



COVID-19

GUIDANCE NOTE

23 October 2020

Summary of Eased Restrictions in NSW

We are thankful to God for low Covid-19 case numbers and for easing of some restrictions. We continue to pray for you all as you navigate the complexities Covid-19 has brought.

From **Friday 23 October**, religious gatherings and places of worship (excluding weddings and funerals) can have up to 300 people attending, subject to the 4²m limit.

From 1 December 2020, numbers at weddings will also increase - see highlighted sections below.

Current COVID Safe Requirements

The following information has been prepared to assist our congregations with applying the numerous Covid-19 requirements. This guidance has been updated from the information provided on 22 September 2020, showing the changes in yellow. For further details on Covid-19, including requirements for specific ministries and activities please visit the Synod [COVID-19 Safe Roadmap](#) site.

In all gatherings and meetings:

- Complete COVID Safety Plan and have copy onsite (we are told police are randomly checking – even in rural areas)
- Register the plan and keep it updated
- Maintain strict COVID Safe cleaning regime
- Maintain attendance lists for tracing purposes
- Maintain 1.5m physical distancing
- Maintain hand hygiene
- Practice respiratory hygiene (cough into elbow etc.)
- Stay home when sick and get tested if unwell

Worship

Decide whether you can confidently manage returning to face to face can be confidently managed. Synod or Presbytery cannot decide this for you; it is a local Church Council decision.

PRESBYTERIES

CANBERRA REGION

FAR NORTH COAST

GEORGES RIVER

ILLAWARRA

KOREAN

MACQUARIE DARLING

MID NORTH COAST

NEW ENGLAND NORTH WEST

PARRAMATTA NEPEAN

RIVERINA

SYDNEY CENTRAL COAST

SYDNEY

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If you are able to meet in person (and we rejoice if you can):

- Register as a COVID Safe Business.
- Max number 300 subject to 4²m rule (whichever is the lesser).
- Masks highly recommended for ages 12 and up especially in areas where there has been community transmission.
- Singing is extremely high risk. Synod continues to recommend no singing. This includes no humming, whistling, chanting, dancing, or similar activities, even if people wear masks.
- People are asked to stay seated/ restrict moving around the venue as much as possible.
- Communion – ensure healthy hygiene practices are utilised in preparation. Distributors wear masks, use hand sanitiser and use tongs to distribute. Congregation remains seated with no physical contact.
- Giving should happen via direct debit as much as possible or have the collection plate at the door. The NSW Government continues to recommend that bags or plates are not passed around.

Music

- The Department of Health advises that 5 singers are allowed to sing together in a large well-ventilated space. They must face forwards and not towards each other. Singers must remain at least 1.5m apart from each other and any other performers, and 5m from anyone else.
- Singers should not stand above the congregation.
- For pre-recorded singing or livestreaming, a soloist is allowed and must maintain 5m physical distancing. For a group of up to 5 singers, the conditions for singing in church must still be met when streaming or pre-recording the service.
- Wind instruments are also high risk, and Synod continues to recommend they not be used; however, the following advice has been given to school for musical ensembles.

Musical groups (this is taken from the Group Singing and Musical Ensemble advice for schools as the Govt has not addressed this directly for Churches).

Musical instrument ensembles may continue.

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Players of non-reeded woodwind instruments (such as flutes and recorders) should maintain:

- a physical distance of 3 metres from others in the direction of air flow, and
- 1.5 metres in all other directions.

Players of all other musical instruments (including reeded woodwind instruments) should maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres between each other and the audience/conductor.

Ensembles and other musical groups should rehearse and perform outdoors or in large, well-ventilated indoor spaces.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules#recent-and-upcoming-changes>

Funerals

- Maximum 100 people, subject to 4²m rule
- Small venues can have up to 50 attendees without the 4 square metre rule provided non-household contacts can maintain 1.5 metres of physical distance, whichever is the lesser
- Children count towards the capacity limit

Weddings

- Maximum 150 people, subject to 4²m rule and social distancing of 1.5 metres
From 1 December 2020, the number of people who can attend weddings will be lifted to 300 people subject to the 4²m rule
- No singing by the congregation (see 'Music at weddings and funerals' below)
- Up to 20 predetermined people are allowed to dance

Music at weddings and funerals

- A small group of up to 5 people may sing together if the requirements for singing in church are met (see 'music' above).
- Players of non-reeded woodwind instruments (such as flutes and recorders) should maintain a physical distance of 3 metres from others in the direction of air flow and 1.5 metres in all other directions.

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- Players of all other instruments (including reeded woodwind instruments) should maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres between each other and the audience/conductor.
- Ensembles and other musical groups should rehearse and perform outdoors or in large, well-ventilated indoor spaces.

Youth Groups, Sunday Schools and KUCA Groups

- Government is still recommending caution. It is up to the local church council to determine whether meeting in person is feasible and if the necessary planning has been done.
- If you do meet face to face, it is advised that people over 12 years of age should wear a mask.
- Maximum 20 people, subject to 4²m rule and social distancing of 1.5 metres.
- Avoid high energy activities and shared equipment (e.g. craft, sport).
- Ensure Covid Safe drop off and pick up arrangements.

Third Party Hirers

- Third party hirers to complete COVID Safe Plan for your Church finish times
- No interaction between the attendees of the different activities
- Separate entry/exit for each building
- Workers/volunteers remain within building assigned
- Each building has a COVID Safe Plan

For Further Information

NSW Government Covid-19 site: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

ACT Government Covid-19 site: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/home>

Synod of NSW and ACT Website:

<https://nswact.uca.org.au/COVID19saferoadmap/>

Email: COVID19@nswact.uca.org.au

Kingsley Murphy: Presbytery Support Manager

Phone: 02 8267 4358 - Email: KingsleyM@nswact.uca.org.au

This information has been sourced from:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules#weddings-funerals-and-religious-services>

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