

# DIOCESAN COVID-19 UPDATE

28 October 2020



**ANGLICAN  
DIOCESE OF  
MELBOURNE**

Dear Brothers and Sisters

The latest news and information from the Diocese.

## **The Archbishop's weekly video**

"A small start, so let's get started", this week's video, is found [here](#).

## **Work permits**

Work permits are no longer required within metropolitan Melbourne regardless of the distance travelled for work. However, they are needed for those going to regional Victoria from metropolitan Melbourne and vice versa. The new form for a metro-regional work permit is found [here](#).

## **Funerals – correction**

Twenty mourners can attend funerals indoors in metropolitan Melbourne. This corrects a mistake in Monday's update.

## **Weddings – correction**

Weddings can be held indoors in metropolitan Melbourne, as in regional Victoria. This corrects a mistake in Monday's update.

Weddings may have ten guests, plus the bridal couple, the celebrant and a photographer. This is an increase from what was earlier anticipated by DHHS.

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## Indoor services – regional Victoria – added detail

The maximum attending an indoors service in regional Victoria is twenty. However, these must be in two groups of up to ten people. Each group must be ten metres apart from the other. If in separate spaces, they could each have a cleric or ASLM. The two groups cannot mingle. Service times are limited to 90 minutes indoors.

## Indoor services – metropolitan Melbourne – added detail

Service times are limited to 90 minutes indoors.

## Orders of service

We have said we are not to share books, Bibles and utensils. If people do not bring their own prayerbooks and Bibles, then you could provide a single use order of service sheet.

## Private prayer indoors

Indoor private prayer in household groups appears to be permitted in all areas, with a cleric or ASLM leading. Presumably this is best done by appointment.

## Singing

DHHS has not made a ruling on singing, though they acknowledge it is a risky activity. Masks should be worn for congregational singing. A soloist or cantor, well-distanced, could lead without a mask. Our advice remains to keep singing to a minimum, especially indoors.

## Video and livestream

If a service is being livestreamed or videoed, with no congregation present, a maximum of five people essential for the production of the broadcast can be present in metropolitan Melbourne. In regional Victoria, there is no limit of five but anyone present must be essential for the production of the broadcast.

If a congregation is present, those producing the livestream or video must be counted as part of the congregation and subject to the maximum for whichever applies of metropolitan Melbourne or regional Victoria.

## COVID-safe preparation

In order to prepare for indoor services, access to the church for COVID-safe preparation is allowed. The minimum number of people, no more than five, for the shortest possible time can do this.

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### Ventilation

All indoor activity, including services, should maximise ventilation by keeping doors and windows as fully open as possible.

### Meetings

At this stage people are not allowed to gather or meet indoors for parish council meetings or annual meetings.

### Outdoor activities

Discussion groups, youth groups or Sunday School could meet outdoors on church premises, with a maximum of ten, including the leader, under the general public outdoor rules. If children are present, at least two adults must be there. No indoor access is allowed other than for toilets. No contact games or sport can be played.

### Playgroups, etc

Playgroups can operate only outdoors with a maximum of ten people, but no shared toys are allowed. Infants under the age of 12 months are not counted in the ten people. Groups that don't have an outdoor area at their church could arrange to meet at a local park. Booking for sessions will be necessary, and churches might consider running multiple, shorter sessions to cater for more people. Playgroup activities can include nature play activities, reading aloud and group singing. Picnic rugs will help families stay socially distanced for group activities such as snack time and story time. Food and drinks must be individually provided by each family, including for adults. Encouraging fresh healthy food snacks and water, rather than sweet treats and juices, should continue to be the norm for playgroups and Mainly Music, and is particularly important for children to maintain good health as they begin to socialise again. Adults must wear masks except when eating and drinking.

Groups such as after-school groups probably cannot meet indoors but we are still seeking clarification on this, and will report when we have that.

### Indoor activities

At this stage indoor activities for adults in metropolitan Melbourne are limited to services. Arguably a Bible study or prayer meeting is a religious gathering/service and thus, with a cleric, ASLM or appointed leader, it can meet indoors in the church.

A youth group could meet for a service indoors with ten maximum plus one leader, but its whole program should clearly be a service or religious gathering and not a social program or games. Similarly, a children's service, like a Sunday School class, could operate with ten people plus a leader.

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In regional Victoria, separate children's or youth services could occur simultaneously with an adult service, but there can only be two groups each up to ten maximum and each with one designated leader in addition. (There must of course be at least two adults present.)

In metropolitan Melbourne, there can only be one such group at any one time, so a youth or children's service cannot occur at the same time as an adult service.

In regional Victoria, a maximum of ten adults can play non-contact sport indoors with 8sqm per person. For people under 19 years old, the maximum is twenty. The rules for this are complex and found in the Restricted Activity Directions (Non Melbourne) (No 10) linked on our website.

### **Working from church offices**

Work from home if you can. Clergy and staff (including volunteers) may work from or access the church offices for work purposes if it is not reasonably practical for them to work from home. For now, offices must not be shared, masks must be worn other than when in an office or room alone and open windows and doors as much as possible. Minimise social contact and visitors to the site. Keep an attendance logbook. Regularly clean all common surfaces.

### **Meals for needy people**

Meals for needy people can be served outdoors, as well as takeaway options.

### **Gardening**

In metropolitan Melbourne, five people can work on church gardens and lawns at the same time. There is no number limit in regional Victoria.

### **Giving lifts**

In metropolitan Melbourne, only household members can drive people who do not normally drive. Other than that, church members cannot pick up people to bring them to church.

### **Tenants and lessees**

Whether in regional Victoria or metropolitan Melbourne, some tenants or lessees may be able to restart their groups. The responsibility lies with them, but check their COVID-safe plans, that they know attendance limits, and that they are sure they can resume their activities. There are too many varieties of tenants/lessees to have an accurate list here of what can resume.



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### Brotherhood of St Laurence advocacy for international students

BSL is compiling a study of the plight of international students. If you are interested in this or have international students in your churches who are suffering in this pandemic, please contact Bahati Ferdinand at BSL: [BahatiF@bsl.org.au](mailto:BahatiF@bsl.org.au).

We remind you that diocesan information and resources related to the pandemic are on the diocesan [website](#) under four main headings: online church, wellbeing, resources for ministry and mission, diocesan information.

Questions or concerns about restrictions or annual meetings can be directed to Bishop Paul: [bishoppaulbarker@melbourneanglican.org.au](mailto:bishoppaulbarker@melbourneanglican.org.au). Please avoid asking other staff in order to save their time.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus,

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

Archbishop Philip Freier