

Queensland Baptists COVID-19 Update 16 June 2020

Latest News

The QLD Government last night released the [Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction \(No.2\)](#) thereby announcing further relaxations to restrictions impacting on Places of Worship.

Under this Direction, the following now applies to Weddings, Funerals, Religious and Civil Ceremonies:

- Wedding ceremonies with a maximum attendance of 20 guests. The couple and celebrant are in addition to the 20 attendees.
- Funerals attended by a maximum of 100 people, except if an exemption is granted on compassionate grounds by the Chief Health Officer. A maximum of 3 people can conduct the funeral service in addition to the 100 attendees.
- Religious ceremonies at a place of worship or civil ceremonies with a maximum attendance of 20 people.

Live streaming of one of the above services may be conducted with the maximum number of people outlined above, including the camera operator, with social distancing observed.

Apart from the above activities, Places of Worship remain limited to 20 people at a time (unless having opted into the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan). Places of Worship must keep contact information about all people at the attending (including staff/volunteers), for contact tracing purposes for a period of 56 days, unless otherwise specified. This information must include name, address, mobile phone number, and the date and period of attendance. Places of Worship are also required to fulfill mandatory WH&S obligations in relation to COVID – 19.

Update re Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan – Places of Worship

While QLD Baptists were consulted via the Heads of Churches in the development of the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan, significant changes were made to the final document, that we as a part of the consultation group were not privy to. The approved Plan is quite specific and prescriptive in a way that will make it somewhat unworkable for many churches. As such we continued our collaboration with the Heads of Churches for the Plan to be reviewed specifically seeking amendments in relation to requirements for gathering children and the 7m2 rule for congregational singing. Unfortunately, the request for amendments has been denied by QLD Health.

Live Q&A

On Thursday 18 June at 2pm we will be hosting a special event in the QB Pastors' Forum for a COVID – 19 Q&A. We will be working through frequently asked questions, the latest changes and the recently approved Industry COVID SAFE Plan for Places of Worship. There will also be the opportunity to [send in questions](#) prior to the event as well as partake in the live Q&A as we take questions from attendees.

Please share this [Pastors' Forum Special Event - COVID 19](#) invitation with those who are involved in implementing a WH&S COVID Plan or the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for your church.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are our options for opening our church?

Places of Worship currently have 2 options:

1. Operate under current Stage 2 restrictions – max of 20 people per site implementing a mandatory WH&S COVID Plan OR
2. Opt into the [Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan](#) for Places of Worship – fulfilling more stringent and specific requirements affording up to 100 people per site (i.e. up to 5 groups of 20 with specific parameters in place).

How many people can I have at a wedding?

Weddings can have up to 20 guests in addition to the couple and celebrant with social distancing and hygiene requirements in place. It is important if you are unwell, that you do not go to a wedding.

A record of names and contact details of each guest must be kept to assist contact tracing if required. This information must include the name, address, mobile phone number and the date/time. If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers. The information should be securely stored, not used for any other purpose and deleted after 56 days.

Can I livestream my wedding?

You can live stream your wedding but only a maximum of 20 people can attend in person. If you hire a camera operator to live stream the wedding, the camera operator will be included in the 20 person maximum.

How many people can attend a funeral?

From 6am Tuesday 16 June funerals may be attended by a maximum of 100 mourners in addition to up to three funeral officials, with social distancing and hygiene requirements observed. It is important to note that outdoor guests cannot be in addition to indoor guests. The next of kin will be required to keep a list of attendees with their contact details for a period for 56 days after the funeral.

Having 100 mourners at a funeral applies to the funeral only. Up to 20 people may attend the wake, memorial, ceremony or equivalent event that might occur before or after the funeral. A venue with an approved COVID Safe Industry Plan could host more people for a wake, memorial, ceremony or equivalent event, but it is important to note that these Plans require people within a venue to be seated and in separate groups of 20.

The social distancing and hygiene requirements must be observed. The Chief Health Officer can provide exemptions in relation to attendance at funerals, but only at the margin. It is important that, if you are sick, you do not go to the funeral.

How many people can attend a religious service?

Private worship and religious ceremonies of up to 20 people is allowed, with social distancing observed. However, larger celebrations are not yet permitted and are still to be live streamed (unless having opted into the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan).

Can we have refreshments before/ after Church?

Under the Stage 2 Restrictions (Option 1 referred to above), nothing in relation to food/drink/communion etc.is articulated. However, under the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan, it mandates that the church does not provide or facilitate communal refreshments, including tea and coffee, or water stations. This includes disposable cups and stirrer options (e.g. food, tea & coffee).

Can we gather before/ after Church?

Under the Stage 2 Restrictions (Option 1 referred to above), nothing in relation to pre/post service gatherings is articulated. However, under the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan, it mandates that the church does not hold pre- or post-service gatherings or mingling.

Are children included in the gathering restrictions?

Yes. Children are included in the numbers for maximum people onsite, and the same social distancing requirements apply (even though they do not apply to children while attending school).

Can we have congregational signing at Church?

Under the Stage 2 Restrictions (Option 1 referred to above), nothing in relation to singing is articulated. However, under the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan, it mandates that if there is to be singing at the gathering, then there is to be a maximum of 1 person per 7m².