

## Update June 17, 2020 More of Easing Restrictions

The Victorian Government has announced the gradual easing of restrictions from 11:59pm on Sunday 21 June 2020. [Religion and Ceremonies Q & A DHHS](#)

From 11:59pm on 21 June, places of worship can open for private worship or small religious ceremonies for up to 50 people in each separate space. Groups can be no larger than 20 people and be divided into separate areas.

Business Victoria and DHHS have clarified the statement to mean the following:

- If you have a building that has completely separate areas (see notes re separate areas below) – you can have 50 in each area- BUT within those separate areas you have to split into groups no larger than 20. Over this, the social distancing (1.5m social distancing and 4sqm rule) apply.
- So, the area has to be big enough to accommodate 50 people with 4sqm rule – PLUS allow groups of 20 to be separated from each other
- You also need to consider what you can control – social distancing, sanitising, hygiene requirements, cleaning afterwards, contact tracing etc

### What constitutes a “separate area”?

See [Arts and Culture Guidelines for COVID-19](#)

Each separate area must be separated by permanent structures or be a discrete area of the premises that is sufficiently separated from any other area of the premises. Walls separating areas should either reach from floor to ceiling or be at least 2.1 metres high for the space to be considered sufficiently separate.

Temporary structures should not be installed to create separate areas. Each separate enclosed area must not have a density of patrons greater than one per four square metres, and any more than 20\* patrons at any one time.

- Multiple services or ceremonies can be held on the same day, but cleaning needs to occur between services or ceremonies. Enough time should be allowed between services or ceremonies to reduce the risk of crowds at entrances and exits and to enable cleaning.
- Essential public/ community support services allowed – food banks, help for the homeless or other essential community activities including leasing church halls or other spaces for community support groups. Physical distancing requirements are the responsibility of the group or organisation leasing the space.
- Prayer groups held at a place of worship or another public place, up to 20 people can attend. A prayer group held in someone’s home can meet as long as there are no more than 20 people, including the normal residents of the household.
- Weddings can have up to 20 people in attendance, in addition to the couple and the celebrant.
- Up to 50 people can attend a funeral service in addition to the personal leading the funeral and other funeral staff.
- display a sign at each public entry to any single undivided indoor space that says what the maximum capacity is based on the 4 square metres rule. You may have different signs for different room

- For more information and guidelines, refer to COVID-19 Safety management plan for reopening of church buildings. Management plan is sent to church pastors and leadership teams.