

PCV COVID restriction advice – 10 September 2021

Yesterday the Government, through the Acting Chief Health Officer, issued new Directions. This is summary advice written especially for PCV congregations – noting that a distinction between Melbourne Metro plus Shepparton, and the rest of Regional Victoria has been re-instated.

Sources:

- **Stay at Home Directions (Restricted Areas) (No 20)**, issued 9 Sept
- **Stay Safe Directions (Regional Victoria) (No 8)**, issued 9 Sept
- **Restricted Activity Directions (Restricted Areas) (No 15)**, issued 9 Sept
- **Restricted Activity Directions (Regional Victoria) (No 8)**, issued 9 Sept
- **Workplace Directions (No 49)**, issued 9 Sept
- **Authorised Provider and Authorised Worker list – see WD (No 49) definition 7**
- **Area Directions (No 15)**

Metropolitan Melbourne plus Shepparton

- While we may not meet for public worship or any other reason, our place of worship may be used for broadcast of religious ceremonies (whether live or recorded).
- We are permitted to have the minimum number of persons attend who are required to conduct and facilitate the broadcast – but only up to a maximum of 5 - but now it no longer has to be the same people each time – that provision has been dropped from the Authorised Worker list. (These designated persons, provided they each carry an Authorised Worker Permit (AWP), are permitted to leave home and even travel beyond their 5km limit for this purpose.
- For broadcast purposes, all the usual COVID-safe practices apply such as wearing masks, social distancing, cleaning regimes and registering attendees through a QR code.

Worker Permits required for authorised work

Even during these lockdowns, the essential work of pastoral care for the needy is not halted. Consider what is considered essential work:

- faith leaders broadcasting services and ceremonies at places of worship, with the minimum number of people required for the broadcast to occur (5);
- care services for people with particular needs because of homelessness, family violence, age, infirmity, disability, illness or a chronic health condition or other essential support services;
- funerary or mortuary services or related activities.

Each time you want to leave home to attend to essential work, provided it's attending to one of these nominated essential services, all you need is to carry with you an AWP, signed by yourself both as the employer as well as employee (see Workplace Directions (No 49) section 5(3)(a), note 1).

Weddings and Funerals

Weddings – effectively banned

Funerals – 10 members of the public only, PLUS those reasonably necessary to conduct the funeral.

Regional Victoria (NOT Shepparton)

We may operate our place of worship for activity, provided:

- the density quotient of 4 is observed (not counting persons under one, nor the persons conducting the activity);
- a cap of 20 persons on the premises (not counting persons under one, nor the persons conducting the activity);
- a COVID Marshall is present at each entrance;
- no shared food or drink;
- no dancing!

If your building is less than 100 square metres, refer to Restricted Activity Directions (Regional Victoria) (No 8) Clause 9, subclause 4 on p14.

As responsible persons governing all activities of the local church, each time there is a variation it's always best to have your Session read the Directions themselves and come to its own mind. This document remains only advice, the law is the current CHO's Directions.

with warm regards

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