

COVID-19

VICTORIA FAQs

Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT JANUARY 04, 2021



As of 11:59pm Sunday December 6, Victoria entered COVID-safe

Summer requirements, including:

- **Leaving home:** No restriction on reasons to leave home but stay safe.
- **Public gatherings:** Up to 100 people can gather outdoors from any number of households (infants under 12 months not counted in the cap)
- **Visitors to the home:** Up to 15 visitors per day (infants under 12 months not counted in the cap). Visitors may be from any number of households, together or separately. Front and back yards are considered part of the home.
- **Face Masks:** Wearing a face mask is again mandatory in all public indoor spaces as of December 31, 2020. Masks must be worn in indoor public spaces apart from when eating or drinking. This includes anyone attending any indoor worship or ceremony. If you have visitors in your home, it is strongly recommended that masks are worn during the visit. If you are planning to leave your home – take a mask.
- **Weddings and Funerals:** No maximum attendee caps indoors or outdoors, but:
 - A density quotient of 1 person per 2 sqm applies when using electronic record keeping of attendees (see p4).
 - A density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies when if electronic record keeping is not used.
 - A cap of 15 people applies if the wedding or funeral is being held at a private residence.
- **Religious gatherings and ceremonies:** A density quotient of 1 person per 2 sqm applies if using electronic record keeping of attendees (see p4). If not using electronic record keeping a density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies. Indoor and outdoor ceremonies can now occur at the same time.
- **Food or Drink at gatherings:** No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment is permitted to be **shared** by participants. Food or drink can be **served** as part of a religious gathering or after a religious gathering. It is recommended that single use items are used to serve food or drink. It is recommended that one

person serves or distributes food or drinks. For example, one person uses the urn for hot water for tea.

- **Singing:** Singing or chanting can occur as part of a religious ceremony, wedding or funeral. (See p4 for guidance).
- **Care facilities and hospital visitors:** No restrictions on purpose, number or time limits of visits. Symptomatic individuals (e.g. sore throat), close contacts and returned international travellers excluded from visiting.
- **Work:** A continued phased return-to-work for workers who have been working from home. Capped at 25% of the workforce on site until January 10, 2021. From January 11, offices will be able to increase to a cap of 50% and workplaces with fewer than 40 staff may have up to 20 staff onsite.
- **Community venues:** No patron caps with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm, subject to use of electronic record keeping (see p4). If not using electronic record keeping a density quotient of 1 per 4sqm applies.
- **Creative arts facilities:** No patron caps with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm, subject to use of electronic record keeping (see p4).
- **Seated entertainment venues (indoors and outdoors):** Open, up to 75 per cent of fixed seated capacity with maximum patron cap of 1000 people, density quotient of 1 per 2sqm in foyers, bars, bathrooms etc when using electronic record keeping. In venues not using electronic record a density quotient of 1 per 4 sqm applies. Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online.
- **Indoor non-seated venues (such as galleries):** Open, up to 50 per cent total capacity with maximum patron cap of 1000 people. Density quotient of 1 per 2sqm when using electronic record keeping. In venues not using electronic record a density quotient of 1 per 4 sqm applies. Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online.
- **Accommodation:** Bookings restricted to the private gathering limit. The person or household booking the accommodation can have up to 30 visitors.
- **Interstate travel:** Continued international border controls. State border controls activated in case of outbreaks.





COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs

Metro Melbourne AND Regional Victoria AS AT JANUARY 04, 2021

- **Tourism spaces and groups:** No patron cap on tour groups. Masks must be worn on tour transport.
- **Indoor physical recreation and community sport:** No patron caps with a density quotient of 1 per 4sqm for each space. Gym and exercise classes limited to 50 people (excluding anyone necessary for running the class). COVID Marshals required when gyms are staffed. At times when gyms are unstaffed, a density quotient of 1 per 8 sqm applies.
- **Outdoor physical recreation and community sport:** Up to a maximum of 100 patrons for outdoor fitness classes with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. Record keeping is required. Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online.
- **Retail:** (e.g. supermarkets, other retail) Density quotient of 1 per 2sqm, with record keeping where practicable.

For a full list of COVID-Safe Summer requirements, visit <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covidsafe-summer>.

As of 31/12/2020

In response to this serious and evolving situation of new cases appearing in Victoria, new Statewide restrictions came into effect from 5pm on Thursday December 31, 2020.

- The limit on the number of people gathering in the home was reduced from 30 to 15, meaning the household members plus 15 visitors (excluding children under 12 months of age).
- Masks became mandatory in public indoor spaces. Masks must be worn in indoor public spaces apart from when eating or drinking. If you have visitors in your home, it is strongly recommended that masks are worn during the visit. If you are planning to leave your home – take a mask.

What has NOT changed in Victoria?

- 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 or maintained electronically (see p4)
 - Cleaning protocols
 - Physical distancing, maximum occupancy and all other COVID signage
- Sharing of food and drink: No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment may be shared

As of 31/12/2020

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



This week's updates:

- **GATHERINGS** P3
- **CHURCH/COMMUNITY HALLS** P6

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/>

The Synod Crisis Management Team monitors changes on a regular basis. These FAQs will no longer be updated weekly and now only be updated as required.

It is recommended that you occasionally check the Synod website <https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions/> for updated FAQs, by checking the "Date Modified" column.

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Should there be any major changes to COVID restrictions, these will be advised via separate email to all Church councils.

If you have any queries, these may still be sent to CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au.
As of 10/12/2020

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 31/12/2020

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. Face Masks must be worn in indoor public spaces apart from when eating or drinking.

As of 31/12/2020

There are no limits on numbers who may attend, however density limits do apply to ensure people are able to maintain a distance of at least 1.5m. A density quotient of 1 person per 2 sqm applies if using electronic record keeping of attendees (see p4). If not using electronic record keeping a density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies.

Indoor and outdoor ceremonies can now occur at the same time. No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment is permitted to be **shared** by participants. Food or drink can be **served** as part of a religious gathering or after a religious gathering. It is recommended that single use items are used to serve food or drink. It is recommended that one person serves or distributes food or drinks. For example, one person uses the urn for hot water for tea

As of 10/12/2020

Weddings and Funerals: There is no maximum attendee caps indoors or outdoors, but:

- A density quotient of 1 person per 2 sqm applies when using electronic record keeping of attendees (see p4).
- A density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies when if electronic record keeping is not used.
- A cap of 15 people applies if the wedding or funeral is being held at a private residence.

As of 31/12/2020

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Singing or chanting can occur as part of a religious ceremony, wedding or funeral.

Group singing is safest when the following measures are applied:

- singing outside or in a well-ventilated room (with windows open)
- physical distancing of at least 2 metres between each person while singing
- short performances (of less than an hour)
- wearing a mask when singing indoors
- singing softly.
- Performers (choirs etc.) should be 5 meters from the audience where practical.
- Fans, free-standing or ceiling, are not recommended for use in enclosed indoor spaces for singing.

Singing rehearsals are permitted.

If the rehearsal is held indoors, the indoor venue should be well ventilated. This can be achieved by making sure that windows are opened. If you are participating in a music or singing rehearsal it is recommended:

- That you keep at least two metres from other people in the rehearsal.
- No group size limits apply if the facility can apply the two square metre rule if using electronic record keeping. This means the limit on the number of people who can attend is determined by the size of the venue. The two square metre rule is the only limit on the number of people who can attend.
- Activities can be held indoors or outdoors. The facility must apply the two square metre rule to ensure people have enough room to maintain 1.5 metres distance between them.
- Wearing a face mask is again mandatory in all public indoor spaces as of December 31, 2020. Masks must be worn in indoor public spaces apart from when eating or drinking.

As of 31/12/2020

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 if

attendance records are not being collected and maintained electronically. If attendance details are being collected and maintained electronically, then the rule is 2 square meters per person.

To calculate the maximum capacity of any building, measure the floorspace (length x width) in metres, then divide by either 2 (electronic record keeping) or 4 (non-electronic record keeping).

For example: if the inside of your church measures 10m x 6m = 60 square metres. If you are **not** keeping attendance records electronically, divide this by 4: $60 \div 4 = 15$ people is it's the maximum capacity.

If you are keeping attendance records electronically, Divide the area by 2: $60 \div 2 = 30$ people is the maximum capacity.

As of 10/12/2020

What is meant by electronic record keeping?

The Victorian Government has introduced a QR (Quick Response) Code service to allow for contact tracing information to be gathered by venues electronically. This allows for easy self-registration by guests directly into a contact tracing app.

QR codes are unique for each venue, but will look something like this:



How do QR codes 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.

Continued P5





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. If you intend to keep records electronically, 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.

What is the advantage of using the QR code system?

Only venues which are using the above electronic method of gathering and keeping records with a Victorian Government supplied QR code can use the 2sqm per person density quotient. It also removes the need for maintaining hard-copy attendance registrations for 28 days.

All venues which are not using this method must continue to apply the one person per 4sqm density quotient.

As of 10/12/2020

Physical distancing signs

All church buildings must display signage showing the maximum number of people who can be accommodated in any space.

Firstly, you will need to determine if you are going to maintain attendance records electronically or not, as this will determine the maximum occupancy quotient (2 sqm per person if electronic, or 4 sqm per person otherwise).

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 do intend to maintain attendance records electronically, you will need to recalculate maximum occupancy per space and replace any existing occupancy signage.

As of 10/12/2020

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

Up to 15 people can visit a household per day (infants under 12 months not counted in the cap). Visitors may be from any number of households, together or separately. Front and back yards are considered part of the home.

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 Councils and congregation committees should discuss which meetings are appropriate to be held via teleconference and/or video conference and which meetings are more appropriate if held face-to-face.

As of 10/12/2020

Transporting People. 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)

As of 10/12/2020





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

if electronic records are being kept, or 4m2 per person if records are not being kept electronically.

As of 31/12/2020

No food, drink, crockery, utensils, vessels or other equipment is permitted to be **shared** by participants. Food or drink can be **served** as part of a religious gathering or after a religious gathering. It is recommended that single use items are used to serve food or drink. It is recommended that one person serves or distributes food or drinks. For example, one person uses the urn for hot water for tea

As of 10/12/2020



As of 31/12/2020

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>

Community/Church Halls and similar buildings may be used. Patron number caps have been replaced with a density quotient of 1 person per 2sqm, subject to use of electronic record keeping. If not using electronic record keeping a density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm applies. All physical distancing and hygiene requirements must be met.

Wearing a face mask is again mandatory in all public indoor spaces as of December 31, 2020. Masks must be worn in indoor public spaces apart from when eating or drinking.

WORSHIP SERVICES – Church or Community Halls can be used for Indoor religious gatherings with specific cleaning requirements and COVIDSafe plans. **Total attendance numbers remain subject to density quotient of 2m2 per person**

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 2m2 per person (if maintaining electronic attendance records) or 4m2 per person (non-electronic records) 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 –

- **Indoors:** No patron caps with a density quotient of 1 per 4sqm for each space. Gym and exercise classes limited to 50 people (excluding anyone necessary for running the class).
- **Outdoors:** Up to a maximum of 100 patrons for outdoor fitness classes with a density quotient of 1 per 2sqm. Record keeping is required. Venues with capacity of greater than 500 patrons must publish a COVIDSafe Plan online.

As of 10/12/2020

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>. If in doubt, seek advice from your presbytery or contact uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au.

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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

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

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

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





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

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 must wear facemasks unless legally exempt.
- 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 2sqm, 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.
- Where practical a record of customers should be kept, in addition to records of all staff and volunteers who are on the premises.

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 10/12/2020

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





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?

Most Synod staff continue to work remotely, in line with government directions. Those who are required to work from the Synod offices have now relocated to Wesley Place. All contact details remain unchanged.

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

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 two 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.

■ maintain a contact tracing register (ie name and contact number) for anyone attending the Garage Sale or market if possible and

■ we recommend that you 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 10/12/2020

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

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).

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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

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.

Please watch for a separate email in January 2021 with further advice on Jobkeeper payments after January 3

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 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

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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 03/12/2020

NEXT STEPS TO RECOVERY

When can we expect further easing of restrictions?

The Government has indicated that further restriction easing may be announced toward the end of January 2021.

All current restrictions will be reviewed regularly by the State Government to ensure they reflect current public health advice.

As of 10/12/2020

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 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

