all people other than those where an exemption applies.

The government guidance indicates band members (except singers and woodwind or brass musicians) must wear a face mask while they perform if indoors unless an exemption applies.

Indoors

Groups of no more than 20 people (plus teacher if in a class) in well ventilated area.

Outdoors:

Groups of no more than 50 people (plus teacher if in a class)

Further requirements for indoor and outdoor practice/rehearsal/performance are:

- distancing 2m apart from others involved in the music and 5m away from the members of the public.
- music is not performed directly above any other member of the public.

It is recommended that no more than five people sing or use instruments that lead to the spread of aerosols, such as woodwind or brass, in a space in the rehearsal setting.

As of 12/11/2020





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.

To calculate the maximum capacity of any building, measure the floorspace (length x width) in metres, then divide by 4. For example: if the inside of your church measures 10m x 6m = 60 square metres ÷ 4 = 15 people is its maximum capacity. Even if Covid regulations state that up to 20 people can attend, the maximum number of people, including those conducting the ceremony, who would be able to be in your church at any time would still be 15.

On the other hand, if the inside of your church measures 10m x 40m = 400 square metres ÷ 4 = 100 people is the maximum capacity. However, if Covid regulations state that up to 20 people can attend, then only 20 people can attend.

Which figure do we use? Government maximum numbers or the 4 square metre rule? In all cases, the **smaller** number is the one to use.

As of 17/09/2020

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-askedquestions/>

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

Up to two people can visit a household once per day. Infants under 12 months are not included in this cap, and other dependents can also attend if they cannot be left unattended or cared for in another setting. The two people may be from different households.

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 Council and congregation committee meetings should continue to be held via teleconference and/or videoconference wherever possible.

As of 22/10/2020

Transporting People. Is it permitted to provide transport (“give a lift”) to people?

Where possible, having passengers in your car who are not members of your household should be avoided due to the close enclosed proximity within a car. If travelling in a car with someone who is not part of your household:

- 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 26/11/2020



As of 26/11/2020

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>

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Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT NOVEMBER 26, 2020

Community/Church Halls and similar such buildings may be used for some purposes, providing a minimum floorspace of 4m² per person is available and all other physical distancing and hygiene requirements can be met.

WORSHIP SERVICES – Church or Community Halls can be used for Indoor religious gatherings with a maximum of 150 people plus a faith leader attending with specific cleaning requirements and COVIDSafe plans. **Total attendance numbers remain subject to density quotient of 4m² per person.**

As of 26/11/2020

No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment may be shared by participants.

As of 26/11/2020

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES – If halls or other facilities are intended to be used for Essential Public Services such as food banks, homeless services or education, they can remain open for the delivery of these services (applying all other health and safety measures). If you are in doubt about whether the service is an Essential Public Service, seek advice via your presbytery or contact uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au.

SUPPORT GROUPS – If hosting a support group, a maximum number of 150 people can be present in groups of no more than 20 people per space, providing a minimum floorspace of 4m² per person is available and all other physical distancing and hygiene requirements can be met. This means a maximum of 150 people in total within the building, with attendees spread out in groups of up to 20 per group. Each group of people must remain socially distant from any other group of people at all times, with no physical interaction between groups.

As of 26/11/2020

EXERCISE GROUPS –

- **For 18 and under:** indoor physical recreation and non-contact sport is now permitted, with certain caps.
- **For adults:** indoor fitness and fitness classes (up to 10 people in a space and 20 in a venue, subject to density limits) is now permitted.

- **Outdoors:** Contact and non-contact sport allowed for 18 and under. For adults: Outdoor non-contact sports only (minimum number required to play game). Outdoor fitness (up to 10 people or a household excluding the trainer).

As of 29/10/2020

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.

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 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

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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



As of 26/11/2020

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

PERMITTED WORKER PERMITS

Permitted Worker Permits are no longer required anywhere in the state of Victoria.

As of 12/11/2020

MINISTERS IN HIGH RISK GROUPS

What if a minister is part of a Coronavirus high risk group?

All people who are

- aged over 70,
- over 65 with chronic health conditions,
- immune-compromised, or
- Indigenous people over 50 with chronic health conditions

should carefully consider their need to participate. This includes ministry agents in these at-risk groups, whether retired or in active placement, who might have otherwise led funerals.

Ministry agents in these risk groups are encouraged to talk with their Church Council and have clear arrangements in place in advance as to who may be called on for funerals, especially where a person has died with confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

As of 17/04/2020

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/

As of 16/04/2020





As of 26/11/2020

OP SHOPS

Can we keep our Op Shop open?

In regional Victoria, Op-shops can continue to operate unless directed otherwise by local authorities, and provided that social distancing measures are put in place for staff, volunteers and visitors. You may of course choose to adjust how you operate your shop, such as operating only on a case-by-case basis by request to support local needs and/or in partnership with local community services. It should also be noted that some Op Shops may need to close for a short time while addressing the current requirements.

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

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.

VOLUNTEERS: You must wear a face mask when you leave home, unless an exception applies. 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 26/11/2020

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



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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

SYNOD

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

Whilst they may be working remotely, all Synod staff are still working. Please contact any staff member as normal, but please be aware that they may not have all of the answers at their fingertips quite as readily as usual.

As of 19/11/2020



As of 26/11/2020

MARKETS

Can we hold garage sales and/or markets?

Markets may operate, within the following guidelines:

- 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 at all times.**

Whilst it is not a requirement for markets generally, it is strongly recommended to

- maintain a contact tracing register (ie name and contact number) for anyone attending the Garage Sale or market and
- 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 26/11/2020



As of 26/11/2020

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

CROSSLIGHT

Will *Crosslight* continue to be published?

The December edition of *Crosslight* will be printed and distributed at the beginning of December. The Communications Team thanks you for your support. For those who have become accustomed to reading *Crosslight* in its online "[flip book](#)" format, we will continue to make this available in addition to the printed version.

The October "[flip book](#)" edition is available from <https://crosslight.org.au/>

News and feature stories are posted to *Crosslight*'s website on a regular basis available at: www.crosslight.org.au

As of 19/11/2020





UPDATED INFORMATION

How will we know if the information on this page is still current?

This FAQ sheet will be updated WEEKLY and re-sent in every Coronavirus edition of eNews. Please check this page each week for anything which is of particular interest. If in doubt, check with Synod Ministries and Operations or with your presbytery.

As of 06/04/2020

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



As of 26/11/2020

BORDER CLOSURES

Who needs a cross-border permit, and where are these available?

All border restrictions between Victoria and NSW have now been removed.

The Tasmanian government has announced that border restrictions will be further eased on November 27 when Victoria is to be reclassified as a 'Low Risk' area.

Prior to travelling to Tasmania you must register at <https://arrivals.dpipwe.tas.gov.au>

As of 26/11/2020

JOBKEEPER PAYMENTS

What is happening with the Jobkeeper payments?

In 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.

We can now advise that the Synod has demonstrated eligibility and will receive JobKeeper payments for eligible people paid through the Synod or CSPS payrolls.

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

- From 28 September 2020 to 3 January 2021, the payment rate will reduce 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 will further reduce to \$1,000 per fortnight for all eligible people who were

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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.

Please note that the Synod will need to demonstrate that the relevant decline in turnover test in the December quarter 2020 has been met to remain eligible for the JobKeeper payments from 4 January 2021 to 28 March 2021. Synod expects to be in a position to confirm eligibility in January 2021.

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

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.

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 15/10/2020



As of 26/11/2020

NEXT STEPS TO RECOVERY

When can we expect further easing of restrictions?

The Government has indicated that further restriction easing may be announced on Sunday December 6.

As of 26/11/2020





During this time of second wave lockdowns, 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 Stage 3 or 4 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
- 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

