

DIOCESAN COVID-19 UPDATE

9 September 2020



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
MELBOURNE

Dear Brothers and Sisters

The latest news and information from the Diocese.

The Archbishop's weekly video

"Facing the next hill", this week's video, is found [here](#).

We remind you that diocesan information and resources related to the pandemic is on the diocesan [website](#) under four main headings: online church, wellbeing, resources for ministry and mission, diocesan information. These pages also include the COVID-safe [checklist](#) for parishes and other links.

Metropolitan Melbourne restrictions

The dates below for relaxing restrictions may be later if COVID case numbers do not reduce sufficiently in time.

Churches and services

Until 28 September, churches and church buildings remain closed. From 28 September, outdoor gatherings on church property of up to five people plus a clergy person or ASLM are possible, but not for a service. From 26 October this will be eased to ten people, include outdoor services, and private prayer inside the church would be possible within limits. At this stage, indoor services cannot resume until at least 23 November.

Weddings

Weddings are only permitted on compassionate grounds, such as if one of the couple is dying, until 26 October.

- The Archbishop's weekly video
- Metropolitan Melbourne restrictions
- Regional Victoria restrictions
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Funerals

Funerals can have 10 mourners until 26 October.

Work permits

We understand that the work permit system will continue after 13 September. New forms are not yet available. We will send a newsletter as soon as these details are available.

Regional Victoria restrictions

No set date is given for the next steps of relaxing restrictions. For parishes and church property outside of metropolitan Melbourne, the following apply.

Churches and services

From 14 September, outdoor gatherings on church property of up to five people plus a clergyperson or ASLM are possible, but not for a service. The advice is to work from home where possible, but clergy and staff may work from the church with social distancing (do not share offices).

Weddings

From 14 September, weddings are allowed with a maximum of five attending, including the couple and celebrant.

Funerals

From 14 September, funerals are allowed with up to 10 mourners.

Annual meetings

With the phased restrictions now announced, we encourage parishes in metropolitan Melbourne at least to plan for annual meetings after 23 November to enable as many people as possible to attend.

Annual meetings zoom Q&A

Bishop Paul will host two zoom discussions for clergy wanting to discuss planning for Annual Parochial Meetings. These are on Tuesday, 15 September, at 10am [click here](#) and Wednesday, 16 September, at 3pm [click here](#). Please email questions in advance to bishoppaulbarker@melbourneanglican.org.au to aid discussion.

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Letterbox drops

Under current restrictions in metropolitan Melbourne, we are not allowed to letterbox-drop church flyers or material to all houses in an area. We can, as part of local exercise, hand deliver to specific letterboxes of church members.

Op shops

Metropolitan Melbourne

Parish op shops in metropolitan Melbourne are permitted to trade via click and collect in addition to online trading via post. Existing guidance concerning the need for a parish council resolution and the preparation of an Op shop COVID-safe plan applies. Op shop COVID-safe plans should be sent to registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au.

Regional Victoria

Op Shops in parishes in Regional Victoria are able to open from Monday, 14 September. Op shop COVID-safe plans need to reflect density quotients and cleaning requirements. See [here](#) for existing guidance.

Business Support Fund Expansion

We are aware that Business Victoria has rejected many applications from parishes for the Business Support Fund Expansion Grant. We are looking into the issue as a matter of urgency and it appears that we may need to further clarify with Business Victoria the relationship between MADC and the individual parishes. We are hopeful that we can sort out a solution with Business Victoria in the next few days, and will send out a communication to all parishes as soon as we have an answer.

Parish survey of finances (for JobKeeper purposes)

The MADC is the diocesan entity which is eligible for the JobKeeper payments from the Federal Government for our employees. As the group employer, MADC must periodically gather evidence that its 'clients' (the parishes and diocesan centre) have suffered at least an overall 15% negative impact from the COVID-19 restrictions on operations. If the measured reduction in income is less than this (compared to the same period in 2019), then the diocese as a whole will not qualify for JobKeeper payments post-September.

Parishes will be sent a brief survey focussing mostly on income later this week. It is therefore important that ALL parishes respond over the coming fortnight. Your attention to this is greatly appreciated.



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Wellbeing

A very insightful article on the ancient spiritual state "acedia" can be found [here](#). This reflection may resonate with the range of emotions many are experiencing during the pandemic.

Questions or concerns about restrictions or work permits can be directed to Bishop Paul: bishoppaulbarker@melbourneanglican.org.au.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philip Melbourne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'P'.

The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier
Archbishop of Melbourne